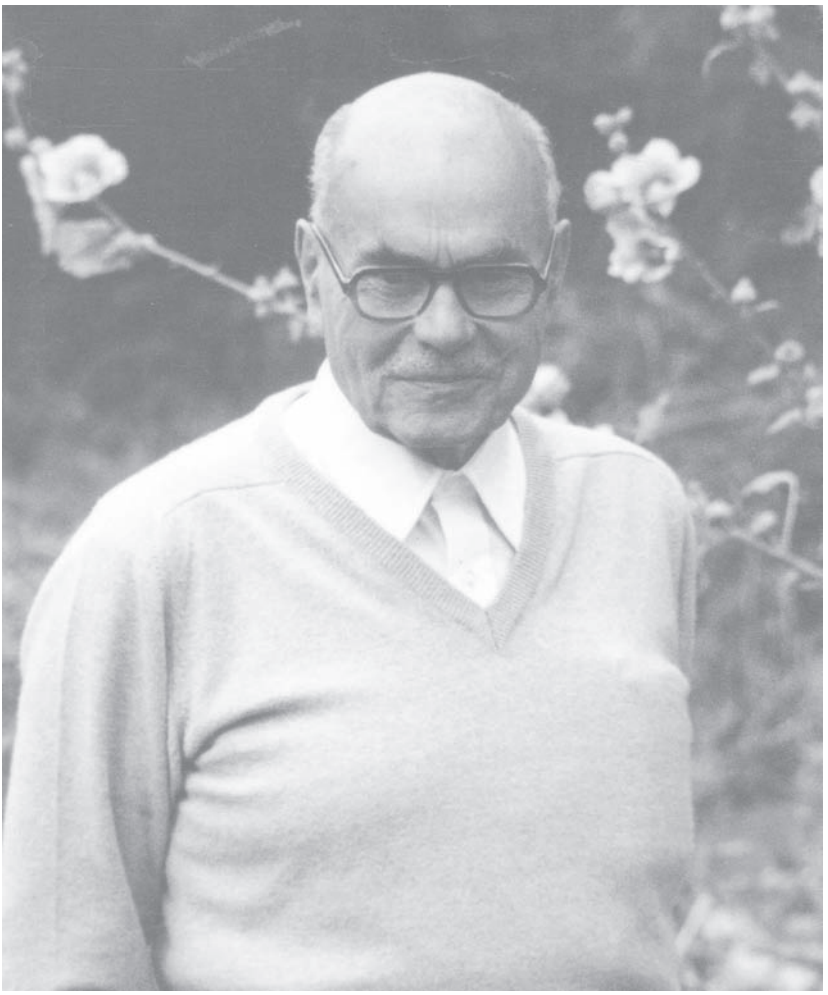
THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME I



W. R. Bion in 1978
Photograph by Julian Bion

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME I

Edited by Chris Mawson

Editorial consultant Francesca Bion

KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume I): 978–1–78220–229–5

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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INTRODUCTION

Scope and structure of *The Complete Works of W. R. Bion*

To have all of Bion's writings in one place, with the additional search and research possibilities offered by digital representation of the contents, enables a previously unavailable degree of access to the breadth and depth of his thought. It has been possible to consult closely with Francesca Bion, Wilfred Bion's original editor, and to work on previously unpublished and undiscovered material. The latter can be seen to repeat much of what exists already of Bion's ways of expressing his core clinical and theoretical ideas, but in many instances additional meaning may be gleaned from the variations on a theme, modulations in the 'angle of approach', and the 'binocular vision' of comparing apparently small differences. This is in keeping with Bion's beliefs concerning what he was attempting to do with his communications, spoken and written.

It was decided – mainly for the reason just given, but also for completeness – to include all the autobiographical writings and interview material. Articles and papers in which Bion was a joint or subsidiary author, or in which the balance of contributions was unclear, have not been included.

The structure is approximately chronological, with the exception of the 1950–1962 papers of *Second Thoughts*, which are kept together (as they were in that book) in order to remain integrated with the important 1967 'Commentary', which details the evolution of Bion's clinical thinking at that point, looking back at the early papers.

The organization chosen has meant that some papers which on original publication were included together have, for the purposes of

these volumes, been placed with other works. An example is 'Notes on Memory and Desire' (1967), which appeared at the end of *Cogitations* (1992) but which – in the context of Bion's *Complete Works* – belongs with the papers of the 1960s in *Second Thoughts* and *Attention and Interpretation*.

Although Bion's 'Notes on the Theory of Schizophrenia' (1954), which appears as chapter three of *Second Thoughts*, is almost the same as his 'Language and the Schizophrenic', published in 1955 in *New Directions in Psycho-Analysis* (edited by Melanie Klein, Paula Heimann, and Roger Money-Kyrle), the 1955 paper differs in one or two respects from the earlier version and is included (chronologically in Volume IV) primarily because of the penultimate section of that work, in which Bion added some important clinical descriptions.

The four papers that were published for the first time in the 1987 edition of *Clinical Seminars and Four Papers*, which includes Bion's last paper, 'Making the Best of a Bad Job' (1979), I have separated from the Brasilia and São Paulo Seminars in order to organize all of Bion's seminars, lectures/ discussions, and talks more effectively. I have done the same with the four discussions that were based on four 2-hour sessions at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Los Angeles in the spring of 1976, which appeared originally in the same 1987 edition.

For ease of reference to Bion's Grid diagram – which he drew up with one axis (the horizontal) representing, as he said, the genetic phase of a particular element of psychoanalysis that one is trying to categorize, and the other (the vertical) expressing the use to which it is put – I have placed a copy of the Grid at the beginning of each volume of the Complete Works in which there are works that refer to Bion's discussions of those categories. This includes Volume IV on the basis that even though the Grid is not mentioned explicitly in *Learning from Experience*, nor does it appear in the index of that book, it can be seen to have crystallized later for Bion from the thinking he pursued in the second half of the book, from Chapters 20 onwards. There he developed his formulation of alpha-function into what he calls a 'model' – of pre-conception, realization, conception – in which repeated 'nesting', as it were, of container–contained relations allows emotionally invested thoughts to be promoted to increasing levels of abstraction within the mental structure, constituting an aspect of mental growth. It was for this reason that the formal Grid

was included in the original book and on the cover design of the Karnac edition.

The previously unpublished work appears in Volume XV, except for Bion's 1943 'On Groups'. Those early notes on his methodology are useful in understanding the innovative group study and treatment initiatives that came to be known as the 'Northfield Experiments'. It will be appreciated readily that the paper belongs naturally with the published papers on group methods and group mentality, rather than to have it included later with the three unpublished works of the 1960s and 1970s. 'Memory and Desire' (1965), which was transcribed only very recently, appears in Volume VI.

The book published in 1997 as *Taming Wild Thoughts*, a short booklet of 58 pages edited by Francesca Bion, comprised two pieces of previously unpublished work. The first was a paper given to the British Psychoanalytical Society in October 1963 with the title, 'The Grid'; the second was a transcription, with no title, of tape recordings of Bion talking in his study on the weekend of 28–29 May 1977 as he considered his forthcoming visit to Rome in July of that year. The first transcription begins with Bion musing about what he calls 'stray' or 'wild' thoughts that are yet to be housed – in other words, to find a mental container. The idea follows from the axiom he used as a central heuristic device in his theory of thinking, and it was this that gave Francesca the idea for the title of the book.

Since Bion discusses the Grid in his *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* (1963), and in *Transformations* (1965), it makes sense to take the Grid paper from *Taming Wild Thoughts* and to reposition it in Volume V of the *Complete Works*, to be together with them. I have extracted the relevant aspects of the original foreword to the 1997 book by Parthenope Bion Talamo and used them as the introduction to the 1963 Grid paper in its new position in Volume V. The section of her foreword that relates to the two untitled transcriptions appears as the introduction to them towards the end of Volume X, with the other papers of the mid- to late 1970s.

Cogitations (Volume XI) contains a note, written in 1971, in which Bion revisits his 1947 paper, 'Psychiatry at a Time of Crisis', which was published in 1948 in the *British Journal of Medical Psychology*. Since this paper appears in Volume IV, it has not been repeated here in *Cogitations*.

The structure of the *Complete Works* is as follows:

Volume I
The Long Weekend 1897–1919: Part of a Life

Volume II
All My Sins Remembered: Another Part of a Life
The Other Side of Genius: Family Letters

Volume III
War Memoirs 1917–1919

Volume IV
The 'War of Nerves' (1940)
On Groups (1943)
The Leaderless Group Project (1946)
Psychiatry at a Time of Crisis (1948)
Group Methods of Treatment (1948)
Language and the Schizophrenic (1955)
Experiences in Groups and Other Papers (1961)
Learning from Experience (1962)

Volume V
Elements of Psycho-Analysis (1963)
Taming Wild Thoughts [I]: The Grid (1963)
Transformations: Change from Learning to Growth (1965)

Volume VI
Memory and Desire (1965)
Catastrophic Change (1966)
Second Thoughts: Selected Papers on Psycho-Analysis (1967)
Notes on Memory and Desire (1967)
Attention and Interpretation: A Scientific Approach to Insight in Psycho-Analysis and Groups (1970)
Book Reviews (1966)

Volume VII
Brazilian Lectures
1973 São Paulo
1974 Rio de Janeiro
1974 São Paulo

Volume VIII
Clinical Seminars
- Brasilia 1975
- Contributions to Panel Discussions:
  - Brasilia, a New Experience (1975)
- São Paulo (1978)

Bion in New York and São Paulo
- New York (1977)
- São Paulo (Ten talks) (1978)

Volume IX
The Tavistock Seminars (1976–1979)
The Italian Seminars (1977)
A Paris Seminar (1978)

Volume X
Two Papers
- The Grid (1971)
- Caesura (1975)

Four Discussions (1976)
Four Papers
- Emotional Turbulence (1976)
- On a Quotation from Freud (1976)
- Evidence (1976)
- Making the Best of a Bad Job (1979)

Interview by Anthony G. Banet Jr (1976)
Taming Wild Thoughts [II]: Untitled (1977)

Volume XI
Cogitations
Appendix: Review of *Cogitations*, by André Green

Volume XII
A Memoir of the Future: Book 1

Volume XIII
A Memoir of the Future: Book 2

Volume XIV
A Memoir of the Future: Book 3 (with expanded Key)

Volume XV
Unpublished works
The Conception of Man (1961)
Penetrating Silence (1976)
New and Improved (1977)
Further Cogitations (1968–1969)
Appendix A: The Days of Our Years (1994), by Francesca Bion
Appendix B: Offices and Appointments Held by Wilfred R. Bion
Appendix C: 'Catastrophic Change' and 'Container and Contained Transformed': A Comparison, by Chris Mawson
Appendix D: Standardized Bibliography of the Works of W. R. Bion, by Harry Karnac

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A note on editorial decisions

Some of the previously published work, as well as the material gathered from recordings, has required editorial work. *Transformations* and *Second Thoughts,* for example, required extensive work. In making changes to the original text, I have been guided in every instance by detailed discussion with Francesca Bion.

Bion's own distinctive mode of expression has been given priority over grammar, except where obvious mistakes had been made that affected the meaning of what he clearly intended. Where his intentions were unclear, the original text remains unchanged. Typographic errors have been cleared up, including repetitions; incomplete sentences have been completed where notes, and Francesca Bion's recollections, were available. I have in all instances been guided by the principle expressed by Francesca Bion in 1987,[1] when she wrote, "The necessary editing in transferring the spoken word to the printed page has not in any way altered the content of Bion's contributions or his style of expression.

[1]'Introduction', in *Clinical Seminars and Four Papers* (1987) (see Volume VIII).

I have adopted the same methods as those I used in the past with his approval."

Where appropriate, long notes have been integrated into the text to which they belong. This is indicated by the use of square brackets.

Throughout, the hyphen in the term 'psycho-analysis' and its derivatives has been removed. The exceptions are the autobiographical writings and where the title of a publication involves the term, such as *Elements of Psycho-Analysis*.

Editorial apparatus has been kept to the minimum necessary. Where there are introductions, they are not attempts at summarizing; I have tried in each case to note something relevant to the background of the work and one or two points that may be of interest before the reader gets into the work itself – which is, for the most part, better left to speak for itself. An exception is the Editor's Introduction to *Learning from Experience*: on the fiftieth anniversary of this influential work, I have written a little more.

The overall aim has been to facilitate reading of Bion's highly original works with the minimum of interference, translation, and explanation.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

CHRIS MAWSON is a training and supervising analyst of the British Psychoanalytical Society and works in private practice as a psychoanalyst. He worked initially with young children and adolescents, first at the Tavistock Clinic and later in the Child Psychiatry Department of the Paddington Green Children's Hospital in the days when children at that clinic were offered intensive psychoanalytic treatment. His first training was as a clinical psychologist, with a research interest in attention and manic depressive psychosis.

As well as the clinical practice of psychoanalysis, he is interested in the study of groups and organizations from a psychoanalytic perspective, particularly that pursued by those of the British Group Relations orientation.

He is the Editor of *Bion Today* (2010), in the New Library of Psychoanalysis series. Other publications include: 'The Use of Play Technique in Understanding Disturbed Behaviour in School' (*Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1986); 'Containing Anxiety in Work with Damaged Children' (in *The Unconscious at Work*, ed. A. Obholzer & V. Z. Roberts, 1994); and 'Pseudo-Free Association: The Sophisticated Analytic Patient and "As-If" Relating' (*British Journal of Psychotherapy*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 2002).

FRANCESCA BION is the widow of Wilfred Bion and the transcriber and first editor of his seminars and talks and many of his published works. She was made an Associate of the British Psychoanalytical Society in recognition of the importance of her contribution to the transmission of psychoanalysis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Francesca Bion, Wilfred Bion's wife and original editor. I have worked closely with her in detecting and correcting those errors that escaped the editing process in some of the works when they were first published and in deciding the order of the works for the fifteen volumes.

Wilfred Bion was, from the 1950s to 1979 when he died, a major contributor of new ideas to psychoanalysis. Without Francesca's intervention, it is certain that much of his work would not have been published – remaining only as Bion's working notes, possibly to have been disposed of after they had served him as required during a particular period. The posthumous ones – *Cogitations*, for example, which contains notes that make explicit much of the 'bridging work' left out, behind the scenes, in his published work – would not have seen the light of day. Even the papers written between 1943 and 1952, collected and combined in 1961 as *Experiences in Groups* would have remained disparate, fragmentary contributions, read by a few, had Francesca not played a major role in getting them published together.

I would also like to thank Oliver Rathbone of Karnac Books, the primary publisher of Bion's work. Oliver has been a driving force for this project and has given invaluable support in making resources available for it. I would also like to thank Eric and Klara King of Communication Crafts, specialists in book and journal project management, for their invaluable and patient help in rendering this work into a form for publication. Their long experience in working on books by Bion has greatly facilitated the production of the *Complete Works*. I thank them for their dedicated, conscientious and meticulous work. They remained undaunted by the enormity of the task; I am sure that nobody else could have done such a good job.

Finally, I would also like to thank those analysts whose work and supervision of my own analytic work – in particular, Hanna Segal, Betty Joseph, Michael Feldman, Robin Anderson, Ronald Britton, and Ruth Malcolm – have shown me directly the value and clinical usefulness of Bion's core ideas. It has been invaluable in making the editorial choices necessary for these volumes.

THE LONG WEEKEND 1897–1919: PART OF A LIFE

1982

The Long Weekend was first published in 1982 by Fleetwood Press and reprinted in 1985. It was subsequently reprinted in 1986 by Free Association Books and in 1991 and 2005 by H. Karnac (Books) Ltd., London, by arrangement with Francesca Bion and Mark Paterson.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The Long Weekend was first published in 1982. It contained a helpful foreword by Francesca Bion, which is included here.

For a more detailed account on Bion from Francesca's perspective, it is recommended that the reader consult "The Days of Our Lives", an address she gave in April 1994 in Toronto and Montreal, Canada. It was first published in 1995 in the *Journal of Melanie Klein and Object Relations* (Vol. 13, No.1) and is reproduced in Volume XV.

Unlike Freud, who destroyed many sources of personal information about himself, there is a wealth of autobiographical information from Bion himself in the public domain. Francesca wrote in her address that "Before studying the work of original thinkers in the field of human behaviour and the human mind, it is surely valuable to know what influences and experiences contributed to their personalities, especially as seen through their own eyes. We are fortunate to have a record of Bion's own impressions of his first fifty years in *The Long Week-End* and *All My Sins Remembered*."

The relationship of Bion's work to his background is significant, so I have included the available biographical material as an important component in the present work. The rationale for this has been well and clearly exemplified by Meg Harris Williams in her extended commentary on the autobiographical works (Williams, 2010), which I commend to those readers studying the autobiographical writings; it is particularly helpful in understanding Bion's *Memoir of the Future*.

The Long Weekend
1897–1919

Part of a Life

Bion family crest
'Nisi dominus frustra'

'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in Vain.'

Psalm 127.i

FOREWORD

Wilfred Bion was born in Muttra, in the United Provinces of India, in 1897. Many generations of his family (of Huguenot descent) had served in India – as missionaries, in the Indian Police, and in the Department of Public Works. At the age of eight he was sent to England to attend preparatory school, never again to return to India. All his life he retained a strong affection for the country of his birth; he died in November 1979 two months before a planned visit to Bombay.

His autobiography was left unfinished, but the years covered by this book form a distinct period which ended with demobilization just before he went up to Oxford to read History. He felt then that he had to start life again, building on unsure foundations. He regarded himself as uneducated, out of touch with the world outside school and the army, and demoralized by his experience of war. Nevertheless, his outstanding athletic ability in rugger and swimming saved the day – just as it had done during his schooldays.

Although he felt that the war had left him unable to take advantage of the opportunities offered at the university, he always recalled with gratitude the talks he had with H. J. Paton, the philosopher. By 1924 it was clear to him where his interests lay – in psychoanalysis. He started medical training at University College Hospital, London, won the Gold Medal for Surgery, qualified in 1930, and then went on to psychoanalytic training. At University College Hospital he had contact with another outstanding man, Wilfred Trotter, the surgeon and author of *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* [1916]. Both Paton and Trotter played a very great part in his intellectual development.

After the Second World War, during which he served as the Senior Psychiatrist on the War Office Selection Board, he devoted the rest of his life to the practice of psychoanalysis. He became one of

the foremost original thinkers in this field, and also in that of group behaviour, lecturing widely and writing prolifically – many papers and some fourteen books, most of which are now required reading in training institutes.

He was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Tavistock Clinic, London, in 1945; Director of the London Clinic of Psychoanalysis from 1956–62; and President of the British Psychoanalytical Society from 1962–65.

In 1968 a request that he work in Los Angeles provided the opportunity to escape from what he called 'the cosy domesticity' of England. The vast open spaces of the western United States awoke in him memories of his childhood in India: the culture, however, was altogether new to him. It released him from the confines of traditionalism and enabled him to entertain his 'wild thoughts'; his mind was as wide open to new impressions during the last decade of his life as it had ever been in youth. So it was that in the alien, vital, dangerous but superficially idyllic environment of California he was stimulated to write the trilogy, *A Memoir of the Future,* a psychoanalytically orientated autobiographical fantasy – the most controversial and least understood of his works.

The qualities of courage and leadership, already evident by the time he was twenty years old, stood him in good stead as a psychoanalyst. He made plenty of enemies, as original thinkers always do, but no amount of hostility ever deflected him from his determination to be true to himself and to his beliefs.

Although he originally intended to stay only three or four years in California, he did not return to England until 1979. He died two months later in Oxford, with the 'dreaming' spires' visible from his hospital bed.

Those who were fortunate enough to be touched by his wisdom and affectionate concern were never quite the same again. We who knew him well will carry something of him with us for the rest of our lives.

Francesca Bion
Abingdon, Oxfordshire
1982

PREFACE

In this book my intention has been to be truthful. It is an exalted ambition; after many years of experience I know that the most I can claim is to be 'relatively' truthful. Without attempting any definition of terms I leave it to be understood that by 'truth' I mean 'aesthetic' truth and 'psychoanalytic' truth; this last I consider to be a 'grade' of scientific truth. In other terms, I hope to achieve, in part and as a whole, the formulation of phenomena as close as possible to noumena.

Many names are mentioned; experience shows that it is impossible to prevent conjecture from replacing gaps with 'facts'. The 'facts' are not of my choosing; they can be so fashioned to serve any aim that the speculator might have. Anyone can 'know' which school, regiment, colleagues, friends I write about. In all but the most superficial sense they would be wrong. I write about 'me'. I do so deliberately because I am aware that that is what I should do anyhow. I am also more likely to approximate to my ambition if I write about the person I know better than anyone else – myself.

The book, therefore, is about the relationships of one man and not about the people, communities, groups whose names are mentioned. If I could have resorted to abstractions I would have done so. Such a procedure, without any preparation, would leave the reader grappling with meaningless manipulations of jargon.

W.R.B.

INDIA

1

Our ayah was a wizened little woman who, in so far as I connected age with her at all, was assumed by my sister and me to be very old, much older than our father and mother. We were very fond of her, perhaps more fond than of our parents. On second thoughts, perhaps not. My mother was a little frightening. For one thing she might die because she was so old. She was not so old as our ayah; my sister and I agreed that *she* was not less than, say, two or maybe three hundred years old, and though this was a ripe age she did not seem likely to die. Our mother, on the other hand, was peculiar; it felt queer if she picked me up and put me on her lap, warm and safe and comfortable. Then suddenly cold and frightening, as it was many years later at the end of school service when the doors were opened and a cold draught of night air seemed to sigh gently through the sermonically heated chapel. Sermons, the Headmaster, God, The Father Almighty, Arf Arfer Oo Arf in Mphm, please make me a good boy. I would slip off her lap quickly and hunt for my sister.

In the evening we would stand together by the travelling harmonium while my mother, in the light of an oil lamp, carefully picked out tunes which my sister and I joined her in singing, about the green hill – so green compared with parched burning India of the daylight that had just finished – and its tiny jewelled city wall. Poor little green hill; why hadn't it got a city wall? It took me a long time to realize that the wretched poet meant it had *no* city wall, and longer still to realize he meant – incredible though it seemed – that it was *outside* the city wall.

I went into this question thoroughly – and others like "Is golden syrup really gold?" – with my mother, and later with my father, but without being satisfied by either. I concluded that my mother didn't

really know; though she tried very hard she seemed as puzzled as I was. It was more complicated with my father; he would start but seemed to tire when I did not understand the explanation. The climax came when I asked my question about golden syrup for the 'hundredth time'. He was very angry. "Wow!" said my sister appreciatively.

Later, when I wanted to know what 'persona non grata' meant, I kept it and similar problems to myself. I developed a sixth sense about the 'hundredth time' long before I learnt enough mathematics to count up to one hundred. Even then I seemed to have established such a gulf between applied and pure mathematics that I could not satisfy myself – then or now – of the connection between one hundred and 'the hundredth time'.

I went away snivelling. My sister, after having said, "Wow!", wasn't much use and by the time I had reached my mother I had forgotten what I had come for. Anyhow, she was 'busy'. This was another word like 'hundredth time' which it was as well to regard as precautionary. My mother was proved by my sister also to be, like so many grown-ups, 'peculiar'. She went one day and stood firmly 'at ease' in front of her. Then enunciating her words very clearly and precisely, she said, "Lavatory, lavatory, lavatory". The effect was gratifying to me though, thinking over the matter, disappointing. She did not get her ears boxed. My mother said, "I've a good mind to . . .", but she did not achieve fulfilment.

When it was all over I took my sister into a corner and worked the thing out properly. "You're a *very, very* naughty little girl" I said, keeping as closely as I could to my mother's intonation. Then I, very carefully, boxed her ears.

The result was cataclysmic. "Whatever is the matter?", I said in amazement at the incredible volume of sound she could command. My mother appeared with a frightened ayah close behind, then the kitmagar who was soon kicked out by the ayah. My sister by now had recovered what I can only call her composure to the point at which her screams were not inhibited, as mine were, by curiosity; she devoted herself whole-heartedly to bawling. She was sitting up pointing with an imperious finger straight at me.

"You wretched boys" said my mother extremely angrily, "What have you done?"

Deafened and now thoroughly frightened, I said, "Nothing!"

"Nothing?" said my mother furiously, "Why, look at her!"

I did. I had to admit to myself as I looked at (I would almost say 'down', as one could of a pointing revolver) the furious child and her accusing finger, that my disavowal was extremely implausible", –

Arf Arfer – as I knew him from now on – had turned up. Someone else had been 'busy' and was therefore also in an explosively unstable condition. My mother was shaking me.

"I don't know *what* to do with the boy" she said.

"Let me have him", said my father sternly.

"Oh God, not that!", I felt wordlessly, mindlessly.

"These children!", said my mother. Then, in an unguarded moment, she addressed my sister as well as me. "You're both as bad as each other!"

Up to that point I had fancied that her screams were abating. "Renew a right spirit within me", but if that was my unspoken prayer it had been wrongly addressed. Her screams were renewed. We were separated.

My father sat me kindly and patiently on his lap. Encouraged, my screams – or were they hers? – dinned less intensely in my ears. I began to collect myself. After much patient questioning I was able to remember why I hit her.

"She was being naughty", I said with a sudden dawning of memory. "She . . . and . . . so . . ." I faltered. I could not remember what she had been naughty about, or how.

"Yes? Go on", said my father patiently.

I could not. I had no idea.

The storm burst; he turned me bottom up and gave me 'a good beating'. But this I did not know about; I only heard of it as I heard him telling my mother later. He was still angry and his eyes were turned fiercely on me.

From that day on I hated them both "with all my heart and all my soul for ever and ever. Amen". A few minutes? Seconds? Years? Later I had forgotten all about it; so had they. But as no doubt they suspected I had learned my lesson and so had my sister. So had my parents for they too seemed uneasy, especially when I shrank from them and kept as far away from my sister as possible. "Why don't you two play together?", my mother would ask in a puzzled way.

2

The great advantage of the ayah was that although grown up she could be dealt with. When my sister was furiously angry she would try to distract her. From what? I do not know – for reasons which I have forgotten I was extremely circumspect in dealing with my sister.

The long call of a Sarus crane gave the ayah an opening. "Oh, listen" she said in synthetic rapture "to the pretty Dickie Bird". My sister stopped screaming at once, magically, then exploded in rapturous laughter. "*Dicky* bird, *dicky* bird!", she said with adequate scorn as soon as she could speak again. Sycophantically I joined her, being careful not to become too involved. I had no idea what it was all about, but at least the hateful child had got her socks on.

In a sunny room I showed my father a vase of some yellow flowers for him to admire the skill with which I had arranged them.

"Yes", he said, "very good".

"But do look Daddy."

"I am; it's lovely." Still I was not satisfied. "It's very pretty isn't it?"

"Yes", he said, "it is."

"I'm not lying Daddy. I did it all myself."

That stopped him in his tracks. He was upset. "Why did you say that?"

"What Daddy?"

"I never expected you to be lying."

"Well, I wasn't", I replied becoming afraid that Arf Arfer would appear. Arf Arfer was very frightening. Sometimes when I heard grown-ups talking they would indulge in bursts of meaningless laughter. "Arf! arf! arf!" they would go. This would happen especially when my sister or I spoke. We would watch them seriously, wide eyed. Then we would go into another room and practise. "Arf,

arf, arf!", I would say. More shrilly she would join in, "Arf, arf, arf!", and in the end it would make us laugh because it sounded so silly.

Sometimes it would be puzzling to know why the grown-ups were so big and why they spoke as if we were 'silly'. Then my sister would clasp her hands behind her back and, straddling her legs in front of one of them, peer into his face and say, "Arf, arf!" very loud and clear. A man with a large reddish face, like my balloon when the air was leaking out of it, looked down at her. He looked angry and I was afraid he was going to turn into Arf Arfer. I dragged her away. "Don't do that – it's naughty". For a terrible moment I was afraid she was going to scream. She changed her mind. "Arf Arfer in Heb'n", and she began to laugh. That was a great relief and I began to laugh too – till I suddenly remembered. I turned serious and got out of it; or tried to. But she wanted me to stay. "Arf arfer!" I was alarmed; I did not want her to go on; I did not want to think it was funny. Arf Arfer was not to be trifled with.

Sometimes in my dreams I thought I heard Arf Arfer arfing. It was a terrible frightening noise. Once I saw jackals sitting in a circle while one gave the 'fiaow' call. It was bloodcurdling. 'That's Arf Arfer' I thought.

Arf Arfer was related, though distantly, to Jesus who was also mixed up with our evening hymns.

'Geesus loves me this I know, For the Bible tells me so'.

I could not be bothered with the Bible at this time in the evening because it was dark and frightening and the animals had started howling. They started all at once, together, when the sun went down. I felt Gee-sus had the right idea, but I had no faith in his power to deal with Arf Arfer. Nor did I feel sure of God whose attribute seemed to be that he gave his 'only forgotten' son to redeem our sins. By this time I had become wary of probing too deeply into the doings of these night-time things; secretly I felt the green hill city and Geesus were ill-treated.

I came across them as I nightly said my prayers kneeling in front of my father, my eyes fixed on his watch chain swaying on his waistcoat. "Pity my Simply City". After a long time I ventured to ask my mother what had happened to my Simply City. She seemed puzzled, and as I was too scared to say how I had come by it she was not able to enlighten me. Once I thought I had found the trail when my father told me that if I was good I should have a railway engine worked

by 'electric city'. This excited me so much that I asked him a mass of questions about 'electric city'. He was delighted at such an astonishing emergence of intelligence where he had long given up expecting to find any. He believed I was excited by the thought of the engine and was amazed that I was actually enthralled by electricity – so much so that after a time he began to wonder why I could *not* pronounce it correctly.

"Does the railway go over it?" "

No, it goes through the engine."

"Is it green like the other one?"

"No; well, it hasn't really a colour. But you could call it green – a very bright bluish green. Yes, I think you could call it a green", said my father hoping against hope, but beginning to fear that his son's gleam of intelligence was only by way of some extraordinary accident.

For my part I began to fear that the train was going to turn out to be some ghastly misunderstanding.

"Will it go fast? Really fast I mean – faster than any trains in the world?"

"Well yes, they are very fast of course. But this is not a real train you know. It's only a little one."

Depression began to close in on me. I was not at all sure about a blue city even. . . . "Is it *very* bright? As bright as bright?" I asked.

He was getting tired. He decided to close the discussion. "Wait and see", he said with a hard, bright jocularity. I ended up with a wish to drop the subject for ever.

"You do want the train don't you?", my father asked anxiously. Electric trains for children in those days must have cost a small fortune and my parents were not wealthy.

"Yes", I said listlessly, "can I go and play now?"

I suppose I could hardly have chosen six more devastating words. My father was a sensitive man and I could feel that something had gone terribly wrong. He was upset, though I could not imagine why. He patted me on the head with a gentle sign of dismissal. "Perhaps it is too old for him", I heard him say to my mother later. I did not want to hear about it again. Simply City; Electric City; Green hill far away where our dear Lord was 'crucerfied' and died to save us all.

Perhaps some things were too old even for the grown-ups. It did not occur to me till many years later that any of those in a position of authority could be called on to solve problems that were too old for them.

One day a dignified, authoritative Indian appeared at our camp and asked for me. I understood that I was to be polite. I was in fact used to being polite to strangers; what was unusual on this occasion was that this strange Indian wanted to be polite to me. He salaamed. As I stood there he produced a silver cup, about four inches high as I remember it. This he presented to me with a decorous bow. Then he withdrew, leaving me to understand that I was to keep it. My father said he would look after it for me – and that was all.

When the Indian had gone my questions started. "Why did he want me?" "What is the cup for?" "Who was he?" "Where . . .?" But my parents were uncommunicative.

"Must I give it back to him?" This because I was used to the never-to-be-broken rule that neither my father, nor mother, nor sister, nor I, nor any servant of the household was ever to accept a gift of any kind – huge trays of sweetmeats, fruit and flowers were the gifts most often offered and invariably ceremoniously returned. This time, I was told, was different; the man would be deeply shocked and offended if his gifts were not accepted. The incident must have made a deep impression for I often asked about the cup and as often was met by an evasive response. To this day I have not seen it again.

I suspect that my father and mother were afraid I would 'get ideas' if I were allowed to have contact with any kind of 'pagan superstition' at variance with the pure, unsullied belief of our puritan and their missionary forbears. These were indeed made in a formidably robust and uncompromising mould. My Uncle Harry and my mother, as I discovered later, were not on speaking terms because he had denounced her as an "abandoned woman". This sounded interesting and exciting; my curiosity finally produced an explanation. The quarrel had started because one Sunday my mother had worn a hat which had aroused Uncle Harry's wrath by being too lush for the austerity proper to his church. I was on my mother's side as I was most fond of this hat which was of wide diameter and decorated with bunches of bananas and pears and other luscious fruits rather like the trays which Indians had striven to present to my father. But

the glory was a bunch of black grapes of some transparent material which made them incredibly realistic and horticultural. I longed for my mother to leave them to me in her will. Alas! Fashions change and that hat was discarded long years before I was old enough to be given those grapes.

3

One day there was a Big Game shoot to which my father had been invited as he was well known as a fine shot. Preparations had been going on for some time, but my sister and I knew nothing of the great day which came and went without our small world within the camp being disturbed. As we travelled about the country with my father on his tours, the camps – expertly erected and struck by a staff of Indians paid and employed by the government – were considerable affairs and housed some fifty engineers and others who like us were members of the families of the higher paid technicians. Being of the 'Chief's' entourage, my mother, sister and self were like local insignificant royalty. There were no other children so one or other of the temporarily unemployed Indians was usually told to keep an eye on us so we did not stray.

The hunt was on my birthday, the day for which my electric train was designed. It was unwrapped by me and after much fumbling it stood revealed. It was a beauty – a model of one of the latest London trains, perhaps even of the first London electric train. In a fever of excitement not, I was pleased to note, shared by my sister, it was set up, the battery fixed and the motor set off with a slight push from my father's finger.

That initial jolt was the highest speed it ever achieved. As I watched the miserable crawl I tried to see it devouring the miles in its headlong rush through space; I might even have succeeded if it had not, like my tank many years later, stopped. It just stopped.

"It's stopped?" I said inquiringly. My father was as upset as I was. He picked it up and examined it. I watched his face, and as I watched I could see from his expression that it had indeed stopped. My sister, who was being taught to read by Mother, came to life. "Full top?"

Full top indeed. "Never mind", said my father brightly, "we'll soon get it going after I've seen to the mails", and he went to the office tent.

I told the bearer who was a good friend of mine but no engineer. He reassured me and, mobilizing his religious beliefs, carried the train off to the kitchen supply tent. There he smeared it plentifully with ghee. "It was", said the March Hare, "the best butter." Then he set it down in the hot sun telling me that after an hour or so it would rush off cured.

"Will it go fast – really and truly very fast? As fast as . . .?" I could not think of anything fast enough, but so it would assuredly be.

An hour or so later my father found me sitting watching it. "Now", he said, "let me have it and we shall soon get it . . . but, whatever is this?" He put it down suddenly to wipe the greasy mess off his fingers.

"Did you do this?"

Thank God, no. Arf Arfer with his great black wings beating had already obscured the sun. I cowered away. I feared. I wanted to tell my friend the bearer to run, run for his life before Arf Arfer got him.

"I didn't do anything", I said starting to weep.

My sister, who always seemed to appear at the wrong time, had already started to scream. For a wild moment I had an impulse, immediately stifled, to point at her and say *she* had done it.

To have two yelling brats on his hands was too much. This time my father turned and fled. I was afraid *he* was going to cry and indeed he must have been bitterly disappointed.

I did not care. The sky was clear; the sun shone; Arf Arfer had gone.

Ultimately even the bearer was miraculously saved because although he could not claim it was the best butter he could cite, as his authority for the treatment, the ayah. *She* it was who had told him about electric 'terains'. Her head trembled as the storm beat about her, but like a reed shaken by the wind she bowed to its fury and it passed her by.

That night Arf Arfer came in terror 'like the King of Kings'. The hunt had killed a tiger and the body had been brought to our camp. His mate came to claim him and for the next two nights the camp was circled by fires and torches burning bright to keep her out. With her great head and mouth directed to the ground so as to disguise her

whereabouts she roared her requiem. Even my fear was swallowed up in awe as almost from inside our tent there seemed to come a great cough and then the full-throated roar of the tigress's mourning. All that night and the next it continued while even our brave dogs shivered and snarled and cowered. No sooner had the sun set to release the orchestra of the tropical night than we were aware of the added diapason.

"She won't eat us Daddy? You are sure she won't?"

We slept safe in their tents for those nights. On the third night her vigil was short. She went away before midnight and came no more.

I asked my mother a few nights later if she thought Jesus loved the tigress. She seemed surprised at first, but after a little thought she said she was sure he did. I was glad because I did not want the tigress to be lonely.

"Where is she now?"

"Oh I don't know child – far, far away I expect. Why do you ask?"

'Remember also the humble beasts', says the Edinburgh War Memorial.

Far, far away; where 'Saints in Glory stand, Bright as day'. How was the tiger going to get on there? We had a beautiful picture of an assortment of animals, including a lion and a lamb; a little boy, or it may have been a little girl, wearing a nightgown stood with his arm round the lion's neck. They stood about doing nothing in particular, like the people in Picasso's 'Saltimbanques'. Doing nothing in particular. Nobody ever believed I was doing nothing.

"What is he doing now?"

"Who?" asked my mother having lost track of the conversation. "Jesus – I mean the tiger", I felt suddenly embarrassed, thinking I ought to have asked after the lamb. If the tiger, as seemed reasonable, was in heaven, it ought to be having a fine time chasing the animals as our dog Bootles did; only Bootles was so slow he couldn't chase anything. Once he even let a mouse hide under the hair of one paw while he just stood there smiling because everyone was laughing so much.

"Come child", said my mother giving me a kiss, "I can't stay here all day talking – I'm busy".

Through the tent flap the sun beat down on the floor draining the colour out of the grass and making everything beyond the circle of light an intense black.

Intense light; intense black; nothing between; no twilight. Harsh sun and silence; black night and violent noise. Frogs croaking, birds hammering tin boxes, striking bells, shrieking, yelling, roaring, coughing, bawling, mocking. *That* night, *that is* the real world and real noise. When the super clever monkeys with their super clever tools have blown themselves into a fit and proper state to provide delicate feeding for the coming lords and ladies of creation, super microbe sapiens, then the humans who cumber the earth will achieve their crowning glory, the gorgeous colours of putrescent flesh to rot and stink and cradle the new aristocracy.

4

Time I went to school to knock this nonsense out of my head – I hadn't a mind then, only a 'head'. This stage did have a twilight. No doubt it should have been a dawn – the dawn of intelligence. It came to me this way: I was taken along a long road by my ayah together with a little box for my lunch. In this box was some guava cheese of which I was inordinately fond. So far, so good; 'school' was making a good start.

Woodstock turned out to be a vast barrack-like building unlike any house I was familiar with. There was a group of three children with whom my ayah left me. The largest one, who wore glasses, appeared to be unhappy; to defend herself against the other two she was repeating in a ritualistic monotone,

"Sticks and stones may break my bones,
But words – they cannot hurt me."

She seemed peculiarly miserable but staunchly repeated the rhyme while the other two – boys I think – butted her, pushed her and mocked her. They did not tire and only stopped when a bell was rung, whereupon they, dragging me with them – "Come on!" – rushed into a large room of shrieking boys and girls.

"Here, you!" said the nearest one to me, "Do you want a box on the ears?" A box of any sort, thinking of my little lunch box with its guava cheese nestling inside, was attractive.

"Yes", I said. Whereupon he clouted my head. Shocked, I let out a yell of dismay.

By this time a grown man was trying to restore order by hitting about freely with a ruler at any brat within ruler reach.

"You!" he said, seeing me, "What are you crying about?"

"He hit me!" I wailed.

"Well we don't want any cry-babies here! And don't tell tales."

"Sneak! Sneak!" loudly whispered one or two near to me. The master's attention, distracted by his attempts to get within ruler's reach of another yelling ruffian, went back to restoring order. I sobbed quietly, hoping no one would notice me in the prevailing tempest. Nor did they. My little box had gone. I didn't care because the room was becoming relatively quiet and I had no wish to ruffle the surface.

I cannot say how I came out of the room nor how I came to be walking back the same road with my ayah. My attention was distracted by two girls presumably also on their way back from Woodstock. They were putting their faces close together and sticking out their tongues, not in derision but excited and pleased. They would lick each other's tongues, burst out in excited laughter and then repeat the game. I was fascinated – Woodstock forgotten – and would have been pleased to watch, had I been allowed. But my ayah was shocked; she clearly did not think it right for ruling-class white children to behave like that. So I was dragged off unable to see how the game ended – it must have ended though I could not imagine how.

This time I didn't ask my father and mother questions. The Master Race *did not* behave like that.

"He is only four." said my mother. "Perhaps it will be different when he goes to school in England; a lot can happen in four years."

So now there was another problem – becoming eight and 'England' which was not Woodstock. I am now becoming eighty which is nicer, though I have had a long time to wait, and as my mother said, "a lot can happen in four years".

The previous Christmas I had been asked what present I would like. I had set my heart on a Union Jack. When it came I did not know what to do with it. It seemed silly only to wave it. It was so much more exciting *before* Christmas – like being at the siege of Lucknow where there was a brave girl who put her ear to the ground and heard the bagpipes and knew the 'Campbells were coming'. Only no one believed her. Then they came and a wicked man called Tippa Sahib – well, perhaps it wasn't, but he was very wicked anyhow – ran, or perhaps marched away. It did not solve my problem with the Union Jack; you can't stand there waving it like that silly old woman, saying "Welcome home boys! Welcome homm!" That was later – much later; it hadn't happened yet. That was history. I had to learn history before I was eight; and mathematics, and Paul of

Tarsus. That wasn't history; that was Scripture. Scripture and Jesus-loves-me-this-I-know-for-the-Bible-tells-me-so. I didn't like Scripture. Or England – that was Geography; my mother showed me how like a bear it was with a baby on its back. And another small one called the Isle of Wight coming out of its . . . but I knew *that* wasn't Geography. It made me sad like everything else after Woodstock; growing up, being a big boy now, England. . . .

5

A long two years of 'Shadows of the evening steal across the sky'; my mother felt it; I felt it.

"What?"

"Nothing."

My mother would caress my head with what seemed a new tenderness. Even my little sister seemed to become less of a bitch and more like a wide-eyed inhuman robot. Nobody knew why. Only I understood. It was like being in front of an inscrutable, patient schoolmaster. "Well", he seemed to say, as if waiting for me to repeat my homework. "Well, what next?" Pause. And then as if recollecting something very difficult and painful and future, "In England . . ." "Yes, well, and then?" No good. "I don't know." "Surely you haven't forgotten?" I had. "Think["

My mother just stroked my cheeks and dreamt without fear but with sadness. I couldn't stand it.

"Moth-er! You aren't sad are you?"

"Sad?" She would laugh. "Of course not! Why should I be sad?"

Well, why should she be sad? I couldn't think. It was ridiculous. Sad? Of course not!

But she was.

Nicholson: Hodson of Hodson's Horse. Nickel Sehn – the Indians had such queer names! It made you laugh – like my mother. The Indians would laugh too if they knew that one of those cowardly little white brats was frightened. An Indian came into Nicholson's tent and he was so frightened he died of fright. Wasn't that splendid? No; it only made me die of fright, at night time when I could hear Nickel Sehn roaring in the forest, imperatively, with authority. And Arf Arfer. And then the bird with a cruel beak and saucer-like eyes would ring

a bell, for fun, because it scared the wits out of bloody little English brats. Mummy! Christ! Whoever was that screaming?

Soon I would be in England which was full of little boys, brave boys like Havelock and Outram – not like me. "Shsh . . .", my mother was saying. "It's only a dream. Go to sleep dear."

I knew I was not brave. About a year before I had a gun, an air gun which you loaded like this – it's quite simple really – you bend it across your knee and it breaks like this – not really breaks you know, but it looks as if it breaks in halves, only the two halves remain hinged together. Then you get a pellet and . . . suddenly before I could find a pellet the two halves snapped together and there it was hanging from my thumb. Christ! Whoever is that screaming? Screaming, screaming, screaming. Oh God, my throbbing hand! My mother came in. "Whatever . . .", and then she saw. Over seventy years later I can guess she is releasing my thumb. My father is there; they won't let me see, but there is blood everywhere. There! It doesn't hurt much does it? And a real bandage, just like a real soldier!

But it throbs; bang, bang, bang it goes. Why does my heart beat like that in my thumb? "Shsh", my mother is saying, "it's only a dream. Go to sleep my darling." The scar on my thumb is clear now, seventy years later. I don't suppose it made much scar on my mind because I do not remember a time when I wasn't a sissy. Even Outram and Havelock, and the girl who heard the bagpipes in Lucknow, and Nicholson with his beard and stern eyes scared me stiff. *Your King and Country Need You,* thundered Kitchener from the hoardings – but that was years and years later.

6

I was now very conscious of my self, but the self of which I was conscious – timid, morose – was not worthy of myself. I cherished a photo in which I was running fast, laughing rapturously, probably being chased by my father or mother. *That,* I liked to think, was what I looked like – not the glum depressing object that I saw for so many years. I never again saw anything else. Yet there was that snapshot; I must have looked like it only for those one or two moments of my life. My character, when I glimpsed it, was horrible – in contrast with my wishes.

My sister and I played to, but not with, each other. Each was an obstruction to the other, a sentient piece of furniture. Even when I discovered the pleasure of masturbation by lying on my stomach on the floor and wriggling, she could make nothing of it. She tried, but had to report failure. I think I attempted to persuade my mother of the importance of my discovery; she must have sneaked to my father, for to my acute embarrassment, and theirs, they came silently into the room and found me at it. They thus actually *discovered* me doing what I had tried to share with my sister. Indeed, they not so much discovered me doing it as *caught me at it.* I felt horribly guilty. I had an impulse to look at what they had found but I could not find it quickly enough, for the guilty sense of imminent danger was overwhelmed by the fear that they were looking at me. Yet I knew that this could not be true. I was picked up and kissed, so clearly it was not me they had seen when . . . well, when what? Their expressions had frozen into a form I had never before seen; nor horror or dismay, but silent, undramatic.

The experience had a peculiar, adhesive quality like fluff on clothes. There were bits of the Bible – the last place where you would

expect it – where there were 'things' which had this same quality. 'Giggling' too; *that* was mixed up with it. The grown-ups didn't giggle; they laughed in a peculiar way. My parents didn't giggle; they were solemn.

One day we were all together, singing a hymn, 'Sometimes a light surprises the Christian when he prays'. My mother said to my father, laying aside her hymn book, "I don't think I have ever heard of anyone who had that experience, have you Fred?" She seemed sad. After thinking for a moment my father replied, ill at ease, "Yes I think so, but I have not had it."

I was watching, listening intently. Why were they so sad? I put my hand on my mother's to comfort her. They had not till that moment noticed my presence. The spell was broken; my mother stroked my hair and the subject was not resumed. Queer. I often wondered what it was about.

"Why are you sad Mummy?" I asked her later; she laughed the suggestion aside. "Yes", I insisted, "you know – the light surprises", I reminded her.

"Someday you will understand – when you're grown up", she said.

"But", I persisted, "you are grown up and you didn't say you understood." She coloured slightly and laughed. That uneasy laugh! Not arf, arf, arf, like the men in the club when I asked one of them for an ice-cream. That *had* made my father angry. People got angry very quickly and suddenly especially about nice things like ice-cream and lying on your tummy and 'wiggling'. I thought I had better keep clear of 'light surprises' too.

But I *did* like asking questions. This made people go arf, arf, arf. Once they thought it so funny it made me frightened and angry. I felt hot all over and made up my mind to keep my questions to myself.

"You must learn to keep your mouth shut", said my father harshly.

I was astonished. "But, Daddy, I *always* keep my mouth shut! Why must I keep it shut?"

"There you go again! just when I have told you not to!"

This defeated me. I was about to ask him another question when I found myself crying instead. I thought it time to run away; he did not like it when I was a silly little cry-baby.

Very soon after my father and mother caught me wiggling on my tummy another dreadful thing happened; they got out my

bathtub – which was peculiar because it was not bedtime. Remembering about keeping my mouth shut – just in time – I nearly burst with curiosity. Why were they mixing hot and cold water? What was that queer thing they put in the water? Why did they feel it with their fingers? It was fascinating – like the time I was playing trains in church during the sermon, forgot I wasn't to make a noise and let out a terrific scream because my railway engine was going to bump into another railway engine and had to whistle at once, as loud as possible, to save all the passengers. This time I remembered not to be such a fool. To my growing surprise I was seized, stripped by my mother and dumped in the tub! I tried to scrambled out. "Mm . . .", I yelled, carefully keeping my mouth shut. They subdued me and I had to sit there for three minutes by my father's watch. Then my mother lifted me out and dried me.

What had she wet me for, since I was dry to start with? This was repeated on two subsequent days – but I was forewarned by previous experience. I kept my mouth shut but otherwise put all into resisting this queer and somehow repulsive battle. They too began to feel it was idiotic; it never happened again. I, they, we, was, were cured. Sometimes a bath surprises a Christian while he plays.

7

On the whole my experience of being read to by my parents was not a success. *Alice in Wonderland* was spoiled by my habit of asking questions and my intolerance of frustration. The mouse's tail made *me* feel, well, like the animals. Why was it dry? Who was Fury? Why? What was he furious about? Why did the tail get smaller? Yes, but why do mice's tails . . .? My father was torn between the desire to be patient and the wish to get on with the book. "It gets better later", he said, but it did not. I didn't like the Dodo. I wished those animals would sit still and not go scurrying off whenever Dinah was mentioned. Why was Alice so daft as to keep on mentioning – well, you know who. Why couldn't *she* keep her mouth shut?

Then, when the story cheered up and it looked as if it was getting exciting, my father would shut the book because it was bed-time. Even when Alice did get into the garden it was terribly boring, made worse by my father who kept on seeing some joke which he said was funny.

But awful as it was to hear about Alice's Adventures in Wonderland it was not half as bad as a book about a girl called Little Meg. At the start her mummy and daddy died. Then she had to look after her little brothers and sisters. Of all the stupid things – she tried to sell a box of matches 'at a street corner'. The street corner was not like being in the jungle; there seemed to be lots of houses. So you would think there would be lots of people about. But there weren't so she couldn't sell any matches. Then a very rich man came and . . . my sister, for reasons best known to herself, began to bawl the house down. I was not so foolish as to try comforting *her*; it seemed best to keep clear of her. As I didn't want to have to sit in a tub again I just stared at her as she had taken to staring at me. After a bit I began to bawl too because Little Meg seemed unlikely to get anywhere especially as my

sister was trying to fight her way off my father's lap and had settled into a scream which fetched my mother into the room. As my father rightly remarked, it was "bed-time anyhow".

The next night was worse still. The rich man, or a policeman whom he summoned, wanted to take Little Meg and her children to gaol! For once my sister and I were unanimous; we started to wail together. The more she yelled the more frightened I became. A terrible Arf Arfish feeling rose in my throat. "Whatever is the . . .?" my mother began as she came into the room to find out what on earth I had been up to. Mercifully she realized I was innocent this time.

The next night my sister and I started to yell the moment we saw my father coming with that awful book under his arm. That put a stop to that. I have sometimes wondered about Little Meg. Did she marry Eric or Little by Little? That book I did not come to till I was at school; sufficient for the day were little Meg's children – and my mother and father's two 'beauties'.

Two beauties we were. My sister had a wooden parrot of which she must have been very fond. It was a brightly painted grotesque with large goggle-eyes. In the heat and intense boredom of Indian mid-day I was inspired to introduce some leavening into the siesta during which we were supposed to retreat to our bedroom and sleep. "Goggle-eyes", I said. There was no response. Had I the resources of religion at my disposal I might have described the experience as "the devil entering into me". "Goggle-eyes", I said, pointing to the parrot. "Goggle, goggle, goggle, goggle-eyes". My sister looked at me; she looked at the parrot; she got the idea. She was a woman of few words, but swift action. In a twinkling the adorable child of three had turned into a raging ball of fury.

My father once explained to me why the bear was such a dangerous animal despite its cuddly appearance. "He doesn't bother about stealthy movement; he will lumber around a hill-side forest with about as much discretion as a lorry-load of tin cans. You have to stay uphill of him because without any warning he will roll into a ball and launch himself at you – and heaven help you if you cannot get out of the path of that cannon ball of furry fury." I saw what he meant; I saw what my sister meant. But I was not wise. "Goggle, goggle –", I was about to remark into that raging inferno of screams, which a moment before had been my sister, when I became aware of a spectator; my father had been watching at the door.

There was not time to say "Nothing!" for my father did not even bother to ask me what I was doing. He proceeded to 'faire la sagesse entrer par le cul'. My reactions had been slow, but not so slow that I was unable to end up with a guilt transformed into a sense of hardened grievance, resentment and impenetrable innocence. 'Put on the whole armour of righteousness', said Saint Paul; it was a text which brought me much comfort – until I felt the inadequacy of moral armour. It is wonderful what can be done with 'nothing', but it takes a deal of doffing once put on.

After much painful experience I learned how to curl myself into a tight ball of snowy innocence and launch myself, with a small sharp piece of ice in the middle, at my foe. 'O the great days in the distance enchanted', days of hot air in the stifling Indian sun.

We quarrelled; the gleam of joy, even co-operation, which had flashed out when I discovered the pleasures of wiggling on my tummy had been extinguished. I learned to keep away; she in turn learned to demand imperiously that I should play with her. In this she discovered a valuable ally in my father's ambition to have two children, brother and sister, who loved each other with a tender, loyal and lasting affection. My mother's attitude was certainly more loving – genuinely loving – than my father's; hers was not an 'attitude' at all; his was. She loved us; he loved his image of us. She knew she had two nasty brats and could tolerate that fact; my father bitterly resented the menace of any reality which imperilled his fiction. To strangers (in so far as we met any who allowed themselves to be aware of our existence) a short and superficial contact would reveal nothing to disturb an agreeable impression. We were aided by being a good-looking pair; retrospectively I can see that we had grown in experience to become an accomplished and unpleasant pair of liars, smooth and quick to see what our betters expected of us and to provide accordingly. The awareness of something better was responsible for an unspoken and unspeakable misery which added its quota to our general nastiness. To this day I retain a certain confidence that no matter how dangerous or how unpleasant my contemporaries may be, I myself am even nastier. I cannot feel confident that I am more *dangerous* because my malice is tempered by cowardice. The resultant cunning is not without its value; I probably owe more to this quality than I have ever admitted.

8

The approach of night and its sense of the foreboding presence of Arf Arfer penetrated my whole but fragile armour of daylight. Very rarely my parents were near a city and friends would come to dine. The men would sooner or later laugh – arf, arf, arf – and I would wake in terror. Arf Arfer had come! With his great goggle eyes and painted visage, bright, bright as . . . "'and, 'and", I would wail. My father would clasp my hand in his great strong one and I could sleep. Not when there was company though; on those occasions even my mother was different. If she came she was dressed in strange clothes, cold, like the place where saints in glory stand, bright, bright as day. That was no happy land for me, but more, had I known it, like the Ypres Salient, glistening, cold, cold. 'Quo fas et gloria ducunt'.

"Hush dear, shsh, what's the matter?"

Nickel Sehn was the matter, Hodson's Horse was the matter; the whole damned lot were the matter. "Go away" I would say through my sobs. "Go away!"

None the less I loved India. The blazing, intolerable sun – how wonderful it was! The mid-day silence, the great trees with leaves hanging motionless in the breathless air, the brain-fever bird with its rising reiterated call, "Brain-fever, brain-fever, brain-fever . . .", then silence again.

I discovered it was a marvellous place to play trains. The intense heat conspired to produce masses of fine white dust. Nonchalantly I kicked it up and was rewarded by a great cloud that rose into the air. I did it again. Before I had time to think I was racing around, kicking up huge clouds of . . . steam . . . in front of me like a huge 'Ee Ay Ah' locomotive. The Devil entered into me: The Devil, unlike Arf Arfer, was a great friend of mine. "Go on! Do it again", he said. "Lead us

not into temptation", I learned to pray, but only rather half-heartedly. Temptation, unlike heaven, was such fun. The immense speed at which I was travelling, the intoxicating sulphurous fumes of smoke which belched out from the pistons in front of me – glorious! And much superior to electric city with its old slug of buttered locomotive.

"What *have* you been doing?" my mother asked. "Just look at you! White . . . from top to toe!"

I couldn't 'look at me' but I saw what she meant. I was a bit dusty. She, poor woman, thought I had come in for a drink, but in fact it was the great E.I.R. express locomotive come to have its tank filled in its record-making run across India and there was not a moment to lose. I tried to make her understand that I had to go at once. It took her some time to make *me* understand – even now I can hardly believe it – that I was never to do it again. Never!

"The ideal And you have been racing around in that hot sun."

"What sun?" I was impelled to ask dully. I hadn't noticed any sun.

I did do it again. The Devil got into me, but I suspect that Arf Arfer had got in too. I was just cornering at speed, leaning over to counter the drag of centrifugal force and the lack of camber, when I was impelled to 'look at me'. I *was* a bit dusty already. I couldn't get it off so I went in to find my ayah before my mother could see. Like my sister, who couldn't understand about wiggling, she had her blind spots and I never succeeded in making her understand she was wrong about what *she* called "racing around like a mad thing in the hot sun". Later, when the monsoon came, I found she was curiously blind about *that*.

"What rain?" I asked, not hopefully, as I stood before her "soaked to the skin" as she called it. It made it worse that I felt she was laughing – inside.

"You're laughing", I said. "No", she said looking very stern. So she wasn't sad; and she wasn't laughing either.

9

I was not sad and I was not laughing either. Nor was Melvin. Who was Melvin?

Melvin and Cyril were two brothers, known to my father because they reminded him of two characters in a book for children, as Budge and Tod. Cyril was Budge, big, clumsy, with a raucous frightening laugh like a goat bleating. Melvin, or Tod, was my hero. He was mischievous and likeable – unlike Budge or their sister Beryl who was a sneak, always telling tales about the boys – any boys – to her father and mother, my Uncle Walter and Aunt Helen.

We were all very fond of pancakes; so my mother told the cook to make pancakes as a treat for our lunch – two each, she said, which made ten for the five of us children and two more to make a generous dozen. Melvin, who had a nose that did not mislead him in gastronomic affairs, had sought out the kitmagar. He was a nice man, fond of children. The nine year old Melvin had natural charm; he also had the skill to enhance his assets. Accordingly, when lunch was served, my mother found herself confronted with a pile of forty pancakes to serve. The kitmagar, asked to explain this extraordinary miscalculation, uneasily admitted that the chota sahib had amended his mistress's estimate of adequate supplies. Melvin, who was unabashed, augmented his meal by tearing off and eating a piece of pancake which I was about to put in my own mouth. My mother laughed, but I was not amused. My father told us to try to behave ourselves when we were at the table.

Melvin had made a garden, as had my sister and I; he had greatly improved on our efforts by fencing his with a piece of rabbit wire. This I greatly coveted. So when the day came for Budge, Tod and

Beryl to leave for England I asked if I could have his fence to put round my garden. "You can put it round your head for all I care!" was his disconcerting reply. He did not want to go to England; as it was only two years before I myself would be going I feared and wondered about this place that upset even Melvin.

My dread was more apparent than it was when I was aware only of sadness and not-sad, when I was taken by my father on a visit to Gwalior, the fortress and home of an Indian ruler. I was aware, partly because my father impressed it upon me, that we were visitors to an Indian state and under the laws of that state. I was shown an image, carved in wood, of an Indian god. This, I was told, was a heathen god. As I looked upon its deeply carved features, the black more intense and forbidding because the brilliant sun made the shadows so harsh, I was afraid. Was the Indian Ruler like that? I didn't like it; I didn't want to go further into Gwalior. I had learned to keep my mouth shut so was able to keep it more tightly shut when I felt impelled to ask questions or say "'and, 'and", or that I was afraid.

On our nearer approach to Gwalior we came upon a stoutly built wooden cage. It must have been fifteen feet long, ten feet high and four feet wide. This could be entered by treading on a platform which released a wooden, heavily built portcullis. I was not frightened by this tiger trap till our Indian guide pointed out a small flimsy crate which was outside, but attached to the main structure where it was furthest from the trap door. Why ever would the tiger go in? Because, my father said, tigers were lazy creatures. When they saw a kid in the crate – so that was what the crate was for – it would not burst its way into the kid but would walk round to the open end of the trap, enter and bang! it would be caught when the portcullis came down. See? I did. What did the poor kid do? I faltered. Well, of course, it didn't have to do anything, you see, for it wasn't in the trap *with* the tiger . . . This was enough for me. Couldn't I go home? I *want* to go home. But . . . couldn't I see? The kid was quite safe. . . .

Not only did I think it would be awful to be the kid, I also knew I was an awful cry-baby and I would start to cry if we went any nearer to that fortress. My poor father! He was a famous big game shot who hunted with Corbett and King George V and General Ironside . . . and there was I, a sniveller who was frightened even by the sight of a tiger trap. How could my mother and father possibly have produced such

a . . . such a . . . Well, such a what? I didn't know; must be to do with wiggling; that always led to something dreadful.

So much for Gwalior. No more talks about tigers; something to do with irrigation and dull enough not to frighten me – till I got home at least. By that time I would have forgotten. But I have not.

ENGLAND

1

Delhi, motor cars, rich people, English women with loud voices – "fancy! the Kingdom of Heaven filled with people like . . ." like my ayah and my friend Dhunia the sweeper? I hoped so, but in fact I knew it would not be low caste, untouchables, like *that*, but 'untouchables' like that beautiful, laughing English Lady. Now I know that they were unspeakables too, but that I learned too late to be much help. Not even Miss Whybrow and Mrs Thompson could teach me that; I had another twelve years to go before I would even have a chance to learn.

But Delhi: New Delhi! Isn't it splendid? If only I hadn't got to go to school. . . .

The train worked steadily, sometimes painfully over the stiffer gradients of the Western Ghats till it drew in to the terminus at Bombay. The railway station, like other architectural monuments of the British Raj, was a mixture of tawdry provincialism and Imperial domesticity which even in retrospect can evoke in me nostalgic feelings of great poignancy. I came in time to believe that these feelings were the substitute for what others called 'homesickness'. But I had no home for which I could feel sick – only people and things. Thus, when I found myself alone in the playground of the Preparatory School in England where I kissed my mother a dry-eyed goodbye, I could see, above the hedge which separated me from her and the road which was the boundary of the wide world itself, her hat go bobbing up and down like some curiously wrought millinery cake carried on the wave of green hedge. And then it was gone.

Numbed, stupefied, I found myself staring into a bright, alert face.

"Which are you – A or B?' it said. Other faces had gathered.

"A", I said hurriedly in response to the urgency I felt in their curiosity.

"You're *not*! You jolly well say 'B'. You know nothing about it!" This was only too true.

"B", I said obediently.

"You dirty little liar!" said the first one. Appealing passionately to the rest, "He just said he was A. Didn't he?" That I had to admit.

"You can't go back on that", said the advocate of B. "You must stay B or you'll be a beastly little turn-coat!" he cried heatedly.

"All right. I'll stay B."

A fight developed. I heard the first one shouting, "He *is* a beastly turn-coat; and a liar anyway. We don't want him. Do we chaps?" The crowd had grown to formidable proportions, say, six or seven. "No", they shouted.

"Don't mind them", said the second boy. "You stick to B." And I did – for the rest of my life – though it took a long time before I discovered, and even then did not understand, that the main school was divided into Houses. School House, being bigger than all others, was divided into School House A and School House B-rivals. That was the immediate issue which had been solved by my becoming for ever B.

The storm subsided as if it had never been of the slightest interest to anyone. B, *not* A; not A – B; *that* was what I had to remember.

At last the ghastly day ended and I was able to get under the bedclothes and sob.

"What's the matter?" asked one of the three boys who shared the dormitory with me.

"I don't know", I wailed. He seemed sympathetic. He considered the matter for a moment.

"Are you homesick?"

"Yes." At once I realized what an awful thing I had done. "No, B", I hurriedly said. He got into bed. This time the day *was* over.

I learned to treasure that blessed hour when I could get into bed, pull the bedclothes over my head and weep. As my powers of deception grew I learned to weep silently till at last I became more like my mother who was *not* laughing, and was *not* crying. It was a painful process; I failed often in my attempts to climb each step of the ladder. Sometimes the problem was familiar – as with lying. "I'm not

lying!" I had said brightly, hoping for my father's approval of my floral arrangement. My mother would have known at once that such a mess could have been made by no one else; my father, though a brilliant engineer, was curiously dense when it came to Electric City and Simply City. So, in a luckless moment, my greed for reiterated admiration had led me to add "I'm not lying". In that moment the glorious morning was obscured, the sun stopped glowing, became darkened and scorching, his words a torrent flowing over, beyond and below me. Tears did not cool and refresh – they scalded. Where had I got such an ideal I did not know. I had plucked them in the garden; I thought they would be nice.

Experiences – 'déjà vu' phenomena – had provided me with a vocabulary thus:

Q What *have you* been doing?
A Nothing.
Q Where have you been?/Where are you going?
A Out/Nowhere (discrimination required).

In my new world, peopled with Nickell Sehns, Hodsons, Havelocks, all disguised as little boys, the questions – like the questioners – were often deceptively familiar or incomprehensible, like "Are you A or B?" Sometimes the questions could not be met by my armoury of answers, and my improvised answers led to further troubles.

"What's your sister's name?"

"Edna."

"Edna?" repeated with bleak incredulity, followed immediately by a gale of scornful and contemptuous laughter, not quite 'arf, arf' but pitched in a sharper higher key – Havelock with a touch of jackals at night-time.

"What does your father do?"

"Engineer." As I braced myself for the response I was deflated by sudden and unexpected tones of respect.

"No! Really? You lucky swine! You mean he really drives an engine?"

Fool that I was; why, oh why did I have to explain? The splendour faded from his face. Canals? Water? Obviously as wet as his job and as anyone who produced me could be.

"Never mind", he said generously as he realized we had now touched bottom and could sink no lower. "Have a sweet?" I was to discover *he* was B too – a friend for life. It was painful to discover, an hour or two later, that he had forgotten me. For some time I continued to hope he would remember he had offered me a sweet; I don't think he ever did.

2

On Wednesdays the bells of St. Michael's Church on the neighbouring hill pealed for a service or, as some said, "choir practice". They filled me with dread, a reminder of Sunday yet to come. In *Eric or Little by Little* which I had begun to read, the bell was always tolling. *Or the World of School* it said, and in that school it seemed that the boys died off like flies. Every Wednesday I remembered someone was dying; on Sundays I nearly died myself – every Sunday. I still feel ashamed that I was so utterly miserable, but so it was; I could not know that religion was being born.

On Sunday morning we went to church wearing Eton suits, mortar boards with bright blue tassels, our shoes polished before breakfast miraculously worn out by church time.

"What have you been doing to them?" the vixen who was our matron used to ask. "Your parents are poor; they cannot afford to buy you new shoes every term!"

Who had said they were poor? They hadn't told me. It was like *Eric or Little by Little;* or *Little Meg's Children*. I began to whimper.

"You crying? A great big boy like you! Playing trains were you?"

Yes, but there was no dust, only gravel.

"Don't let me catch you doing that again! The idea – just *look* at your *shoes!* Nearly worn right through and new only a week ago!"

She was smart, petite and . . . well, God rest her soul, I knew I was a horrible child and God would never make me a good boy however hard I prayed. I don't think He ever listened. I really don't.

The other boys stood around and watched; watched with their big, round eyes and hard, expressionless faces. 'Come not in terror as the King of Kings, But kind and good with healing in Thy wings'. Please God, make me a good boy. He never did, never, never, The

inspection by the matron ended always with me tearful, horribly brushed and neat, indescribably scruffy.

Church was all right; even the sermon, never less than forty minutes, was a respite from tormentors. I remember the relief when I learned that the text 'I know that my Redeemer liveth and shall stand at the latter day upon the earth' really should have been translated 'For I know that my Avenger liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon my grave'. When church was over – and sometimes there were lovely hymns like 'Onward Christian Soldiers' and 'Art thou weary, art thou languid, art thou' something 'sore distressed' – the trouble started. For half an hour we did 'Search the Scriptures'. These were booklets in which texts from a book in the Bible were printed with blank spaces; we were to fill in the chapter and the verse where they were to be found. I could not find them; other boys could. God was worse than useless. I used to pray. One day, in a sermon, the mystery was solved. "Sometimes we think", said the preacher, "that God has not answered our prayers but he has". I pricked up my ears at this. "It means", he went on, "that the answer is 'No'". I unpricked my ears.

After dinner of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding – very good I thought, but spoiled by what was to come – we went into the gymnasium where our tuck boxes were kept. We usually had no 'tuck' in them, but one fat boy with fishy green eyes and red hair always had. High off the ground, vertiginously high it seemed to me, was a horizontal pole that ran the length of the room; the smaller boys were made to crawl from one end of this to the other. For an age I was one of the small boys. As I gazed fearfully at the concrete far below and inched my way along, the eager faces of the boys below watched to see if we would falter and fall under the missiles showered at us. No one was injured while I was there so it cannot have been *very* bad in fact. But in my dreams – Oh God, my dreams! – the goggle-eyed parrots and pink round faces swam around me and I woke with a shriek. Whoever was that screaming?

One small boy who was crippled by polio escaped for one whole day because he had got his parents – who *were* poor – to provide him with a full tuck box for just one Sunday. For that day, as he handed out his goodies with nervous, shining eyes, he was voted "jolly decent". The tuck lasted the hour; with the ending of the hour so ended his glory.

I would like to think that I had nothing to do with the tormenting – I was so terrified that it is just possible that my pre-occupation with my coming turn saved me. Certainly it was not through any superior decency.

Another feature of our Sunday was The Walk. It was conducted by our head-master, a taciturn, frightening man called Hirst. It was always the same – about three miles. To prevent loitering he had a rule that any laggards were punished according to a scale by which those who came in at the gate more than two minutes after him had to do ten squares; five minutes after him, it became twenty squares. No one in my memory exceeded, and only rarely approached, the five minutes. The misery of starting Monday with a load of ten squares – four figures multiplied by themselves – was so awful that it overshadowed the walk – till I learned to imagine that I owned a beautiful little railway that ran along the side of our walk. Its coaches could just hold my friends. I myself was the engine driver of course. Ever after that I had no difficulty, no fatigue, no boredom, no squares to do on Monday. I don't think God had anything to do with this; I thought it up by myself. But if it was God who put the idea into my mind I can only say it as jolly decent of Him and a first-class idea. For that three miles every week I was infallibly and unmistakably a 'good boy'.

At six o'clock we went to Chapel at the main school for an hour. I liked that. We did not have 'Art thou weary, art thou languid?' – which was a pity – but once we had 'Onward Christian Soldiers' and the music master, who played the organ, interposed the stirring strains of 'Come to the cook-house door boys, come to the cook-house door' as part of the accompaniment. The effect of this authentically military music made the occasion extremely moving. I also liked the hymn with the lines 'A noble army, men and boys, the matron and the maid'. I could have done without the Matron, and it seemed a bit mean to have only one maid; otherwise it called up splendid visions. 'Borne on angels' wings to Heaven, glad the summons to obey' was also a favourite till I became big and powerful, and the centre of ribald glances when I was singing about the angels' wings.

The day Thou gavest Lord is ended. Bed at – nearly – last. But first we had to say our prayers. Each knelt in prayer at the end of his bed. I must have thought of engines during this necessary but tiresome interlude. Unlike the dust, the glorious dust for ever gone, unlike the

concrete and gravel of the playground, more safe even than the Walk which could be interrupted by some fool wanting to talk, one could emit clouds of steam and smoke without scuffing up one's heavenly boots and bringing financial ruin on Little Me's parents. Shod with the gospel of peace, which the moth could n t corrupt nor gravel wear out, I was going to sleep. I would leap in o bed and there, if the bed did not creak too much, I could start wiggling. This was so delightful that a new danger crept in – I might laugh. The danger was real because no one had ever known me to laugh.

One day in class the master noticed that I was wiggling; it seems hard to believe now that I could ever have supposed he didn't, for my wiggling could hardly have been more anonymous than the Indian bear's progress through the forest. He was very gentle. "Don't do that Wilfred", he said, "or you will have to be sent away." I could hardly believe my ears. The other boys, witnesses of my rebuke, stared at me in stony innocence like the gods in the caves at Elephantine.

One evening Freddie Sexton and I were late in joining the devotional parade. At the end of every bed, except his and mine which were at one extreme, were kneeling boys. The sight of seven pairs of pink upturned cherubic feet was too much for Freddie; he, unlike me, was a lively, cheerful boy with a keen sense of the ridiculous. Suddenly he limped down the row, one foot on the floor, the other placed firmly on the upturned soles. Each time, as if he had been recalled by the accident of his clumsiness to the sacredness of the occasion, he said "Ooh – sorry! Ooh – sorry! Ooh – sorry!" I saw his point; I laughed.

God, taking a leaf out of the Devil's book, entered into the seven little hypocrites praying in a row. But Freddie could hold his own.

"And you were laughing!" one boy said indignantly.

"No, not laughing" – but certainly not crying either.

"How do you know?" said Freddie, coming to my rescue. "You should have had your eyes shut!"

Like a well-placed bullet this stopped him – for a moment – but he was a quick-witted Welsh boy of strong revivalist tendencies.

"I *heard* him!" he countered, but he was too late.

"You had your eyes open!" said Freddie, afire now, moral warmth glowing in his face and eyes. "You had your eyes open!"

Bevan collapsed. His smooth, soft, gentle, religious nature was something I had not encountered; later it led to my downfall.

Freddie's bright eyes were something Bevan had not encountered either.

I was afraid of Freddie, but this incident aroused feelings of glee which were never wholly quenched even in the hours of great moral and religious superiority. Poor Freddie was quenched for ever by an undiagnosed acute appendicitis.

3

A year later I was on an errand that took me through the church-yard where Freddie was buried. A figure – it was Bevan – was kneeling in prayer at his grave. He stopped as I came up, saw me, and explained smoothly in his beautiful voice that he often prayed at Freddie's grave.

"He did me a great injury once", he said meditatively, "but I have prayed that he may be forgiven."

If unction can ease the path to the Almighty, Bevan's prayer reached God; it may even have got through to Freddie. The angels would like his laugh, "Ooh – sorry!"

Freddie's raid on the domain of the Almighty – which in my theology had a mixed population of God, Gawd (Baptist in those days), Cud (C. of E., privately educated and Cambridge University, Civil Service), the Devil (not a bad sort with many disguises), various demons (Nickel Sehn, Hodson or Hodson's Horse – I was not sure whether he owned the horse or the other way round), and the most awful Arf Arfer – was not the only rebellion that began to erode my oppressor's power.

Once every two weeks we had a hymn-singing class taken by a mistress who I thought was nice despite her ominous name – Miss Good. She was *not* smart like the Matron, *not* like the maid in the hymn and only smart on Sundays. She was clever, like Nigger our headmaster, but curiously and very frighteningly gave me the 'wiggling' feeling when I "hadn't done a thing" – "really and truly" – but who on earth would believe *that*?

Some hymns expanded my Pantheon; Gideon for example – the 'prowl and prowl around' one. This was a bit sinister with Gideon

prowling around and I wasn't quite sure if he was A or B – Powers of Darkness, or the other crowd. Anyhow, it was a fine hymn; while 'they' were prowling and prowling around we sang very softly, ppp, gathering our breath ready for CHRISTIAN UP AND SMITE THEM, fff; we gave it everything we had. That, I used to think, must have scared the slats out of 'them'. At night time I didn't like Gideon and the powers of darkness prowling around our dormitory and under my bed.

This hymn-singing period gave me great pleasure and on one occasion a surprise. The hymn 'Art thou weary, art thou languid?' had a lovely, sad tune and brought me much comfort. I found out that five or six little boys liked it and were just as weary and languid and sore distressed as I was. Grown-ups, including I am sorry to say Miss Good, seemed to think we *couldn't* be weary and languid; we knew we were – most of the time. This hymn and another, 'Summer suns are glowing', were my favourites. I did not have to ask for 'Art thou weary' because five or six others always did so. 'Summer suns' was not so popular; that I had to support all myself or we would not have it. On this particular day the drizzle was coming down in its usual determined, anonymous way, more like a fungoid growth of the air than what I was used to calling rain. I put up my hand.

"Well?" said Miss Good in what I thought at the time was an unwelcoming way.

Stimulated by the ghastly weather, not laughing, not crying, not happy, not sad, and spurred by the fire of that wonderful sun, the great leaves drooping in the heat, the flowers blazing in colours of unimaginable splendour, "'Summer suns'", I said.

There was a stupefied pause. "Oh Wilfred!" she expostulated, "not *again*! Just look at it – pouring with rain! You can't want that!"

I had looked at it. It was *not* pouring with rain. What rain? It was just a dirty . . . well *not* rain. Rain! Now *that* was something like – if only it *would* rain – like when you heard it coming, roaring and hissing and moaning and sighing over the trees and the grass in the distance till suddenly – there it was! *That* was rain! *That* was sun! Still, there were buttercups. When I saw my mother on my next Sunday out I meant to pick her a big bunch of them to show her. 'Frail as summer flowers we flourish, blows the wind and it is gone' – that was a nice hymn too.

"Well?" It was Miss Good again. I felt tense, anxious, stubborn.

"'Summer suns are glowing'", said my small, almost inaudible voice. She, mercifully, did not persist. The others were looking at me; they were more than ever curious when we were all singing and they could see I was hardly singing at all. I never asked for 'Summer suns are glowing' again.

When Sunday came I did not collect the buttercups. My mother told me she could tell by the buttercups if I like butter; she held one under my chin and . . . yes! I liked butter because it showed yellow on my chin. She herself seemed unconvinced; so was I, but I was weary and languid; maybe even 'sore distressed' thinking about going back to school – though I had only been away about an hour. I did not think much of the riddle; I could not think about the marvellous, incredible, unimaginable buttercups which blazed unconsidered in the meadows around us.

It was time to go. We were in the parlour of the lodgings. She had a present for me – a half pound size Lyle's Golden Syrup tin, the container in Indian days for so many of our luxuries, filled with chocolates. I shook my head.

"You *are* a funny boy! Don't you want them?"

"Yes", I said dully.

"Then take them back with you."

But I persisted; I shook my head again. I wouldn't take them back to that . . . gymnasium . . . school.

Was I unhappy, she asked. No. Did I like it there? I nodded, yes. But I wouldn't take them back.

4

Religion was a sore trial. It was difficult to avoid the certainty that I would be a sore trial to God if he knew about my existence. Sometimes, as when I laughed at Freddie treading on the feet of boys saying their prayers, I thought He might suppose that my involvement was more active than in fact it had been. Dean Farrar contributed to my suspicion of God, and my suspicion of God – "I haven't done anything; really I haven't" – gave ghastly reality to Eric's school in which the mortality should have attracted the attention of authority.

The sense of brooding disaster was made real by the tragic life, unknowable by us, of our headmaster. He was a man of whom my father, like others, was very fond. How my father came to know him, since his visits to England were infrequent, I do not know, but so it was. Masters from the main school visited him regularly; one in particular played billiards with him once a week on a miniature table – the one luxury he possessed. The weekly click of the billiard balls exercised us curiously and was the signal for giggles which I did not understand.

The story circulated by one boy, that Hirst had married in his early twenties a girl of twenty-one who had to be admitted immediately to a mental hospital, I discovered years later to be true. To my contemporaries of nine and ten this story meant no more than any other fact about 'Old Nigger' – our name for him – such as that he wore carpet slippers, or a new tie, or – as I announced loudly one day as I scrambled upstairs to bed, unaware that I was helping myself by clutching the leg of his trousers – "Old Nigger says it's to be a half holiday tomorrow!" "Oh no he didn't", said the trouser leg gruffly; I let go hurriedly. "Ooh sir, sorry sir!" I said, filled with confusion but

not afraid, for he was not a man one feared – though I had been afraid of him when he said I might have to be sent away if I 'wiggled'. Well, he must have known because his wife had been sent away. It could not have been for wiggling because my sister had not been able to wiggle. On the other hand Mrs Hirst may have been able to; and *that* might have caused it and *that* might explain why Mr Hirst was so sad. He was sad; of that there was no doubt at all. Like the church bells that reminded me on Wednesday of the last Sunday and the one to come, his sadness reminded me of something. "Are you feeling homesick?" the boy in the dormitory had asked. He had not meant was I A or B – that was clear. But the church bells, and St Winifred's of 'The World of School', or Nigger Hirst – it was none of it quite 'homesick' but I was not sure what it was. 'Search the Scriptures' was a bit like it; so was Willy Bevan who was an orphan. Everyone said it in a hushed voice.

One day I tried saying it out loud. "You're only an orphan!" I shouted at him. For a moment I thought I had solved it; Willy flopped suddenly and became religious – but with his eyes open, unlike saying your prayers when you shut your eyes or pretended. His friend Pickett was there and he, as he proclaimed, heard me say it. I had meant him to – that is why I had shouted.

In less time than it takes to write, the whole pack were on to me – then stopped and watched. The goggle-eyed parrots, the hosts of Midean or Gideon. "Let's chase him", said Pickett. "No, not now. Wait till we get him on the Mountain", said Morgan, "We can use stumps then." It was agreed; even Bevan was recovering at the suggestion. We all cheered up – in the prevailing optimism even I began to feel better.

Bevan, who had been overcome by religion, though still mournful, became as exalted by 'stumps' as he had been hurled into religion by 'orphan'. When I tried to join the prevailing gleeful anticipation I was given a cold reception. "Look at the little swine", said Pickett, "he's not a bit sorry for what he's done." It was rather frightening – like the 'box-on-the-ears' which I had said I wanted at Woodstock. I modified my rapture.

The Mountain was our cricket field, very uneven and well described by our name for it; we were supposed to play football and cricket on it. By the time we got there the prevalent air of cheerfulness seemed to have dissipated the former mood till Pickett and Morgan

said, "Come on now chaps! Let him have it!" Six of them took a stump each, and with shouts of "Run! you swine!" they started after me. I ran.

As I was still the smallest I had no choice. Physically I did not come to any harm other than a few bruises. Most had forgotten what it was all about, but Bevan had a tenacious religion; when he 'forgave' someone he did not do it in any half-hearted manner. I likewise did not easily 'forget' being 'forgiven'; it added a zest to my determination to steer clear of Arf Arfer and his trespasses.

It was disconcerting to discover, soon after this, that 'Trespassers will be prosecuted'. I did not dare to ask whether it was with stumps or without, but it was evident that orphans, church bells and God, to whom Bevan habitually prayed even when he was not going to bed, should be given a wide berth.

Not long after this an extraordinary thing happened on one of our Sunday trips to the main school for chapel. It was clearly in the next term; it must have been winter because we trooped up in darkness. This was usually a pleasant occasion because from the time we set off nothing particularly awful could happen till Monday morning, except nightmares and the usual squares which I continued to accumulate till I had perfected my scheme of playing trains on the Walk. The big boys were large and impressive, not frightening or nasty like Hodson with his horse, and Havelock who believed in God and bagpipes.

The gaslight in Hall was dim, the flames burned with a sinister blue tinge. A cold draught which used to spring up and moan through Hall as the sermon ended seemed that night to add a heavier message.

"It is quite wrong that no one said anything to me; not a word at any time."

I came to my senses suddenly. These were not the tones with which I was familiar when the Headmaster was preaching. The level monotonous phrase, the uninspired message, those I knew and dreaded as I composed myself for the weekly ordeal; nor had I on this occasion expected anything else.

"But", he continued, "surely if you knew that one of you, however esteemed for his games or work, was putting poison in the food of another boy you would go to one of the masters and tell him. Yet when a boy is poisoning the mind of another you say nothing."

The school had become silent and tense. This made the event even more exciting to all of us in the preparatory school. As soon as service was over the pent-up curiosity broke.

"Has he died?" I asked.

"Who?" said my friend.

"The chap he poisoned."

"No, you chump; he wasn't meaning that kind of poison."

"But he said poison; what kind of poison was it?" I asked.

My friend became embarrassed and confidential. "Tell you later." And he ran off. But he did not tell me later; a name was mentioned, of a boy in the main school; he had been expelled it was said. 'Expelled' sounded dreadful; for long the flaring gaslight, the gloom, the thrillingly serious voice of the Headmaster as he spoke of poison, dwelt in my mind. But I dared not speak of it after I had discovered that mention of . . . what? Besides, I did not wish to be called a fat-head or a chump.

'Expelled'. That was fine! Expelled! Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden – by God or some archangel with his flaming sword. Then it came to me suddenly, in the 'twinkling of an eye' like Death. Of course! It was wiggling! It seemed absurd that I had not grasped the point earlier. But then doubts crept in. Mr Hirst had only said I would be sent away. That sounded awful but was not so awful as 'expelled'. I was sure I was on the right track. 'The wages of sin is Death'. Clearly I was done for and, like kittens, would sooner or later be 'put down'. On the other hand, it was 'the Mighty' who were put down . . . really it was too boring, depressing. I gave it up. But it did not and would not give me up.

5

Looking back on that appalling period of my life I do not feel, as I did then, that it was my fault; nor the fault of my contemporaries, or the local school authorities. The parents, staff, all were caught in a web of undirected menace. Sex, 'wiggling' of whatever variety, was the only redeeming thing in our lives. It was not the cause of anything; it obtruded because it shone out – as anything that brought relief in that dreadful darkness would have done. Since it obtruded it became the target for hostile attention. It did not dawn on me that it was 'wiggling'; it glowed into realization; first darkness, incomprehension; then an incandescence in my reddening cheeks – *they* knew even before *I* did. They always did. "Nothing! Nothing!" I would say, "I haven't done anything!"

Years later I complained of a sore place in my mouth to a most formidable, Christian old woman who asked me if it had not been caused by smoking. Since I did not smoke – my first experience of a cigarette had made me sick – I had no difficulty in saying "No". Then I saw her eyes were staring fixedly at me and I knew I had done something wrong. "No!" I said, "I haven't", becoming red. The glow burned ever more brightly in my cheeks. "Honestly! I haven't", feeling angry now as well as frightened. Of course she believed me. She believed me in that quiet, forgiving, Christian kind of way which showed in the bright smile which illuminated her features – and would even have illuminated mine if only I had been a good boy, a *nice* boy instead of a bad boy, a dirty little wiggling horrid boy. Well, I had *not*, definitely *not* put poison in any boy's food. But there it was; 'Conscience makes cowards of us all'. No one told me that that did not prove I was guilty, but only that we are all cowards. My mouth hurt; maybe my mind hurt. Gradually I learnt – the realization of

the horrible truth about the poison in the food was one milestone on that path of learning – the rules of the game. First, you go and ask for help. Then the adult ripostes "What have you been doing?" Hell's fires have by this time begun to blaze in one's cheeks. The next stage depends on the speed of the protagonists; it depends on being able to anticipate the next stage. For the small boy this is the firing off of moral grape-shot, like " I haven't done anything!", before there has been time for the adult to formulate a charge. The opponent, on the other hand – especially if an experienced adult – anticipates the repudiation of guilt by firing off an equally polyvalent forgiveness, a general absolution, before the small boy has had a chance to find out, and therefore defend himself against, the crime of which he is charged. I had in fact long since graduated in this war and did not need to consult further. The true armour, without Saint Paul to tell me, was to be innocent – if possible genuinely – *and* to keep one's apparatus of dissimulation and lying well oiled and working smoothly.

The general principle was clear enough; its formulation in precise terms for rapid translation into action was a more complex matter. There was the 23rd Psalm with that bit about having oil poured over your head till your cup, if you had such a thing handy, ran over. 'Unctuous' was the word; 'supreme' unction was not as simple as it seemed. Usually it was safe to bet on being 'innocent'; not so when others got into top moral or religious gear. I was scared. I resolved to keep as far from wiggling as possible, but since the time Hirst had spoken of the danger of being 'sent away' (and I now realized how closely this might resemble being 'expelled') I had no luck at all. *I* might resolve to have nothing to do with wiggling, but wiggling did not return the compliment. What was more, I felt so much better – even so much morally better – after wiggling, and far more able to withstand temptation. I almost always entered into lavish contracts with the Almighty to leave my 'widdler' alone. I sometimes wondered if Saint Paul was speaking metaphorically about his 'thorn in the flesh'; my 'widdler' was permanently stuck into my flesh.

'Sex' might have become the focus for equally exaggerated glorification, as I know now from experience of other times and places. Then I did not know what the menace was. The sonorous and impressive phrases of the headmaster, the mobilization of 'Christian So-ho-ho-holdiers marching on to-hoo war' was premature, immature grasping for certainty where no certainty was. Had I wanted to erect

a primitive phallic, visual image to worship it would have taken a Curzon-like form with leather exo-skeletonous sheath to take the strain imposed by an inadequate spine.

The time was ripe for change. At last I, approaching twelve, could see hope of release into the free air of the Main School; 'freedom' was an emanation from the main school which penetrated into and pervaded my last year in the prep. It owed something to the quality of the main school which, even as I think back on it now, was enlightened and advanced for that time. The first symptom of this complex state of enlightenment and relief was peculiar and alarming. It came about in a surprising way.

As I have said, my prevalent impression, though unformulated then, was of undirected menace – it was implicit. The overt manifestation of this was a craze for playing trains, a game which dominated our communal play. It developed voluntarily, spontaneously, the school crystalizing out into a pattern of two groups, reminiscent of 'A' and 'B', having names of main railway lines – Great Northern, and our local line, Great Eastern. We used the same system of 'rails' which were tracks in the playground. Unobserved, but observing us, was Miss Good who, as I found out later, saw us as happily and enthusiastically playing together. From the worm's eye view – mine – I watched enviously. Impelled by some memory of glorious dust I tentatively joined in. At once it was discovered that I had outstanding gifts as a locomotive. Unwarned by unhappy experience with my shoes I was carried away by being suddenly 'wanted' by both teams. The glory, never achieved before or since, went to my head. I was picked for his railway by Morgan the head of one team, the other head being Pickett. Lost to the world I emerged from the hitherto well-preserved anonymity of the Walk game. Before I had realized it I was almost at once recognized by Pickett – who pointed it out to Morgan, who hardly needed to be prompted – to be "swanking" and "showing off". Gone was my glory. It was as bad as shouting "Orphan" at Willy Bevan. Not wanting to be chased with stumps I returned to my private world; I resumed my insignificant role of doing what I was told. But I had tasted what it was like to be wanted – almost famous *and* loved. Not so Pickett and Morgan who, both being big and powerfully built, had chosen to be famous and feared. They were stupid and nasty, but these opinions I kept strictly to myself. Consequent to their choice they retained their eminence

for months. It surprised them and us when suddenly one day ten or twelve of us attacked the two. Shrieking and yelling we threw ourselves on them. I do not remember myself as in any way prominent although I had now been at the school for three years and could hardly be excused on the grounds of insignificance. Fists were used; the mass of us in an unco-ordinated, yelling horde piled ourselves on top of Morgan. I do not know where Pickett had got to. Then, as suddenly as the riot had started, it stopped. I remember feeling frightened, frightened of what Morgan would do to me – I could not imagine 'us' having anything done to us. Then it became clear to me that we were frightened – Morgan too. There was a sudden hush, no shouting, just dusting ourselves down. Perhaps Hirst came in, but I am sure we had stopped before then. Had I been asked what was going on I would have said, "nothing".

Once we had an English nurse in Delhi. I remember nothing of her – only a vague impression of ladylike superiority and a strong sense of my parents' inferiority. One day a row started; it had something to do with her use of paint. My mother questioned my sister and me about what she had been doing. I was frightened; my sister may also have been frightened. My mother could not get a word out of either of us. I did not even say "nothing".

The next English nurse, whom I liked, took us to see a sheep being killed. It was a black sheep and its throat was cut. My sister was not frightened – or perhaps she was too small to know and certainly too small to run. I was terrified and I could and did run. I told my mother and my story could not be shaken. The nurse said it was only a red scarf round the sheep's neck. She was immediately sacked; I did not want her to be sent away. My mother was furious and the girl – very young compared with the imposing aristocrat who, despite her superiority, my mother had dared question – was packed off.

That was the end of them and the beginning of our ayah. As far as I was concerned it was the end of Nickel Sehn and Co. who beat up people like her and Dhunia whom I loved.

It was also the end of that particular Morgan. It took me a long time to learn that there were plenty more where that one came from, the source of the Morgans of this life. He was promoted to the main school because he was judged 'too big' – that is, too big a bully – to remain in the prep. I heard no more of him though I did hear a little

of his friend Pickett whose nastiness had a more durable quality than Morgan's.

What led to Morgan's investigation and promotion I do not know. Years later Miss Good told me that she, Mr Hirst and Miss Whybrow had no idea that anything was amiss till the day of the riot. It was supposed that we were having schoolboy fun – just a continuation of the train game which we so happily, spontaneously and voluntarily played together. How could she have known better? How indeed did she and poor 'Nigger', living in his private hell, come to know so much?

We used sometimes to go to the Upper Field to watch the main school play a match. The field had an iron swing gate separating it from the lane which led to the prep school. The distance was almost two miles between gate and school. Three or four of us decided to stand and swing on the bottom rail; the weight made the cast iron post snap. We looked with consternation, looked and ran wildly without stopping till we were safe in our school room.

What *had* we done? It fell to me some hours later to go to Nigger's study and confess. Perhaps he was amused; if so he did not show it. We had to pay for the damage. It cost us each half a crown and since this had to be found in my case out of my pocket money of three pence a week, for ten weeks I had no pocket money. It was a small price for such enormous relief. What, we wondered for some dreadful days, was going to happen? I have not found out yet.

No school could be as bad as the horror stories we invented for ourselves. Was that the source of the dreadful storms to which we were subject? Such cataclysmic disasters cannot be described. They haunt me still; even now I am impelled to write of them, but what I have written is, as soon as it is written, a boring triviality of the lives of over-privileged brats.

6

Miss Whybrow used to judge our gardens and award a prize to the best. Like another and more famous Order of Merit it had no merit about it. But at that time I had not become hardened to an experience which for me had all the freshness and vitality of complete novelty.

I had two 'friends'; a hard-bitten little Yorkshire farmer's son, Heaton Rhodes, and John Dudley Hamilton. It was understood that we were friends; it was like A and B. It was so – so help me God – and there you were, for life. Rhodes had a beautiful garden, spick and span; it was unbeatable and everyone knew he had won. Conversely, John Dudley of the Red Hair had obviously lost – that is, he would have done had anyone bothered to consider a scarecrow's nest of such monumental non-horticulturality. Mrs Hamilton, with whom I had fallen in love, on being shown her son's achievement, burst into peals of the most fascinating and lovely laughter. In no way disturbed, John Dudley uprooted his geranium – I think of it as the only one – and threw it, not so much at her as out of the 'garden'.

Then came the judging. Miss Whybrow went round with acute observation, becoming more and more portentous. Finally, as one whose expertise and mastery of the arcane arts had been learned in communion with God in the Garden of Eden, she proclaimed, as if announcing the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, the winner. Yes! It was none other than J. D. Hamilton! J. D. looked as if he expected trouble. Mrs Hamilton flushed rather painfully at her son's triumph. B. H. Rhodes, who had a hot temper, waited. He told us afterwards that Miss Whybrow had seen Mrs Hamilton's car and was "sucking up" to get a ride. This certainly seemed a possibility. The Hamiltons were the only parents who owned a car – a Leon Bollet.

Years afterwards Mrs Hamilton told me she thought Miss Whybrow was a most unsuitable matron for small boys. Was it imagination that made me think the flush on her cheek as she spoke was a reminiscence of the garden prize?

There could hardly have been two boys more different than Heaton Rhodes and Dudley Hamilton. Heaton was a very tough little boy; I cannot imagine how he put up with me. He was acute, intelligent and hard. I remember how, when the form was being taken by a master from the main school – a man with a sharp tongue who on this occasion chose to be facetious at the eleven-year-old Heaton's expense – Heaton stood it, and the form's sycophantic approval of what should have been his discomfiture, with steadily mounting anger and a deepening flush. Then when the flow of sarcasm faltered he turned to a boy sitting a couple of yards away and said clearly and loudly, as if the form master was only a mechanical object like a gramophone, "Thinks he's funny don't he?" It was crushing in its finality and seemed to gain in force from the diminutive size of the speaker. When arguing, his voice had an edgy tremor and his phrases were punctuated with "nays" which intrigued me because everyone else I knew, including my parents, said "no".

Dudley was softer, larger, with a wider range of emotion and greater flexibility of expression. I never knew anyone who devoured books as he did; he did so literally as well as metaphorically. One of my earliest experiences of him was finding he had eaten large parts of every page of my *Captain*. He responded to my anguished wail denouncing and announcing the depredations of this human caterpillar, by blushing hotly and behaving as if I did not exist. As the rest of the boys in the school had not the slightest interest in whether I existed or not I was reduced to fighting him. As he was bigger I could make no impression on him and had to be content with watching him go on reading and eating my *Captain*.

At the time of his horticultural triumph we were on what passed for friendly terms. I do not believe boys at prep school age achieve more than a rudimentary love; we certainly did not. Rhodes's and Hamilton's 'people' used to ask me to their houses for occasional – I now think most generously frequent – holidays. As the unfortunate sons had to suffer for their parents' indiscretions so the parents compromised by accepting the convention that I was a friend of theirs.

I was a conscript ally in their warfare with their parents and brothers and sisters thus:

Dudley: Get out Tuey.

Stewart: Shan't.

Dudley (furious): Get out! You stink!

Stewart: I don't.

Dudley: You do! Doesn't he Will?

Self: Well . . .

Dudley There you are! You see? We both think you stink!

Mrs Hamilton and Mrs Rhodes, both in their different ways, helped to make my last year at the prep school one in which I began to break through what I see in retrospect to have been an intolerable exoskeleton of misery. I did not see my parents; Hirst was inaccessible in his own misery which could not be eased by us; Miss Whybrow entertained hopes of an outlet for her ambitions through Hirst's calamitous situation and favouritized attractive boys like Freddie Sexton. I must have felt Mrs Hamilton's personality as spring to my prep school winter.

Mr Hamilton was a good business man and a good employer, judging by the respect in which he was held by his employees. His shrewdness frightened me though I admired his keen, alert manner.

I remember his once describing at table that someone had gone over Niagara Falls in a barrel on some kind of money-making wager. "And if he had got through that, then the next fool would have had to go over in a paper-bag." This so tickled me that although as a small boy, and a guest at that, I should have been seen and not heard, I laughed so undisguisedly that Mr Hamilton, Mrs Hamilton and several adult friends could not help catching the infection. "Paper bag!" I repeated, and would start off again, the others being swept in by my amusement.

That holiday was a revelation. I could not have believed I could ever be so happy. I was not pleased when the time came for me to go to Archer Hall where the Rhodes's lived. I was taken in the car – not that it was called a car. It was referred to, that glorious cream-coloured, brass-embellished confection distilled out of Heaven itself, as The Leon Bollet – the one and only in our world, a world made radiant by its presence in our midst.

Archer Hall was at the top of a hill and was approached by a long drive which led from a lane to the valley of the river Rib, then climbed to the farmhouse. The climb seemed to exhaust the Leon Bollet which, if it were not irreverent to speak of it in such terms, laboured at the latter end; when it turned and left for the return it deposited not only me but a patch of black oil. This introduced me to a different culture, one in which the Leon Bollet literally and metaphorically 'stank'. "Look!" said Heaton, pointing to the patch. His scorn was absolute. He said nothing else; there was no need. Suffused with guilt as if I were personally responsible I crushed back my sense of glory and was taken at once to see Prince, already known to me through Heaton's description.

7

Prince was a shire-horse of gigantic proportions and exquisite grace, nine, ten, fifteen, maybe twenty hands high, noble as his name denoted and of a beauty not to be expressed in words – except by Shakespeare. Alas! He was out working, but for some minutes we worshipped at the shrine where Prince was not.

Heaton showed that the rest was anti-climax; the introduction to Kathleen, Faith, Mercy and to five lesser brothers and sisters too numerous to be bothered with, and to Mrs Rhodes who could not be so easily dismissed even by Heaton. She was plump and motherly with great dignity and a capacity for affection which did not altogether conceal an air that she was not to be trifled with. She came, as did Mr Rhodes, from an old Yorkshire family, both sides of the family tracing their descent in a line unbroken for some three or four hundred years.

Heaton did not disguise his dislike of wasting time on these members of the family and their several occupations about the house when it could be spent on Prince, but he went through with it – visiting the larder first.

Mrs Rhodes would express a shrill, explosive, but immediately muted laugh; this she did as she gave me a welcoming kiss. She asked after my parents whom I had forgotten; thinking of them was inseparable from homesickness. To all such inquiries I used to reply that they were "very well thank you"; no more 'summer suns are glowing' for me. In fact they were in India, my mother having returned with my sister at the beginning of the year; they were a nuisance – the cause of having to write a letter once a week.

Life at Archer Hall was austere in a way that was new to me. I always picture the Hamiltons in summer time with the lawns

brooded over by their magnificent cedar. With the Rhodes family, loving and comfortable though it was, life seemed easier to imagine in hard, bitter winds of winter. On the exposed hilltop the winds were keen, except in the height of summer when on occasion Heaton and I cycled over from school. We would find the farmhouse open-doored and apparently deserted. Our first call was at the larder where we helped ourselves liberally to cake. Thus refreshed we would wander out over the farm to Heaton's favourite haunts. In time our punctual appetites warned us it was time to return to the house and pay our respects to Mrs Rhodes.

She would greet us with her little laugh. "I heard you had come", she would say, "but I knew from the state of the larder before anyone told me that 'someone' had arrived. Never mind – we have made a fresh supply." In those days there was always 'plenty more'. Kathleen would be glad to see us, though shy; Faith, the pretty one was sulky and unwilling to hide her dislike of our intrusion.

The table was spread for tea. "I don't expect either of you would mind" said Mrs Rhodes with an air of diffidence, "if you had an egg to your tea?" We agreed that we did not, mentally noting that 'an egg' meant 'two' eggs; 'un oeuf', but 'deuz-er-ee'. Our hearts, heavy at the impending departure, were lightened by our gastronomic feats.

These were the summer occasions, delightful but untypical. When I see Archer Hall it is as a great farmhouse lying amidst fields, deserted, sleeping its winter sleep. Mr Rhodes, weathered, striding from field to field, stopping now and then to talk to a farm-hand, seemed to typify the ruthless and austere character of farm life in prosperous England. *It was* prosperous, but the prosperity did not conceal the relentless struggles with an impenetrable cloak of comfort – as did the wealth of the Hamiltons. "Smelly things" said Heaton when he spoke, with curling nostrils, of the car. But neither he nor anyone else on the farm seemed to be envious so much as aware of a different way of life. Probably I idealize them; I certainly remember feeling that I could not live up to the enjoyment of farm life which was genuine enough with them.

Heaton considered I would be sure to like seeing a pig slaughtered. I, still remembering the trouble with the sheep, knew I would never be able to stand it. This I wished to keep to myself. Kathleen said I did *not* want to see it. Heaton, as I feared, said I couldn't possibly be so soft as to object – after all, he reminded Kathleen, I wasn't

a girl. In fact I knew I was worse than any girl – certainly worse than Faith or my sister, and probably worse than Kathleen who did at least stand up to Heaton and never made me think she was a coward. I went. By so doing I found I did not prove my masculinity – not with Kathleen at any rate. As I kept my eyes shut or averted I could not be sure that I had deceived Heaton.

Less personally horrifying, but of an intensity of humiliation for Heaton, was the episode of the cow. "You two boys haven't anything to do", said Mr Rhodes briskly one fine morning, not so much formulating and reporting an observed fact as premising a definitory hypothesis. "Just drive Curly over to Mundens for me." Heaton, who expected to see his cousin Bob of whom he was very fond, dropped the caution which he usually observed when dealing with his father, and agreed.

Curly was in Bartram's field next to the drive where it crossed the Rib. This Mr Rhodes told us. What he did not tell us – I can hardly believe that Heaton's suspicion would have remained dormant had he done so – was that Curly had recently calved. If he did tell us he must have slurred it over to test Heaton's perspicacity. At eight in the morning we duly located Curly and set off light-heartedly enough to drive her, without her calf, to Mundens. We reckoned, or Heaton reckoned as I had no views on the matter, to achieve our task in a couple of hours without much difficulty. The first fifty yards to the gate into the drive were accomplished with such ease and speed that we were not really concentrating when Curly passed through the gate, turned sharply up the hill – that is, away from Mundens – and proceeded at a brisk trot for home.

Running up-hill is no joke, but to be outdistanced by a mere cow, with whom one does not usually associate fine athletic prowess, was a nasty surprise. Curly reached the farmyard, where her darling was lodged, a considerable distance in front of Heaton and still further in front of me. For the next quarter of an hour or so she showed that she had outdistanced us mentally as well as physically; she knew her way about the farmyard with a detail which surprised Heaton who thought he had been born and bred there. Then we cornered her, or, more accurately, Heaton did with myself as a stop-gap, but one which hoped that Curly would not realize that where I stood the gap, despite appearance, was wide open. Vain hope. With lowered horns she came straight for me. Without a moment's hesitation – there was

no time for that – I removed myself. Curly, with frisking tail, lit out for the open spaces.

Heaton, almost beside himself with rage, hardly bothered to flash his curses at me. "Why didn't you stop her you fool?" was all his chattering teeth permitted him to say.

Curly now had a short pause for rest. This itself seemed like bravado as she was clearly the least fatigued of the three. When we drew near she moved off. We went on like this for another quarter of an hour; then Heaton's anger blazed out; he threw a clod of earth at her. It was a good shot hitting her on the head. This, she decided, had frightened her. She broke into a brisk trot and in no time at all we had her locked in behind the gate of Bartram's from which we had started. It had taken the best part of three quarters of an hour of violent exercise to get no nearer to Mundens.

Just then Curly's accursed offspring decided to moo. Curly heard, burst through a corner of the hedge and set off up the hill to investigate. Heaton set off too. Since it was not my cow my disinterest began to show. "Whoa!" I said gently from time to time – I did not want to upset Curly. As far as I was concerned Heaton and Curly could have the farm to themselves. But remembering the time when I had been hit in the eye by the cricket ball when lying on the ground fielding, remembering Curly's charge at me with lowered head and very sharp horns, I decided to consider that part of the yard and environs denied to Curly if I occupied it – that is, unless Curly wanted it very badly. By mid-day Heaton, with my help of course, had got Curly back to Bartram's field. He looked hot; I deemed it only civil to be breathing heavily.

We locked the gate but did as little as we could to upset Curly. It was not Mundens, but there were, we decided, worse places than Bartrams. We cleared off hoping we wouldn't be noticed.

In the afternoon Mr Rhodes met us. "Well Heaton how was it? How long did it take you to get to Mundens?"

Heaton gave him a wary, rapid glance and dropped his eyes. "She had a calf."

"Really!" Mr Rhodes seemed genuinely interested. "How long?"

"Three weeks."

The conversation became professional; it was carried on without a trace of sarcasm or any undertone other than interest in breeding. I could hardly believe my ears as it was unthinkable that Mr Rhodes

had not all along known about Curly and her calf. Any suspicion on that score had disappeared from Heaton's mind, but I was sure it had been there.

Then, "How much will you offer me for the calf Heaton?"

"Oh, don't know."

"Oh come on!"

"I'll see it when it's ready to wean."

"I'll hold it for you. Say a pound?"

Heaton flushed up. "Nay!" – it was curious to hear the famous 'nay' in its proper context – "Nay! that I woan't!"

"Not bid a pound? Oh, come on Heaton, what's the matter with it?"

"I haven't seen it", said Heaton obstinately.

"But you've seen the dam; she's all right isn't she?" Mr Rhodes was coaxing now.

This argument went on for about half an hour, the father and son beating each other down, coaxing, wheedling, flushing angrily, complaining of being done – by unfairly. It was serious. I had never heard anything like it before, though I was to hear it again. Finally Mr Rhodes appeared to have had enough and to be preparing like a bored old cat, to dismiss his offspring.

"Old Cow" – surprisingly the herdsman's name – "will take Curly over to Munden tomorrow. You can go with him and see how it's done." And he stalked off.

We went; it was done – easily; but we did not see how.

Cow was a notorious drunk. I had witnessed a conversation between him and Mr Rhodes which surprised me, as the conversation between father and son had done. When talking cows, Old Cow was not drunk, however much alcohol he had on board. Mr Rhodes spoke as the Farmer whose word was law which he meant to see was observed: Old Cow spoke as a man who knew about cows and meant to see that what he observed was respected. Each was boss in his realm: each knew where the boundaries were drawn. Perhaps Curly respected the boundary that separates an expert cowman from mere men-calves.

Cousin Bob met us at Munden. He would not allow us in the pigeon-cote because "the mess had not been cleared up".

"What mess?"

"Oh, it was a bad business! One of my foremen went up there last night with a gun and blew his head off. It was a terrible mess."

This time neither Heaton nor I wanted to see.

The sun shone brightly through the soft golden haze, the doves strutted and cooed, Bob spoke quietly to Heaton and me, but 'up there' was a 'mess'. We went into the house and had lunch which was accompanied by an erratic semi-solemn conversation which was the more incongruous because nothing solemn was said. Curly spoiled our first visit to Bob; the foreman had spoiled the next one. Farming, so peaceful, so creative – 'just the thing for conscientious objectors to war' – was for me violent and ruthless. Farmers taught their sons the hard way. Farmers, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, did they not ever *love* each other? Alternatively, if they loved each other, what were the rest of us up to?

A month or so later Heaton said to Cousin Bob, "Clear it up all right?" For a moment Bob looked puzzled; then he picked up the conversation where it had left off. "Oh, *that.* Good Lord, yes." So much for *that.* Why had he done it? Who cares? He's not even news now.

As I say, it was a nice day – 'Soft as Sorrow, bright as old Renown'. Rooks sat about in the fields or flapped off lazily on our approach.

"Those old beggars(" said Heaton admiringly. "If I had a gun they'd be off in no time."

"Yes" said Bob, "I've even carried my walking stick like a gun; they take no notice. Pigeons are even worse – and they do harm. Rooks are useful – well so long you two. See you soon."

We had reached the boundary of his farm and we settled into a steady stride back to Archer Hall.

8

On Sundays spent with the Rhodes's it was understood that we attend the parish church at Standon. Heaton, Kathleen, Faith, Mercy and I walked there and returned the same way afterwards. We hated it. One day Kathleen, who had brains and spirit, announced to Mr Rhodes in the presence of Mrs Rhodes and the family, that it was ridiculous to go. We were astounded. Mrs Rhodes, who always reminded me of the Mona Lisa and derived her frightening quality from the source that Leonardo must have known, pursed her lips ever so slightly, the smile fading out of her eyes; or perhaps, since they did not alter in any other way I can describe, it was my imagination that made me think so. She asked why. Kathleen did not flinch – let me be the sacred poet who only can erect an imperishable monument to her courage – and with eyes blazing in contrast to the block of ice that her mother had become, said "I think Mr Philson is a fool; he gabbles away" – and so he did – "like an old cockatoo!"

When she had finished her denunciation Mrs Rhodes ordered her up to her bedroom. There, for the rest of the day, she stayed. Heaton and I – the men – were delighted but did nothing. I do not know what we could have done, but . . . well, it was her funeral, not ours. I was to remember my cowardice many years after in a situation which could not be so easily laughed off. Was I in love with Kathleen? 'In my fashion' perhaps, provided it did not cost too much.

After lunch we went to the chapel in Latchford, a tin-roofed little box with 'gothic' windows and a patch of stained glass in one of them – 'late lavatory' would describe the style. Mrs Rhodes would play the harmonium to accompany the hymns. There we were, scrubbed, transformed yet recognizably the same. Saint Paul has described it beautifully: "Behold I tell you a mystery. We shall not

all die, but we shall be changed." So we were! And though we might reasonably have died of laughing, in fact we did not dare. The change must have been something to do with religion for there was a young man who served in Fordham's shop in Puckeridge who one day turned out to be the visiting preacher. He looked so odd – he was so odd – that we did not dare to hail him. Even in Puckeridge we could not have done that because he was so immeasurably our inferior. Yet there he was, standing there where the minister should, as if he had not even seen us. We were surely not completely disguised – the round-faced, snivelling, red-nosed urchins that we all were had not been completely soaped and scrubbed out of existence.

There were also community secrets which overflowed the secular village boundaries, just as there were a few 'holy' jokes which flowed out through the congregational boundaries. Thus, when we sang 'Shall we gather at the River', we allowed our knowledge that the meeting house was on the banks of the River Rib to show in a few bucolic but holy leers of comprehension from which the visiting preacher, like our young man from Fordham's, was excluded; he, poor sap, had very likely not heard of the Rib.

Mrs Rhodes was not a smooth performer and from time to time we had to sustain a note rather longer than the score indicated while she searched for the next one. But we got through and at the end of the service our awareness that the religious chores for the day were over seemed to bring a certain de-tension. Indeed it was supposed that this was the occasion for the more regular lapses of Old Cow from the strict abstinence which divine service imposed on alcoholic refreshment. Eventually he realized that the obstruction could be obviated by simply staying away from service; the meeting house knew him no more.

At Christmas the farm was ruled by the festival with which I thought I was familiar. It was cold. There was ice on the ponds thick enough to bear the weight of all the children of Latchford. Latchford was a small village but more than a hamlet; at that time it was inhabited entirely by men and women employed by, and therefore known to, Mr Rhodes – 'therefore', in those days, described an essential link.

When I was invited for Christmas, which was a generously frequent hospitality, Heaton and I used to arrive from school some time before midday on Christmas Eve. All the children collected to gather evergreens for the decoration of their homes, village and farmhouse

alike. That was a dirty, violent and ferocious hour, exciting in itself and in the expectations it aroused. Before this, thank heaven, the pig or pigs had been killed, and sundry geese sacrificed for the pre-Christmas baking and cooking.

On those Christmas Eve excursions there would be thirty or forty of us, ranging in age from fourteen or fifteen down to eight or nine. We were armed with bill-hooks and hedging knives – ordinary pen knives carried by the small ones who invariably cut themselves rather than the greenery. Within an hour we had exhausted our enthusiasm, cut a huge stock of ivy, mistletoe from some abandoned orchard trees, and holly. This last was not popular; the leaves prickled and hurt far more than the gory, but grander, wounds of the pen knives. It was accepted that the biggest pile went to the Rhodes's farm, not least because the parents of the village did not want to have the spotless order of their parlours destroyed by mess-making foliage. Heaton and I dragged our pile to the farm where we left it to the girls to transform into decoration. We were glad to leave it to them; they were glad to dispense with any 'help' they were likely to get from us.

The arrangement worked well. Heaton and I allowed that the transformation they brought about was "pretty". Kathleen, being the oldest, took charge. The kitchen, big, stone-paved, was done first because the cook, kitchen maid and Mrs Rhodes "had work to do". By the time the girls had finished, the kitchen had become the centre from which scents of hot cocoa, freshly made bread and cake suffused the house.

Shortly, children began to collect. They were the bell-ringers and the carol singers from the village who traditionally ended up at the farmhouse exhausted, hungry and thirsty. They mostly brought their own mugs for the cocoa; the fresh baked bread, butter and jam did not require plates. Refreshed, they performed some three or four carols very creditably before being plied with more to eat and drink – this time unrestrained by fears of impairing their voices.

Then it was the turn of the handbell-ringers. They played two or three well-known carols – very well indeed they did it. It was fifty years before I heard such a performance again, at my own son's school. Then more cocoa, cake and laughter. Finally they swung off into the night – no doubt to be at home and half way to sleep in less time than it takes to remember.

The next morning Heaton and I were up in the icy dawn of an upland Christmas. Our stomachs told us we had been up for hours by the time it came to breakfast. Luckily breakfast was more than adequate to our needs. We started with porridge, sugar and cream. I still felt ashamed that I did not follow my father's custom of eating porridge with butter and salt, but sugar and cream were too seductive. This was followed by liver and bacon or eggs and bacon. But at this season pride of place was given to a very big pork pie.

The slaughterings which had already taken place were preliminary to the making of two hundred such pies cooked in the village bakery ovens and despatched in time for Christmas to friends and relatives of the Rhodes family, and to people so poor that they would not otherwise have had a Christmas meal. In addition to this they sent off some twenty fully dressed geese to similar recipients. I did not hear anything of the poverty of the recipients to whom the Rhodeses displayed such unadvertised generosity. It was wicked that such poverty existed; magnificent that such private generosity was unostentatiously displayed; astonishing that the Rhodes parents did not own a car or a radio. I did not hear of their reading a book other than a crudely written volume on English Eccentrics which was well-thumbed and repeatedly laughed over; its humour never staled.

The consequence of appetite and opportunity for satisfaction could have been, but was not, foreseen by me. By the time that we should have been looking forward to Christmas dinner Heaton and I were feeling ill – very ill. The nature of the malady – disinclination for food, a sense of impending death, a craving for maternal love – was made worse for me by the absence of my mother. We sought the lavatories and unburdened ourselves. When we compared notes the malaise had gone and both felt completely able to do justice to Christmas dinner. Mrs Rhodes said we had overeaten ourselves. The suggestion seemed to be unworthy of her and of us.

A hearty lunch was followed by similar, less acute, but more enduring symptoms. Some slight caution during the meal – not that Mrs Rhodes's suspicion could be seriously entertained – and an eruption of the village into the fields and fresh air in the afternoon led to amelioration.

On the following day food was a prelude to beagling. A faint queasiness – of the 'art thou weary, art thou languid?' but less spiritually

inspired kind – prevented me from grasping what was going on. I would rather have been at the fireside with Kathy, but my stomach clamoured for the open air and prevailed over my heart. Heaton did not like Kathy; he made no secret of his belief that no man would waste time on anyone so "wet". Anyhow, he confided, she was bad tempered. I did not think she was, but after I had heard her talking to him I could see what he meant.

On Christmas morning, before the dinner was due to start, the pony trap was loaded with toys for all the children of Latchford. The trap was then drawn very unwillingly by the pony, Puck, through the village and the toys distributed. I do not remember hearing what the reaction of the recipients was, but I assume it was taken by most to be a part of uncovenanted wages. I doubt that they consciously regarded themselves as deprived of part of their wages so the employer could buy them a 'present'. They were duly grateful but I neither saw, heard nor felt any abiding love. Mrs Rhodes did not entertain sentimental beliefs, but I had no doubt of her capacity for genuine concern for others.

The beagling, which I did not experience through my skill at evading what no one was trying to impose on me, was part of the rough and vigorous farm sport. The greater part of the sport consisted in walking the farm stalking a hare or rabbit. Myxomatosis had not then made its attack on the rabbit populations, nor was it threatening as it is today to leave in its wake an immune race of rabbits.

I have learned to look back on the kindness, of which I received so much, through a romantic haze. Nevertheless the abiding impression is one of an austere and ruthless life. Too many animals had to be killed; too much hard, unforgiving work had to be done; there were too few diversions for me ever to think of life on the farm as educative, healthy to body and mind, a painless instruction in the 'facts of life'.

9

The Hamiltons lived an entirely different life. Although it was farming, it was under glass on a large and lucrative scale. Mr Hamilton's cultural aspirations were once expressed by buying a pianola, but he was too cultured to be able to tolerate the disillusionment this expensive toy brought him; he ceased, almost at once, to play it.

While he was away at work, the household busy with its daily dustings and cleanings, Dudley and his brothers, Stewart and Colin, and I used to try our hand at the machine. Its mechanical attributes, which were in any case more prominent than its aesthetic qualities, were then given a thorough testing. A pleasing effect was obtained by playing the Moonlight Sonata at full speed. Dudley and his brothers also found a way of making the machine play the same piece backward. But despite these novelties there was a lack of variety in what could be done. This, combined with the danger that Mr Hamilton might catch us at it, led us to abandon our experiments. The possibility that Mr Hamilton might vent his hostility to the pianola on us for demonstrating, albeit unconsciously, its maddening defects was real; it could not be ignored by boys with a sense of reality.

Mr Hamilton had a lively sense of his social obligations. He expressed these by being an officer in the Boys Brigade – the 'B.B.', as it was called by the cognoscenti such as ourselves. One day we went to an important anniversary parade. I remember how much I admired his military appearance as he stood in his officers uniform and little pill-box hat waiting to take us all to the parade ground in his Leon Bollet; and the parade itself – hundreds of boys in their black uniforms, white belts and pill-box caps strapped at a jaunty angle to one side of the head!

It seemed to me that nothing ever *happened*; Dudley I suppose felt the same – we both wanted to *do* something.

Eventually we went off to see his paternal grandmother. She was being given oxygen; otherwise, Mrs Hamilton said, she would die. She said 'yaller' instead of 'yellow', which I thought was very uneducated. Mrs Hamilton said it was not; some people said 'yaller'; and 'laylock', instead of 'lilac'. They were not uneducated but were pronunciations used by people who were *very* well brought up. I asked Mrs Hamilton about ''at'; my mother had told me when we were going aboard ship not to talk like people whom I should hear saying ''ear' when they meant 'hear', and ''at' when they meant 'hat'. But 'yaller' and 'laylock', though wrong, were all right.

The Hamilton house was very big and full of nice things – nicer even than the pianola which looked so funny when the keys went bobbing up and down though no one was touching them. There was a large garden with some fine lawns and a huge cedar tree.

We played a lot in the garden. One day we bought some bird lime because *Chums* said that if you spread it carefully on twigs you could catch birds that got entangled in it. For ages and ages we caught nothing except the gardener whom we did *not* want because he was bad tempered and did not like our smashing his biggest flower pots; we did not like his not liking it because it spoiled our otter hunts. For these – years later at Oxford I read an account of the game by Kenneth Grahame in *Dream Days,* but at the time it was our own invention – you needed the co-operation of the cat. At first it used to like us, came up in a trusting way and started purring when Dudley or Stewart or I took her in our arms and made much of her. Then, while she sat and purred and smiled, one of us would fetch one of the largest pots from the gardener's shed. The next stage was a bit tricky, even from the first, because the cat seemed to think it was time to go for a walk when the one holding her put her on the ground and continued to stroke and pat her. However, without using much force it was possible to get the flower pot over her. Then she got agitated and when she had, as it were, come to the boil, one of us who had brought a croquet mallet crashed it down on the top of the pot thus shattering it and releasing the cat. So she got off to a good start – as Dudley and I tried to explain to Mrs Hamilton who said it was cruel to chase the cat round the garden as we did. We said *we* would not mind and set out to prove it by using Colin instead of the cat. We decided to use a

big – enormous would be a more accurate term – ornamental vase for Colin as the pots were not big enough. The scheme came to nothing because Colin had been the youngest brother for too long; his suspicions were fully alerted the moment Dudley or Stewart began to say anything friendly or to use any terms of endearment less offensive than 'stinker'. The game died because the gardener complained about his pots, and the cat had become very unco-operative. As Dudley said, "It wouldn't run properly anyway."

We did have some success with the bird lime. One day when we had given up hope we found a sparrow on a bush behaving in a very peculiar way. It kept fluttering but could not fly. We thought it was ill and we were filled with compassion, determined to catch it and nurse it back to health. Colin caught it at last but immediately let it go with cries of disgust – it was covered with horrible sticky stuff which he tried fairly successfully to wipe off on his clothes. Dudley suddenly realized "It's the bird lime!" Of course! It was our first success! Getting the fatuous Colin out of the way we quickly retrieved our bird. Gone was our compassion; it was but an instant's work to wring its neck. We decided it was not really game and would not require to be hung.

Colin was sent to collect firewood while we three set about plucking the bird. At first the bird-lime was a hindrance, but after a quarter of an hour or so the feathers became a kind of amalgam and really assisted in keeping them under control. When we had finally plucked and cleaned the bird there did not seem much meat left; even what there was looked unappetizing. But we cut off the more useless parts – 'beaks and works' – and cooked it. Colin wouldn't touch it, and "anyhow he had practically let it fly away" – so that left three of us to share. I chose a leg because that seemed less revolting. We ate our portions which we pronounced delicious.

10

Mrs Hamilton always had a sparkle and a smile in her eye. With her three sons she required no instruction on the need for discipline; looking back now I wonder how she preserved her sanity and her lively sense of the ridiculous. I think the cook and two housemaids used to keep her well informed of our wilder excursions. Otherwise I could not explain how she appeared on the roof just as we were about to test our essay in aeronautics.

We had built an aeroplane. The venture was surrounded by the utmost secrecy chiefly because unlike mine, Dudley's ideas about his mother had been developing in a quite different direction; he considered her to be losing her capacity for fun; in his view she was losing her nerve. Indeed her attitude to the cooking and eating of the sparrow lacked warmth. Furthermore, her appreciation of me, which was unmistakable, appeared to be based almost entirely on my least admirable qualities.

There was the incident of the rubber for catapults. Dudley and I had been given our pocket money – sixpence a week it was then – and both were stoney broke by the end of the day. Called upon to explain this circumstance Dudley pointed out that the catapult rubber had cost that amount. Mrs Hamilton said it was ridiculous to waste money in such a profligate manner, and added in an unfortunate moment, "I am sure Wilfred would never spend his money on anything so silly."

"But he has!" whooped Dudley in unconcealed triumph.

Blushing hotly I had to admit that I was in fact just that kind of ass. Mrs Hamilton's revelation of her opinion of me served to formulate Dudley's suspicions that I was really 'wet' – as his mother and everyone knew – and that his mother likewise suffered from some kind of

kink that deflected her judgement in the direction of fundamentally 'wet' people. I had lost caste both ways.

Then there was the episode of the Toy Soldier War. We both had a small number of tin soldiers which we regarded as so idiotic that we did not consider them worthy of the time which would have to be spent on setting them out. Then one day we saw some little brass cannon in the window of an otherwise undistinguished toy shop. We went in to buy some sweets – cocoanut ice at one penny for a quarter of a pound of pink and white was a 'must' largely for economic reasons – and Dudley idly asked about the cannon. They were two pence each, real solid brass, "and look", said the shopkeeper, "you can fire them!" So you could! Incredible though it seems, they were pierced at the breech; through this small hole you could insert from inside the fuse of a Chinese cracker or jumping jack. The crackers were extremely inexpensive. You could buy a whole mass, perhaps a pound, for sixpence. Having detached one of these little cylinders you could place it, fuse first, in the gun barrel which was exactly the right length, coax the fuse through the vent in the breech, and – the shopkeeper showed us – light the fuse. For this of course you had to have a match. In a moment the fuse ignited the tiny charge, there was a gratifying bang and the remainder of the fire cracker was ejected in a most realistic manner!

That settled it. "No cocoanut ice", as Goring might have said. "Two cannons please, a pound of crackers and a box of matches." The last item was a momentary problem because we were not allowed to have them. Dudley was in favour of my buying them because I was his mother's favourite and so wouldn't "get into a row". I demurred and Stewart hit on the obvious solution which was for Colin, who was not present to object, to buy them. We raced home and up to the attic.

All this was done in the utmost secrecy although how anyone could have failed to notice the stampede up the stairs and the immediate silence following our arrival in the attic I do not know. We set out the soldiers in two opposing armies and then Dudley said, "Can I borrow your matches Colin?"

"I haven't got any matches." But of course we took no notice of him.

"Thanks very much." He must have been surprised to be thanked at all, but his suspicions were lulled by the start of the battle.

It was truly a grand affair and though at first it seemed to take rather a long time to load and fire the cannon, this was compensated for when I landed a shot, still glowing, in Dudley's magazine. It did not catch at first, but when it did the attic seemed to become an inferno of flying crackers augmented by my magazine which had now caught. Colin, "dirty little sneak", shouting in tones of lively indignation, "my matches!", made for the door yelling for his mother. Luckily he bumped into the cook and a scared housemaid who had come, originally to see what the silence was all about, but now could smell gunpowder.

They put it out. Mrs Hamilton showed the first signs of her declining sense of humour by saying, with a tight-lipped expression, that we might have set the house on fire. She did not seem disposed on this occasion to favour me. The three of us were too annoyed with Colin to bother even when Mr Hamilton confiscated our cannons. Colin, who had not allowed for the dangers of shrieking "my matches!", was, we were glad to notice, spanked for his contraband. So, we reflected, there was some justice in the world.

It can be seen that the deterioration in Mrs Hamilton's sense of humour and Dudley's augmentation of his capacity for secrecy proceeded on parallel but non-Euclidean lines which sloped to terminate in an eighteen-inch balustrade between us and the garden some thirty feet below. Our aeroplane was constructed from the gardener's bamboo canes, the disappearance of which he had noted and duly reported to Mrs Hamilton. The canes were tied together in such a way that they "could not possibly come loose". There was no fabric on body or wings for the sufficient reason that we could not afford any, but Stewart also pointed out that it was only the appearance that was affected; it was accordingly decided that we should delay no longer but launch it from the roof as it was. Colin was the obvious choice for passenger had he not already shown in the matter of the matches that he was a sneak and could not be trusted. We decided that the three of us would hold it above our heads, gripping firmly so as not to let go before the plane had landed us all softly on earth below, and then at a concerted signal launch ourselves from the roof. Colin, from whom we were hidden by a chimney stack, was waiting on the lawn by the cedar where he "would see something". This stirred him up so much that he nearly wrecked everything with his questions and bad temper.

We were just settling the final details when the attic door opened behind us where it gave on to the roof, framing Mrs Hamilton, a serious faced Mr Hamilton and the cook. What, they wanted to know, were we up to on the roof? Although it was lunch time, and therefore a period during which Mr Hamilton was usually back at home, his presence gave a very definite air of solemnity to the proceedings. I began to wish I was not there.

Did we not know we were not allowed on the roof? Well, of course we did, but it did not sound as if the question required an answer. We had to come down "at once!" We went. I felt especially foolish; the "at once!" applied to me just as much as it did to the others. I was one of them, but this time it did not console me because I was not at all sure that anybody really thought I was 'one of them'; far from it. Later in the day, when Mrs Hamilton was talking 'in tranquillity' and asking Dudley if he hadn't realized that the three of us would probably have been killed and certainly very badly injured, she ran her fingers through his hair sadly and as if she missed him. Stewart, Colin and he were very near to her. I felt I was more of a liability than an asset though she had not directly said anything to me. For the first time for a long while I remembered my mother and father and sister, and felt homesick. I even felt, for the first time, that I would rather be with Mrs Rhodes who frightened me, but had been upset when Freddie Sexton died. Though he died at school it was believed that the appendicitis which killed him had been contracted at Archer Hall one week-end when he stayed there. Who could want to go through such guilt and heart – searching on account of the son of absent parents? I never realized at the time what a responsibility I must have been to my hosts.

It must have been about this time when the unco-operation of the cat, the limited field for explosive experiments in warfare, aeronautics and cookery pressed heavily on our imaginative resources, that we dug a cubical hole in the orchard, big enough to hold the four of us, and built a small fire-place in one clay wall. We roofed it over with boards. Perhaps it was the stifling heat when we were all inside with the fire burning brightly that led to the discovery that the indignant Colin stank. He was kicked out. He was, however, good at billiards and this endeared him to his father. This time it was the three of us who were excluded; we did not, or could not, play.

We dragged Mr and Mrs Hamilton to see our 'house'. They were genuinely and understandably impressed. The next day, by Mr Hamilton's orders and without reference to us, the hole was filled in – the roof made it a skilfully disguised man-trap for anyone who had to work in the orchard.

This was a blow to us and contributed to a note of ill-will between us and the Hamilton parents. Something peculiar was happening to us all. Life was dull. Was there nothing interesting to do?

Dudley persuaded a disreputable character called Duck to buy us a packet of Woodbine cigarettes which we smoked in a field adjacent to the Hamilton grounds. The thrill was impaired by an estranging sense of guilt made worse because we were sick. 'Common diversions divert us no longer'. In short, we were bored.

11

I was aware that the boredom was lessened from time to time, or the mixture of guilt and boredom changed to become more interesting. A religious would have said, 'The Devil entered into us', or, at an earlier stage, 'Satan found work for idle hands to do' if – as the implication was – we did not find something to do ourselves. It was clear that the 'something' should not be interesting. But it is difficult, when you are bored, to set out to find something 'different' but equally boring.

One night when I was lying on my bed with pyjamas on waiting for Dudley to get into his bed, he suddenly discarded the towel he had round his waist and jumped astride me as if challenging me to wrestle. "Now how do you feel?" he said. I felt nothing physically; mentally a sense of boredom and anti-climax, which soon communicated itself to Dudley who, after a few futile attempts to provoke a struggle, got off. I was bitterly disappointed. I had no idea what I wanted, but I did know – and the realization grew with time – that I wanted it badly. I wished I had encouraged Dudley to go on and then I would have found out what he was going to do. But now I think Dudley did not know any more than I did.

When I expressed this to my psychoanalyst years later he was convinced I knew. This seems to me now to be a failure to understand the horrible and painful nature of frustration, its powerful contribution, with fear and guilt, to an absolute hatred and loathing of sexuality in any shape or form. Furtiveness, guilt, frustration, in alternation or all together – such was my experience for many years, the most impressionable years of my life, the matrix from which passionate love supposedly will spring.

Dudley and I continued to duel and wrestle with a growing sense of pointlessness. The only overt and unmistakable emotional

experience was when futility flared into mutual dislike, or more correctly, hate. I did stay with him again – a visit which differed from the past in our avoidance of any tantalizing situation. We met again, once, after the war; it was the last time. At school we kept our distance.

Living with the Hamiltons typified luxury, warmth, almost sybaritic pleasure though Mrs Hamilton discouraged any idea that we should be provided with ready-made pleasures. The Rhodes family was no less well-off; they had a farm in Yorkshire, one on the Isle of Wight and the family dwelling in Hertfordshire. "In those days", Mr Rhodes said to me after the war, "you could make farming pay. Now Heaton cannot, and I'm sure I couldn't." I doubt if that was strictly true; there was nothing lacking of comfort and luxury in the farmhouse on the hill. But in summer it was not difficult to imagine that the soft expanse of field and hedgerow could change to harsh and crude under the bitter winds of winter. Heaton and his father had that winter in their characters. Bob over at Mundens had it too.

At the Rhodes's I felt a need for one particular girl in a way which would have seemed strange at the Hamiltons. Kathy was a pretty girl, tall and slender. She spoke straight; she was fiery tempered. I remember her contrasting sharply with her mother who sat by the fire-light, with her calm Mona Lisa expression, watching Kathy confronting her father with eyes ablaze.

Mrs Rhodes I feared; there was something timeless about her capacity for maternal love. But the tender feelings which I expected between mother and child took no form that I could recognize in her contact either with her sons or her daughters. Kathy with flushed face and sparkling eyes I could understand; the cold scrutiny of her mother was something I could expect to see in the farmyard outside rather than indoors in the welcoming glow of the fireside. What I might have learned at Archer Hall, but did not, was that breeding is ruthless. The graces and civilities play like a beautiful iridescence on the surface when feelings are absent or in abeyance. With Dudley our friendly tussles turned to frustration and hate; with Heaton there were no friendly tussles. Slaughter, bloodshed, cold, and Kathy's flashing eyes alive with love or hate – those were things I could see and know. But I did not know the meaning of what I saw. The Hamiltons and the Rhodes's were providing an education that was not in the timetable. I saw: and was conquered. I did not understand.

12

The home life at the Rhodes's and Hamiltons' continued the emancipation started by the revolt against the removal of Morgan. These upheavals were probably symptoms of puberty rather than causes of the sense of freedom with which I and my contemporaries entered the Main School.

There was anxiety at being a new boy again. Rhodes fell on his feet by becoming fag to Frankie Lord and Spurgeon, two mature and friendly Sixth Formers. Rhodes had the push and drive which made him a capable fag. Because I was thought of as a friend of his – not through any shining merits of my own – I was chosen to be fag to an athletic Sixth Former called Morgan and his study mate Nickalls. Morgan had the merit of being no relation to the prep school pest and did not resemble him in any way; he was alert and efficient, and alas, expected me to be so. Nickalls had the reputation, deserved I think, of being brainy though too clumsy to be a good athlete. I was big, dreamy, unbelievably incompetent, and though I have spoken of having achieved my freedom I fell almost at once into the pains of adolescence. I struggled with my duties: to make toast – "burnt again, blast him!"; tend the fire – out? not always; and make tea. I also had to see that supplies were kept replenished. Lack of foresight meant that I had frequently to borrow a tin of Swiss Milk – as our tins of condensed or evaporated milk were called. My voice had become deep and somewhat uncontrolled. I became famous for saying "Have you any Swizz–milka?" in somewhat stereotyped and mournful tones. 'Swizz–milka' became my theme call. I tried to get rid of the 'milka' but could not; by the time I achieved 'condenny' it was too late. My nickname was 'Swizz' till I entered senior school; then the name was used only by my intimate, Dyer.

After two terms of fag – it had its privileges – my pair could stand it no more. To my great relief I was sacked and returned to the obscurity of the school common room. I was no good – a failure for which I was profoundly thankful.

The sexual climate of the school could have been described as Nonconformist Wholesome – that is assuming that sex was admitted a fit subject for description. This result was achieved, first and foremost, by keeping the school intact as a kind of gigantic sexual pressure-cooker always gently simmering away under the watchful eye of two or three masters of unimpeachable integrity and vigilance. These men, aided by a system of boys of similar but less firmly established outlook, formed the main network of honourable spying, lightly sketched in, it will be remembered, by the Headmaster in his sermon in which he spoke of the failure of boys to realize when disloyalty to their fellows had become obligatory. This network served to detect any escape of steam from any part of the cauldron and to report it at once to the appropriate authority. At this point the big guns came into action, although loosing off only small-arm ammunition in the form of a cosy sexual talk. I was privileged to watch this from close range as I myself, to my surprise, came under suspicion. I say surprise, not because of any sense of sexual asceticism, but because my own sudden illumination which had led me to realize that 'poison in another boy's food', being sent away, wiggling, expulsion and probably – but not quite certainly – poor Mrs Hirst's incarceration in the Lunatic Asylum, were all the *same thing* and made me resolve never to get within miles of that dreadful domain from which no traveller returned.

I was having a very nice confidence-inspiring tea with a master for whom I had great admiration, though I always worshipped from afar. He was the music master, Tidmarsh, a terrifying disciplinarian, widely loved and revered by all Old Boys. On Old Boys days his study was the resort of every hero of whom I had ever heard. From that room came sounds of cheerful and distinguished laughter. In that very room I was knocking back a wonderful tea of buns, cakes, toasted scones, jam. And I was all alone. At last, when all had become cosy – I would be the last person on earth to be unsusceptible to the emollient effect of buttered toasted scones on a cold winter day – with the noises of the school common room drifting distantly in, he asked me, "Have you ever had any troubles?" "No", I said at once.

In the light of the fire I could see he was watching, not intently, not curiously but sympathetically. "No", I lied, this time deliberately, certainly, confident that I knew what he meant though I could not have formulated it. The conversation became general. Thank goodness it was only firelight or he would have seen me blushing.

In about a week guilt became too much. I asked to see him; I owned up. He was very nice about it. Did I know of any other boys? This time I did not have to lie. "No", I said. Perhaps if I had it wouldn't have been so unbearable. Did it go on for ever? How long did it go on? For a year or so; then it became less. I did not dare to ask him how long it was before one became insane, as I felt I had pretty well exhausted my ration by this time. I thought that if I could last out the next two years I would probably have escaped. I resolved to keep a careful watch for insanity – those first awful symptoms! How terrible to know *it* had come, *it* had got me. But – so far it was all right. Thank God! I did so that night, fervently, on my knees.

I avoided any more cosy talks; the reassurance wore off. I played games hard and fortunately I was good at them. Playing well became important because playing badly was not only horrible in itself, but a sign that the dread process of degeneration was active. As time went by I began to hate religion; it was ineffectual and at the same time an obstacle to sexual pleasures. My isolation was unbroken and thereby showed, but not to me then, how general this plague must have been to us all.

It seems unfair, irreverent, to say that from this time on sex achieved a certain cachet. It was a season ticket, nearly always good for a cosy chat and quite a good tea. Not all the staff believed in it. Charles Mellows, for example, produced outstanding teas but no sex talk. Just as one felt that the time had come for a slightly soulful, faintly devilish invitation to purely platonic intimacy, he would rise up, hissing through his teeth, shifting rapidly from one foot to another, and with glazing, abstracted eyes intimate that tea was over. There was nothing to do but clear out.

Sutton-Bobby, as he was always known – behaved as one man talking to another; sex or other intimacies could be discussed, if anyone wanted to, in privacy. In the meantime there were books to talk about, begonias to look at – he was a keen gardener – gramophone records to play.

Sex was not, however, so easily laughed at. One house in particular was notorious for . . . what? The housemaster was a huge man, frightening for his hearty good humour, his rigid, Teutonic discipline, his aesthetic sensibility; his mousey, short-sighted sister acted as Matron. Some of his house were admitted to the privilege of sharing his interests. A boisterous religiosity seemed to defy anyone to storm the safe stronghold of his God – not, I would say, *the* Almighty because the impression was more of a limited co-operation, the housemaster in the foreground and the Very Nearly Almighty within easy reach for consultation and guidance. He was not popular outside his house; inside it he was deemed, certainly by himself, to be popular. At least, no one ever suggested that a capacity for sycophancy came amiss in a member of that house.

In those days early morning prayers for the whole main school were held in the School House common room. His majestic approach, rather like a great warship steaming into home waters to its anchorage, would be greeted by a spontaneous outburst of singing. The school choir, trained by Tidmarsh, was enthusiastic and very good. As befits an East Anglian non-conformist background it was naturally religious; that is to say, it had an ingrained religious quality which has, since it has become a great public school, become less raucous, less fervent. This was not so then. As the Great Man steamed up, the anthem was commenced. 'Who is the King, the King of Glory? *He* is the King of Glory, the Lord Strong and Mighty, Mighty in Battle'.

I do not know if he noticed it, or if, noticing it, he regarded it as in any way inappropriate. He was the swimming master; the school swimming bath – it must have been the only school in England to be so enlightened as to have one at that time – was under his domain. We swam for pleasure and so became extremely proficient swimmers at school. He did not swim for pleasure; he swam, so to speak, ichthyologically, natatorially, to save life. He floated scientifically, lying with his arms stretched out, his legs stretched out, his toes peeping above the surface, the Body Beautiful itself, lying there in the middle, hairy, healthy, Holy.

Poor man I After years of faithful service he and his sister one day suddenly disappeared. Sacked? Resigned? By that time war had started. I was so bored by this undetectable, undetected landmine in our midst that I had reduced my sexual life to perfunctory prayers of the "Oh God, save me from self-abuse" type. I did not care what

happened; one also suspected that God must have had other matters to attend to.

In the intervals between bothering about sex, cosy sex, very rare and exciting capital SEX of the 'poison-in-the-food' variety, I played games and did work of the kind that usually is mentioned in the prospectus. I do not ignore these more usually recognized activities; I am here concerned with the spiritual life of the school and its individuals.

13

The school was recognized for its high moral tone, one of the symptoms being an absence of bad language. One boy invented and used 'blam'; 'blast' was permissible if not used to excess; 'drat' was used by masters. On one occasion the Headmaster, whose expression was unruffled no matter what the state of affairs, was demonstrating in a mathematics class while a traction engine in the lane outside was puffing and snorting and grinding gravel into the surface. It was certainly difficult to hear for the Headmaster was not given to shouting. For once composure settled on us and did not leave us throughout the exposition – which we could not hear – of the intricacies of vulgar fractions. At last he surrendered. Ruffled rather than soothed by our occasional but well placed complaints that we had not heard, he burst out, "Oh drat that traction engine!" We were aghast, both at the mildness of the expletive and that it should be uttered at all. He sent a boy out with a message to the driver, but the boy failed to convey his headmaster's wishes effectively. For the rest of the period we watched the Headmaster – we could at least watch even if we could not hear him – without his usually noble expression. For he had a noble expression which often showed to advantage, particularly when he was preaching, or making a speech on Prize Day or other occasions when parents or visitors were present. 'A fine face' it was generally agreed, except by that small group of carping critics where envy and detraction are at work. Later on, when a well-known artist was commissioned to paint his portrait, it was generally agreed by friends and foes alike that he had caught his expression perfectly; the friends averred that the fineness of the underlying character shone out from the canvas with an inner radiance; the few others agreed about the revelation, but insisted that it showed him as he might be

if he were straining at stool. When I became an undergraduate at his old college at Oxford I met a don who had known him from those early days and who made to me the remark that "he was a downy old bird". I was slightly shocked because I was a supporter of the 'noble' school of thought – and still am. Searching my mind for some criticism which would make the portrait more credible, less open to the criticism that it is vitiated by hero-worship, I think he may remind me of my ambition to soar into the empyrean without adequate down or its counterpart. In my schooldays, my fledgling period, religion provided me with a soft mental down. Such hardness of character that I had was more akin to bits of shell that continued to adhere than to the development of a character that was a 'spine'.

After tea on Sundays a voluntarily organized prayer meeting was held. The authorities provided, or permitted, the use of a classroom for the purpose. I first noticed this when I saw serious looking boys coming out of a classroom, but as there were a number of prefects amongst them it seemed as well to be circumspect with one's curiosity. I did not like being called a 'silly chump', yet it seemed to be reciprocal of 'poison-in-the-food'. I cleared off.

In due season I inquired of Heaton who usually knew everything as he was alert and did not, like me, go around with his eyes shut. Looking self-conscious he said it was a prayer meeting – *The* Prayer Meeting.

Why didn't the bell go for it?

Well, it was kind of private – but anyone could go of course.

Did he go? – I knew jolly well he didn't.

"Nay", he replied, pursing his lips and blushing as he did when haggling with his father. "You won't catch me going there." I couldn't imagine anyone catching Heaton anywhere; he was too wary an old bird, however downy.

"What do they do?"

"Oh, pray and that sort of thing."

"I saw the Prices coming out." The Prices were Sixth Formers, very good athletes. "What *do* they do there?"

"Nay; *you* ask them."

This was one way of calling me a chump, so I shut up. If it had been a pig being slaughtered Heaton would not have blushed at being questioned; some things a respectable god would know. But the Prayer Meeting belonged to a different ceremonial; to witness it

would have had the same effect on Heaton as seeing a pig slaughtered had on me. Neither of us would want to be the pig – or to be 'crucerfied' if it came to that.

In the end I got there, probably as a result of asking too many questions and thereby laying myself open to the suspicion of having come to God or Jesus. One of the Prices (who some years later captained Oxford at cricket) was presiding. On this occasion he went in to bat first, saying "Let us pray." We all stood. I shut my eyes though I wanted to see what was going on. For ages and ages nothing happened; then at last someone, to my intense relief, began to pray. Otherwise I would have *had* to open my eyes to see what they were up to. For all I knew they may all have sat down except me – they could hardly have crept out without my noticing, and anyhow I could hear the chap next to me breathing. I was so relieved that I didn't hear anything after "Oh God" – not 'Gawd' or 'Gud' or any of that lot, but just straight 'God' and later 'Amen'. Then we sat down and Price read a few verses of his own choosing from the Bible. Then, "Let us pray" again. This time someone started at once, there being less nervousness in the Second Innings despite the poor score in the first. He was followed by Jones who, as I later discovered, was the mainstay of our batting strength; he could always be relied on for a good score. He was a tall, red-haired, emotional Welshman with a keen face and a powerful flow of sincerity. He spoke in a slightly strangled voice on the verge of contrition. As far as I knew there was only one thing you could be contrite about and that was linked with asking God for a clean heart. Not that, in my experience, it was the slightest use.

Jones had a peculiar walk which seemed as characteristic as the walk of a cricketer going in to bat, a walk which suggested a mixture of crisis, confidence in the outcome, anxiety mastered. In prayer meetings where movement was restricted to standing up and sitting down he managed to convey the same impression by his anguished tone. Then, as if he had somehow mentally cleared his throat, the flow would establish itself, clear, forcible – no, not clear; muddy, like a river in spate.

I found I could not easily stop attending; my presence had become noticeable. Unable to stop attending I could hardly refrain from, well . . . showing myself a 'good soldier of Christ'. Accordingly one Sunday I found myself with eyes clenched tight and a horrid feeling in my chest, addressing myself out loud, ostensibly to God, but in fact

to Price, Jones and one or two others who formed a kind of Celestial Selection Committee. "Oh God", I said, "Thou knowest . . ." – then why bother the poor fellow? – "We meet here again this day to confess our faults and failings" – not on your life! Wiggling? Whining? Cheating? Hoping I would get into the water polo team come what may? 'Not', as Bernard Shaw would say later, 'bloody likely!' However, I had 'broken my duck' and was getting into form. I was suddenly reminded of Jones, swerved off, was reminded of Price, and swerved again. In terms I borrow from a sports writer's description of my hero, the English international three-quarter, Poulton, playing against the South Africans, I 'sold them the dummy, showed them the double swerve and scored between the posts', the posts being "For Christ's sake, Amen".

Afterwards I felt much better; I was not inclined to doubt Jones who assured me, coming up with his walk characteristic of impending religious crisis, that it was due to the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit or not, a few Sundays after this, perhaps because I had got my swimming colours, I felt I couldn't stand any more of it. I *did not go* to the Prayer Meeting! Nothing happened; absolutely nothing happened. I did take the precaution of praying that I might score a goal – I felt it advisable to keep the score moderate – in our coming swimming match, though I hoped secretly for another as a bonus. I did 'hedge' my devotions by practising assiduously. I kept clear of the Selection Committee.

At the opposite pole from Jones was a master who didn't take religion seriously; it was popularly believed that he thought the boys who went to the Prayer Meeting were a lot of hypocrites. He was fat and, I thought, unathletic till I discovered he played for England at hockey. Although I knew that hockey was a sissy game which even girls played, I felt an emotional tremor; an international was an international, even at hockey. Furthermore, I respected games like cricket in which a hard ball and some hard instrument like a stick or bat was used; I disliked pain and I did not want to be hit.

Sometimes he behaved as if work was a joke. My friend Dyer had not done his Latin homework – it was notorious that he never did, so it was no surprise when he couldn't say his repetition when called up to the masters desk to do so. There sat Corelli, smiling, complacent. Between him and the window, opening on a vista of trees and lawn, stood Dyer unshaken, impenitent, floundering.

"Me . . . me . . ."

Corelli, with ever broadening smile, nodded appreciatively.

"Me . . . tempore . . . dulcis alebat . . ."

Corelli seemed surprised but did not allow it to disturb his composure. It was a lovely morning. Dyer fell silent. Corelli continued to smile. At length, "Don't know it Dyer?"

"No, sir . . . oh, yes sir! 'Carmina qui lusi . . . pastorum. . . .' It's all coming to me now. Something about 'te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi'" Dyer stopped, triumphant.

Corelli, smiling sadly, said, "Just stand aside boy, so I can see the green leaves." He stared out of the window, still smiling. "Sub tegmine fagi", he repeated, but I thought he sounded a little stern. "Not done your homework, eh Dyer?"

"Well, I had to . . ."

"Never mind, Dyer. Better luck next time", and he dismissed him. No impot, nothing. But I was sure he was angry. Then why did he not take work seriously?

14

With the exception of religion – which seemed to offer alternations of blue skies and dark, the latter being both threatening and exciting – I entered into relative calm. I was free of prep-school bullying; the horror of Sundays, half holidays, night-time, remained lively ghosts. Morgan in the main school was a physical representation only of himself; he was a non-entity; his relationship with all his prep school contemporaries had altered. Whether the change was located in himself or us, or both, I did not know. From the little I saw I did not think he had changed: his friend Pickett had – he was more intelligent, more cruel. The continuation of that friendship was one respect in which Morgan showed his lack of change.

The morale of the main school was powerful enough to show up clearly the defects of the prep school and the disastrous cancer of Hirst's tragedy. What was done to him by the laws of his time seems to me to be the outcome of the unspeakable cruelty of a nation dominated by a prep-school mentality.

The main school, which I have no intention of sparing from criticism, was well disciplined, extremely enlightened. It can stand comparison with any other known to me since. It was lively intellectually and emotionally, and therefore not a comfortable place to live in for any of us, but particularly uncomfortable for bullies like Pickett and Morgan. For whatever reason, these two left before they were sixteen. What happened to them I do not know. It was right, for the good of the school as a whole, that they were removed. The question posed by their presence or absence loomed large in my mind. I can see now that it repeated itself with variations many times in the course of my life. It resembled a mathematical problem set in examinations. The mathematician can see it is the 'same' problem; not so the student

who either cannot recognize it in its new formulation, or thinks of it as 'disguised' simply to make things difficult. I did not recognize the underlying pattern when I became aware of H. N. Browne and 'Bilge' Browne.

They were two Sixth Formers who shared the same study. H. N. came of a wealthy family, though I did not know this at the time. 'Bilge' was intelligent, tiresome and, as his nickname indicated, disliked. I knew nothing of either because both occupied exalted positions, but from time to time there were certain curious emotional flurries. "C'mon", said an excited contemporary, "watch the fun!" "Why, what's the matter?" But he had gone and I immediately followed, unwilling to miss an exciting adventure.

Some forty or fifty boys were collected at the cinder track which surrounded the Old Field. It was in full view of the School House, but some fifty yards of track were on a slope sufficient to afford concealment if a boy undergoing a customary punishment of having to run ten or sixteen tracks wished to evade the supervising prefect's scrutiny. The boys had collected at the part nearest the School House and therefore least concealed from observation. Here a curious scene was being enacted.

H. N. had used pliers to cut holes in the wire fencing and through these holes he had, presumably with some assistance, inserted the wrists of his victim so that Bilge was held captive in the figure of a Saint Andrew's cross, his feet being similarly held at the other extremity. Having achieved his purpose H.N. had walked off leaving Bilge to be scrutinized by anyone who chose. As the wire had been repaired by H.N. he could not release himself. No one took advantage of his helpless position; he was finally released by two moderately senior but otherwise undistinguished boys.

On another occasion I was present early enough to see the start. It took place in an old but which served as a gymnasium and contained various pieces of apparatus suitable for the purpose. The crowd of boys was of much the same proportion but this time, since it was indoors, the chances of secrecy were greater – though owing to the number of spectators, still slight. This time H.N. was tying Bilge, face downward, to the rungs of a ladder which spanned the width of the gymnasium horizontally. As far as I know the story followed the same course: H.N. walked off; Bilge was not molested after he had been secured; in time someone else released him.

Some time after this H.N. must have been reprimanded; the Headmaster announced to the school that it was wrong for one boy to ill-treat another. I gathered that it was particularly wrong for this to be done to a senior boy. As far as I was concerned I did not want it to happen to me.

Subsequently H.N. went to Cambridge. He was a good athlete, a fast runner, and blossomed out as a 'blood' who entertained in some style though without extravagance. Spotless napery, distinguished silverware is what I remember of a lunch party at which I was a guest. H.N. cannot have invited me from choice. I had been taken to see the University team play Newport at rugger and as I knew no one at Cambridge he, hearing of my plight, asked me to "come along" and join his groups of friends from school. Retrospectively I think he was being extremely tolerant and long-suffering; I cannot imagine anyone more gauche or less rewarding than I as an addition to a social event.

Had I been asked about bullying I should have denied any knowledge of it outside prep school; some ragging perhaps, but all good-hearted harmless fun. Many years later I met a man whom I recognized as a contemporary of mine. He had not become distinguished at work or games as I had before I left; I thought of him as a nice though somewhat uninteresting person. I felt that I, as was natural to me, was being friendly to him despite his colourless personality and lack of distinction. We had business to transact and I went out of my way to make these occasions social with some references, to which he made a limited response, to the 'old days' – I did not call them the 'good' old days. I did not think he was pleased to see me, but I attributed this to his being somewhat over-awed by me.

It took me time to understand that in fact he hated me. It is the more surprising that I was unaware of this because his feelings were not just active dislike and repulsion, but thorough going deep hatred not unmixed with fear and contempt. Yet I could remember nothing that I had ever done against him or any of his friends. There was, however, no doubt about it – I was the address to which the hate was properly directed.

While expressing freely my dislike of others whom I feared and hated, it seems to me that I failed to see activities of my own. These were obscured for me by my own efficient methods of camouflage. I do not now expect to evade my own capacity for self-deception and

self-admiration; my discovery, though unpleasant, stimulated my curiosity.

At first I tried to remember instances in which I had set out to overpower another physically. I at once recalled an occasion which was more terrifying in retrospect than at the time. Three or four of us were indulging in horseplay with a boy called Greene. I had a piece of string looped about his throat, untied and loose. I pulled the ends together and at once he lost consciousness; I let go and he recovered. The event was so sudden and such my ignorance that I thought he was pretending, but I did not require much persuasion that he was not; my own observations convinced that some disaster had nearly occurred. The game stopped; an older boy told me I should never have played with string around his throat – It might have killed him". I was too frightened by this time to admit it and laughed the idea to scorn. Later, however, I asked a master – without admitting any personal concern other than biological curiosity. I was not reassured. The next morning at nine o'clock, the regular hour for seeing the Headmaster, I went and made a clean breast of the matter, showing how guilty and anxious I had become. He reassured me but told me that if the string had been knotted and I had not been able to loosen it Greene would have been dead in thirty seconds. He dismissed me saying he would make an announcement to the school; he added that he was glad I had come to him. The next day in front of the whole school, but without mentioning names or any particulars, he issued a general warning that boys should never, in playing or wrestling, use string and certainly not in the vicinity of the throat, as this could be highly dangerous. I was glad he said no more – I had had my lesson. Greene, I think, had not really known anything about it – or is this: one of those ideas of 'the fox likes it' type?

The next of my heart-searchings brought to mind an occasion when I was playing water polo in a pre-breakfast practice game. H. N. Browne, my immediate opponent, swung his arm and hit me in the eye. I was aware instantly of intense pain. I crawled out and began to vomit. I was too crazed with pain to know what was happening. A master was fetched and I was removed to the sick room to await the surgeon, as it was found that a piece of the white of my eye was hanging from the eyeball by a thread of connective tissue. From half past six that morning I lay till half past two in the afternoon when the surgeon arrived; I must have been only on the edge of consciousness

all that time. He injected cocaine in the eye, replaced the displaced piece and put in a couple of stitches. The cocaine had stopped the pain but I could see the needle and hear a tearing as it entered my eye.

I remember waking in a confused way to see my mother by my bedside; I could not think why she was there when she should have been in London. She told me that the doctor had said it was "all right now". A week or two later I went to the doctor's surgery to have the stitches removed. I dreaded more pain but it turned out to be of no importance – a slight prick and it was all over.

I was incredulous but vaguely gratified to be assured that I had been the subject of an announcement to the whole school. The Headmaster had said I had nearly lost the sight of my eye and he urged players to be more careful in future. I could not imagine how we were to be 'more careful'; I still believe the same thing might have happened the very next day to yet another boy.

There was at school a boy, slightly bigger than I, who was short-sighted to an extent that compelled the use of thick lenses which gave him a noticeably owl-like appearance so that he came into the class of those whose physical defects made them helpless and vulnerable. He always looked miserable and this stimulated the impulse to exploit his 'miserable' resources, included amongst which was his inability to play games. As there was no outlet, as today there would be, for playing any game such as chess which might have revealed his intellectual capacity, he was reduced to working. Unfortunately for him he appeared to be as 'hopeless' at that as at everything else. One afternoon I found myself with nothing to do – a situation in which, I had been trained to believe, Satan could be relied upon to find work for my idle hands. Nor, from my experience, was this an implausible belief. And there, asking for trouble – presumably at Satan's prompting – was Maynard. He was applying his short sight to trying to read; it took but a moment to snatch his book. I did not even have to think; there was no interval between the desire and the appropriate action. To my surprise I found my wrists firmly grasped; I could not free them. I was extremely indignant; I was stronger than he, being by this time a successful games player with considerable prestige. I told him to let go. He took no notice. Luckily there was no one to see my predicament, but at any moment someone might have come in. I remembered that I had been told by friends of his parents that at his previous school he had been bullied and forced to kiss his

tormentors' boots. I had been asked to befriend him and save him from similar ill treatment. In my helpless position I could not think of any way in which I could turn this to good account. He did not have to say anything; he had only to wait till someone came in to witness my humiliation.

I said, "Let me go." He tightened his grip. So – he could not read; I could not get loose. He said, "You thought I was too weak to hold your hands." This was a remark I could not refute. Finally he let go. He said nothing more and I cannot think what face-saving ritual I discovered – probably none at all.

I do not remember learning anything from that experience, but I do remember avoiding the temptation offered by weakness and helplessness; I avoided not only Maynard but any emotional situation which might precipitate another such experience. I should say it was my *intention* to avoid such a situation, but I soon forgot what I was intending to avoid. I retained only an incomprehensible vestige of the experience. I can now think only of a sense of disaster, past and impending, in which either my companion, or more probably I, was being shaken by sobs.

Misery at school had a dynamic quality. That is where Dean Farrar was baffling. In the prep school *Eric or Little by Little* seemed false. In my imagination the characters were always miserable and dying, but in my experience school was not passive depression. *Eric* was a part of the misery of school – not a good story about it.

Night in the dormitory was a time when things happened. Boys talked in their sleep, they sobbed, they cried out. In the morning, as likely as not, they knew nothing about it.

"I say Richards, you *were* making a row last night!"

"Really? What sort of row?"

"Oh, yelling and shouting. You kept on saying 'Don't' as if someone was strangling you."

"Funny! Don't remember a thing about it."

There were horrific stories of sleep-walking which were part of the saga not only of my school but, as I discovered, of school life in general. I told my cousin about the occasion when a boy had been swinging on a gas-bracket and his weight had caused it to pull out of its ball and socket joint. A master had, with great presence of mind –

"I know", said my bored and sophisticated cousin, "he rushed

to the bathroom, got a cake of soap and plugged the gas pipe till it could be mended".

"How did *you* know?", I said indignantly.

"Why, that old chestnut is as old as the hills!"

"But I know for a fact it happened because it was the master himself who told me."

"It always is", said Roy, "Beaks never wash because they use up all the soap plugging gas pipes."

15

In those pre-Freudian days sex, nurtured and cosseted and titillated by the segregation of boys in public schools, was a PROBLEM. At considerable expense of mental pain, money and time, this problem was then all set for solution. The machinery for its solution was, by a happy coincidence, the same as that used for its creation – religion and law – so that I never thought that religion had any other function than the regulation of my and other people's sexual activities. My increasing development ran parallel with increasing loathing and hatred of sex and religion and rules – all equally fatuous. It did not occur to me that there might be something wrong with a creator who created sex and did not allow you to exercise it till some unspecified date in the distant future, or that there was something wrong with sex and its rules.

There were words which were associated with the domain of 'self-abuse'. We did not use the term 'masturbation', and were too 'refined' to use others available to 'rough' boys. Even when I came to know it later, 'masturbation' had much of the same Hellish Grandeur of 'expelled'. Our vocabulary had an iridescence of terror, satanic splendour and Biblical mystery. Onan's story used to stimulate emotional ripples; the powers of Darkness, still prowling and prowling around, returned with their former glory refurbished; 'Fight the good Fight/With all thy might' also seemed to revive the dying embers of sexuality – crushed beneath the load of boredom. It must have been my first experience of the rejuvenating quality of guilt, though at the time I experienced it more as the beneficent glow of Salvation. Saint Paul was a great stand-by with his 'whole armour' of Faith.

Jones in the prayer meetings had contributed a warm, cosy, though slightly humid emotion to the sexual orchestra. "Oh God", he would

start. "Oh God indeed", my sinking heart would respond. "Thou knowest . . ."

"Good God, said God, I've got my work cut out." – but there had to be a J. C. Squire and a war before that phrase was available, otherwise I might have had a straw to which I could cling.

I was reminded of Jones years later when the head of a medical unit used to address the assembled medical and surgical staff at regular intervals. "I have an announcement to make. I am sorry to say that Matron has complained to me that the nurses are very shocked –" "Oh Christ" broke in an impatient senior surgeon, "has Kisch been saying 'fuck' again?" The Dean of Studies inclined his head reverently, sadly, to admit that indeed it was so.

A great hospital with its obstetric and gynaecological departments had advantages over a public school with its powerful, moral, pre–1914 traditions. We had to do what we could with a veil of modesty worn with the impenetrability of the armour of faith. By 1920, having – as my friend Nokes said – supplemented the education provided by a non-conformist school with experience extended by God's War (Holy, soft nations, for the use of) we could go, cleansed as by fire, up to the University with a wisdom which had not been within the reach of our forebears. By 1945 the cleansing qualities of war had become too abrasive; now we are able to try LSD, marijuana ('bhang' to you my poor, ignorant, little Indian self) and other fruits of enlightenment. I am surprised to find how rigid, old fashioned, uncomprehending I have become, although I have always been naturally intolerant and self-opinionated; it is only the opinions which have altered.

As I have indicated, bullying which was overt and easily recognizable was rare; what there was of it could be, and was, dealt with adequately. But the cruelty embedded in the school system could not be dealt with because it was not possible in those days to detect it by the tentative groping methods available. What could we do? Masters and boys alike were caught in a web which we did not see even as we struggled to free ourselves. Who could recognize danger in piety, ardent patriotism to school and games heroes? There were those who suspected that the danger was not all confined within the bournes recognized by convention. Corelli was typical both in his strength and his weakness. His protest, and that of such boys as were attracted to him, would have been more likely to engender today's licence than

the Golden Rule. 'Sublimation', not yet a Freudian term, was used by some for what in fact was a substitution. Games were substituted for sex; even religion was thought of by the more advanced as if it were some harmless substitute. No one thought that sublimation could mean the reaching for, yearning for games which were sublime, a religion that was sublime and not a stopper that could dam back the noxious matter till it stank, or bury the growth of personality till it turned cancerous.

When I reached the Main School I had become proficient at games. Games were in themselves enjoyable; I was fortunate not to have had them buried under a mass of subsidiary irrelevancies – such as winning matches, keeping my ghastly sexual impulses from obtruding, and preserving a fit body for the habitation of a supposedly healthy mind. I *liked* swimming; I *enjoyed* water polo; I could be indifferent to the rivalry with others for a place in the team. I was equally fortunate in rugger. It was soon obvious that I was good; I was first class at every game but cricket – at which I was so bad that it presented no problem. I could, therefore, come nearer to playing the game for the sake of the game than I ever came to working for the sake of work. My excellence meant that the prospects of captainship began to appear over the horizon. That would mean that games for the sake of games would no longer be a feasible aim. In fact I became a very bad captain, but by that time war had come and captainship – but not leadership – had become irrelevant. My failure, in so far as it was noted at all, was excused in the prevailing disaster – 'it's the war'. No one had told us that the games were a prelude to war.

Before that day – dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae – I had one triumph, one great pleasure even though not unexpected. Athletic contests took place in the Easter Term – a bleak arrangement, inimical to athletic success, but so it was ordained. Distinguished from the rest was the Senior Cross Country Run.

16

The day of the Run was sunny and clear. The hedges showed the green blush which in southern England I had come to expect within a day or two of March 25th. In School House lunch was over; we runners ate sparingly, believing that a big meal produced 'stitch'. The sky was blue and cold; I felt taut in the pit of my stomach for I was expected to win. My rival was a sprinter, stories circulated about the high speeds he had reached in practice runs over the distance. They were faster than mine, but I judged it prudent to keep my mouth shut. It was time to line up. At last – the start. There were thirty or forty of us, too many for the lane to hold us conveniently, so I had to run faster than I cared for to avoid being held up half a mile from the start at the narrow gate at the top of the hill.

I was distressed by the sprint up the hill, as I knew I would be. Nevertheless it seemed more severe, more sinister than I had expected. I was first through the gate, my rival second. How smoothly and easily he ran ! I felt awkward, clumsy, laboured. The stitch had started; as we had drawn away from the others I felt sure he could hear my distressed breathing. I quickened my pace to draw away so he could not hear me. There was the Farm, sharp and bright in the sun. I was drawing ahead; the sound of his foot-fall was fainter. Long Meadow and the stitch gone at last; no more sound of feet to torment me. I was running easily when I saw the gate leading into the road in front of me. As I came up to it I had a sickening feeling that I had lost ground. A scrap of hedge enabled me to snatch a glance back without being seen by my rival from whom I wished to keep all knowledge of my fear of his success. He had closed right up; he must have seen my furtive glance, hawthorn hedge notwithstanding. I vaulted the gate though I felt I could hardly spare the effort. As I turned left-handed

on the other side I saw him check. I fancied he had been disconcerted and had fumbled the catch of the gate in momentary dismay. I had regained a few yards I was sure; how had I let him catch up on me unawares?

The road was hard and uneven; it was much further than I expected before I reached the field where the run left it for the slope down to the Plantation. He was close behind now and I knew he would pass me. I sprinted down the slope, but he did the same. I so desperately needed to reach the shelter of the Plantation before he could pass me. He was breathing easily; I was sure he could hear my gasping distress. I hardly realized I had entered the Plantation before him, but what use was it to me? I needed to be screened from him to put my despairing plan into action.

Though the path through the coppice was a series of short winding turns I did not think they could serve my purpose. The Plantation was notorious for this path, narrow, almost overgrown and of a glutinous mud at any season. It was known that any runner would take the chance to regain his breath there where nobody could run. I decided not to take the chance. At the first twist of the path where I could be sure of being hidden from sight I would . . . I lengthened my pace. He was too distressed to notice. At last I had a few yards to spare, under cover, disguised. Throwing all I had into the effort I began to sprint – if I could call it that when every step was an agonizing pull to release my foot from the squelching, cloying tug of the mud.

At last I saw light at the path's parting from the wood. If he could see me then he would know the race was his. I came into the clear light of the afternoon sun, gasping and without the energy to spare even for subterfuge. Here the path was firm and dry. I ran for the point where a left-handed turn interposed hedge between me and the path he yet had to run. As I reached it I saw he was out of the Plantation and had me in view for the second before I turned under the shelter of the hedge. Once behind it I lengthened my stride and ran as if the fiends were after me. No fiend could have spurred me more than the knowledge that my rival could not see me for at least seven seconds. I wanted to be sure that when he saw me next I should have gained so much that his hope was destroyed. I was now running up hill. Though the firmness of the ground more than compensated for the slope, I knew that this effort would punish him

more than it did me. He had lost ground in that terrible Plantation; he cannot have expected me to gain on him there. I had a chance to see him again, about a mile later; he was a hundred yards behind. There were another thousand yards before the finishing line, yet I was sure I could not now be beaten. I was not.

I did not like my rival; he was the hero of his house, the athletic champion on whom they relied to defeat me. He was favoured by the classics master who was a popular man and a fine cricketer; his status as a scholar was similar – a fine classicist with a genuine passion for Virgil and Homer. He would expostulate with me in class, "What is there difficult about Latin? You have the brains; you only have to follow the rules and there are so many of them –""that", said I finishing the sentence for him, "you cannot possibly remember them." This pert answer annoyed and puzzled him. It puzzled me; there was more of jealousy and envy than I realized – jealousy of the boys, the athlete being one, with whom he had friendly tussles; jealousy of his glamour which dated in our eyes from Cambridge University days, and which was enhanced by his association with the senior classics master, Colman.

Colman was of established English stock; he looked like an Elizabethan statesman of the kind with which I was familiar from portraits in history books. His enthusiasm for sport was intensified as he was debarred from it by an injury reputed to be due to falling from a lamp post in a boat-race night rag. He liked me sufficiently to invite me on one of his schoolboy parties on the Norfolk Broads; on another occasion to his home in Peterborough.

The envy and admiration of English Society – so different from my ayah or dhunia – grew as it had with the Rhodeses. The religious rituals of the family surprised and impressed me. His parents, both deaf, filled me with awe and dislike. Before breakfast the whole family – domestics, visitors and any relatives who might be near – gathered for prayers. Before they all knelt, after the Bible reading, the sister whose duty it was would deftly slip the lighted spirit lamp under the egg-boiler so that the termination of the prayer – three minutes for lightly boiled – would coincide with the readiness of the eggs for consumption. This economical arrangement kept piety, gastronomy and common-sense in harmonious combination until one day the guest of the family was a gentleman of great piety and distinction whose claims to represent the family before the Lord could not be ignored.

He was asked to offer up a prayer. Whether he was overwhelmed by the thought of the August Personage whom he was invited to address, or whether he was modestly aware that the family were wealthy members of his congregation, never became clear. Martha slipped unobtrusively to the egg-boiler; all knelt, and the petitioner slipped into what might be called 'top' or 'Jonesian' gear.

'Lightly boiled' was passed easily; 'hard boiled', and still he showed no sign of weakening. Martha began to have a spiritual crisis: to extinguish the unspiritual lamp, or not? Martha, true to her name, was troubled about many things.

The family, knee-sore and flushed, rose; prayers were over, the eggs – boiled. They had lost their savour for the family; all refused except the guest. Unfortunately it appeared that he could not take hard boiled eggs. Could he, perhaps, he asked modestly, have a 'soft-boiled egg'? He could, and did, as he didn't in the least mind waiting. The guest must have been spiritually inspired – perhaps by a spirit with a sense of humour.

The walls of the parental home were covered with painted leather. I was not able to see what was depicted, nor, I was surprised to find, was Colman. The home possibly had oppressive memories and the power to evoke them, for when he proposed a walk across the fens he seemed as pleased as I with the prospect. We had previously visited the cathedral. Although he and I both took an amateur interest in identifying ornaments and their styles and periods – to which he in fact had introduced me – the cathedral seemed to evoke similar feelings to those of his home.

Colman was a personality as complex as his physical body but his patriotism was simple and unwavering. It did not suggest to him the roll of drums, the clangour of martial music, but the great expanse of the fenland sky, the soft glow of hazy sun, Ely riding the landscape like a huge ship, a shadow matching the procession of clouds above. He was a man of the Fens, of Elizabeth's England, of Hereward the Wake, of Cromwell, of Milton.

The walk to Crowland Abbey enshrined in an England which I was never to know again. It was hot; the air formed a shimmering screen between us and the landscape; the song of the yellow-hammers had crickets to form accompaniment; the bells of Crowland came over the land before we saw the remains of the abbey. The threat of war was

upon us as an exciting actuality for me rather than the source of exasperation it was to Colman. The joy of fenland skating on the peculiar hooked skates, the shimmering bare landscape of summer, the small life of Wicken Fen, the glory of the skies – the thought that these were in jeopardy from robbers and violent men made his detestation of the German threat. The similarity to the Rhodes farmers, although outwardly they could hardly be less alike, was unmistakable. The Rhodes family did not read books; Colman, Oxford graduate and scholar, would not go to a performance of Shakespeare for 'religious' reasons. The beauties of nature were hard and bitter like hoar frost, the bleak winter scene, the slaughter and sale of animals; for Colman there was no beauty in international brotherhood, the ideals of peace on earth. These were matters for those who liked conversation.

Colman knew every inch of the Fens; his friend Will Mellows, Town Clerk of Peterborough, knew every street and alley of that city. He was able to point out that the Victoria County History had, in its painstaking survey of the Peterborough streets, made one great error – the streets described were those of Stamford, not Peterborough. The error had not been acknowledged, nor had the receipt of his communication – perhaps a sign that the rot had gone too far. We discussed this in sight of Crowland and ate our bread and cheese.

17

THE walk to Crowland, the visit to Peterborough cathedral, Ely swimming through the heat of the unsheltered fenland – as I write of them I am distracted, aware of some change which meant 'nevermore'. In the light of later events it is easy to suppose that it was war that brought about great changes. I do not believe that my sense of loss derived either from changes in myself or the world I knew. The expertise of Will Mellows, the fiery yet controlled patriotism of Colman, the calm security of Hereward the Wake's country – I was dismayed, resentful of a past so filled with renown that it both stimulated and imposed a dead hand on my inchoate ambitions.

The Agadir crisis: what a nuisance these Germans were! "Wake up England!" King George V was alleged to have said. Well, what for? I *was* awake; so were lots of others. I would soon be going to Oxford or Cambridge – how wonderful it would be if I became an *International*! Wonderful indeed, but so ridiculous that such thoughts had to be kept secret.

I had no money so, I thought dully, I would have to win a scholarship. I knew no subject in which I could aspire to a scholarship except history – and that I did not like. I wrote half-heartedly to my parents, but I knew the answer so well that I could hardly bother to open the envelope or read their letter. No – I knew it – they had no money, unless £50 a year would be enough. It was awful to think that they imagined that £50 a year would do. Euston at Trinity, I told my father with such civility as I could muster, said I might be able to scrape through with £300 a year. I did not want to scrape through. I wrote, rudely, to my mother to tell her to get some sense into my father. She did not reply; even if the money was available I would need good manners too if I were to 'scrape through'. To them I could express my

ambitions while exposing the bankruptcy of my equipment; I did not anticipate a welcome from less tolerant observers.

I had to go to sit for scholarship examinations at Oxford. I was overawed by the Queen's College hall where the exam took place. I knew I was not worth a scholarship – it was one respect in which my estimate of my chances was correct; the result showed beyond a doubt that they could not give me a scholarship or an exhibition, even though an exhibition took into consideration the poverty as well as the worthiness of the candidate. Damn them! They said I was not even poor enough. My relief at slinking out of Oxford was tempered by despair at what was to happen to me. Without influence I could get nowhere; I had no influence.

I told Colman. "Never mind", he said, "better luck next time." No money, no manners and no luck. I despised having to depend on luck instead of on – myself? It did not inspire me with hope. Colman comforted me, not by anything he said, but by what he was. His crippling headaches could come on him so suddenly when he was in class teaching that he would have to leave, dazed and almost reeling, to return to his house and his bed; his temper, so quiet that its intensity intimidated the oldest and bravest of us, never quite obscured his gentleness and stealthy kindness. Though it was many years later before I had an idea of the extent of his benevolence, I could feel it and be sustained by it.

A new spirit was abroad which began to obtrude upon me and gradually to obscure my anxieties. The pre-occupation of all the staff seeped through to pervade the senior school. At first they seemed only to be uninterested in us and our world; it was not clear why they were attaching so much importance to Agadir, the Panther, the Germans. It was interesting of course. Did they think there would be a war? They didn't know. Probably not. Perhaps. Maybe. But it would be short. Someone – Norman Angel – had proved no one could win a modern war so, clearly, no one could be so foolish as to start one. I felt my heart sink; even a short war would be interesting and it was depressing to feel that it would be smothered by common sense. Colman thought it would be a relief to see the end of war scares. "Do you think there will be a war sir?" Our questions became more frequent, more hopeful that there would be a war; perhaps a great naval battle. 'Your glorious standard raise again to face another foe', we sang at the end-of-term concert. Our music master laughed. "No", he said, "it

was pure coincidence." He had chosen *Ye Mariners of England* months before he had any idea that there might be a war. Still, it would have been nice if only he had owned up to some premonition, something which we could have boasted about – a psychic counterpart of the leak of gas from the torn-out gas bracket so magnificently plugged with soap.

The war became a bore. The fleet had sailed under sealed orders. Even 'sealed orders' was something you sailed under with the inevitability with which you conferred behind 'locked doors'. Where the hell had the fleet gone? After a few days I stopped rushing to the paper for news of the Great Naval Battle.

Term ended. I went off for my holiday to the Thompsons' with Laurie Lawn whose parents, like mine, lived abroad. Thompson and his wife ran a prep school. He had a boat, an untidy, dirty, dilapidated old yawl which he kept tied up at a mooring in the river Deben. There was no nonsense about Thompson; he was an unpredictable, bad-tempered tyrant – unlike my loved, unhappy, ghost-haunted failure 'Nigger' Hirst. He hated boys who were soft, loutish, half alive, half dead – a perfect description of me. I felt he could have saved time and words if he had simply said "Bion". Manly boys, morally clean boys, did not make a fuss about dirt. They liked his indescribably filthy boat with sails whose brownish red pigment came off on their jackets. They liked being up at the bow working the foresheet while icy cold seas broke over them. So did I, but I was determined that I would not be in debt to that hateful old fool. I liked it because nobody was there except myself alone.

Part of the pretension of manliness was to turn up for the day without any food – being indifferent to hardship and food was manly. In my soft way, nurtured on the luxuries of Colman's boat on the Broads, I thought – but did not say – that it was not manly, merely incompetent. Years later, when I read a book describing the dreadful winter of the South Polar exploration, I felt I knew it all – the manliness, the incompetence, the utter futility, contrasting so nobly with the sneaking, unmanly clockwork precision and success of a rival team. In my soft feminine way I preferred success. I certainly preferred success that fine blustering day at sea when I was invited by the effervescent Thompson to make do with a hunk of stale, musty cake; search had revealed that there was no other food aboard.

Mr Thompson's wife, unlike Hirst's, was not in a loony bin. Mrs Thompson was beautiful; she wore smart, frightening clothes; she liked manly, intelligent boys like Laurie who won a lead over me which he never lost. One or two of the boys of Thompson's school who were staying after the end of their term were already far in the lead. They looked tremendously scruffy to me; it was hard to realize that they were superior beings.

I was in love with Mrs Thompson; with hang-dog look and downcast eyes I worshipped from afar. And then I realized . . . it was quite simple really. She could not understand how a great big boy like me, who could easily be taken for military age, did not run away and join the army. I couldn't understand it myself. Whenever I thought of doing so I felt such a fool that I dismissed the thought. It would have been fine to run away, join the army, go to the front and . . . I couldn't quite make up my mind about getting killed and finally settled for winning the VC and coming back to see how Mrs Thompson took it. Even so I had doubts; one glance at my woe-begone face in a mirror showed how ridiculous I would look as a hero. Subsequent events proved me right.

Anyhow, there in the evenings I sat – a great boring lump of dog-like devotion. Poor Mrs Thompson! My heart bled for her. I could *not* make out why I didn't run away and . . .

The holidays at last came to an end. I didn't run away; I didn't join up. And the bloody fleet did not have a Great Naval Battle. Laurie and I on our last day did, however, put aside our school caps – so as not to bring dishonour on them – put on sailing caps and amidst some furze bushes pulled out two brand new pipes and began to smoke them. We admitted that it was better than fiddling around doing nothing in particular; tobacco was a solace. After a bit I told Laurie I thought I would take a stroll. He, damn him, agreed with alacrity and offered, almost insisted, on coming with me. It was the last straw; war, pipes, Grand Fleet, Mrs Thompson – they could all be at the bottom of the sea for all I cared.

On the second day of term someone rushed into the studies. "The Army! Quick!", and vanished. At first, with dignity sufficient to show that we of the Sixth would never be influenced by scum like boys from the Lower Sixth, we moved towards the gate. But . . . That was band music! Those powerful throbbing pulsations! We ran; we reached the gates just before the head of the column. It was the army!

As column after column passed I was overawed. "North Midland Division", someone said. North Staffs, South Staffs, the Leicesters . . . I had never heard of any regiments in my life except the Guards, and they were only something to do with Tuck's postcards, Buckingham Palace and other fairy-story furniture. But the Leicesters – they were real. I was converted; in an hour or two I spoke with professional ease of regiment of the line, gunners, 'figurez vous en plein Sahara'. I was not brash as I had been about India, cannibals and such exotic fry in my first term at the prep school, for I did not even know this was a Territorial Division – nothing at all compared with regulars. My pride, though immeasurable, was not based on knowledge. Later this same division, incompetently handled at Neuve Chapelle, arrived at the Line worn out and unfed only to break when its attack met the withering fire of German machine guns. They said it never recovered; this I can believe even though I never heard any supporting evidence. When we saw them the division was at full strength; the marching columns could have gone on marching for ever without tiring me.

From then on I could not work. I was captain of the 1st XV; I was a prefect. Dust and ashes. At last, at last – I left school after a year which would not move. I went to say good-bye to Bobby Sutton. I was miserable, and angry at being miserable. I said something rude and hostile about being glad to leave. I then burst into tears – to my surprise and embarrassment, and I suppose to his. Bobby was not a sentimental man and I expect it was as well for both of us that I immediately removed myself, collected my traps from the School House and went to the station. I had been at the school for ten years; the last year, my year of glory, the culmination of one of the longest school careers, ended in anti-climax. My captaincy of the XV had been a succession of cancelled matches, frustrations, gloom. My captaincy of swimming, the same. Visiting teams were composed of abstracted and bored men who had made great efforts to come together to give the school a game. Their efforts were understood, but not appreciated; our lack of appreciation aroused no sympathetic response.

As the train drew into Liverpool Street station I knew I would shortly meet my father and mother. Thank God, thank God! And then I thought, for what?

WAR

1

The world was all before. The iron gates of my Paradise clanged to behind me as I walked, alone, solitary in my anonymous glory to face the dawn of the freedom for which I had waited so long. Were there not millions of others? No; I only knew what it was like to be me. No one knew that terrible fear; no one could know how it felt, how awful that first night at the prep school, Search-the-Scriptures Sunday classes, the Sunday 'tuck' in the gym, crawling over the horrible bar with the concrete floor below, the 'summer suns are glowing' but *not* for me. "Oh, *not* again!" Exactly; not again. No more; no, never more.

I knew that tunnel at Bishopsgate. Once it used to open out into the sunshine. There breaks a yet more glorious day. And this – dark, sodden, sulphurous Liverpool Street – was *it*. Surely it *must* be a pool whose stench-borne waters close over one for ever. So like the shell-hole – no, no; not yet. That was later; or long ago; take your choice. Now I stepped out into the glorious company of the umbrella-bearing Saints. England at War. Myself with nothing but my tiny little public-school soul. "Let us run with enlarged hearts", the Headmaster used to beseech our inconsiderately unmedical Maker. "Animula, vagula, blandula . . ." Did Hadrian really feel like that? That was a long time ago, and not in Liverpool Street with the rain pouring relentlessly, icily down. A great big boy like you! These buses! Not one . . . ah, here – Russell Square? "T'other way chum". Someone's umbrella emptied itself down my neck. Mustn't say "damn", damn it!

I got there. In my parent's bedroom the electric light cast its livid warmth; they were glad to see me – that I knew. But I could feel that her boy's precocious departure for the war left my mother kissing a chitinous semblance of a boy from whom a person had escaped. But I was imprisoned, unable to break out of the shell which adhered to

me. 'Couvre-toi de gloire!', but how loudly my unjesting soul said, 'Couvre-toi de flannelle', despite the prickiness of those hated Indian stockings. The roar of traffic in the streets below 'bore all its sons away'. Although fanned by its waves yet I remained tenuously held by a thread, my father praying that I would join the Church's communion; my mother praying, as I knew she must be, that I would not be swept away and lost. Often I have wondered whether it had not been better if those invisible bands had not been so steely strong, or whether, had they been any weaker, I should have lost my hold on sanity. "'and, 'and" I would weep as a child when asleep in the throes of terror. "A great big boy like you!", sneered Miss Whybrow and Mrs Thompson. And here . . . would the evening never end?

One morning – it may have been the next – I presented myself at the recruiting office of the Inns of Court OTC which, being a territorial unit, had been embodied at the outbreak of the war. Although it was technically liable to be sent abroad for active service, by this time the authorities had learned from experience with the UPS that it was not a good idea to put all potential officers together where they could in one short disaster be destroyed or captured. There were two such units; the Artists' Rifles and the Inns of Court. The Artists no more consisted of artists than the Inns of Court consisted of lawyers. It was understood, however, that men considering themselves to be officer material would join one or other of these units. Who 'understood' that I was officer material I do not know; it did not occur to me that I was not. Thus I found myself in a queue of similarly aspiring officers and gentlemen waiting to be interviewed so that our credentials might be scrutinized. I thought we looked a rum lot including three or four elderly desk-bound men who had been swept into the army as the national authorities – Lord Kitchener of the piercing and accusing eyes, Asquith with his unsheathed sword – combed ever more deeply into our reserve of manhood.

One face I recognized belonged to the captain of the rugger team of a famous school – one far better known and prestigious than my loved but unadorned institution. He, I noticed to my horror, was wearing a bowler hat! Of course, already and by nature a 'gentleman' and therefore as good as commissioned, whereas I – loutish as usual – wore the gaudy school cap of our 1st XV. 'Soccer' (not 'rugger'), moon-faced and school-capped (not bowler-hatted), I, already demoralized, faced two majors. They were red-faced as true alcoholic

epileptics should be, but with piercing eyes. These were not as penetrating as the accusing finger of Lord Kitchener, but like gooseberries in a strawberry tart – more appropriate to an OTC. "Come back after lunch", I was told. I came, but had no lunch.

"You there – you with that college cap – 'op it."

"Can I go?"

"Yus – that's wot I said – napoo, finished, rejected."

That blasted cap! I knew it. But I also knew that I had no base on which to stand. Why hadn't I run away and joined the army?

2

My father and I were trying to see into the shop window. A large woman suddenly stepped back into me. She turned her angry face up to mine. "What the bloody hell!" Although only eighteen I was heavy and solidly built, but a moment's scrutiny of my moonface as I raised my cap and stammered out an apology satisfied her curiosity. She and her companion laughed, linked arms and moved off. My father, who had drawn in his breath sharply as if to say something, thought better of it; we went back to my mother at the hotel.

It was November 1915, gloomy and drizzling. We went up to our rooms, ostensibly to change but really to pass the intolerable hours until the evening meal. One cannot make a change of clothes last for ever; I found my parents in their room waiting.

My mother looked up, but her affectionate greeting could not hide her anxiety. There was plenty of time before dinner to continue the family debate. Their debate and mine differed but overlapped in a way which seemed to make each an interference with the other. Their debate, I suspected, was about me, my hostility, misery, resentment and self-centredness. After a while my father picked up the paper and pretended to read; my mother knitted, which was awkward because it did not remove her from the scene enough to relieve my guilt that she was available for conversation; I did not want to talk.

My idiotic cap! Of course the woman, being sensible, laughed. Anyone knew it was a symbol of humiliation – not officer quality. My father had been flabbergasted by my rejection; he was very good at being flabbergasted. But the 'stout party' of the kind of Punch joke with which he was familiar differed from the kind who had bumped

into me. Two flabbergasts in one day had put him out; I could feel him wondering which one to start with.

He put down his paper. He had decided to start at the "Cannot possibly understand how you could fail to be accepted by a nation at war" end. The storm beat around my head. Finally it let up enough for me to hear my father say, "I wonder if Marsh could help." I would not have noticed it if my mother had not laid down her knitting as if something worth pondering had been said. She listened, but my father had nothing more to say. I kept my mouth shut.

At length my mother conceded that it was 'an idea'; we went in to dinner in a frame of mind which was surprisingly and unexpectedly cheerful. It was clear to me that my mother set great store by Mr Marsh. I think my father was as much surprised as I was to find he had dispersed so much gloom.

The relief was more my parents' than mine. I did not know who Marsh was and I found it difficult to imagine how anyone could help with me. Not that I had any opinion that I was worthless, but rather the contrary; I felt it would be difficult to demonstrate any grounds for my conceit of myself. I was furious at my humiliating failure to be accepted; I was humiliated by the humiliation which I vaguely felt to be my own fault. Adding sharp detail to my drab and sordid state was a memory of August 1914: a green meadow and on it drawn up, brave and shining, the guns of a territorial regiment. The men looked fine, so keen, like a materialization of Glory itself. "Quo Fas et Gloria Ducunt."

A day or so after the Marsh conversation, loafing along Russell Street, I heard a band. I could hardly believe my good fortune when the excitement, the craning of necks told me they might be coming my way. Then – there it was; distant khaki moving rhythmically. All too soon it was passing. How fine they looked! Who? What? Royal Fusiliers! City of London! Why didn't I go and join up and get done with the whole damned business instead of messing around with . . . respectable people? While I could take wings and 'finish the damned thing' mentally, I felt as if I had feet and a body of lead. I could not finish the damned thing; I was rooted in a ghastly, unimaginative, unromantic slug of reality. My feet would not lift off the pavement; paralysis from the pelvis down. I felt that anyone could see I was not walking but shuffling. I hauled myself, iron rail by iron rail, to

the Russell Square hotel lunch and Russell Square paternal moral nurture.

My eyes glazed, my ears were filled, my venturesome dream of joining the army gave place to the following dialogue in which I could distinguish my own voice, clearly and distinctly – so clear and distinct that I could not understand it. Had I not been familiar with my father's voice and the very sentiments expressed I would have said that I did not know either of the participants. Was it really about joining the army? To fight? Was it to make the world safe for Non-conformity? "Like a mighty army . . . Onward Christian Soldiers . . ." – shuffling as to war? The trumpets sounded an ambiguous note. "Come to the cookhouse door boys." The needle had stuck in the groove of a very old recording.

"There's one thing I don't like", said my father. I knew the tone of voice.

"What's that?" I said flatly and with an enthusiasm to push the answer as far away from my understanding as I could.

"Why do they call it 'The Devil's Own'?"

"Oh that", I said carelessly. "Well you see, George III or somebody once asked where these troops, or trained bands or whatever they then were, came from, and he was told they were lawyers. He said, 'They should be called The Devil's Own'. It's a kind of joke really."

"But", said my father turning this over in his mind, "surely they could drop that now? After all, one can't fight under that banner when our cause is just."

"We don't use banners now", I said, playing for time, but I knew I was going to be defeated; his eyes had glassed over which meant paradoxically that the game was up. "And anyhow they don't fight. It's only an OTC."

"You know very well what I mean", he said with some warmth, unglazing his eyes for the moment. I realized you can't be angry *and* keep your eyes glazed. "This is very dear to me; we should fight with clean hands."

It was very dear to him. I remembered when I was small and had in an unguarded moment bragged of the daring with which I and another boy had broken bounds and gone down town without permission – 'skunked' down town we called it. "The very term you use shows that you think it is mean. The skunk itself is an animal –" "It doesn't go into town at all Dad!"

But my Dad did, at great length, morally, biologically, theologically. I tried to avoid these conflagrations in which he extinguished me with a moral foam that made it impossible to breathe. If only I could join the Royal Fusiliers! They were probably made up of boys whose mothers said, "What the bloody hell!"

"Have you heard from Marsh?", I said, hoping to deflect the flow. To my surprise it worked.

"As a matter of fact I have. That is just what I was coming to when I was saying the one thing I didn't like was its being called –"

"What did he say Dad?"

"He wants us to come to dinner." It was a struggle, but he abandoned the Devil to tell me that I was to go with them so he could introduce me to his old friend. Dark suit – but no school cap, I thought.

3

Mahogany, silver candlesticks, two maids and plenty of white starch. The conversation was uneasy; I could not believe it would be anything else with me about. My father was trying to ask me something – I imagine it would be by way of getting me to explain why I had been such an oaf – but my mother gave him a look which stopped him.

Mr Marsh did help. On January 4th 1916 I was being sworn in as a member of the armed forces. The officer had thin sneering lips. "So, you are Mr Marsh's friend?", he inquired. Was I? Luckily he wasn't wanting an answer or heaven knows what I would have let him in for. A few days later I was in uniform, baggy, itchy, hot. I felt so unsoldierly that I had quite a shock when a girl who had given me a white feather a few days past didn't give me another as I passed by her beat. I thought she must have been pre-occupied or worried about something to have missed me. Then I realized that she had mistaken me – taken me? – for a soldier. My mother was proud of me.

I enjoyed the Inns of Court. We drilled in Lincoln's Inn Fields. We were very bad; even my feeble cadet corps experiences at school were enough to make me shine – or at least 'glow' – rather more than others.

We graduated to Hampstead Heath and to Leffman, an amateur – like us – CSM, an intelligent, efficient, drill-book performer – unlike us – who prided himself on the distinct and elocutionary exact pronouncement of his orders. One of us, a professional singer, Topliss Green, was contemptuous; "He thinks his voice carries!" Lunch – coffee and cheese at the Express Dairy – and 'home' in the evening.

Once, when we had been dismissed early, I went to evensong at St Paul's cathedral. It was a gloomy day. The non-conformist Sun-

day had eaten deeply into the soft remnants of my soul; it brought back the queer sense of Doom from my prep school days which had confirmed my fundamental timidity. Many regard timidity as the disposition of a 'milksop' – flimsy, wayward, unreliable. In me it is the toughest, most robust, most enduring quality I have. 'All we like sheep have gone astray', but at least Handel's sheep seem to be a cheerful lot. Not so my 'ewe lamb'. I was tough, timid, gloomy and infectious. It was a hideous foundation on which to base one's war-like hopes.

I do not now remember when or how the period at Hampstead Heath came to an end. In retrospect it was pleasant and short – at the time never-ending. It was spring; it was warm; it was exciting to be in camp. In my tent were Baker, my bowler-hatted rival school rugger captain; his older friend Hunter, who shared with him a common background of mancunian origin; and Howells, who was of an age with Hunter and who dwells in memory as a man of sense, humorous and kindly. I was separated from them by my immaturity, queerness, nonconformity; drawn to them by the same difference.

Typical of the trifles I remember is of being on parade with Baker immediately behind me in the second rank. We were inspected by our platoon sergeant to see that we were correctly turned out. One item of 'correct' dress was having the safety catch of our rifles in the 'on' position. As we stood immobile at attention Baker mischievously used to reach forward with the toe of his boot and trip the safety catch of my rifle to the 'off' position. So when the sergeant reached me I was detected as being 'improperly' dressed – much to the amusement of Hunter and Howells. This was often repeated so that 'Private Bion improperly dressed again' became a stock joke: so did my fury at the 'unfairness'.

Two great pleasures stand out. On most days we had a route march of some fifteen or twenty hot, dusty and thirsty miles – "Don't empty your water bottles; only wet your lips. Save the rest." Once we passed a garden with high lavender hedges and roses in profusion; an old gentleman reclined in an easy chair reading his newspaper. The faint blue, the soft glow of roses, the scent of England ruffled my hot and sweaty face. The 'past' was etched in my mind more indelibly than the grime which our communal showers could wash off. Later – so time as it is measured by calendar and clock told me, but not my sense of smell or poetic ear – perfumes known as 'Quelques

Fleurs' and 'Temps de Lilas', a line of verse, 'Soft as Sorrow, bright as old Renown', set music vibrating in me. Another scent was introduced into my life by Quainton, a recruit nearer to me in age and social culture. Though a Quaker, he had joined the army with a view to fighting. One pleasure to which he introduced me was Pears Attar of Roses scented soap. From now on I washed away the sweat of the route march with Attar of Roses. Quainton's fate almost washed away the joy of life I learned from him.

My second delight was acquired in 'night operations'. Tring station, our operations orders told us, was on fire, having been captured by 'the enemy'. Perhaps the enemy was unimaginative or my memory deceives me by leading me to believe that this was a frequent event. It introduced me to the experience of creeping through the woods at night. Here I learned what it was to be alone with the sound of deer belling. Blessed peace! Blessed wildness in England's cultivated calm. Tring station is on fire? Not yet; only make-believe so far; schoolboys of all ages playing soldiers, rehearsing for the real thing, but never learning that war and yet more terrible war is normal, not an aberrant disaster.

We had a field-day against the Officer Training Corps of the Public Schools. The authorities had issued us with blank ammunition which our 'patrols' handed to the boys so that they had plenty to fire. Blank ammunition makes a rifle dirty; as we had to clean ours we kept our barrels unused. I do not remember the lessons which were drawn from our exercises; they cannot have been profound. They certainly did not bite into the substance of my mind as the love of Stokes, the South African, and Quainton (the quaint 'un) did. Stokes is dead; Quainton has left only the sound of his name. 'Gone are the gypsies but where, who can say?' Perhaps memory can throw a flickering gleam – firelight that teaches gloom to illuminate the dust.

From Berkhampstead I passed to an Officer Training Unit in transit for Bisley – change at Brookwood, the London Necropolis, for the few miles to Bisley. Before this I was amongst equals for none of us had combatant experience. I remember only a Jewish cadet who made fun of his Jewishness by singing – very competently – comic songs about Jews. The songs were well received. I did not ask him a question that bothered me – why did he make fun of Jews? It was no business of mine; I was learning not to ask questions. A Jew was entitled to make fun of Jews if he wanted to.

Bisley was the final school for aspirants to commissioned rank in the Machine Gun Corps: for me it was only a transit camp on the way to the Tanks for which I had applied and which were known as 'Machine Gun Corps (Heavy)'. The men there had almost all seen active service at the front. There was a difference, which was palpable, dividing us from them. They were tolerant and kind – as if we were children; you weren't cruel to children, nor did you take them seriously.

The camp was understaffed. We had two officers – at once known as Gona and Diah – the brothers Rhea. There were one or two warrant officers from the Brigade of Guards; and there were two or three hundred of us. The understanding between the men from the front was spontaneous, instantaneous, complete; it was in no sense favourable to co-operation with the authorities unless pursuing parallel aims in a wish to say good-bye to Bisley Camp.

We learned the intricacy of the Vickers machine gun. We practised stoppages by using American ammunition, thoughtfully supplied by our American allies but withdrawn from combatant use as soon as its unreliability became apparent. Clearly, as it invariably led to the jamming of the machine gun, it was ideal for training soldiers in how to deal with emergencies.

My first and only week-end pass from that camp was a horror which plucked harshly and cruelly at chords which I had forgotten – my week-end of respite from the daily misery of the prep school. I loathed it; I hated every moment of it. I have no recollection of how I spent the day; I must have been conscious – my psychoanalytical bible tells me so. What it was like for my mother I do not know and cannot remember caring. I was cut off from my base. And the enemy was in full occupation of my mother. 'Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new'. Yes, woods you fool! It is there alone in the jungle that you have to learn to live.

4

When it was time to go back to camp my mother was pre-occupied; she stroked my cheek; she said it was soft. I was furious and about to remind her that I was not a baby now – I had begun to feel smart, like a kind of soldier, by this time – when I noticed she was crying. I kept my mouth shut but fumed inwardly.

Waterloo was horrible. Khaki everywhere, blanked out and anonymous. Brookwood. The London Crematorium. "Nearly there boys – any more for the London Crematorium?" As we neared Bisley the whole train became active. I thought it was because they were all on leave and we were approaching camp. But they were not all on leave – I doubt if there were more than a handful like me who were. Someone pulled the communication cord, the train came to a halt and the passengers, all in uniform, swarmed out of the carriages and onto the fields to make their way back to camp without running into the Military Police. I stayed where I was, feeling foolish for all my military grandeur and wishing I did not always feel a milksop. At Bisley the few of us who had stayed because we had leave passes started to slush back to camp. Why was it always dark? Why was it always raining?

Mutt and Jeff were there; they at least were always cheerful and had earned their nicknames because of their resemblance to two comic characters in one of the daily papers. They made life bearable in camp – not beyond. There was no anaesthetic for those suffering home leave, the worst being before embarkation.

After what seemed an eternity of anxiety about the chance of being commissioned I was eventually posted to the 5th Tank Battalion. I had applied to go to Tanks as it was the only way to penetrate the secrecy surrounding them. I was ordered to report to Bovington

Camp at Wool where I saw my first tank – it blocked the road to camp. The day was hot, sunny, still. The queer mechanical shape, immobilized and immobilizing, was frightening in the same way as the primitive tiger trap near Gwalior; I wanted to get away from it. A metallic hammering came from inside; a soldier got out and the day sprang into life again.

It was a good camp, well disciplined – not ramshackle, temporary and amateur like so much I had seen in my feverish and irritable progress. This I felt was it. The officers were men you expected to obey; even a second lieutenant, though known as 'a blot on the landscape' as I soon found, was expected to behave like one in authority. We were drilled by a senior NCO and our manoeuvres were intended to impress other ranks with our efficiency, not as evidence of our unimportance.

Drill, technical courses, revolvers, machine-guns, 6-pounders, and above all the mighty tank itself, filled our days. Then Mess; still a ritual. Not so wonderful – how could it be? – as the Royal Naval College, but still not bad for mere soldiers. Then Lights Out, the deep evening glow, the nightjars.

I became re-united with Quainton and Stokes who had been parted from me at Berkhampstead. They had taken a different route to arrive at their commissions – in Tanks and, by a curious chance, the 5th Battalion. Health, good food, intense concentration on guns and courses, and on one occasion a ramble with Stokes, Quainton and Bayliss through the hot, humid, rhododendron-studded parkland far from the devastation of the tank driving area, seemed to stretch out the carefree minutes into hours and days. It was known, but like all else we knew we hardly dared believe, we were to go overseas as a battalion; we were proud of it.

Embarkation leave and a lovely sunny day – how I wished my mother could see us as we marched down to Wool Station. But she preferred to stay in the cottage she had rented in the village. I was sure she would hear the band when the special train drew in – it played Auld Lang Syne and Home Sweet Home.

Le Havre, 'rest camp'; this time no courses to hide our frustration. Close by was a VD hospital and about this there was a 'funny' story. The 'funny' story belonged to the VD camp as certain adjectives belong to words; tired adjectives, tired words, tired stories; as tired as the diseases that belong to wars. "What are you doing?", asked a

padre of an officer who kept dodging from one camp to another. "I've just seen my son here and I don't want him to see me." A little later, to his surprise, he saw another officer behaving in the same way. "May I ask what you think you are doing?" he asked. "Nothing; only I've just seen my Dad in here and I don't want him to see me."

Cohen, Bayliss, Stokes, Quainton and I were religious; in the view of other members of our company we were 'pi' or just plain humbugs. As far as I was concerned, though I kept to the disciplinary code, I felt that religion had not 'taken' even as effectually as medical inoculation. There were reminiscences of night-time fears when I was small in India, linked with a harmonium played very carefully by mother while my sister and I sang 'Jesus loves me', or 'There is a green hill far away'. The parched Indian landscape must have drained all its green into that hill which retained its city wall like a crown, within which were tiny spires and towers huddled together against the foes 'without'.

Again, and for the last time, we marched as a battalion to entrain, the band creating a mild stir by playing the Marseillaise. As Carter, our company reconnaissance officer, remarked, the people of Le Havre must have hated the sound of it by this time. "On the other hand", he said, "it does drive the point home in the unlikely event that any German spy might fail to notice and report our arrival to Boche HQ." This indeed was unlikely, but then the enemy also made extraordinary mistakes.

Le Havre, though undamaged by war, was stark and gloomy to march through for all the music the band was blowing through its streets. "We are quite near Agincourt", I wrote dutifully to my old history master at school, feeling as far from the thin skin of my patriotism as I could be. 'This quarrel honourable' – of course we all 'did' Henry V – seemed to be some quirk in Shakespeare rather than anything stable in the English character. No one could have been so 'unpatriotic' in the glorious days of Elizabethan England. Patriotic, had I realized it, was all I could be.

Our destination? A mysterious place called The Front. Maybe for half an hour – time had already come to mean something that could not be measured by watches – we travelled slowly but in a manner reminiscent of railways in pre-war England. The coaches bore a resemblance to those on trains going to the East coast – Norwich, North Walsham, Cromer. Then the train stopped. Novices, we wanted

to know why. After a while some of us *asked* why. A railwayman came along the line; he seemed a decent fellow and he stopped to give the matter some thought. Finally, though we were not sure as we only spoke public-school French, he suggested the train had stopped. Even in french French it sounded unenlightening. Later we became habituated; we did not ask questions requiring answers. It was wiser to sleep.

It sounded like the rumble of an approaching train. What was remarkable was the speed with which it came, out of the silence as from a ghostly world. Then it was upon us, so material, so evidently an express that in that context it *was* a ghost, shimmering, brightly lit, it passed with its rhythmic beat. It was not blacked out; in that innocent age the International Red Cross needed no protection other than to make its presence known. A faint smell of iodoform came through our windows.

"Lucky sods", said Yates feelingly. The rumble died away in the distance till silence swallowed us again. Yates was one of our few veterans; he had been in the landing of the Royal Lancashire Fusiliers on Gallipoli. It was said that the survivors tossed up to decide which of them were to receive the Victoria Crosses which had been awarded in 'bulk' to the battalion because it was invidious to make distinctions when in valour all were equal. Yates was not quite our hero. One of his friends joked about his wearing his second lieutenant's star on a shoulder strap already pierced for the stars necessary to mark his promotion to captain. "After all, I have already worn the stars!" he replied with what to us was more eloquent of a chip on his shoulder than of a badge of rank. Poor Yates – he looked worn and his attempts at putting a brave face on the prospects now looming were threadbare. The Colonel, he confided to me, had given him a damned good talking to. "I tell you he gave it me straight. He's a fine chap!" The Colonel was a handsome young regular who had been jumped from captain to command of our battalion to match the DSO he had been awarded on the Retreat with his original infantry regiment.

"What's the matter with this damned train?" said Carter. The brilliant flashing special with its suggestion of spotless linen, nurses, cleanliness, against the anonymous dark had cast a gloom on us all. We were many hours, days, weeks from the Line; what was the trouble? Too far and too near.

5

We woke to a fine sunny morning, stiff and cold from having slept on the concrete floor in our uniforms without bedding. Carter, who must have been nearer fifty than thirty, stoically did not show the pain which must have been much worse for him than for those, like me, who were nearer eighteen than twenty. "What a rum smell", I said sniffing the sweet and rotten air. Carter drew in his breath through compressed lips and spat it out. The nearest, I thought, he ever gets to a smile. "Must be a corpse somewhere – that's what that smell means." We hunted vainly, four or five of us when that many had woken. "It's not a Boche – they stink; not the rotten sweet smell." 'In death they were not divided' – much. We could not find it so we had to endure it till we moved off two days later.

The trains were for men or horses, forty or eight, and with one or two coaches or compartments for officers; not just broken down third-class compartments such as we might have used in our youth when we ourselves were civilians, but grand, shabby, broken down *first* class, thus making unmistakable the gulf that separated US from THEM. Our men, my men or *The* Men? Or perhaps "Men!" as one would address them before battle. It seemed queer that Sergeant O'Toole, Hayler, Allen, the other Allen, Richardson, Gee Colombo should suddenly have become estranged and separated as we now approached the Line for which we had prepared so long. Much later I had a similar crisis of etiquette when cheerful, jolly Smith suddenly became 'It' when a shell splinter entered his brain and we could not get his limbs to pack properly into the grave. 'Him', 'Corporal', 'Matey', 'Smith' – time was getting short and it made things awkward if we had to make a grave to fit him (or It).

We sat in our superior comfort. I felt uneasily that my crew might

not see or realize that I was entitled to travel first class because of my graver responsibilities.

The afternoon landscape through which we crawled was scrub-covered. It grew dark. We went more slowly. Then stopped. "Is this the Line?" "No chum, it's not." "Then what?" "Nothing. We've arrived – that's all." We got out and I went to find my crew. They wanted to know too. They were wet and cold. We were standing outside the trucks and coaches which were forlorn and bleak. And the rain came down in sheets; rain which was destined to be 'mentioned in dispatches', to become famous later, but which for the present was only wet. We stood there and waited for something to happen. We had not even begun to realize that nothing happens in war, or – which comes to much the same – nobody knows what happens. I would have thought I was being made a fool of if I had been told that, even years after that war and yet another like it, I still would not know something so simple and obvious as who had won.

"Fall in!" The word began to pass along to us from the distance; then stopped without reaching us. After another fifteen minutes there was a flurry. An angry voice, agonized – Bagshaw's – "That you? What the hell do you think you're doing? You're supposed to have fallen in years ago! Oh, never mind, get fallen in now anyway!" Boots squelched in the mud; the rain poured down our faces and necks; the sound of it mingled with sniffs and coughs and curses. We moved off, too well disciplined to 'slouch off', too raw to achieve a semblance of a march.

Oosthoek Wood they said it was, tangled undergrowth which our advance party had made an attempt to slash down. It was a quiet night. The distant gun flashes made it impossible to do more than guess that there were branches between us and the teeming sky. "Put down your bivvy tents where you can and turn in." We used them mostly as ground sheet cover; in the blackness and rain it was foolish to pretend to pitch anything. Tomorrow we would put up proper tents. Then and there it was a tangle of knotted twigs and roots and rain which we churned up with our heavy ammunition boots preparatory to lying down on the patch which we fancied that we had trampled flat. When we could stand it no longer we seemed to arrive at a simultaneous agreement that it was 'tomorrow'; therefore time to pitch our tents.

After a few days the wood was filled with irregularly spaced tents laced together by a network of paths. "Luckily for us", sneered Cook, "the Boche couldn't recognize it as a camp even if he could see through the trees." "If we were the ship-shape Guards", said Carter, "it would take hours to make them look like this. As it is, our natural flair of warfare needs no schooling; we are just spontaneously military." He swore as he tripped in the remnants of a shrub.

We all felt excited though it would be hard to say why. The prospect of action at last, the fear of being afraid – all the phrases were true but empty if uttered. For me fear was the central fact made worse because I could never even try to escape. I remembered 'Popsy' Brightman inviting me to get a commission in the Corps and his feeble, off-putting inducement, "You won't get a Military Cross you know – just one of those little wooden ones." How absurd to think that any such common sense could carry weight. And now, here we were in the bleak, grey desolation of rain which seemed to have a quality of garishness.

One evening the company was sent on a route march. 'You're in the army now' was the catch phrase to sum up such exercises in forgetting our incurably civilian outlook. It was wet, cheerless and dark. The vitality of the desolation broke out of black night, mud and abandoned gear like the bubbles in a cauldron. As we stood 'fallen out' in one of our regular halts, the horizon changed from uniform black to dazzling, shimmering white. We stood, stupefied. Then on the breeze came 'drum fire' in which no individual gun could be heard any more than the individual flashes could be seen. The white was now penetrated by the red of bursting shells, the enemy's return fire.

The order to 'fall in' came down the line and we continued our aimless march. The raid, for that was all it was, was not even mentioned in *Comic Cuts*, the army paper, and since we were not marching in that direction we could ignore it. There must have been few who did not, like me, wonder how anyone survived exposure to such hell. One day I would see in broad daylight a German battery position with the legend 'Hurricane Fire', guns wrecked, German bodies around, some half-clothed as they had been surprised by our gunfire. The scene had the meaningless neatness of a war correspondent's drawing.

Our march was sombre, irritable, mindless, as if to keep an appointment with reality emulating a popular weekly; headlines exciting a

languid curiosity – 'Fall of the British Empire'; 'The Umpteenth Royal Irish Grenadiers' drawn up in regular lines at the Ypres Salient, kneeling with heads devoutly bowed, 'Receiving Holy Communion Before Battle'; 'Tanks Storming the German Lines'. The pictures might have repaid careful study; our march seemed unlikely to reap any reward at all. It was just a bore spoiled by hideous misshapen blobs of fear.

Then – we were going into action. At least, my section was going into action – not Battle. A division of infantry, a section of Tanks, simply to clear up a couple of pill-boxes.

We were urged, ordered, to reconnoitre. This was exciting, frightening. Soon we felt, we should *know.* Our section commander, a young, bespectacled captain, addressed his officers and men. The talk was designed to tell us of the nature of the operation and, I suspect, enthuse us with the lust for battle. His appearance reminded me of the Mock Turtle; this, combined with a sense of reality, militated against a would-be forceful address.

"As you all know we shall shortly be going big-game shooting." He sounded as if he was talking from the bottom of a heavy cold. We were listening with such intensity that the mirthful response which a stage direction would have indicated was absent.

"The red line on the map" – here came a crackling of papers as officers, four of us, with the crews craning their necks to see the shared papers – "marks the starting point. We have to take Hill 40. Got it?" More rustling. "And the village behind." Gunner Harrison, our cockney, looked serious which usually meant a witticism was coming, but none came.

"Bion, you take Hill 40 and patrol it till the infantry have consolidated. You must watch the sunk road – marked just to the north-east – because our intelligence have told us that the 'umptieth' Division have just moved in. You will see on *this* map which is secret and must not be given to you" – he held it up for us to see – "the sectors held by the individual units are marked and will probably remain unaltered for three or four days – that is till after your show. The chap in command of your sector always likes to counter attack down sunk roads; so, when you are patrolling after taking the Hill, watch for this bit" – he indicated the sunk road – "and let them have it. Despard, you'd better watch it too. The village no longer exists, but Quainton, you and Cohen have to take it and hold it. You can tell when you are there by the brickish stain of the mud. Any questions?"

"The pill-boxes sir!" It was my tank sergeant O'Toole speaking. His large protuberant ears, red shiny face and permanently indignant expression suggested that an officer should have asked the question. Perhaps he was blushing for us.

"Ah yes; I nearly forgot those. Well, you know they have usually six or more men in them – some people say a dozen. As they are solid concrete and over a foot thick all you need do is fire at the gunslits and go round to the back door. The gunners are concentrating on them so don't go too near. If you fire at the gunslits you may stop the Boche firing."

It sounded most improbable, but he had to say something. We all knew of heavy howitzers, 9.2's, that had registered direct hits and done no harm. Our questions had little to do with a thirst for information; it was a mindless activity, the individual becoming merged into a primitive brute, an army.

On our journey to 'the Salient' we came first to a crawl, then to a halt. After a long pause someone said we were outside Hazebrouck and couldn't go through because the station was being shelled. The train, like a stupid caterpillar, waited. Finally it went through, slowly, ponderously, between shell bursts which continued rhythmically like an animal chewing the cud. The tail of the train waited breathlessly for the front to get hit; the front waited for the tail. We listened, searching the air as if to get some clue.

We were to parade in a quarter of an hour to start our first reconnaissance. The remnants of evening sun – its appearance after weeks of rain had precipitated the idea that the battle commenced on July 31st could be continued – lit up a watery sky as we scrambled into a lorry. Our captain was in front with the driver; the four tank commanders and men in the back. We rattled, roared and bumped our way at a good pace for half an hour. Then stopped.

We could see we were at the beginning of a ruined city – Ypres; unusual, for buildings still stood. "Military Police", said someone. At that instant he appeared at our tail board. "All gas masks to be worn at the Alert from now on", he said. "Gas and HE shells mixed, but they have slowed up a bit now." We set off with a jolt as the driver let in his clutch. "God! He's going as if all the devils in Hell were after him", said Despard as he was thrown against me by a particularly violent jolt. Cohen, who had known action and wounds before, shouted through spasmodically clenched teeth, "So would you if you knew Ypres."

6

'WIPERS', Ypres, the Salient. It had to be held. Gaunt, echoing streets, empty but for an occasional soldier, always hurrying. This I was soon to know was a peculiarity of the Salient – no one in sight other than the solitary hurrying figure; uncharacteristic were the standing walls and masonry forming a pattern which made it possible to speak, still, of streets. We were soon done with it and were standing on the banks of the 'Canal'. Like 'Wipers' and 'Salient', the word needed no qualification.

These words have little meaning to anyone today, but as an ancient this is the only way of making my voyage through time; from now on it can be only to islands in the mists of memory. Thus, though it must in fact have been dark as we stood there, a few dream figures about to traverse a narrow causeway from one bank to the other, a black puff uncurled in the sky and expanded like the Japanese flowers of my childhood. "A woolly bear; they are quite harmless. If the nose-cap hit you it would kill you, but as you can see, the shell bursts about fifty feet in the air and it would be very unlikely for any of the bits to damage anyone. No, they're quite harmless."

The Canal was not the place for chat; we moved on impelled partly by doubts of the harmlessness of woolly bears, but also by the state of mind engendered by that dreadful place. Even now the menacing streets of Ypres and this nightmare Canal can return to me and leave a stain of foreboding on the brightest day.

We pushed on in silence till it became too dark to see more than the mud at our feet in the light of gun-flashes. As we were to continue the reconnaissance in daylight the next day, we returned to our waiting lorries. They wasted no time on the journey home, thankful to be getting out.

The scene in daylight had its peculiar horror, contrasting with the blackness of night and the unknown it covered. We went in twos, I with Quainton whose cheerfulness, though unspoken, was a change from the more usual silliness with cliché and foul-mouthed continuo. The sky for once was blue and cloudless, the land a glistening ochre. There were in the distance some scattered stumps which we decided was a wood, since one was marked on the map. We were walking down a slope supposedly to the Steenbeck from which the ground rose to a series of gentle rounded slopes, one of which was Hill 40. The enemy line, between us and the hill which was to be my objective, was clearly marked on the map as a series of trenches in great depth, redoubts and machine gun posts, all in red and dated the previous day. It was meticulous and a marvel of the work done by the Royal Engineers. We walked on a duck-board track, shattered here and there by a recent shell-burst. Otherwise there was nothing to be seen; no trenches, redoubts, fortifications or machines. Even so I had enough respect, never diminished, for the Royal Engineers, to know that what they had marked was not a flight of imagination, but a reality.

We stopped and sat on a piece of duck-board to study the map. As I fumbled with it I found my hands were trembling; I was exasperated to find I could not control them. I was grateful to Quainton that he seemed not to notice them. A sudden scream and almost instantaneous explosion made us both flatten out. The enemy had fired a salvo of three. We picked ourselves out of the mud as we realized the burst was some hundred yards away, in no sense dangerous. Then we noticed a group of three men between us and the shell bursts. They were standing; their teeth shone white in a mirthless grin; our reaction had been observed. I was too obsessed with fear of cowardice to avoid flushing with humiliation. We walked on with as much swagger as we could muster.

And now a fresh anxiety – where was the Steenbeck? At this time it was as deeply graven and marked in our minds as the fortifications were clearly delineated on the map. It was notorious as an obstacle that had presented an insuperable barrier to attack after attack of our armies which were supposed, on August 31st, to have swept on over it and beyond to ‘open warfare’ in what I had imagined were green fields where the German was to have suffered a blow from which he would never recover. It has now become at

most a name without meaning except in the minds of a few old men.

We looked at the maps again. They were exact and clear; the cursed place where we stood was not. As far as one could see, even in the direction from which we had come, was a rolling desert of mud where shell-holes intersected shell-holes. We were in a hollow from which the ground sloped upwards; water trickled from one shell-hole to the next, or lay stagnant at the bottom. Quainton asked one of the party of men with whom we had now drawn level where the Steenbeck lay. Still grinning inanely he pointed down to the quag where we stood. So, that was the Steenbeck. Quainton then asked where Hill 40 was. He continued to grin but said nothing.

Haig and his Staff have been blamed for thinking that such terrain was suitable for tanks, for not reconnoitring the ground personally, for not understanding the capacities and limitations of tanks. Well, we three *did* know the tanks and we were reconnoitring the ground on the spot. But I do not remember that any of us for a moment thought that a forty-ton tank could float; the mud must have seeped into the place where our minds were supposed to be. The army, of which we were part, was mindless. "One of these lumps", said Cohen vaguely indicating the horizon, "must be Hill 40. The German line is between us and them, about a hundred yards away." The slow quacking machine-gun note and some whining bullets were at once answered by a burst of rapid fire. "Lewis guns; too damned close for my liking. Come on, let's get out of it." Cohen with his wound stripe could dare to say this, but neither Quainton nor I could. The working party had disappeared. We had not seen them go and this intensified the sudden sense of loneliness. The sky darkened. "What about Hill 40?" I asked. "Look for it tomorrow", said Quainton sarcastically.

My anxiety to be gone made me particularly guilty about not having identified my objective. The ochreous slime, glistening, featureless, stretching for mile after pock-marked mile scared me. Some guns over on our right began to fire; more machine-guns, the slow German rhythm as from a squat animal, mingled with the faster hysterical chatter of our Vickers and Lewis. So this dead place was alive; this was what armies concentrated for battle looked like. "Come on", said Cohen. "Come on!" said Quainton. I was not afraid; I felt as if my nostrils quivered, scenting danger, watched by thousands of eyes, animal eyes like those in the Indian night of my childhood.

A man over to the right where the guns were firing was hurrying along a path; while I watched he disappeared. Then I noticed we were hurrying with short, quick, staccato steps. Later I realized that any figure, every figure, walked in the same way. Even our faces had become standard, strained, covered with a slimy sweat.

The ochreous mud became reddish. "This must be that blasted village we couldn't find." "Blasted is correct", said Cohen.

Things seemed to be livening up; many more guns were firing. Machine-guns, five-nines – "What did you do in the Great War Daddy? . . . What are five-nines Daddy? . . . What . . ." "Oh, eat your damned bun . . ." I still feel I am in too much of a hurry to explain all that. And anyhow it is out of date; they do things better now. Even atom bombs, nuclear fission and such 'trash' have been replaced by . . . the successors to the human race, at present an unknown, undetected, but what we would call particularly dreadful disease.

But, to return to happier days – we were once more at the Canal. The woolly bears, great black question marks in the sky, were more frequent. " I hope we get across before they start shelling the bloody place properly with something harmful like HE." (Not His Excellency – High Explosive, you fool.)

7

In the darkness we could just distinguish some remains – possibly they had been sheds. English Farm they called it. This is where our tanks were to rendezvous for the battle. The timing was exact and we went on without having to wait for each other, but not before some German bombers unloaded. Meant for us? Did the enemy know of our impending attack, or was it just a routine raid on English Farm because it was there? Then a star shell fell on our route. We stopped instantly, or so we liked to think; no man moved. The entire line of tanks, eight of them, was glistening, brilliant metal against the velvety blackness of the night. It burned on and on. What an age they took to open fire. Bayliss, at my side, suggested they were just having a good laugh as they watched us, standing to attention there like a lot of military dolts. We had not recovered from our first bombing; dread of the immediate future weighed heavily on our attempts at being carefree. No weight so leaden as the weight of freedom from care. Perhaps Miss Whybrow and Mrs Thompson had been right – I should have run away. Too late, too late.

In another ten minutes we could not be affected by what happened to English Farm. Suppose, though, the presence of the tanks had given away the impending attack. It is difficult now to believe that our anxieties were of so little substance.

The route we were pursuing now became jammed with traffic; suddenly without warning troops came from nowhere. We waited. Nothing happened. I ordered Allen to switch off the engine. On that packed road no one spoke. Occasionally a mule whinnied or harness jingled.

As I write these words I know that I have not forgotten what happened that night at English Farm, what was going to happen on the

St Jean–Wieltje Road at Cambrai, at Amiens, in the 'train bleu' after years in the black areas of a second world war; I see them still in the watch fires of a thousand sleepless nights, for the soul goes marching on.

"If the Boche start shelling we shall be for it." It was Quainton, whose tank was some thirty yards behind mine, who had come up to see what was the matter. He had always had that kind of initiative and I envied him his easy, uninhibited way." I think I'll go forward and see what's up. After all, they told us this road would be kept clear for tanks."

"Don't be a fool", I whispered back, "If anything happens you may not be able to find your tank again."

Bagshaw came up. "What's up? We ought to get on." I told him I had no idea. Infantry, gunners, ammunition limbers were all stuck in a solid mass in the silence and darkness. Every so often a red spurt of sparks and an explosion marked the fall of an enemy shell. It was a quiet night, but for how much longer? I had visions of a chaos of plunging mules, overturned ammunition limbers, and above all, tanks with their ninety gallons of petrol aflame.

There was a sudden disturbance; a young staff officer had appeared. "You!" – he was speaking to me – "What the hell – is this your tank? What the devil do you think you're doing? Get on man! You should be at your starting points by now!"

"I can't sir . . .", I started to explain.

"Good God man!" he cut me short, "Drive through them! Push them off the road!" I realized I had fallen into some peace-time form of manners. "This is a *war* – get on!"

With sinking heart I told Allen to start the engine. We edged and pushed. A gun limber went over amid the curses of the team. "You fucking bastards!" they swore at us. I felt they were right. I tried to get off the track but the tank began a fearful slither into the mud. Allen stopped the skid with difficulty – only the fact that he was a fine driver made him able to do it – and we pushed, surrounded by curses and hate every foot of the way.

At any moment, I thought, the star-shell which must have discovered us at English Farm would flame out in a barrage to blow us all to hell. And then suddenly our guns opened up their preliminary barrage. All around us the mud became alive with the white flashes of our artillery. These were not field artillery – they were 6-inch

howitzers in position fifty yards behind our front line. In a moment or two the enemy counter-barrage started. Our 'road', inevitably, was the target of their fixed lines, calibrated over the weeks, automatically registered. The nightmare was now fact. I signalled Allen to turn at right angles off the road. The shelling was now uniform, as heavy off the road as on it. Yet it was a comfort to feel we were not now a pre-determined target. At least I did know what was happening on that road.

I judged we had reached our starting point, signalled again to Allen and pointed our tank towards the 'hill' which somewhere in shell-illuminated night was our objective. The tank commander's private fear now possessed me – that I would fall wounded, unobserved by the crew and so be driven over by the tank. Just as I reached our side door a shell-burst blew me over. The door opened and my crew pulled me in and slammed the door to. "I thought you was a gonner sir", said Richardson. I worked my way to my seat in front next to the driver Allen. We shut off the engine; we had another forty minutes to go before zero.

With the engine's roar silenced we could appreciate the racket outside, like an inferno of slamming doors. And now I was aware of a novel sensation; the tank with which I was familiar as a solid mass of steel was shaking continuously like a wobbling jelly. No protection more solid than a figment of the imagination.

I was not aware of being afraid, which, from the point of view of comfort, is as good as not being afraid. The tank continued to wobble and the doors to slam; sometimes the slam and the wobble were instantaneous. When I realized that both violent slam and wobble occurred at intervals which were rhythmically connected, I knew we were very near the bursting point of a heavy shell. I felt we should move; there was nowhere to go.

Since it was dark the enemy were firing blind on their established barrage lines and, so far, we had not been hit. Could a shell fall short or over? It could – so I gave up thinking about it, thus taking shelter instinctively in mindlessness. Allen had nothing to do, but I could order Hayler and gunner Allen, a youngster whose face I could see by the dim interior light of the tank to be glistening with sweat, to get out with me and release the pigeon reporting our arrival at our starting point. I recorded the time and Hayler stolidly fixed the message to the container on the carriers leg. With only five minutes to zero Hayler

tossed it into the air. It promptly settled on the edge of a shell-hole and began to walk about. Exasperated, frustrated, we watched its deliberation. "If it's going to *walk* to HQ it will bring very stale news." "It's not daylight yet sir", Hayler reminded me. We started to throw clods of earth at the bird as if that would disturb a composure which could not be shaken by the now intense shell-fire. "I wish I had its bloody wings . . .", shouted Allen. "You want the best wings: we have them", it seemed to say.

It was nearly time. "Get in and start up", I ordered. The crew began to swing the starting handle. Nothing happened. Then, just as despair began to settle on us, the engine sprang to life with a roar.

Dawn; and we were moving into battle. Through the front flap I could see the contours of the 'hills' and that was all. We were in low gear; even at full power we could only lurch at a mile an hour from shell-hole to shell-hole. The tank began a list to the right. We could not correct it and the six-pounder gun filled with mud as it ploughed through, not over, the ground. The flying earth made it impossible for Allen or me to open the front observation flaps more than a thin slit. When I tried to use the periscope it was shot off.

Once, to our front and right, I saw the stumps of trees. It was a great relief as a wood was marked just to the right side of Hill 40. So far so good – if only the tank would right itself, but it would not. We were on rising ground, but with drainage gone the higher ground was a morass worse than the Steenbeck.

Should the staff have known? Of course; but nobody had told the Etonians, the Harrovians, the Public School Elite; that rain on a summit emerged at the surface just below the summit. Or had they – when I was not attending? In Geography class perhaps. No, that was only 'jute and flax' growing somewhere or other. Not on Hill 40. Where the hell was Hill 40?

It was time to try to check our direction. Opening my flap wider I was relieved to find the shattered trees more or less where, according to my guesses, they should have been. Bothered by chunks of earth each time I opened the flap at all widely I found it difficult to make my fleeting glances cohere. "Shells seem very close sir", screamed Allen in my ear. He was right. With the increasing daylight the rhythm of shells I had noted before we started had given way first to the drum-fire of zero hour, and then to something more discriminated. The enemy could see us and his artillery were aiming

concentrated fire at us. He could not miss. Yet miss he did, and this contributed to the delusion of safety. And then I realized, in one of my repeated glances in the direction of the trees, that they were not trees but our infantry advancing in line with their rifles slung on their shoulders. I had imagined that infantry used their rifles for shooting; not so – not in Ypres Salient. Imaginary security; imaginary aggression? Yet men died.

8

With sinking heart I pulled out my map and looked at it. It was the same map so it was hardly surprising that it looked the same. But what the devil had it to do with the mud bath in which we wallowed? My hands were not now trembling although I was certain of death, probably of the whole crew, but certainly for Allen and myself. What happened in the back of the tank I left to Sergeant O'Toole, that brave, ugly man with red face and protruding eyes and the biggest protruding ears I had ever seen issue from the sides of a man's head. The first time he introduced himself to me as assigned as second-in-command to my crew he had stood as rigidly to attention as a knock-kneed man could and announced defiantly, his habitual expression, that he was an orphan.

Something heaved up in the middle of the tank with a grinding noise. I signalled to O'Toole. "Get out with Colombe and fix the unditching beam." The two clambered out – to certain death I thought. The huge balk of timber, iron shod, had to be belted to the tracks so that they were locked to revolve together carrying the beam round under the belly of the tank and giving the track additional purchase.

They did revolve but the tank did not budge an inch. The beam scooped the mud out from under the tank; we were digging ourselves deeper into the mud. A louder, more raucous grinding than before – "Transmission has gone", shouted Allen. The engine was racing, free-wheeling. He shut off the power. "Get out!" I ordered, and the whole crew tumbled into the mud. O'Toole yelled and pushed me away from the door. A bullet had spattered, missing my head. I had not heard it or been aware. The near miss they said, unlike the whining more distant bullet, made a loud crack – or killed you.

As I looked at my map and hands in the tank I felt I was floating about four feet above my self, Allen an interested and unfrightened spectator. This dis-association, de-personalization was a way of achieving security – spontaneous, automatic, but potentially costly as it involved not knowing of the imminence of death.

We formed, according to our training, a 'strong point'. We scattered in a rough line between the tank and the position in which we thought the enemy lay. We had our Lewis guns and ammunition. If rifles were not used by the infantry, what could we do with our guns? If I knew where the enemy, or even Germany, was we could have fired in that direction. I got out my compass. I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw we were facing in the wrong direction. Luckily for us I retrieved some capacity for scepticism; it delayed me enough for suspicion to ripen into certainty that the compass was disturbed by the mass of steel of the tank. We crouched in our shell-holes, fiddled with our guns to see the mud had not clogged them. Morning passed to golden afternoon; the sun came out, the gunfire seemed less and our tank, now sinking out of sight without help from the unditching beam, no longer attracted gunfire.

"Triplanes!" They were said to be Royal Navy reconnaissance machines. We showed our identity by putting our three discs on the ground. The planes, we had been told, would thus learn of our position. It seemed a miracle that they were not hit by the shells which, though fewer, were hailing down on us and must be weaving, with those of our guns, an invisible pattern in the air. "Shouldn't think they will see these things or our tank", said Colombe. "I would have other things to think about if I were up there." Indeed, their loops, dives, steep climbs into the sky looked more like an exercise in evasion of an unseen enemy than a part of our life.

It was now 12.30; I could have believed we had been there timelessly. There was nothing to see but the unchanging mud, the faces of my crew, the spotless sheen of the guns contrasting incongruously with our caked uniforms and filth. There was no doubt of it now – the gunfire was less. Richardson produced some photos of his wife and children for me to look at. He was the grandfather of the crew – thirty-eight, twice my age, and much older than the rest of us. His wife, motherly looking woman, and the two rather lumpish children were displayed with pride, discoursed upon in detail and in confidence of a sympathetic hearing – I did not know why. Now I

suspect it was more out of a feeling of compassion for my youth and inexperience than belief in me. Could anyone, outside a public-school culture, believe in the fitness of a boy of nineteen to officer troops in battle?

I had no idea what was to happen next. No one said anything about tanks sinking in the mud or men like trees walking – except in religion. Battle orders I wanted – not Bible stories. There came a time when I began to feel that religion could likewise do with battle orders and fewer fairy stories: God is too much of a devil to be dealt with by the fairy stories of Birmingham business men. Krishna made Arjuna see that long ago. Would nobody tell me what to do?

Richardson fell silent. We watched the wastes of mud. Nothing, nothing, nothing. 'We are Fred Karno's Army, What bloody use are we?' – the words of one of our marching ditties seemed to fit our situation. "And, boys and girls", said the parson, fresh from a conducted tour of the front at government expense, as he warmed to the peroration of his children's sermon, "what do you think they were singing? All those brave marching men" (not sentimental Sunday school softies as you might think, but soldiers) "were singing, 'The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord'."

"Sir!" It was Sergeant O'Toole, asking permission to speak; battle or no battle, the conventions, the rules must be observed. "Yes sergeant?" "I think things are livening up over there." His voice was urgent.

They were indeed; a flurry of figures, the first I had seen since the early morning 'wood' had appeared; some seemed to stumble. "I think they are our chaps retiring sir!" They were about a hundred yards in front and slightly to the left. Had I managed to direct the tank to the wrong side of the hill? German machine-guns were now joined by the rapid high-pitched note of ours. Down came our barrage and the whole inferno broke. Cursing our luck we 'stood to' our guns.

An officer appeared and ducked down by my side. "B Company? Your orders are to withdraw to forward Company HQ", he shouted.

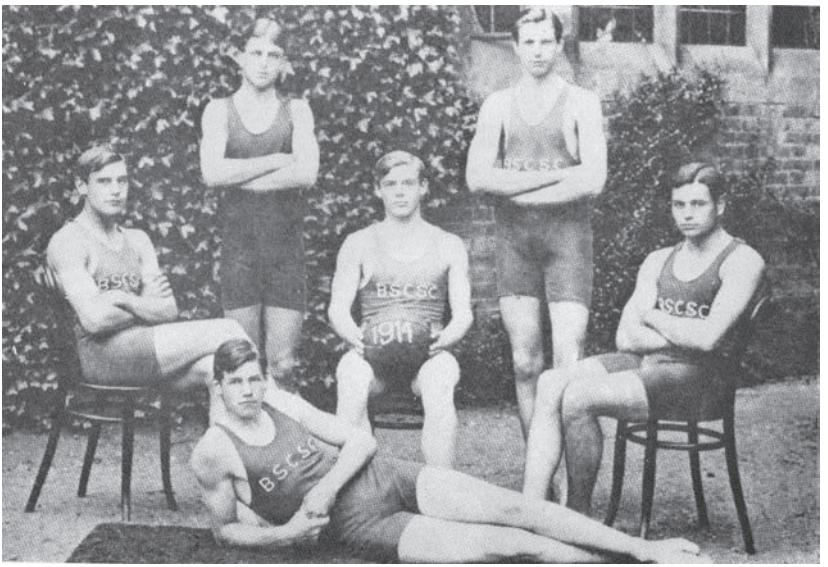
"Oughtn't we to stay – Lewis guns, plenty of ammunition."

"Do what you bloody well like – I've told you the orders." He was cross. So was I. Why the devil start arguing? I wanted to be cleared out; the Angel of Mons itself could not have been more welcome than this apparition. In 1940 it would have been said he was a German spy dressed as an officer, causing the gallant armies to fall back.

1897

1900 With his parents

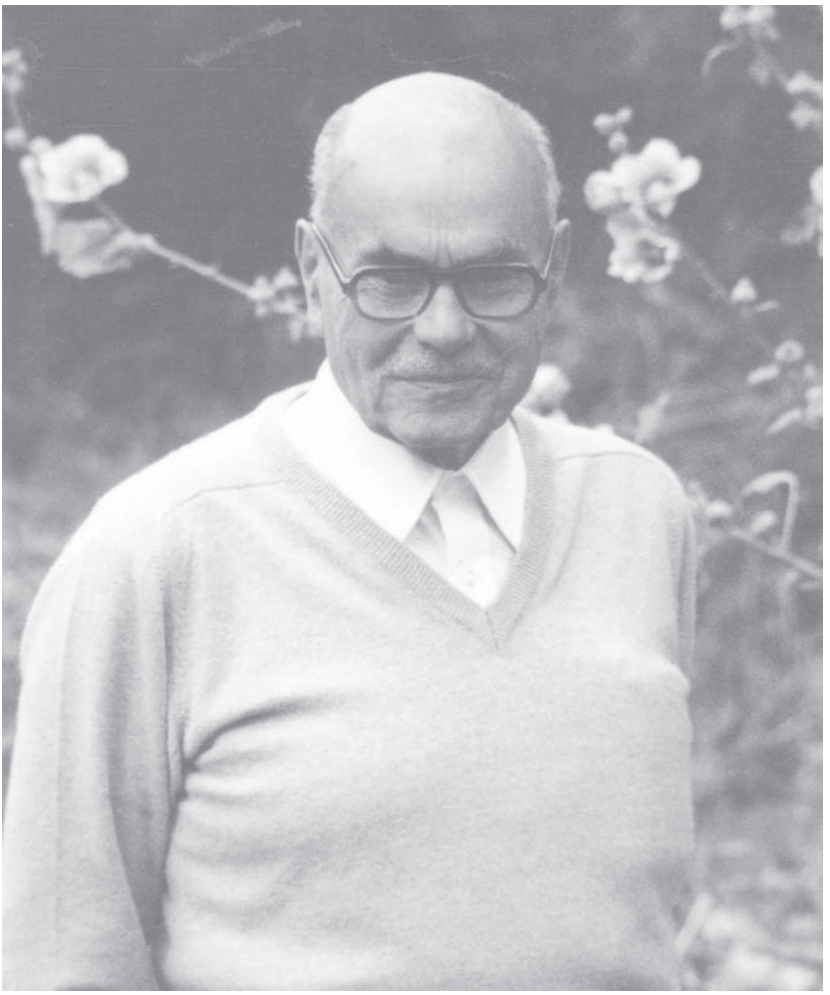
1903 With his sister



1914 School Water Polo Team (sitting right)

1915 School Football Team (back row second right)

1916



1978

1979

The officer had gone. I knew – I still know – I should have stayed, orders or no orders. Even junior officers are supposed to show initiative. "Come on chaps!" I yelled, waving them back. Breathless, hot, worn out, we got back to the Advanced HQ in a German pill-box. Victories, said Churchill after the terrible defeat in Malaya, are not won by retreats however glorious.

Despard, a tank commander rather older than the rest of us, was waiting to go in. A bullet, God knows from where, hit him in the belly. He sank down.

"What's up?" I asked. I was surprised; more surprised still when he said he was "finished". The pallor of his face increased.

"I knew it. When that bloody . . . magpie . . . came this . . . morning", he gasped, "I knew my number was up."

I felt stunned. I could not think what to say to this queer fatalistic Irishman. How could he possibly be convinced, as he was, that a magpie was more obviously the cause of death than a bullet? He died some two hours later.

I was called in to the Company Commander and saluted. "Despard has just been shot sir."

De Falbe looked pained. "Nothing serious I hope."

"He thinks he's dying sir."

"Dear me, dear me. Poor fellow."

The pill-box was relatively quiet though the door-slamming went on and the rat-tat-tat of machine-guns reminded one that the front must be near – if a bullet could kill a man it must have been fired from nearby.

"Sit down my dear chap." The major's voice was soothing. "What a pity; such a nice chap too. You did say Despard, didn't you?"

"Despard sir."

"Yes, yes of course. That's what I thought you said. I'm not deaf you know. Have some port my dear fellow."

On the table shone half a dozen beautiful port glasses of a size unknown to me. He was – had he been an ordinary officer – what I would have called 'drunk'. But the fruity voice, the gentle, melancholy tones, were no different from what they ever were. How like the White Knight in Alice he was.

"Thank you sir."

"What? What did you say?"

"I said 'Thank you sir'."

"Don't mention it my dear fellow. Now, we must get on. Where was I? Oh yes. But do have some port first won't you? Sergeant, just pop out and see what it's like will you?" He leant confidentially towards me. The blast as the door opened and shut again prompted his next remark. "Very rough night. Doesn't do to have these chaps hanging around when we have secret stuff to discuss. Now, tell me, what was it like?"

I told him, and explained that I had lost my tank. He nodded sympathetically.

"I knew it was rough. I was afraid it would be."

I said I regretted having had to withdraw during the counter-attack and after we had formed a strong-point. He was getting bored. So was I. I felt I was beginning to believe we really had formed a strong-point.

"It was really very good."

"What was sir?"

"The strong-point."

"Not really sir." I was trying to struggle back to the world of fact.

Was my Company Commander drunk? These 'old seasoned casks', as Mrs Jorrocks said, are not easily made drunk. I had not – then or since – known what it is to be seized by the joy of battle; taken 'by the throat' as Julian Grenfell described it. My sense of reality made me too leaden-footed even to run away.

Mercifully the Major's boredom and my fatigue asserted themselves. "My dear boy, you must be tired out. Get back to camp now. Carter, get these chaps to camp."

Carter drew me aside. "Tomorrow the brigade intelligence officer will be interviewing you. Your chaps are in the trench outside. Get them together back to the Canal. There should be a lorry there – if it hasn't been blown up."

Outside I thought the shelling, though heavy, was less than it had been. Our bedraggled and exhausted band stumbled together and shuffled off towards the track leading to the Canal rendezvous. It had become lighter. Just time, I thought, to get to the track before dark – maybe even to the Canal.

Harrison, Quainton's driver, had attached himself because Quainton and his crew, also without their tank but otherwise intact, had gone off in front of us without him. About ten minutes later we saw them a hundred yards or so in front. We could not catch up. In fact,

as we stumbled and floundered with our heavy loads of guns, ammunition and equipment from one water-logged shell-hole to the next, I felt increasingly afraid that we could not get to the track. Dread of spending the night in that bog made me drive myself and the crew desperately to reach the track, now an incredibly long fifty yards in front. I relieved Allen of his load which was now beyond his strength.

At last; we threw ourselves onto the duck boards while it was still light. I decided to check our direction by compass; to my amazement the compass showed I was about to lead the crew back to the enemy lines. Unable to think and with no one to ask I followed the compass instead of my sense; it was an age before I was assured that I had been right to do so.

We were joined by a couple of tommies escorting some half dozen prisoners who were carrying two stretchers with wounded. Harrison, without any warning, broke under the strain; he had seen the Germans. "You bloody bastards", he screamed. "You bastards, you killed my brother." He had drawn his revolver and was blazing away at the stretcher party. Luckily O'Toole and I managed to disarm him, still fighting violently. We got him down and two others pinioned his arms with webbing belts from our equipment. He was frothing at the mouth. No one had been hit and his ammunition was exhausted. I stuffed his revolver, empty, into my pocket.

After some minutes he stopped struggling; the fit seemed to have passed. I told O'Toole to keep by him and not let him out of his sight. When we had re-loaded ourselves we all stumbled on, Harrison morose and sullen with his hands tied. Somehow we found the lorry and scrambled in. I managed to count our party, found the numbers correct, gave the all-clear and off we went with the usual jolt which threw us into a jumbled heap on the floor. I suppose we slept, but beyond the jolting and rattling I knew little more till the driver said we were at the camp.

9

The Intelligence Officer sat on one side of the table and I sat facing him. "Can you show me whereabouts your tank got stuck?" It sounded simple, but though it was early afternoon I seemed incapable of thought. I said it was a bit to the right of Hill 40, that is, east of it – or was it west? It could be . . .

He waited patiently, "Here, show me on the map."

Obviously it could not be west – it would be in the German lines. Nor east, because we would not have got into action. But, come to think of it, I was not sure we *had* got into action. I kept thinking of my shell-hole which I shared with a corpse from a previous engagement.

"Here", I said with a wobbly finger.

"Or", he said with scarcely concealed sarcasm, "possibly here . . . perhaps?"

I agreed that it was very likely. The corpse was lying andrews-cross-wise. It was thin, desiccated, not blown-up, and the green skin was stretched tight like parchment over the bones of the face.

"Sir?" He was asking me something.

"I said, did you notice when the alluvial changed to the cretaceous?"

I could hardly believe my ears. "I didn't notice any change", I said truthfully.

"There seems to be general agreement about *that*." I was unable to interpret his intonation. Anyhow I was not alone; the fellow in the shell-hole had his mouth wide open, the skin stretched – by the mouth? Or did the tight skin pull it open? It – or was it 'he'? – didn't stink, for which I was thankful.

"You say the tank sank out of sight?"

I considered this. "No, it sank level with the ground. You could probably see it if you stood up."

"But . . . didn't you *look* at it before you went?"

"Not standing sir. I had nearly been shot through the head just before."

"Well, yes, I suppose there is always the risk of that . . . in battle I mean."

I was getting cross. "This was supposed to be a battle . . . sir", I added.

He looked at my face for a moment and then studied his map. At last he said, indicating that the interview was over, "Well, thank you very much. I think that will do . . . Oh, by the way, did you see any infantry?"

I said they had been falling back when we left – a small bunch of them under counter-attack. "Here, pretty well on the top of the hill, a bit to the left I should say."

"Ah! That's very interesting." It must have been my only intelligible remark. I saluted and left.

The Intelligence Officer was Clough Williams Ellis whom I was to meet after the war when he designed the War Memorial to our school dead. At this meeting in 1916 he could hardly have failed to realize that I was typical of the damned fools that were made combatant officers. We were not impressed by our highly intelligent staff, or I might have congratulated him on the arrangements for the blockage on the St Jean–Wieltje Road. No fool could have arranged the battle I had just seen for myself.

Cohen met me outside. As always he was pallid, skin drawn tight – oh God, not that again – sweating and tense. Seeing my face he laughed.

"What did he say? I liked the bit about the alluvial didn't you? Or didn't he ask you?"

We joined a small group. Despard was the only casualty. Cohen and Stokes, both twenty-two and so much more experienced than the rest of us, were exchanging notes on the 'show', 'stunt' or, as I hoped, 'battle'. Broome, pink, baby-faced and foul-mouthed, joined us. His eyes wide open and innocent, he described how he had tripped over a bit of barbed wire.

"Before I knew what had happened I began to slither into this ruddy shell-hole. Must have been a 9.2 – huge, filled with water. I

didn't stop till I was up to my waist. It stank – full of arms and legs and blown-up bellies. I tell you, it was a kind of human soup."

"Liar", said Stokes.

"It's gospel truth I tell you; if you don't believe me ask my batman – he's just had to throw my uniform away – the whole lot – it stinks so awful. Kind of horrible sweet . . ."

"Oh shut up for Christ sake. We don't want to hear about your swimming gala."

"I tell you, it's absolutely true." He was getting annoyed. "The belly was ripped open and the guts . . ."

"Stank – they usually do", said Cohen crisply.

"But – " expostulated Broome.

"Oh, put a sock in it. Shut up – we don't want to hear about your battle. What did you do with your tank?" Stokes tried to stop the flow.

"It blew up. Direct hit."

"A direct hit?", said Stokes incredulously. "What happened to the crew?"

"Dead", Broome simpered. He began to snuffle and wiped away a tear.

"What's the joke?" asked Carter joining in.

"There's no joke. These silly bastards don't believe . . ."

"How did you get out if the whole crew was killed?"

"I don't know."

"You were having your soup – swim I mean – I suppose."

"Well, that was afterwards . . . I think . . . I caught my foot in the barbed wire and before I could stop I was slithering waist deep into this sort of human . . ."

"Oh God! You've started him off again." Cohen, Quainton and I had had enough and drifted away. "Do you know", said Cohen, "I really believe that little bastard is speaking the truth."

"He's got the story pretty pat. We can find out – I'll ask in the orderly room about his crew."

It was true; they were dead – 'missing', they called it, 'believed killed'.

One day, years after the war, I was swimming at a popular road house and was accosted by another swimmer. He had recognized me, but it took me a moment or two before there emerged from out of the matrix of the firm businessman's face the pink baby-face of Broome.

"Those days of the war – when I look back at them", he said, "were the happiest days of my life."

"Impossible!" I replied.

"They were. I enjoyed every moment of it."

Every moment; fancy that. I really believe that prosperous businessman was speaking the truth.

"How's Harrison?" I asked Quainton.

"Oh, he's all right. He's simmered down again. Sorry you had all that fuss. I don't know how he didn't see us going off. I should have noticed that he wasn't in the party. Talking of parties, here's the *Daily Mail.* Do you think the papers will mention the show?"

"How about 'We carried out some adjustment of our line', or 'We took X-thousand prisoners and reached all our objectives'? I haven't a clue what happened but I did see about half a dozen prisoners."

"And we seem to have captured a lot of mud", Quainton replied, "even if it's only what I've got on my uniform. I think I'd better see what Perkins has done about it." He went off to find his batman.

Cohen came up; he and I started to walk off down the road outside the camp when an orderly said the Major wanted to see me.

"Oh Bion, sorry, but I've got bad news for you I'm afraid. Will you take your crew up the line this evening and see if you can bring your tank back? It wasn't knocked out when you left was it? We are supposed to salvage any tank we sent into action."

"Sir, I don't think we can do it without special equipment – it's buried in mud, up to the roof before we left." I was going on to tell him that the transmission had gone too and even if we could dig it out something would have to tow it back, when my eye caught the expression on the face from which the soothing tones and quiet voice proceeded. His moustache drooped, his face was flabby, but his green eyes were hard. This unmilitary figure had always frightened me.

"I know my dear boy" – he still frightened me – "Silly isn't it?" As he spoke he reminded me of the soothing, almost oleaginous tones of the parson – he of the 'and-what-do-you-think-they-were-singing?' infamy – when he pronounced the words, 'Hear what comfortable words Our Lord saith'. ("I know dear boy, something humorous I think – with boiling oil in it.") I thought it best to hold my tongue.

"Don't risk the lives of your men", he added, "If the fire is too heavy come back."

I saluted and went out. The aristocratic – and he was aristocratic – alcoholic – and he was alcoholic – is not to be treated with the sort of familiarity which one might dare to assume with a man-eating tiger.

"What luck?", asked Cohen who had waited for me.

"Going to fetch the tank back."

"Mind you don't get your feet wet – I should take an umbrella if I were you."

I went to rout out Sergeant O'Toole.

10

The lorry was waiting, so was the Canal, so was Number 5 Infantry Track. I was disappointed to see it was an unmistakably quiet night. If we found the tank again . . . what? We could beat it with shovels so the enemy would open fire. "We got there sir, but the enemy fire was so heavy they beat us off it every time . . ." But in fact I was too green to think of it. Later one became more of a veteran liar.

This time our journey was easier. We had only revolvers, the heavy service Colts, and little ammunition instead of those Lewis guns which seemed both flimsy and made of lead. At one point the ground became dark and lumpy; there were men resting or sleeping – a relief party.

A lump detached itself and came up to me. "Who are you?" it said. I told him. "And you?" "Number 17XY battery-gunners." "What's it like forward – do you know?" He told me it was very quiet. Of course I could see that for myself. In any case we were on one of the well-worn infantry tracks so clearly marked by the duck boards that the enemy gunners had registered it weeks ago. If it were not 'very quiet' the track would be spouting with high explosive and the air above whining.

The clouds parted and a shaft of moonlight revealed us momentarily to each other. "Good God! It's you Bion isn't it?" "Bonsey! E. K. Bonsey!" I remembered him at school, a couple of years older than I, studious, wearing spectacles; I neither liked nor disliked him.

Now, sixty years later, that momentary moonlight contact is etched on my mind. We walked a few yards. In the quiet a groan came from the mud in the distance, followed by a cry further off. I was listening – but not to Bonsey. How queer! Like marsh birds, innumerable bitterns mating. Or perhaps, a more comfortable vision, the moonlit

plain near Avignon bathed in light, alive with the cheerful songs of nightingales spreading a web of sound.

"What's that?" I said – as if I didn't know!

"I was just telling you", he said, exasperated. "Don't go off this track. You may get wounded, or just sprain an ankle and you will sink into the mud and drown. No one will ever find you. Listen!"

We did. Sometimes it stopped for a minute or so and then the chorus broke out again, not raucous or crude – gentle. Dante's Inferno – but how much better we do these things now.

"Do you mean no stretcher bearer gets them?"

"No stretcher bearer would be such a fool. Your unit might save you, the regimental stretcher bearers. Haven't you heard of the RAMC? The Rob All My Comrades boys?"

Of course I had – and have many times since, particularly from the RAMC itself which is determined that the particular stain should not be forgotten by its members, though it cannot turn it into an honour like the spats of the Royal Highlanders, or the muzzle on the Bear of the Warwick family.

"Shut up! Shut up! you noisy sods, you bleeding pieces of Earth."

But they didn't; and they don't. And still the warning voices sound in answer to the sufferers of bereavement, depression, anxiety. "Don't go off the beaten track. Don't do as the psychoanalysts do. Haven't you heard? Pay Stills Your Conscience Here. Don't go off the beaten Church. Remember Simon Magnus. Leave your mind alone. Don't go down the Unconscious Daddy: Let the Gold Mine come up to you." How wise! How very wise!

Those guns would *not* fire. "Good-bye old man", we said to each other. "Good-bye! See you in Peace-time!" What morale! What pop-pycock!

We trudged on. Now, not for the first time, I wonder why. It was most unlikely we could find the tank; if we could there was nothing to do. Eight men cannot lift forty tons of steel out of the mud. You can't win a war by retreating, said Churchill. But you can't win a war with a bullet through your head. And yet I knew a very cheerful man who had a bullet just there – through his brain. It must have been the only place where it cannot have done any harm.

Some shells fell; it shut out that damned groaning. I called to O'Toole, "What the hell are we doing here sergeant? You saw that bloody tank!"

He gave the matter some thought. "No idea sir." At least he remembered to say "sir".

"Sergeant, that is the fourth shell I've heard fall in the last five minutes. It is too much. We must not risk the lives of our men. At any moment the place will be aflame. My orders to you are to fall in the crew and march back."

"Very good sir."

It seemed like bravado: it seemed like common sense; a combination which was a luxury indeed.

I thought I would have a last word with Bonsey on the way back, but he had been killed. Requiescat in Pace – "See you in Peace-time old man." I was shocked; I was shocked to find I did not care. I was to become more familiar with the intense comradeship of war, every scrap of gesture, intonation, etched apparently indelibly. A week later it was over and yet not so. One still seemed to know the stout heart, but the name, the history, the parts that lay outside the limits of time and space where he entered into the sphere of one's own life, they did not exist. Married? Single? How many children? Military Cross I see; university graduate. Father as rich as Croesus since he is head of that firm. Accounts for his uniform. Nice chap.

Married? Not yet. Related to that Celebrated Swindler. His father? Really! What does it feel like to have a Dad who's in gaol? Shut up – or you'll say it aloud. Doesn't even wonder if I've heard of his Dad the notorious swindler. But – savoir faire. Fine presence. Hello, hullo, hulLO! What are those nobs under his tunic? Well, I'm damned! A steel waistcoat! Of course, if your father is a notorious swindler he can afford to buy toys like that. I didn't know they made them now. Perhaps he had it made specially – by another swindler of course, because it would not keep out any ordinary bullet. No more use than the ordinary prayer books and Bibles which are always keeping bullets out according to the press. I'd rather wear my Bible over my shins or my balls. Obviously officer material – and anyhow, think of the row the press baron would make if he didn't get a commission. Promoted at once= tank commander! Such an outstanding fellow. Promoted again – company commander! Such an outstanding officer – must send him home to organize a new brigade. We want men of experience. England, Flu and Dooty. Dead in a week – the 'flu got through the waistcoat. Nice chap. *Shifty as hell.*

I did not see the Major when I got back; he had had to go to HQ. He saw me the next day and was kindness itself. When I told him of how we had been unable to get through the barrage he said, without a trace of sarcasm, "Ah yes, I was afraid you would." Where did he think the barrage was? "No good risking the lives of highly trained men. I am glad you used your judgement." He looked at some papers – some officers thought he kept these papers especially for looking at. I saluted. "Goodbye dear boy – crew in good heart?" "Yes sir."

For my part I had learned to keep a crew who wore their good hearts on their sleeves – for inspection, part of their kit like boots or blankets. I went out wondering why that man made me sweat with fear; perhaps he could see the 'very heavy barrage' far better than I could.

11

On an exercise march a few days later we came under shell-fire. A lorry in front of us was picked up and thrown into the ditch; one man was killed, but the driver escaped. After the march was over I saw Harrison had been on the parade.

"How did he get on?" I asked Quainton.

"Oh he's all right. When we were passing the lorry he shouted at the driver leaning against the upturned engine, 'What's up chum? Won't it go?' He's back to his usual."

"What was all that about his brother?"

"Well, apparently he thought he was a great hero and he got done in at Gheluvelt. He's been sore about it ever since."

Harrison came up just then, pink, bony-faced and upturned nose. He saluted me and said, "Sorry about all that fuss the other day sir. I was upset."

"You upset *us*. Never mind – try upsetting the German army next time. Those were unarmed prisoners you know."

He looked downcast and examined his boots. "All right – off you go – but don't do it again." The sound of my voice impressed and reassured me.

I felt no such assurance about that battle, but according to the press a few days later we had made big gains in guns and taken three thousand prisoners. Well, that was a comfort at least. Not so my discovery that, as I suspected, I was a coward and that there was no chance of running away – while observed. But what if there was no one to see? Then no one could say you were lying. Oh shut up! My conscience was dying, but like the Dead it would not lie down.

I did not realize that fear was an irrelevance; there is no question of being able to 'run away' in so far as such an expression is related

to muscular activity. That there are other expressions of fear was brought home to me by one ludicrous and painful event.

Cohen, Quainton and I had had some talk of religion and prayer. Both of them were religious, even fervent as I had been until the powerful effect of school services and those conducted by our parson ate deep into my soul. But after our talk I decided to make a public affirmation of my faith. About half a dozen of us slept in one officers' marquee. Cohen and Quainton used to kneel publicly with the support of Gatehouse our company commander who was huge, an ex-boxing champion of Sandhurst and used to bending his powerful frame in devotion. I was not so lucky and the ritual was something of a strain. Still, down I flopped. The absolute lack of comment or ribaldry left a gap which was immediately filled with an emotion which might have been solid. I found I had nothing whatever to say to My Saviour who, I felt, shared in the general stupefaction. There were some surprises to which even the Almighty should not be subject.

How to get up? Obviously I could not stay there on my knees all night. I could not pretend I had been doing up my boots because I had no boots on. I got up. Never, never again, I vowed, would I make such an utter fool of myself. My fellows would not even believe I had 'wind up' at the prospect of fighting, for despite my preoccupations I was not usually regarded as that kind of person.

The previous night the Prince of Wales had dined with the Major, Gatehouse, and Gull the adjutant of the battalion who introduced him as an old friend of his. The Colonel also had been present. Gull was an intelligent man, but liable to talk with a peculiar nasal bleat when mentioning Royalty. He wore very shiny boots and well-cut breeches.

This evening the mess, separated from the main tent by a canvas partition, was the scene of an altercation. Gull was speaking; then the Major; Gull again; and then the angry voice of Gatehouse. "If you say the Prince's name again I shall thrash you." We pricked up our ears and I at least regretted that I could not see beyond the screen. Again Gull's voice, still somewhat nasal; something about "an old and dear friend of my Oxford days". "Damn Oxford!" – this was Gatehouse – "and all the rest of your arse-licking sycophants!" Then the Major's oily voice; the quarrel stopped at once, but the Major's voice had not sounded emollient, however oily.

Gull diminished now that there were no battalion parades and no call for shiny boots; the Colonel too seemed redundant for much

the same reason. But God? I thought that most people would assume that my precipitate raid on religion had been a flight from fear. In fact fear, real fear, seemed to diminish the God, in whom I sincerely thought I believed, to colonel-size vestments, rituals, like tossing up for innings before a cricket match – impressive to the elite who knew the importance of shiny boots.

The time for heart-searchings, religious and others, was suddenly cut short by strong rumours that the battalion was to go into action. By the afternoon the rumour was certainty. I vowed that this time not even the Angel of Mons in person would cause me to clear out of the battlefield. I would keep my mouth shut and use my judgement about forming strong points, retreating, returning to HQ.

We had drawn new tanks the previous day. Mine appeared to have something wrong with it so the crew sweated feverishly and continuously to get it into perfect condition. The 6-pounders were overhauled; the Lewis guns cleaned and oiled till the whole shone like sombre jewellery. Every scrap of ammunition was sized, that is, dropped into the barrel to see that it fitted and rejected if it did not. Short of firing there was nothing more we could do to be sure we had none of the defective American ammunition.

As we slaved and sweated I wondered if this battle would be for another invisible hill made of mud, or whether the staff had found a dry patch somewhere. At last all the chores were done. As near perfect as maybe but for one thing – the tank would not go. The engine would start perfectly and would move the tank for a hundred yards, though with a seeming lack of zest. Then, backfires, overheating, *stop*. Obviously a timing defect, so we retimed it. The Major turned up and watched our feverish efforts. Had I not by this time learned better I would have assumed that he was captivated by the spectacle of our enthusiasm. Then he drew me aside.

"You are not preparing for action are you?" I admitted, somewhat surprised, that we were. "Oh my dear fellow – quite right of course, ready for action at any time and any place, quite right – but er . . . you don't mean this show?"

I was furious; as relieved as hell and furious to find I was so relieved.

"You see, your lot have already been in action, so Bagshaw's and Clifford's sections will be in reserve. Of course that means you won't be called on for action."

It was like a tug-of-war when the opponents suddenly let go; there I was – on my bottom. When I had recovered we went on fooling with the engine. Then I boiled up and went to see the Major to protest at being left out of the action. It was, in its way, nearly as bad as saying my prayers. My keenness was terrific; the Major's appreciation of my keenness was also terrific. When I finally left I felt as if I had been taking part in a little dramatic dialogue. "You know that I know that you know that I know the whole thing is a lot of damned humbug." Perhaps there was a shade of a shadow of doubt in the Major's mind. Was it possible that the extreme youth and stupidity of one of his junior officers was reducing him to enthusiasm? If he had any such disturbing doubt he soon recovered. Not so myself. I had resolved to do or die and felt as if the tombstone had been suddenly withdrawn from under me – a most undignified posture in which to find oneself.

The rest of the battalion went into action; same mud, same non-existent objectives, same victory, but a different lot of names. Their name liveth for evermore. "If I should die, think only this of me . . ." wrote Rupert Brooke. "You did and we don't", ran the postscript of the second war on the heroes of the first.

12

The conditions for the further employment of tanks at Ypres were demonstrably so unsuitable that we began to feel we should not be used there again. The last battalion attacks had hardly been able to flounder into danger. Our casualties in men turned out to be slight. Nevertheless I had one more jaunt, a reconnaissance of the Poelkappelle–Passchendaele front. By that time I was sufficiently angry and fed up to condemn in plain English the bit of the project on which it was my business to report.

And now officially-originated rumours began to circulate; we were to prepare for a new battle on ground 'suitable for tanks'. We were given special maps of our area printed without names. We were to rehearse on land similar to that on which we were to fight; we were not to know our accompanying troops till the rehearsal; above all we were not to talk. The last injunction has by this time become a grim joke with reference to the Royal Navy as the Silent Service. Certain actions co-ordinated with the Royal Navy had become, first, topics for fascinated and fascinating women to discuss in luxurious hotels and clubs, and next, matters of serious concern to the German secret service and staff. For these the Army paid in blood. "If tea is the price of Admiralty, Lord God, we'll pay in blood."

The section and tank commanders of the battalion were taken by car to some country of chalk downland. We waited at a cross-roads at the bottom of a declivity; on higher ground was a small group of officers including Gull and the Colonel "wearing a French letter", as someone said about his transparent raincoat. He was as usual immaculate. Sometimes such dress is an expression of the personality; sometimes a substitute for a personality that is not there. There are times when it is imperative to know which is which. I think most

of us would have endorsed the views of Yates: in England it seemed to matter; now, seeing the group on the crest the old aura still clung, but it was diminished. The 'fine' face, the handsome regular features, the clipped military moustache, the haughty demeanour and studied negligence of his pose were not sufficiently often displayed; yet too often to be safe from revisions of estimate. Later that day he was to lecture the division's officers on tanks and tank warfare. Of this he knew less than our Major; he lacked the tough ruthlessness of our alcoholic. There was, when I went to the Royal Naval Barracks at Chatham for my gunnery course, a story of a destroyer captain, one of the Dover Patrol, who was reputed to be in a state of permanent alcoholic stupor. The harbour entrance was notoriously dangerous and difficult to enter or leave. It was made more difficult because the war meant that ships had to leave without warning, without fail, at any hour of day or night and without regard to the weather. The naval men said the captain was the only officer who could enter or leave without any possibility of error. Having done this immediate chore no one would dream of asking him to do anything more – he would return to his stupor. Our Major had a similar gift.

This morning he was present, jolly, rubicund, at peace with himself and the world. The fresh November morning seemed an incongruous setting for him. Yet he had a Bacchus-like quality. He exuded an aroma of old port which civilized the rude rusticity of the scene, pervaded it rather than subdued it.

"Hullo Quainton dear boy", he said affectionately, like the Duchess when she met Alice in her 'and-the-moral-of-that-is . . .' mood. "Do I hear something?" His eyes twinkled.

"Sounds like bagpipes to me sir."

"It *is* bagpipes", he said archly, putting his finger to his lips. "Listen!"

It was faint but clear, the skirl of pipes coming nearer. Over the crest there presently appeared the first files of marching men, battalion after battalion of kilted troops.

We watched the rhythmical sway of the kilts as the battalions went by. Nothing was said, for we all knew who they were. In that war the 51st Division, Highland Territorials, had won a reputation second only to the Guards. In their own opinion, and many could be found to share it – even amongst the enemy – they ranked even higher. For steadiness and reliability the Guards, as we ourselves were soon to

see, could not be matched. But the virtue that was their strength also led to the defect of rigidity in some situations where the flexibility of the 51st would have been more valuable.

The music of the pipers was extremely moving. Whatever gibes can be levelled at the pipes no one as near to action as we were could possibly deny their heart-warming power. We had already learned in our very slight and brief experience that our lives depended on the stout hearts of the infantry who were in action with us. The coming battle was to bring this home to the Commander-in-Chief himself. We watched in silent relief the troops who would be in action with us. The 51st Division? Someone meant business – at last!

We rehearsed. Our part was to provide small flag parties to represent tanks. At the end of the day officers and NCOs of the division, with some sixty officers of our battalion, assembled in a long but for our Colonel's lecture.

As always he looked the part. We, his battalion officers, must have changed since our days in Bovington. The magic of his uniform had lost its potency; we listened with attention diverted from his looks to the content of what he said. But after the revelation, at the start, that he did not know what guns a tank carried, we listened no more. We were consoled by the thought that in action the Colonel had nothing to do.

Afterwards he picked out Quainton, a favourite of his, to speak – ostensibly to display his soldierly comradeship, but I who stood near felt he was looking for reassurance. Quainton seemed embarrassed; I shared his feeling.

The day was over. Exhilarated and expectant we returned to our gloomy, muddy camp. We could not and did not say, even to each other, what we had learned on our day's outing.

I routed out O'Toole. How about the tank? Was the trouble sorted out? O'Toole was gloomy. It was as bad as ever. Alarmed and disappointed I said, "But Sergeant, it is obvious that the timing is the trouble." He went over the symptoms in detail. "It cannot possibly be anything else!" "I know sir. We have checked it up completely; at least six times. It came out the same each time. After a hundred yards it would be red-hot, back-firing. No life in the engine at all – and then – stop! The crew are tired out."

The next morning confirmed his report. Allen the driver and I went through it all. There was nothing more we could do. Orders

came through that we were to entrain that night for our unknown destination. In desperation I told O'Toole to ask the workshop officer to come. Luckily for once he had no other job and came round immediately after lunch.

Williams was a wiry, wizened man, no soldier, but an engineer to his finger tips. He was cheerful and reassuring.

"Well old man, what's the trouble?" He listened intently as I told him the story in detail, missing nothing. "Well, thank God! I thought it was something serious. It's obvious – the timing's wrong." I told him about the timing.

"I'm sorry old boy, it's obvious. You've just made a balls-up of it." He spoke with the pitying superiority and confidence of the engineer talking to the usual amateur bunch of boobies. But I wasn't going to let him go.

"Would you mind checking up on it yourself?" He was a good sort.

"Well, I haven't anything to do for once. Give me a spanner", and he set to work while we stood round and acted as assistants.

To my secret relief he found no obvious mistake in our work. He seemed a bit less assured when he had finished. "Now – give her another try."

At that moment the order came to entrain. "Never mind; I'll come with you and we can check it as we go."

It was about a mile to the railhead, but I remember little of the journey. I spent it watching the engine anxiously. Its behaviour was an exact repetition of its previous performance. It had no guts, it became hot, backfired and after about a hundred yards we dared not drive further and switched off. Williams looked anxious. "Never mind. Get it onto the train and we will see to it at the other end."

It was touch and go whether we could reach the train before it had to steam off. We did – because we were so late we were out of order and drove up the ramp onto the last truck. It was just as well for otherwise we should have had to drive almost the length of the train and though it was easy I always hated the sensation of driving on an unstable platform of flat trucks marshalled end to end, just wide enough for the tanks and their tracks, but often with an inch of the latter overhanging.

It was still light when the train left. Any reconnaissance plane – and there were plenty at the Salient – could and probably did see us. But

in the hour before night fell they would not be able to find out any more about our destination than we on the ground could. White puffs of anti-aircraft shell bursts showed we were as usual being observed. Our last taste of the Salient was the flash of wings and bursts of machine-gun fire from a 'dog fight' high over our heads in the fading light.

13

We stopped after an hour. The officers of our company were to go along the rail track to the Major's coach, a dilapidated first-class compartment. Officers must travel first class I remembered, though it was an age since we had known any luxury other than the snout of the tank looming above us as we lay on the boards of the tank trucks. A shaded hand torch was our illumination as we strained to catch a glimpse of the map in the circle of light. We knew it by heart anyway-except for one word clearly visible – CAMBRAI. Where the hell's that?

That was where there was a great railway junction, a nerve centre of the German army communications which, when we had broken through . . . Not *again* surely – all through those beautiful green fields? Ouderdom, Vlamertinghe, St Jean – one bit of mud is very like another whatever the name – had destroyed military fairy stories. And we were not to know that the secret operation could be discontinued at any time since there were no reserves available. Just as well perhaps – one tank was worry enough for us.

There was no port. As no one had ever suggested that the Major was a secret drinker – that was a fault of which the old rascal was incapable – we were agreed that things must be pretty serious. We dispersed to our trucks after one parting injunction.

"Remember; between the time we detrain, in about an hour I should think, and half an hour before dawn, say six o'clock, every tank must have disappeared so the enemy can see nothing, *nothing*, between rail-head and Havrincourt Wood." Another blasted wood. I hoped it didn't look like men walking.

As we were last on we came off the train first when we arrived at our rail-head. Williams was there. "It may be carboned up; if so,

with a bit of luck it will burn itself clear as it goes. I'll give it a proper doing when you get to the wood."

There was no luck. We had five miles to go and in the best conditions we were unlikely to make more than five miles an hour. Certainly the ground was dry and chalky – was that what the intelligent fool called cretaceous? I hoped I was not going to see it change to the alluvial – but after that the conditions were not the best. We were utterly tired out.

A party of some ten men was approaching with a curious shuffling, somnambulistic gait which yet reminded one of men marching. As they came nearer it was clear that they were marching. Harrison dared to ask the question the rest of us seemed unable to voice.

"Who are you chum?"

"Coldstream Guards."

"What! The whole lot?" said Harrison facetiously.

"The whole bloody lot – and mind your own business!" He was angry; so they were alive and not a delusion.

Now we felt unable to be certain of our own reality. During one of my turns at driving I became aware through the open flap at the front of my seat that the sky was lightening. Dawns And heaven knew how many miles to the nearest air cover. As far as I could see the country was bare; just the rolling downland in front silhouetted against the pallor of the sky. Suddenly someone I could not see was yelling through the flap. It was O'Toole and Allen. "Stop! Stop!" I knew the engine must be about red hot and stopped at once.

"Sir, you've nearly driven into a house!" I got out to find we were in a village street, the nose of the tank almost touching a sturdy brick building. Thoroughly awake I got back to my driving seat to find that the 'sky' was the dim torch light, which they were using to watch the engine, reflected on the flap of the observation opening. At least we still had time.

Remembering the Coldstream experience I said that when it was time to take fresh air the crew were to do it in pairs, both men walking together. I did not want anyone lost through falling asleep.

Far behind the tail of the battalion we eventually limped into a village. We had to stop. I drew in as close as possible to a ruined cottage. We draped sacking over the sides and placed empty petrol cans on the roof so the tracks were hidden. We piled up some cans to simulate a chimney.

The Major came up. "Quite a nice little country cottage you have there. I'll have to warn the infantry you may not be able to operate. Luckily the rest of the battalion seem to be at their stations." And off he went, affable, rosy-cheeked, cosy; there are worse states of mind and I felt comforted by his matter-of-fact state.

As for the crew, they were as near mindless as fatigue can make men. I told O'Toole and Allen the driver to check up the tank and its guns so that nothing we could do would be left undone for action. The rest were to go under the tank – there was a space of two feet between the lowest part of the belly and the ground. Then I went off to find Williams and the other company officers in the wood.

The wood had real trees with thick foliage and its quota of magpies. Why, I wondered, was it not a name on a map? Why had nobody been fighting? Nobody had been fighting because this was a position to which the enemy had retired after the Somme; it was untouched country and we were now lying before the Hindenburg Line. Or so somebody said.

Where was Williams? The mess corporal gave me a note. "Sorry – can't do anything now. As soon as it is dark get your tank into the wood under the trees where we can work at it properly. We shall have nearly twelve hours. Sorry you had a bad trip."

Quainton, Cohen, Bayliss and all other tank commanders had had a virtually trouble-free trip. "You look tired", said Quainton. I felt oily; the cool morning fresh air emphasized the greasy, unshaven sense of being encased in a film insulating me from fact. My skin was tired, my eyes bloodshot. Quainton was not being funny. Both he and Cohen were clearly concerned and I wondered why.

"Where's Williams?" I asked.

"The corporal has a note for you from him."

"Oh damn it; of course, I've seen it."

"Go and get some sleep."

"Where?"

"Anywhere; I'll wake you if you are wanted", said Quainton. Then in a low voice, "I'm sorry old man – are you all right?"

Of course I was all right – but we were still inexperienced and had not seen fatigue close to, let alone felt it. Later I learnt more of that terrible infantry fatigue of men tried beyond endurance, pasty-faced, almost as if their very eyes had become grey. In tanks we knew noth-

ing of that unending 'world without end' fatigue. In April the next year . . . but that was mercifully hidden.

I went back to the crew; they were now all asleep except O'Toole who was keeping watch.

"Do you think we shall get into action sir?"

"I know we shall Sergeant; but I have no idea what we shall do when we get there."

In his fatigued state he looked more horrible than ever. "Hard luck if we miss this sir. After Ypres this looks like proper tank ground."

It told him it was part of the fortress-like defences of the Hindenburg Line.

"It will be pretty tough fighting then. But Jerry always is a tough job."

Particularly for a lot of amateurs, I thought – and I was one of the amateurs who said the words without knowing what they meant. There were many catch-phrases endlessly repeated. Those in vogue at this time were, 'Remember Belgium', a sarcastic use of an official formula; 'The first seven years are the worst'; 'Remember the Hundred Years War'; 'Oh my, I don't want to die! I want to go home', a tuneless song sung in the English manner – tunelessly.

"Rout out one of the others and get some sleep yourself Sergeant. I'm going to the mess tent if you want me, but I will be back anyway. As soon as it is dark we must get into the wood where we can see to this properly. Oh, and keep the men from wandering round the tank when they do wake up." He saluted and I went off.

The Quartermaster's men had managed to set up a marquee, part of which was divided off by a screen to serve as the mess. No one was there except the Quartermaster, a short, smooth-faced man, a peace-time Territorial who I think must have been a grocer. He was not given to talking because, I suspect, he had not much to say to executive officers. I seized the opportunity to show him my lunch, a tin of bully beef made by a well-known foreign firm. "This", I said, "is all I have left of my day's ration. It's got to see me through the show tomorrow." The next day's battle was a 'show' – probably indicating something more important than a 'stunt'. He saw one third of the tin was finished; the 'unconsumed portion of the day's ration', the official title, was a solid chunk of translucent gristle. Without a word he pulled out his field service notebook and entered into it the name

of the firm and the date. Then he handed the tin to his orderly. "Get this weighed and tell me the result." Peace-time grocers are not used to being surprised. War-time (embodied) territorials of his experience did not sentimentalize about patriotism or the loyalty of our Allies.

"How about some bully mutton?" he asked me. I told him I would try anything once, but I would like to know what was the worst part of a sheep that could happen to me. "Ah, I didn't say anything about 'sheep'", he replied, "but it could get you invalided back to England if you are lucky in the draw. That chunk of bully wouldn't even get you into hospital." After a moment's thought he added, "unless you've got very good teeth."

The arrival of our Company Quartermaster made him terminate the conversation by telling his orderly to get me a tin of bully mutton from the store. "Make it two tins", he shouted after the man. "Do you want some biscuit too? Captain Tipledy could let you have some."

"Sorry; no teeth", I said and took my leave to a chair in the corner to have a snooze till I had to go back to the tank.

Tipledy, our Quartermaster, was a motherly old woman, competent and with exactly the right name and temperament for the job. Unfortunately he was the wrong sex and this led to a number of coarse jests which tended to a mild and uncertain irascibility of manner.

"Why? What's the matter with the biscuit?" Tipledy was mobilized. I had no inclination whatever to engage in war about biscuit.

"Nothing. It's OK I was just telling the QM about some bully and he wanted to know if I wanted biscuit. If you've got a decent tank to spare I'd be glad of it."

"You know damn well I have nothing to do with issue of tanks."

"I know you haven't. I was only joking." I felt the conversation had taken the wrong turning. I was desperately tired and wanting to snatch a few moments of sleep before going back to that nerve-racking tank. He glared at me with twitching moustaches like a very large, suspicious and bloated rat. A bit like the corpse-fed rats in our billet up at Ypres I thought – and then his good-natured smile reappeared.

14

I was woken from an uneasy sleep when the sound of voices stopped. The silence disturbed me. It was still another quarter of an hour before I need set out. It was hopeless to try to sleep again so I set out for my tank. How dark it was and gloomy! The crew I found awake. They said they had all slept and were fit for anything. I felt they were glad to see me, and I felt glad to see them. What the devil we were all so glad about I could not imagine.

The crew cranked up and we drove some six hundred yards to our rendezvous. We had to stop five times in that short distance to let the engine cool down.

Williams had a reputation for talking bull-shit. So we were not impressed by his optimism and assurance.

"First", he said, "we will check up once more. Has it been any better? NO Just the same in every respect – no power, short run, backfiring and finally red-hot? You're quite sure?"

"Damn fool", I thought.

"Positively no deception, ladies and gentlemen – you have heard what these gentlemen have said? Very well then. *This* is a defective tank. Now watch me very carefully. First we shall retime it because it is obvious that there can be no other explanation. But this time we shall do it by measuring – from the cylinder heads. All right then – first remove the cylinder heads –"

"You mean first remove the roof of the tank don't you? We can't take the cylinder heads off without." Williams checked up and saw this was true, but he was not going to be deterred.

"We shall have to do it through the exhaust ports. Not so good, but good enough. I always said these bloody petrol engines were no good. They should have used steam."

It was popularly supposed that Williams was an ex-naval engineer who had never recovered from the day the navy went out of sail. Now it was the change from steam to the infernal combustion engine.

It was a long job and time seemed to race by. Eventually Williams stood up. "Jesus wept! I've got it! Do you know what's wrong? Those bastards have marked dead centre wrong on the fly-wheel!"

Bastards? What bastards? Not Americans who had provided us with plenty of small arms ammunition – or tins of bully gristle to eat? It is called an iron ration so it is really very generous to have given us animal substance and not mineral. But who are these bastards? They gave us plum and apple jam, they gave us one fly-wheel with dead centre marked wrong. In fact they were patriotic Britons who one day would be rewarded by their grateful country. For the present they had to be content with making their fortunes. Later – the Honours Lists. For us – sleep you perishers! A Military Cross for your officer; "Art thou sleeping there below?" – a 'wooden cross' certainly seemed more likely.

"Finished!"

I felt too tired to care. We said nothing. I did not believe the job was finished; I was beyond profanity, depression or anger. Now, when the entire crew was exhausted, our troubles were about to start. Williams was surprised, even hurt, at our reaction to a very arduous and finally successful job of work. Looking back, I wonder if the journey from Ypres to our starting point at Cambrai killed the spirit of our crew.

The job was hurriedly tidied up – there was now no time to lose – checked and passed by Williams for the last time. He wished us luck and disappeared. The engine was now running sweetly as she should have done from the moment we had drawn her from the Tank Central Workshops. I left a message to be taken to Advanced Company HQ and a copy to the Battalion HQ of the Seaforth Highlanders to say we should be operating after all.

At last we were clear of Havrincourt Wood, out in the open and on firm ground. It was dark and silent. The last tank had reached its starting point long before and I imagined dawn was beginning to pale in the east.

The engine suddenly overheated and stopped. I think I must have ground my teeth with rage, but all I said was, "Give her time to cool." After a few minutes it was evident that either it had not cooled

enough and it would be blown to bits, or we should be dangerously late, caught in the barrage if we waited.

"Swing her!" I ordered the crew. A splutter and then a roar as it sprang to life. "Throttle down for God's sake", I said to Allen. It seemed noisy enough to start the enemy barrage at once. This time the engine went on running till we reached our starting point with a couple of minutes to go. We left the engine to idle as I thought it would be tempting Providence to stop it and hope to start it again.

Night had turned to pale grey. My watch hand crept on to zero and there were three individual bursts from our artillery. Then at once a moaning in the air. The enemy's trench system was picked out along its length by our barrage, unregistered yet bursting, at most, twelve feet above ground level in a precision I have never seen equalled. I could have cheered as I saw the white puffs shot through with white sparks picking out the pattern in the pearly light.

A and C companies, forming the first wave, had already gone through. Our company, B, were to support and go through A and C at the Grand Ravine. We went through to avoid the enemy's counter-barrage and then lay waiting beyond his barrage lines till our turn came.

As the light grew we could see our first line forging ahead. To us it looked as if the enemy's surprise was complete. We could even see the Highlanders signalling the tanks on at crossing point of trenches and other obstacles.

It was our turn; soon it was the Grand Ravine which turned out to be no obstacle at all. A and C companies halted while we went through to take the lead. The ease and orderliness of the operation after the chaos of Ypres induced a sense of unreality. The battlefield was set out like a diagram; the functions of infantry gunners and tanks slotted together with such perfection that it seemed as if we were more pieces of a Staff Officers dream than soldiers at war. Small pockets of German prisoners were being marched back, filled more with curiosity than fear as the spectacle unrolled before them. It was as if the British Army had decided to have a mock field day on territory already in use by enemy troops. They seemed awfully decent about it and indeed quite keen to watch what we were doing.

I raced my tank – in those days four miles an hour – towards my objective, the village of Flesquières. The firm ground made it easy and exhilarating. The ground sloped upwards to an enemy

strong point. As we came nearer I could see how formidable was the barbed wire – at least six feet high and ten yards thick surrounding the fortification proper. As a routine I closed my flaps and plunged into the wire; for a moment I felt a slight tug as it gripped us. Then we broke through and over wire which at Ypres would have held fast for weeks any attack no matter how powerful the artillery support, and probably for as long as we cared to go on hanging our corpses on it.

I still had not got over my exhilaration when an appalling din broke out. It was probably only one gun left out of the depleted garrison, but there may have been as many as two. It sounded, each bullet, like a sledge hammer stroke against a sheet of cast iron held against one's face. There was no way of seeing anything. Taking control I drove the tank so that the bullets struck in front of me; they could do no harm against our armour, and I argued that so long as the bullets were striking on the armour in front of me we must be heading straight for the machine-gun. As each bullet struck off a red-hot splinter from the armour, we had an improvised direction finder provided by the bullets themselves. Feeling my face pouring with a greasy sweat I put up my hand to wipe it away. Allen looked white-faced and scared as I saw him looking at me. I noticed that my hands were covered with blood. Another wipe with my hands showed me why Allen looked scared; my face was streaming with blood. 'His gory visage down the stream sent.' The words repeated themselves in my mind monotonously, rhythmically, like 'Around the rugged rocks the ragged rascal ran.'

The gun stopped. The silence seemed to flow back with a suddenness that hurt one's ears. The roar broke out on my left side.

"Put it in reverse! Fire the left six-pounder" – at anything, anywhere, to make them think we're fighting someone, I thought to myself.

The moment the breach was opened to load, such a storm of bullets came up the barrel that gunner Allen left it in panic. At once the inside of the tank was an inferno. Richardson managed to close the breach and thanks to him we had nothing but a couple of flesh wounds amongst us.

"God damn your soul Allen you bastard!" I yelled at the cowering boy. I was blubbing with rage and fear myself.

No sooner had the gun causing us such havoc been silenced, or had silenced itself, than an explosion from the rear of the tank rocked us all. The tank stopped.

"What's up?"

"Won't go", yelled Allen.

What on earth had happened? I had no idea and couldn't think.

"I think it's catching fire by the petrol tank", reported O'Toole.

"Every man with a Lewis gun and as much ammo as you can carry. Now out you go! Richardson first – we've only one door – the left one. Fall out, firing your gun as you go. Into the trench!"

Richardson tumbled out with only one bullet through his thigh. The enemy must have been as surprised as we were; all eight of us arrived safe in a bay of the enemy's trench system.

When I could look back I saw that the tank had a shell hole where the right rear driving mechanism had been; it was effectually out of action, but the destruction of the gears had saved the petrol tank and ninety gallons of petrol from exploding in flames.

So – we were in the enemy's strong point, holding a short bit of trench in a veritable fort. In front was a high brick wall. At right angles to this, and on our left, was a low wall about a copse of tall fir trees. As we and the enemy recovered from our surprise so the sense of menace grew. My utter ignorance of fighting, as contrasted with the professional soldiers knowledge, was mercifully hidden from me. I could feel it, but I did not know it; subsequent events conspired to postpone my enlightenment.

15

We were under fire, but I had not the slightest idea where the bullets were coming from. They were in fact converging on us from all directions. At the time the most obvious seemed to be the high wall in front, but I had no clear reason for concentrating on that rather than any other possible target. I told O'Toole to take charge in the trench while I tried to deal with our tormentors.

Taking four drums of Lewis gun ammunition attached to my waist and a Lewis gun, I clambered clumsily onto the top of the tank and set up my gun under cover, as I thought, of the fascine – the bundle of faggots about four feet thick which had taken the place of the unditching beam as a special equipment for crossing the deep trenches of the Hindenburg Line trench system. I was not aware of any danger and therefore experienced none of the fear which might have served as a substitute for my common sense which was wholly lacking. I commanded a good view of the little copse behind the wall, this I proceeded methodically to spray. I soon exhausted almost the whole of my four drums of ammunition.

By this time my escapade had stirred up a veritable hornets' nest in the copse. I do not know what I expected would happen – probably nothing – but I was surprised to find German troops, led by an officer, pouring out of a gap in the left distant corner of the wall. An officer pointed his swagger stick to direct his troops to me. I swung round and opened fire on them as they were coming through the gap. At the same moment my gun jammed.

I saw it was a simple stoppage, could not clear it, and realizing that my drum had no more ammunition left fell rather than scrambled back into the shelter of the trench.

By this time I must have been thoroughly scared though I was

unaware of it. My crew were standing about nonchalantly doing nothing.

"Why the hell aren't you firing?" I said to Lance Corporal Forman – he and O'Toole were the only men left. Allen, the driver, had been sent back with gunner Allen to take our two wounded, Pell and Richardson, to the trench on the perimeter. "For God's sake man! Fire at them(" I pointed to the enemy now lying in the open. O'Toole was fiddling with a German gun.

"No ammunition left", said Forman.

Before the enemy had recovered I said "Get back!" – to the trench about a hundred yards distant – "short rushes!" O'Toole struggled with the German gun.

I remember our short rushes; Forman and I with our last two Lewis guns. I remember being hauled by a Highlander into the trench. Safe at last, I thought as I realized that all three were present, still unwounded. Otherwise, but for a vague sense of being under fire, I remember no details.

Gradually I took stock. Richardson and Pell were in good shape, but both were too badly wounded for further fighting; the two Allens were very badly shaken and as there was nothing for Allen to drive I decided to send all four back under O'Toole who was to report to Advance Company HQ after handing over the two wounded to the first advanced aid post. The Allens he was to hang over to the Regimental Medical Officer. Forman and I stayed with our two Lewis guns and the German machine-gun which now was ready, after O'Toole's ministrations, to fire again.

I reported to the Seaforth captain, Edwards, who appeared to be the only officer left in his company. While I was talking to him in the trench there was the loud crack of a near bullet. He fell forward and I saw blood and brains bulge out at the back of his skull.

I was too stunned to know where or how the bullet was fired; it might have been chance but the infantry had no doubt it was aimed fire. As we were occupying the enemy trench system there was no parapet to protect us from fire within the planned strong point.

Search showed a suspicious thickening near the top of one of the tall pines; on this our Lewis gunfire was at once concentrated. Under the intense fire the thickening began to disintegrate, a body detached itself, caught in some branches, hung for an instant and crashed onto lower branches, was again halted and finally dashed to the ground.

The Lewis guns continued their chattering search of all tree-tops in the radius of our segment, but there was no further result. Edwards was avenged. What does 'avenged' mean? Think it out – later.

At Ypres, and once again later, there was a sniper posted at least a mile within our lines. In each case it was clear that the end for the sniper was death or, very improbably, capture. Such cold-blooded bravery, if there is such a thing as bravery, I could envy but never emulate.

There was one similar act which was unknown to me at the time (but of which I learned from the Commander-in-Chief's dispatches) which had led to the destruction of our tank and seven others. The Commander-in-Chief, in addition to all his other crimes, was much criticized for having given comfort to our enemies by having made known to the world the bravery of the German gunner officer whose devotion to duty, when all his men had fled, was responsible for our disaster. For my part I am glad that, even if one cannot oneself be capable of such courage, our C.-in-C. had the courage to acknowledge courage in our enemies. In 1976 I learnt there was no such German officer, but in 1917 there was a hole in my tank.

The Highlander senior NCO reported to me that there were no officers left. Would I therefore take command of the infantry? As I knew nothing of infantry fighting I asked him to stay near and advise me on my new duties.

They turned out to be insignificant. It was obvious that we had to hold our positions which we did against one powerful counter-attack on our left flank. Although the troops of the infantry battalion on our left were forced to yield some ground we held our pivotal position. We lit our marker flares when one of our reconnaissance planes came over.

That was the end of my part in the Cambrai battle. Shortly after, the Colonel of the regiment, hearing my report of the position rapidly summed it up.

"Since you have no tanks you and your bloody Lance Corporal – are no good to me. Get back to our HQ."

I reported to our Major, was kindly received and told to turn in. My batman had produced my sleeping kit; I lay down and in the slight drizzle that had started fell fast asleep. Some time the next day we went back to the comforts of our bivouac in the wood.

Through the day I heard, bit by bit, what had happened. Quainton

had escaped injury and so had two section commanders, Bagshaw and Clifford. Stokes was dead and so was Bayliss. Broome had not been in action. Cohen had been very badly wounded and it was thought was now in the hands of the military hospital.

Of the rest of the company one-third that had gone into action had been killed. As usual there were few wounds as the nature of tank warfare meant that most casualties were killed outright by direct gunfire or the almost instantaneous fire caused by the burning petrol.

Looking back I am surprised that these casualties had so little impact on us at the time. In the next few days Quainton and I had plenty of time to talk. His tank had broken down just after the Grand Ravine; he and his crew had been holding a position ready in case of counter-attack when their tank was knocked out. It blazed up at once and for the rest of the day could not be approached because the exploding ammunition made it a spectacular but dangerous firework. None of them was hurt and as no counter-attack developed and nothing could be done for the tank they were ultimately withdrawn.

Quainton, Carter and I were thrown together with very little to do. Quainton was a comforting person to be with, partly because of his Quaker origins and secure religious outlook. Carter, the tough, wiry, colonial intelligence officer, was also good company, but for different reasons. He was supposed to have joined the army, coming to England for the purpose, when he was still at the permissible age. I am sure he was nearer sixty than forty, but his great physical fitness gave a mild degree of plausibility to his fictions. He strode about his duties, in action or out of it, with a stout walking stick which he said was not so heavy as a rifle and "a damned sight more use". We did not discuss the casualties; they had gone and that was that.

We few survivors were summoned to say good-bye to the Major. We went down to the road where the car was going to pick him up. There the old aristocrat spoke a few words.

It appeared that he had been dismissed from his command. There seemed to be no good reason to suppose that he ought not to have been – and equally no good reason to suppose that he should have been retained. I could only suppose that it was in keeping with a stereotype of the Colonel's idea of efficiency. To be efficient you must be ruthless; if you were ruthless it proved that you must be efficient.

"You mark my words", muttered the Major, "I'll get that tailor's dummy" – meaning, we all assumed, the Colonel – "You see if I don't."

Shaking hands with our small party and wishing us luck he clambered into the car and drove off. He was in a very bad temper, only slightly alleviated by his assumption that he was beloved by his troops – of whom in fact he had only the vaguest impression. Still, I was sorry to miss the healthy countenance and exuberant moustachios. He was a link – with the past.

To anticipate: before Christmas our Colonel also went – dismissed. Quainton saw him on leave reduced to the rank of captain. Poor man; the blow to him must have been infinitely worse than if he had never been promoted to a job for which he had only one qualification – his looks. Gull went at the same time.

16

The removal of our company commander had one immediate consequence for us; the interviewing of officers reporting their part in the battle fell to Major Gatehouse. He was a powerful, ambitious and not very intelligent regular. I loathed the prospect of having to explain the action; I did not feel very clear about it even after several talks with Quainton and Carter. To make matters worse there was a rumour, fortunately quashed in a day or so by the capture of Flesquières, that Highland troops had been fired at by a British officer from on top of his tank. I could not see how I could have made such a mistake because the troops who counter-attacked were German. We could not, all three, have been mistaken – nor yet the Highlanders who had witnessed the action. But anything seems possible in retrospect after battle. The evidence of German dead had not become available at the time.

I was called to see Gatehouse. I was far from being at ease as I stumbled through the interview. It was a long one and I was relieved that my account, which was substantially the same as that previously given by O'Toole and Forman when the men's account of the battle had been taken, seemed to reassure him. Then, right at the end my confidence was shaken; Gatehouse congratulated me on a 'stout show' and said he was going to recommend me for the Military Cross.

I could not easily say why I felt dismayed. Even the rumour about the 'officer on the tank' could hardly account for my feeling. Why on earth couldn't they leave me alone? But so it was. Quainton congratulated me and was surprised that I was annoyed; I said I wished I had never heard of tanks.

Quainton told me that he and Bayliss had talked before the action, wondering whether they should not tell the CO they wanted to

become conscientious objectors. He said he had spoken to Gull after the action and put his doubts to him. I said that in any case after action 'they' would say that it was 'shell-shock', and before action that he did not know what he was talking about. We were still discussing this when Carter appeared. Affecting a jaunty tone he said he – had just heard my good news and congratulated me.

Quainton went on, "Obviously the whole business is flat contrary to the Christian religion."

"Well of course it is", said Carter, "But", he added, "I don't believe in the Christian religion. I've never understood what all you pious people are doing here. I think the Boche are a lot of dangerous maniacs – if we don't stop them it's all up with everything decent."

"Why do you bother with its being decent then?"

"Because I prefer dealing with decent people. In my business before the war" – he was a coffee planter – "I preferred dealing with people who didn't lie, stuck to their bargains and didn't rob you if your back was turned. Or murder you", he added meditatively, "but I don't see what this has to do with Christianity."

"Christianity has a lot to do with it though", rejoined Quainton. "If there had been no Christianity there would not be any decent people to deal with."

"Oh rot! The biggest liar I ever knew was a 'Christian'. By the way, did you know that poor Yates lost one of his 'pips'?"

Yates had, before leaving England, been promoted to Lieutenant, a step nearer getting back to his mourned and coveted Captaincy. Carter told us that at Ypres he had broken down and hidden, weeping, in a shell-hole. He was now a second lieutenant and a tank commander. He was all right again and had been all right at Cambrai, perhaps because A Company in reserve had seen no fighting after we had gone through them at the Grand Ravine. Our debate ended for the time being, leaving me to bear my impending Military Cross alone.

Two days later Gatehouse called for me. He seemed curiously excited – I wondered what was up now. It was not long in coming.

"I have had a long report about you from the 51st Division." (My God, not shooting up their men for heaven's sake?)

After an impressive pause he went on, "They have said they want to recommend that you be awarded the Victoria Cross. With

their report I absolutely agree. So I am putting you in for the Victoria Cross, not the MC."

Not a court martial, I thought. Not for shooting their men or losing my tank. I was immensely relieved. "Did you say from the 51st Division sir?"

"Yes, entirely their idea. My recommendation has not gone through to HQ. So it can go in 'for Military Cross read Victoria Cross'", he said with heavy playfulness.

I could not think of any suitable reply, so I saluted and went to digest this turn in my fortunes.

In fact I did very little digesting; the recommendation was so utterly unlike the experience I would have expected had I been told two months earlier that I should receive it. Gatehouse managed to be completely unconvincing; it sounded as if what he was saying had nothing to do with me, but a great deal to do with some story of which he was the hero. The story, I could see, was quite a good one even if somewhat unconvincingly dramatic. It was odd that it fitted so closely the facts as I knew them, and odder still that nevertheless it was not the experience I had had.

Yates looked in, disgruntled, red-faced and red-eyed. Was I supposed to know, to say something?

"Congratulations old man – wish I had had your luck. If I had the luck of the draw . . ."

It was obvious he had not – he was drunk. I did not hear from him what had happened. Indeed he was so oblivious of any personal disaster that I wondered if the story I had heard had any truth in it. I judged it prudent not to ask any questions. I murmured something suitably nondescript, but I need not have worried; he had staggered off.

He was immediately followed by another A Company officer, Collinson. He looked at me with frankly jealous, envious eyes as if hardly able to believe that I of all people should be on the way to a decoration – and such a decoration! His eyes kept on returning incredulously to have another look. No; there was no clue; nothing at all.

"It's no good looking at me like that – I haven't done anything. You'd better ask Gatehouse."

He checked his wandering gaze, quickly, guiltily. His eyes settled on my face again. He was not really listening to me, suspecting that I

was probably being modest, or, more likely still, that I was a bit soft in the head. "Why Bion? Why not me?" he seemed to be asking himself vainly. Then he sheared off.

The baffling old problem – why do the wicked prosper, and not decent, worthy fellows? I could not help him. I was obviously all set to be turned into a war hero though I could not bring myself to believe that anything so ridiculous as my having to wear a VC would come out of it.

Yet – I hoped . . . But what for? I longed to be a VC. It would be wonderful . . . but I dreaded it. The worst part of it was facing my crew. They were there damn it! They *knew* what had happened; they had seen what I had seen and had been in the same danger. They did not know – I did – that it was my bungling incompetence that had driven the tank into the strong point *before* time, before I was due. Had they all forgotten that I shouldn't have been there at all? Ought I to remind them? Or should I keep my mouth shut and get a VC? How marvellous it sounded!

I had to face my crew; they would have heard by this time. Booby Bion. How humiliated I had felt when F. M. Kingdom – the master we called Bim – ticked me off, with the background of sniggers from the form. This was worse. I faced them: Hayler, the farmer who was no more likely to be fooled than Williams was when facing Henry V; the two Allens, my driver and the one who was shortly to be charged with the crime of 'dumb insolence' for his curious archaic smile.

"Of course I realize", I stammered out my guilty embarrassment, "that we were all in it and it's silly to single me out as if I were . . ." (Bloody fool, I said to myself, what the hell did you get those pips on your shoulders for? You knew you wanted to be 'somebody special', and you knew you weren't.)

I think it was Colombe who recognized my embarrassment and came to my rescue. "We are all very pleased sir", he said. Hayler said nothing; Allen the Australian said nothing; Allen was not insolent but was with his senses shut.

Gradually in the following days I grew a protective skin and my fellow officers shut me out. I was not ostracized – it was as if they had become reconciled to my peculiarity, a 'rum bird', always a bit queer, more queer even than Cohen and Quainton. In this unpleasant turmoil of feeling I faced the prospect of further investigation. How I

hated them all! How I longed to avoid them all. But I loved my crew and resented being cut off from them.

I was hauled before the General. I had to go through it all again. It seemed a bit of a job to find someone to be a VC. It was clear that not just anyone would do; on the other hand, if it had to be someone brave – 'for valour' – how was that to be found? He looked at me – a bit reminiscent of Collinson I thought, but with somewhat different anxiety. Would I do? Could I possibly be made to look, with some degree of plausibility, like a hero? He seemed to doubt it. So did I. I had not forgotten that ridiculous college cap and the moon-face under it. To make matters worse I was feeling in a bad temper. If the General or Gatehouse wanted someone to be a VC why the devil didn't they go and win one themselves?

"But you say you didn't actually *see* any enemy falling?"

I considered this for a moment. "Well, there *were* some people falling, but I thought they were taking cover."

He looked very disappointed and distressed. I felt sorry for the poor fellow – in so far as it is possible for a second lieutenant to be sorry for a General. I could see it was a terrible job to have to find war heroes out of people like me.

"You couldn't – you are sure? – be sure any of them were killed?"

"No sir; they looked far too much alive for my health I thought."

For a moment he almost smiled, though he must in fact have been having an anxious time.

"Somebody said there were a lot of German dead where I had been firing over the wall, but of course I couldn't be sure how they got there."

He didn't seem to feel that this was very convincing. Nor did I. It had all the elements of a first class drama but obviously a hopeless cast.

He tried again. "The 51st Division sent a report about you . . ."

My mind went back to Edwards with his brain oozing out. It was too much. Though I had only had a few words with him I had seen his men's response to his death; it was not all hate.

I looked at the General. He seemed a decent sort; quite different from Gatehouse whom at that moment I hated.

"Yes sir, Major Gatehouse told me. I thought it was exaggerated sir. I am sorry; I don't know why they put in such a report."

"Do you *know* the report?"

"No sir. Only Major Gatehouse said that after he had read it he decided to recommend me for a VC. I thought he meant the infantry report suggested that."

"Well, don't you want one?"

I wanted to explain that I thought the VC should be kept for people who deserved it. But all I could manage was, "Oh yes sir, very much . . . well, not really sir", I finished lamely and miserably.

He did not seem entirely uncomprehending. "I shall of course have to send the report in – but it doesn't rest with me." He pushed back his chair. I felt it was a sign to me to leave and out I went.

I was exhausted. Probably the prolonged strain before action, screened by the battle itself, was now coming to the surface. Carter met me.

"Well, how did it go? Did you get a VC?" he asked ironically.

"I shouldn't think so – I couldn't think of anything to say."

"You ought to have learnt up your past properly beforehand."

I could not guess what was in the mind of this strange, grizzled, disillusioned but determined man. "See you later, and he loped off with his long walking stick and swinging unmilitary stride.

17

The next morning Carter, Quainton and I were having breakfast just below the Gouzeaucourt Ridge by the edge of the wood. A gun limber with two panicky horses came over the ridge and raced towards us. "Looks as if someone's in trouble – lost his limber for good I would think." We went on with our breakfast.

I began to feel that something was wrong with the morning. It was rather like a bad dream without a dream. "Do you know", I said to the others, "I keep on thinking I hear machine-guns. Like having goose flesh –"

Gatehouse appeared from his tent.

"I think something's up sir", said Carter. "Why, what's . . ." Before he had finished his sentence an all too familiar sound froze us into silence.

"By God! You're right!" Carter said to me. "You *are* hearing guns."

We listened, taut, to the slow unmistakable pulse of a German machine-gun. The whine of bullets overhead clinched it.

"But the Line is a good ten miles away!"

Carter was grim. "The Line is now *here*. Back to where we started from – or further."

The news, when we got it during the next hour or so, was this: the enemy had attacked the Salient formed by the successful attack on the 20th. After bitter fighting the Prussian Guard at Bourlon Wood had held our advance. His counter-attack was expected and his main attack on our left had been bloodily repulsed. His feint attack on our right had broken through our flimsy defence and what we were now watching as helpless unarmed spectators – we had two men, no tanks and the four of us – was the clever exploitation by the enemy of our disaster.

Watching from our cover at the end of the wood we were now able to see a sight that I have never forgotten – the Guards Division going into action. The operation was almost nonchalant, it was unfolded with such ease. Right across the plain to our right front the Guards advanced in open order. But for the rattle of machine-guns one might have been watching a troop exercise. They moved steadily up the slope, reached the Gouzeaucourt Ridge and disappeared behind and beyond it. The sound of German machine-guns, so threatening, so close and so insistent, died away.

The Guards had been ordered to retake Gouzeaucourt; they had done just that.

The battalion, though not our company, had been continuously engaged since November 20th. Now, ten days later, it was without tanks, having suffered very heavily at Bourlon Wood and after. It was therefore withdrawn to winter quarters where it was to be brought up to full strength and re-equipped.

It was a 'permanent' camp, that is, one made up of wooden huts. It was disposed on the slope near the crest of a hill and lay within the devastated area of the Somme battlefields. By the time that the remnant of our battalion was installed the rains had started. In the usually pouring rain Quainton, Hauser, Carter and I did our parades with a handful of men, and in between whiles visited the rest of the battalion to gather news of how they had fared.

We knew that our company casualties were exceptional; but for three tank crews who had not gone into action, and Quainton, Hauser and myself, we had been wiped out on the advance up the slope from the Grand Ravine. What we did not know was that the exceptional nature of the disaster lay only in the speed with which it had occurred.

Our visits showed us that news was hard to come by; only a few newly-joined subalterns seemed to be about and they could not answer any of our inquiries. The battalion officers' mess was not yet in being, officers messing in the. quarters of their respective companies; therefore there was no way of meeting the officers assembled as a whole. However, I met a Sergeant Robinson of A Company. He could not tell me much as he had missed the action through illness, but his officer was a man called Green – in peacetime a barrister, intelligent and with a kindly but acute wit, with whom I had spent a Saturday in Bournemouth. There had been nothing to do, but it was

a fine afternoon and we wandered about the lifeless resort. He, and his barrister friend Ball who was with us, made the desperate nullity pass easily till we could at last decently return to camp. If I could find him we might even relieve the ugliness of this desolate hole. I asked Robinson how he was; I cannot imagine why I was surprised to hear he was dead. I did not ask about Ball. Later, when I heard from Gull about other officers, I was glad I had not, for Ball was said to have broken down and crawled underneath his tank and refused to move.

Later in the afternoon I met an officer of C Company, Dawson, whom I knew by sight. Yes, he had come through all right. No, he didn't know about the others; he thought one or two may have been wounded – no use to ask about the ones who had not possibly been wounded. I asked how he had got on. He appeared vague. What had impressed him most was the Prussian Guard. "They finally got right on top of the tank, trying to shove their bayonets through our loop holes. Twice I got a Mills grenade onto the roof and blew the lot of them off. Do you know, they got our Lewis guns under their arms so we couldn't fire! I think the whole damn lot were doped. They came at us in mass formation and while we *could* fire it made no difference." Dawson was a solid unimaginative man; when he said these things had happened I was sure they had. He began to repeat himself, reciting monotonously bits of the story I had already heard.

Quainton and I disengaged ourselves to see if we could find anyone else. We met the Colonel, spruce and soldierly as ever, making the rounds with Gull who was equally dapper. Quainton was wearing a beautiful beaver lamb trench coat. The Colonel looked at him enviously. Next to the Prince of Wales, Quainton was more likely than anyone else to cause the bleating note to come into Gull's voice. He tolerated me because, like Cohen, I was usually in Quainton's company. The Colonel who knew all his officers by name – "a truly Royal Attribute", said Gull – spoke to both of us. We could not very well ask how things had gone with him, and we did not expect him to know any more than he knew about Lewis guns in a tank. "Did you see how he looked at my coat?" Quainton asked me gleefully as we saluted and took our leave.

As the days went by new faces appeared. Robinson, a small, dapper, alert ex-infantryman; Cartwright, a tallish, pale-complexioned, newly commissioned officer without war experience or, it sometimes seemed to me, any other. Both these were posted to my section and

when I was promoted Captain to command it Cartwright took over my crew – O'Toole, L/Cpl Forman, Driver Allen, Gunner Hayler, Gunner Allen.

Hauser, although in our battalion in England, was hardly known to me. He was promoted to section commander; from now on he played an increasing part in my life. He and his crew seemed to live on terms of mutual exasperation. At Ypres, before we went into action, he and his crew were one day on more than usually bad terms. In sudden exasperation he put his driver out of the tank saying, "Here, give me the controls", and drove it straight into a large water-filled shell-hole. Getting out he addressed them. "*Now* you've got something to grouse about! Fix the unditching beam, get it out of that mess, and come and tell me when you've cleaned it up."

We were none of us surprised to hear one of the men mutter behind his stocky retreating figure, "I'll shoot that bloody little German bastard first time we get into action, you see if I don't." They never did. They came near to worshipping him, and if it were possible to make an idol out of a short-sighted, crop-headed, dark-haired, irascible little man they would have done it. I tried to find out from him how he had managed, with a name like that, to be accepted by the army, but never succeeded. It was the only subject which made him look as if he was feeling amused by the recollection. "I told them I came over from the Hanseatic League and was meaning to work my passage back to Germany." He wrinkled up his nose with a characteristic cross between a sniff and a snuffle. It was difficult to tell whether he was amused or irritated.

We both knew we were in the running to be promoted to section commanders. More highly favoured than either was Quainton who was popular with most, but hated by Clifford, Homfray, Broome and others who considered him, like me, to be one of the smug, pious crowd. Homfray was a Carthusian who affected superior, lackadaisical ignorance of anything so vulgar as soldiering. The affectation concealed a genuine and profound unfitness for his job. I now think it was a by-product of the cover-up system of the public schools' unfitness for training the leaders of a great nation.

Looking back it seems to me we never allowed ourselves to realize that the 5th Battalion, to which we had become so attached in England, had ceased to exist. A new battalion was taking shape under our eyes.

Bagshaw had gone, no one knew why. He was probably useless when he came to us as a section commander and was certainly useless afterwards. Our Major had gone and his place had been taken by Gatehouse. Clifford – 'tape worm', he was tall and thin – Homfray, and Captain Cook, promoted to second in command, were our senior officers. A swarthy, greasy-faced young man called Green completed our company officer strength. Drafts of twenty or thirty new men came in from day to day. Their names had to be learned and our lists of crews amended as they were allocated.

The Colonel sent for me. I was to return to Havrincourt Wood with two tank crews chosen from the men in the battalion who had not been in action. There were three tanks in working order there; these I was to take over from Corps Workshops who expected us. Our job?

The front was now stabilized, but the gunners wanted our help. To the right of Gouzeaucourt there were some half dozen 9.2 howitzers. The gunners would tell us where they were; they were stranded between British and German lines. It was imperative that we should get them back and not let them fall into German hands. The gunners thought – and, said the Colonel, he quite agreed with them – it would be easy for a tank to go up to them at night, shackle tow lines to them and pull them out of no-man's land to safety behind our lines.

It was dangerous of course. Nobody could be such a fool as to suppose that one could clank enormous cables and towing chains about no-man's land at dead of night in the neighbourhood of valuable big guns without setting off retaliatory fire. The Germans had now become sensitive to the presence of tanks. Indeed, they learned then a lesson which became useful to them in 1939.

The orders might have been less unwelcome had I thought the Colonel had any idea of the nature of the hazard to which we were committed. But I doubted it. I had achieved a state of mind in which I felt aggrieved that I had to fight. Romance, such as sustained me before Ypres, had gone; yet I could not say what was the matter.

I unburdened myself to Quainton. His contribution must have impressed me for I have never forgotten it. On a slip of paper he wrote, "Above all do not forget you are in good hands", and slipped it into my pocket. 'God's hands' he meant of course. It soothed me. But there was something wrong with me – or religion. For one thing the words had an ephemeral value, short-lived like the military music of the massed bands of the 51st Division before action, or a tot of rum

after it. I felt self-conscious as I had when I knelt publicly to say my prayers in the marquee.

The journey was interminable, but I was relieved to be out of the camp. Preparations had already started for the Christmas celebrations – casks of beer, great joints of meat, meaningless decorations in the mess hut. I do not remember 'Peace on earth, good will towards men', but it would not even have seemed incongruous had it been there. On the great day itself they would be canned to a man: that I did know.

One advantage of army travel was that one became a postal packet, someone else's responsibility. When I arrived at rail-head I was turned out into the darkness and pouring rain by the RTO. He had to see that an officer got off that train at that rail-head. Having done so he could go back to the shelter of the warm, dimly-lit fug of his office. Someone saluted; it was the driver of the car to take me to Brigade HQ. My men I would meet the next day where they had gone to take over the tanks.

The car stopped, I got out and a guide took me along a communication trench to Brigade HQ. The Very lights along the front floated up into the darkness, burned white for a while and flickered away. It was a silent, rhythmical display.

I suggested I should look at the first of the guns we were to tow out. The guide was uncommunicative; I was in the way, a bloody nuisance who had spoiled a potentially quiet evening. We came to a spot where I had to leave the trench and crawl. A monstrous shape rose out of the ground; it was the first of the howitzers. I could make nothing of it till a Very light flared up and showed the silhouette. Someone had painted on it in large white letters, 'Crack O'Doom'. The enemy gunners had registered on it with such accuracy that it was a total wreck. It could not possibly have been towed anywhere. I stumbled and a burst of machine-gun fire warned me to mend my ways. There was nothing to be done; I collected enough detail to report and crawled back to the trench. The guide was waiting.

At HQ I made my report. No one was interested; I gathered that the HQ staff were against the project from the first. The next day I was ordered to take my men back to the battalion; the scheme had been cancelled.

18

Christmas Eve. Now for the jollifications.

The camp was dilapidated. When snow fell that night there was not a hut into which it had not driven, covering the sleeping men with an inch of freezing slush by morning. I was not surprised that I saw the first drunks by 9.30. An A Company sergeant arrested them and put them in the Guard room.

It was customary for the officers to wait on the men at Christmas dinner. Surprisingly this was not an occasion for settling scores; in spite of the opportunity it offered it passed off in good humour and friendly expressions. By the time it had become alcoholic the officers had withdrawn. I was disconcerted to find that the men were not known to us. I was fortunate in having four of my original crew present, but Hauser, Quainton and Broome had none, and men of other crews were still not more than faces to us.

After our own dinner the three of us, with Cartwright, Green and Robinson, sat on in the hut that served as our company mess. We must all have been oppressed by the lack of familiar faces. The new officers were surprised that we knew as little of the men as they did. When we talked of this and explained why, the conversation rapidly petered out. Either we knew little of our job as officers or else . . .

It was clear that something terrible must have happened at Cambrai. Robinson, who had been wounded during previous service with the infantry, asked if the battalion had been "unlucky". No; it had not occurred to us that the battalion had been unlucky.

"On the contrary" – it was Hauser speaking – "we've been damned lucky. The 51st Division had never had so few casualties – not even in trench warfare. They told us that in an advance of over five miles they had had only six men wounded."

Quainton said, and Robinson agreed with alacrity, that these figures were miraculous.

"But", said Cartwright, "how did *you* have so many casualties?"

The conversation languished. *Had* we been unlucky? It hadn't occurred to any of us. How many casualties amount to 'unlucky'? Our company had lost almost two thirds of our officers and men, killed, in the one and a half hours from zero. Certainly that sounded unlucky. Or perhaps it was just bad luck that the German gunner major had not run away with his men? The rest of the battalion had not lost any men that day. On the other hand, at the end of ten days they also had lost all but three tanks and a corresponding number of killed. Come to think of it, we had never been in action, according to Battalion HQ, without losing at least one third of the fighting crews.

Who had been killed? This reminded Quainton – "I see that we are not to have a battalion mess. It's company messes from now on, Gull says. It's jolly awkward because you can never get any news." It was most peculiar; there *was* no news.

Green: killed in action. Despard: killed in action. Bayliss: died of wounds. Cohen: wounded. Crankleton: missing, believed killed – very likely indeed when you consider that one of his men was there when he was blown to bits. Ball: very much alive, but . . . He was such a nice fellow, good company, witty, the perfect foil to his friend Green – till that day he got under the tank.

"Their name liveth for evermore." In the hearts and minds of the survivors it did, till they also died. But what had happened to the 5th Battalion, that fine-looking crowd who sang 'Should auld acquaintance be forgot' that beautiful morning at Wool Station? The illusion that there was a 5th Battalion was more powerful than fact; we were swallowed up amongst so many new boys that we hardly existed. The future, the traditions of the battalion, lay in our hands – Hauser, Quainton, Broome, Green, Cartwright, Robinson and myself. *And* Homfray – representing the Greater Public Schools. *And* Clifford?

A few days after November 30th Hauser and I, with about a dozen men, had been collected together hastily with our Lewis guns and put in to hold a piece of trench under the command of Clifford. Nothing happened, but it was uncomfortable because it was very cold. We knew nothing about infantry work and we lived on iron rations. These consisted of one tin of bully and two captain biscuits each every day. We were not allowed fires so we could not have tea.

The water tasted of petrol because it came up in cans from which the petrol could not be eliminated. When Quainton joined us a day late he made great play of imitating the Major, rolling the drink round his palate, pronouncing on its bouquet and assessing the year of its vintage. He did it well; there was no difficulty in recognizing the character portrayed.

Clifford's contribution to the spirit of his troops was to arrive in the small hours of one morning, shouting "They're coming! The Boche are attacking! Stand to arms! Pass it on!" We did.

It was peculiar; there was not a sound. "They must be coming on tip-toe." After some tense moments I said I thought I could hear them taking off their boots. "Better not stand down though – they might start throwing them at us", said Hauser.

Eventually we did make them stand down. Clifford, who had gone off blubbing and shouting his 'orders', never explained. He was shame-faced but in no way apologetic, and soon recovered what, for want of a better word, one must call his equanimity.

The incident was trivial, but Clifford and Homfray were not an impressive pair on whom to pin our hopes for the future. Nor could I honestly feel superior – only different. That accursed VC still dangling over my head felt more like a sentence of death than an authoritative guarantee that I was a one hundred percent brave man. I knew I was not and I hated feeling I knew nothing of infantry fighting either.

The lack of knowledge of the basic elements of war became more oppressive with the rumours, always active, now louder and more insistent, that Tanks were to be abolished. Haig was said to have turned against them since Cambrai. "Good God, why?" we asked. "What have we done wrong?"

The story was that a tank had crashed through a bridge and fallen into the water below. The whole advance had therefore been held up for two or three vital hours.

"Where were the RE's? Where were the Guards with their bloody pontoons they always cart around?" (It was popularly supposed that the Guards kept them for crossing the Rhine if they could only get rid of the rest of the British Army hanging around interfering with their progress.) We were very indignant; the rumours had a brassy insistence which we were not able to dismiss. Less personal, deeper and more sinister was what was going to happen when the German army, free from the Russian entanglement, turned to the Western Front.

Homfray, who was alleged to leave the running of his section to his batman, was as disturbing as Clifford. The armour of irresponsibility was proof against any contact with reality. Broome and Clifford indulged their trembling forebodings.

"Mark my words . . .", and "I wouldn't be in the Staff's shoes . . ."

"No danger of *that* – yet", said Quainton.

Combined with Homfray's studied fatuity the whole made an orchestra of monstrous background anxiety. It formed a counterpart to our ignorance of the past. Perhaps this had something to do with Quainton's asking, and my agreeing, that I should go with him to religious service.

The evening found the two of us trudging through rain and mud to the chapel but at the bottom of the camp. Our battalion padre was away or we would not have gone. He was cheerful and smooth, not a muscular Christian; it took time to savour the brand of his Church. We did not know the substitute but Quainton with easy optimism insisted that he couldn't be worse than ours.

The hut was so badly lit that it seemed rather to accentuate than modify the darkness outside. It could have held perhaps two hundred men; there were three men and ourselves. Despite the encircling gloom we could see that the padre was of spare build, his features being cadaverous rather than ascetic.

The dark and cold seemed to become more penetrating as if directly related to the progress of the service. My mind wandered. I remembered that our parson at home had told a sentimentally disposed congregation that the communion service to which they had subscribed for use at the Front was in regular demand just behind the front line and within range of the guns. My parents were present when he read the letter from the priest. Had I come across it? It might remind me of home. They realized, of course, that over such an enormous front line it was unlikely, but I might keep a look out for it. It was always there – a place called Étaples. I promised to do so, but did not mention that we would be very unlikely ever to be so far from the front line as Étaples.

The padre had started on his homily. It was hard to believe that he was advising us that it was important to look on the bright side of things. He spoke of a soldier who remained undismayed when his leg had been shot off by a shell. "After all", he had said philosophically, "I only have one boot to clean now." Perhaps the other three members of

the congregation were permanent office staff, I thought, but even so it was a hoary chestnut to choose as an anecdote of personal experience for inspiring us that day.

We drifted out. It was still cold and raining, but at least the air was fresh. When we got back Clifford and Homfray were in the mess; Clifford gave us a would-be insolent stare. He did not bother to lower his voice too much when he muttered, "Here comes the pious brigade."

19

The disappearance of the Colonel and Gull was unemphatic. In England the splendour of the Battalion Headquarters was such that the two persons of the Colonel and the Adjutant seemed of themselves to be the source of an effulgence, a fountain of uncreated light. Shorn of battalion parades, an orderly room, any discernible function, they ceased to emit enough glow to be distinguishable from ordinary worms. Lacking any evidence whatever I must fall back on my imagination to supply the deficiency. I suppose, accordingly, that Gull and the Colonel without their orderly room, with a battalion mess to act as a suitable setting for their brightest jewel, the Prince of Wales, with the threat – the very vulgar threat – of a horse-whipping and no horse to share it, had to look round for some means of filling time to prevent its being filled by something worse. In this quandary I imagine they fell back on precedent, and in their search they discovered efficiency, ruthlessness, unpardonable failure. All that was required then was to find a failure. What could be a more glaring example of failure than the disaster to B Company? It was, my imagination tells me, only the work of a moment to draw up a convincing and suitably damning report requesting the immediate recall and dismissal of B Company commander.

They could hardly have been more unfortunate in their choice of a scapegoat. Dear, kindly old sweetheart that he was, our Major was formidably well-connected. He also had a most unforgiving disposition and a keen and aristocratic dislike for bounders; what is more, he was liable to regard people who boasted of their princely friends as bounders.

Of course, it was all a most unfortunate misunderstanding, but . . . well, 'Gully' and the Colonel went – without even a farewell address to their troops.

Quainton went on leave just after this and wrote me the letter from which I learnt of his meeting with the cycling captain who was all that was left of staff car and colonel and adjutant of happier days. He had more news.

"When you go on leave don't go to see Cohen." I went – it was dreadful. He has lost both eyes, his right arm and both legs. He didn't know who I was though the nurse told him. He's simply – just has a silly grin. The nurse told me afterwards that every now and then he becomes terrified, cowers down in a corner of the room and sucks his thumb. Once he told his doctor that at these times he could see a patch of lawn open up, his mother rise out of her grave and walk slowly towards him. Otherwise he told no one – just went into a corner, scuttling on his stumps with astonishing speed, stuffed his left thumb into his mouth and waited trembling. When the fit was over he would go back to his silly giggling.

"For though the body dies the soul shall live for ever." I hope not; with all my heart I hope not.

Two days later there was another letter from Quainton, but this time it was to Clifford of all people.

"Look", he shouted to us, "look at this! Can you believe it?"

I read it and I could certainly understand his astonishment. 'Such a lark!' it said, 'You'll hardly believe it! I was just driving the car along the road when suddenly, there I was – in the ditch! Nothing whatever the matter of course, but the next thing I knew I was shoved into this loony bin and labelled "shell-shock"!' That was all but for the usual opening and closing greetings.

He did not like Clifford; he knew Clifford liked none of us. Why then Clifford? As I read I could feel his eyes fixed on me. I read it slowly and carefully, wondering what to say, determined not to give anything away.

I handed it back. He was jubilant. "What do you make of that? He's working his ticket. Why, he admits it himself ! He's just fooling them. He's got wind-up! He knows very well what's coming to us as soon as the fine days come – the whole of the bloody German army from the Russian front. He's shrewd, he is."

I knew Quainton was not a fraud – he was worth two dozen Cliffords. As soon as I could I tackled Hauser. He sniggered and snuffled. He certainly did not believe Clifford, but he had nothing to suggest. He clearly did not regard it as an advertisement for the 'pious brigade'. Nor did I.

Why, oh why, write to Clifford? When I spoke to Carter he had nothing to say, but his attitude suggested, without words, "Well, what else do you expect? Why get mixed up with that snivelling crowd?"

The dark and gloomy days were made worse by the realization that the 5th Battalion had gone. Stokes, Bayliss, Cohen, Despard, our Major, the Adjutant, the Colonel – where were they? Now Quainton, snuffed out with a snigger. Hauser, Carter and I were the only ones left. Hauser I did now know; Carter was too old. Homfray, Clifford and Broome: what confidence could one place in them – or in us? However mystified I felt I could not stifle the feeling that Quainton was a damned fool. And if Quainton was a fool, what kind of fool was I?

The winter was horrible. Without the glitter, the veneer to disguise the sordidness of our winter predicament, depression grew. No talk of the advantages of losing a limb – twice as 'lucky' in Cohen's case – quite covered the growing menace of the Russian defection. Something, however bogus, had been lost and there was nothing to replace it. Carter spoke of the merits of the Bhagavad-Gita. I could not have understood even if Carter had been the man to explain.

Time crawled by. January – nothing. February . . . nothing. March . . . a move to a forward position, that is, to within seven miles of the front – nothing. It began to be said, as our spirits rose with the lengthening days, that the enemy had 'missed the boat'. This immortal phrase, to which Neville Chamberlain was to add fresh lustre when Hitler missed it on his way to Norway, did not seem out of place when glorious campaigning weather, day after day of warm sunshine, went by. *We* would not have missed it like that! *We* would have caught the boat as we had done at Ypres in August. Unfortunately there had been no boat to catch – and we needed boats, not tanks. At Cambrai there had not even been a pontoon to catch.

Someone marked out trench positions, sited on reverse slopes with white tape, and told us that our men must dig them and revet

them properly. It was not serious, of course, but in war – you never knew – we might have to fall back and then it would be a good thing if the infantry had prepared positions to fall back on.

Rumours grew; they became weighty; even *Comic Cuts* seemed to know the date of the German offensive, and the date of the postponement, as if the writer at least believed.

Just before we were going to start digging I was ordered home on leave to attend at Buckingham Palace for the investiture, for I had been awarded the DSO. The first intimation was a letter which had been forwarded to me on which some wag had pencilled 'DSO' and an exclamation mark.

I was pleased; proud and pleased. I could hardly believe it. For a while I didn't give a damn whether I deserved it or not; I knew I didn't anyway. But '2nd Lieut. W. R. Bion, DSO' looked good and it felt good. Second Lieutenants with DSOs were rare birds anyway.

But by March the glow had begun to fade in the more ominous light of the threatening offensive. If only 'they' had supplied me with a dollop of courage to go with the medal – how nice it would have been !

At Le Havre I was made OC Boat; this particular position was *not* coveted. It was imposed on the most junior officer on the boat and necessitated certain tiresome but important chores. It led, however, to a moment of glory when at the end of the trip the major responsible for landing me with the duty caught sight of my ribbon and made a most handsome apology for imposing such a job on someone so distinguished.

20

There were about sixty officers and men present in a large room which turned out to be an ante-room to the Hall in which the investiture was to take place. A private, who had been awarded a DCM, and I were the youngest there. I was by far the youngest officer to be up for the DSO so a large, fierce and extremely important colonel addressed me personally.

"Now, mind what you are at. March up to him and stand to attention facing him. You've got your ribbon on? Well that's something at any rate", he said with the tone of one who must be thankful for any mercy however small. He continued, "His Majesty will put the medal on you so keep your hands out of it. For God's sake don't try to help; just stand to attention. Don't move and above all *do not try to engage in chat* with His Majesty. When he's done, step back and march out. Remember – no chat!"

I couldn't possibly have engaged in chat with anyone, let alone 'His Majesty'. The only thing I could have thought of saying was, "For God's sake get me out of this hole."

At last the ghastly moment came. There were few DSOs and before I could tell how, I was in front of the King with what looked like a picture hook stuck into my ribbon. On this he hung the DSO. As I was about to back out he started to chat.

"You were at Cambrai? That was a very fine action. You lost your tank I believe? Did you get it back?"

"No sir, but the infantry did."

"Ah! Excellent."

I could almost feel the colonel breathing fire down my neck; why had he not told His Majesty "and above all – don't chat!" Why pick on *me*?

As I was going out a large hand whipped off my DSO and slapped it into a box. Before I could defend it or myself he was handing me the box. I didn't dare to see if the medal was there or if he had just substituted the box and stuck to. the medal.

Outside the Palace gates was a small knot of press photographers and civilians. Through the lane they formed I escaped to the end of the queue where my mother waited for me. It seemed a shame that she had not been allowed in to see and share the glorious moment which was in fact so much hers and so little mine.

I could not have explained to anyone why it weighed so heavily upon me. But at least I could understand why a VC was virtually a sentence of death; why men said that winners of the VC either broke down and found a soft job in England, or were killed subsequently trying to deserve the honour they had won.

I have little memory of that leave other than fierce unhappiness. Seared into my mind was one silly, trivial occasion, and one stupendous and numbing.

My mother, defeated and helpless in the face of my taciturn moroseness, asked if I knew the riddle of the miser's most hated flower. "It's the anemone", she said, "because it reminds him of someone asking 'Any money? Any money?'" My response was a stony silence which was so hostile that it frightened me. After a moment I felt stealing over me such pity for what I was sure was her utter misery that I looked at her, caught her eye and the fleeting trembling of her lips. The tension was released. "Damn silly things, medals", I said, "but very nice to look at don't you think?" She wiped away her tears, relieved at being able to weep openly.

The second event followed almost immediately – voices in the distance, calling urgently, coming nearer, newsboys. I did not need to be told; I felt that the news was so old, so very old that I read it mechanically, with tired eyes. The banner headlines read "Great German Attack Opens." I read on: Blah . . . blah . . . blah, said my mind. I could have made it up in my sleep. Daylight had caught up with my nightmares. "Dense fog. . . ." Quite. I suppose their troops, like ours, must have had luck . . . What? ". . . holding the enemy in our battle positions . . . Tincourt." Our battle positions? There could be no doubting it. We were holding them in our battle positions – 'Tincourt' being the battle positions mentioned!

I remembered the climax of a funny story about a man trapped

in a blazing house who was urged to jump from the roof-top into a tarpaulin below. 'And at last old Bill 'e jumped. And we couldn't 'elp larfin' because there weren't no tarpaulin there!' Well, I could help laughing; because there weren't no battle positions there! The lying jades! The lying bloody twisters!

"How's the news dear?", said my mother in her calm, matter-of-fact little tones. "Good?"

I pretended to be absorbed in the news while I tried to think of a suitable lie. '. . . enemy's overwhelming forces. They attacked in a strength of three troops to every one of ours.' Let me see now . . . When we were attacking we considered that the attack had no hope at all if it was not *at least* in a strength of three to every one defencer. 'Thick fog' – fatal to the attacking troops. 'Three to one' – barely margin enough for starting an attack. Who then was overwhelmed? And why?

"Yes", I said at last. "Pretty good they seem to think. Sounds all right." I folded up the paper. "Lucky I am at the end of my leave or I would have had to be recalled." I was due to return at six thirty from Waterloo Station the next morning. The lying bastards, I thought. If only the trenches had been marked out in *red* tape even the Germans might have been held up!

We walked slowly along Green Park to our hotel. It was hopeless to pretend; my mother was no fool. It was simply a matter of compelling our face muscles to do their drill.

By eight that evening I felt neither of us could stand any more. Pleading the excuse of an early morning and a long day I suggested we should go to bed. She agreed – like an automaton.

As I entered my bedroom and closed the door I felt I had entered Hell. I have entered it since, not often, but too often. To others who have to do the same I can say: it's not so bad if you stick it out. After the first three or four times it's not so bad, but don't do it till after twenty-one – nineteen is too early.

The next morning when I saw my mother's white powdered face I recognized misery. We did not talk; we had withdrawn. We said good-bye in the hotel and a taxi took me to Waterloo.

'Everybody suddenly burst out singing' – I did not; not even after the war. Never, never again. I was not unhappy – indeed I often felt I was much happier than most. But no more singing; never.

There was singing at Waterloo; alcoholic singing, but surprisingly little. The platforms were a mass of khaki – 'recalled from leave', 'all leave cancelled'. We took whatever coaches were in front of us and in due course the train pulled out.

No more cares, no more thinking; no worries and nothing to do but remain a parcel of BEF. until one reached one's destination. Where was that? If you were a gunner, 'Ubique'. 'Quo fata vocant. Quo fas et gloria ducunt'. But what if you were a 2nd Lieutenant of Tanks with a DSO? Where the hell did one go from there?

In fact it turned out to be Le Havre. I stuck it for three days. Then, following the example of other impatient souls, confident that in the chaos we should not be found out, we 'deserted' towards the Line. It was coming towards us anyhow.

21

The technique of travel was simple – thumbing lifts. At the end of the first day I found myself at Étaples – where the communion service was said to be right behind the front line under gun-fire. Well, perhaps it was a bit exaggerated, but the news from the front seemed likely to make the lie approximate more closely to the truth by bringing the gun-fire up to the communion service.

A gunner captain with whom I travelled for about twenty miles said, "I see the wicked Germans have been bombing one of our hospitals." He pointed to a newspaper paragraph and winked heavily. "Clearly marked with the Red Cross too. I know the ruddy place – there are ammunition dumps for at least five miles along the railway. They've got the hospital right in the middle of it. No wonder they marked it clearly with a Red Cross. I nearly had kittens every hour I was there – wound in my leg; couldn't run", he explained.

I had been directed to bed down at a small hospital just outside Étaples. It appeared to be a peaceful spot. I found a friendly RAMC doctor who showed me where I could lie up for the night and as it was a lovely afternoon I unpacked my safety razor to mark the spot as mine, and decided to stroll round and move on after a night's rest.

"How is it you are so slack?" I asked him. "I would have thought you would be chock-a-block with wounded."

"Efficiency, my lad. The moment this shemozzle started they sent all wounded that the Boche didn't or couldn't capture straight to England. Result – the first decent holiday we've had for years. We've got one poor devil in that but over there, that's all – he's dying anyway."

I was worn out. I lay down under some pines and went to sleep. When I woke the sun was beginning to set. For a time I was aware of voices mingling with dozing dreams.

"Aren't I *awful*!" It was a girl's voice. "You *don't* think I'm awful do you?" The man muttered something. The girl spoke again. "It *would* happen on my half day – and me going out with you."

Again the man's voice. "All right", she replied, "you stay here; I won't be long."

I felt, as I had felt my last night in England, that my nerve must have gone. I was petrified with fear at an ordinary lovers' lane conversation such as one might hear any night in England. I could not make up my mind to move. Before I had made up my mind to stay she was back.

"OK. He's snuffed it." The two walked off. Lucky he had died in time, but what on earth was the matter with me? Not shell-shock pray God. Not . . . ridiculous!

The next morning I felt quite rested. Before going off I said goodbye to the RAMC man and thanked him for putting me up. He had found out that orders had come into the RTO's office that all Tank Corps were to report at Le Tréport, the Tank Corps Depot camp. I checked up with him to find out where it was.

"I hear your officer patient died."

"Yes; he shouldn't have, but he kept on starting up and trying to get out of bed. Thought the Boche were after him. Last time he was so terrified – he thought the nurse was trying to murder him – he leapt out of bed, ruptured his wound. Well, so long. Good luck. What? Oh yes, she's a charmer." He winked. "But you haven't a chance old boy – half the thugs in the town are after her."

Le Tréport was a magnificent camp, but I saw little of it. At HQ I asked the Adjutant for news. "Blangy: I'll give you a warrant, but I would get on anything on wheels if you can – the 5th Battalion are refitting there. So long – and good luck." He saw the ribbon. "That's very nice. Had it long? Congratulations – should get you anywhere – without a warrant!"

A lorry was going out of camp. I jumped on next to the driver to get a lift to the rail-head. Then I found he was going to Blangy. Hardly believing my good luck I asked him to put me down at Battalion HQ when we got there. He had to concentrate on his driving, leaving me free with my thoughts.

So; the officer had died of wounds – or was it shell-shock? Shell-shock was obviously complicated – from Quainton who, according to Clifford, was working his ticket, to the officer who did not bother

about his wounds but thought that everyone from the Boche to his nurse was trying to murder him; all apparently had shell-shock. War was also complicated. My experience of it so far should have added up to something, but from it all I learnt nothing – presumably because at nineteen I had become too set in my ways. Now I suspect that I was aware of a lack of discipline either of the kind that is a part of spontaneous maturation, or of that which depends on endless mechanical repetition such as military drill. This last I had seen when the Coldstream Guards took Gouzeaucourt; I could therefore imagine a feat of arms which could not be conveyed by words however eloquent. For lack of any such training I had my childhood and schoolboy culture. It gave me something, but neither the discipline of repetitive command, nor the 'heaven' of middle-class England, nor an exo-skeleton taking the place of a skeleton for an endo-skeletonous animal, can serve; still less in the domain of the mind.

At last we arrived and I reported to HQ. To the voluble inquiries of the Colonel I made the appropriate conversational replies. I had, of course, had a good leave. No, I had not been besieged by bevies of admiring females. I quickly escaped to re-join my company.

My first impression was that the battalion had not altered. I had met O'Kelly and Fitzwilliam at HQ and here were the old Gang. Both adjutant and colonel had come to us before March, but the Adjutant I had met only when he told me I was to go on leave. Here were all the old familiar faces – Homfray, Clifford, Carter, Hauser, Cook. Aitches was a newcomer from A Company where he had been a section commander in the original battalion. He was likeable, but timid. As I know now, and suspected then, A Company would not have transferred him unless they wanted to get rid of him by kicking him upstairs. He was with us to be promoted.

Broome, rosy and youthful as ever, had no horror stories. "It was pretty thick I can tell you", was his contribution to the saga of March 21st.

Where were the others?

"What others? Oh yes, you met Cartwright and Robinson didn't you? – I had forgotten. Bridges? We don't really know, but Robinson was killed. In fact all the men in tanks were done in I think. Cartwright may have been captured after escaping from his tank." That was as far as I went with Broome's story.

As I had missed all the fighting I was first choice to take a party with Lewis guns up to the front at once. It was the Adjutant himself who had come round to our mess to give me the message in person. Written orders were being typed out and would be sent round soon.

He drew me into a corner out of hearing of anyone else. "Things are pretty damn serious I can tell you. We have no tanks and I'm certain the rest of us won't be long after you. I'm sorry it is so soon after your leave. You are really the only officer . . ."

I was furious. Why? I cannot have realized that I was supposed to fight. I was dominated by a romantic idea that my business was to be a hero, decorated, and to spend the rest of life basking in the warmth of approval. Fitzwilliam was guilty too; had I known it his apologies only showed that he also was an amateur soldier. I felt it was good of me to have 'won' the DSO – I think I must already have begun to believe this. I hope it didn't show; fortunately the light in our corner was not good. I dredged up some common sense from somewhere while he talked.

"Of course you realize we are shot to bits – only senior non-tank crew officers left – we useless non-combatants. The Boche have torn another gap in our line; we have to help stop it. I'm expecting orders to come in any time. We are to 'stand to' for immediate movement to the Line – supposing there is one".

"Not like Cambrai?"

"Oh God, worse, far worse. As far as I can make out it's as bad as March 21st. Only this is to the Channel ports – if they get across the sea. No retreat and no surrender."

Ah, my cup of tea after all – heroism. But I knew it was not. This was not an agreeable option for 'public school men of suitable character'. It sounded a simple, straightforward order like laying out kit, just so, for inspection; or 'all officers must return salutes in a soldierly manner' and not as if they were acknowledging a well-deserved tribute to their superior merits; or 'the Guards Division will retake Gouzeaucourt'.

22

I had not counted on getting back to the battalion to be hustled off straightway as if I had been having a nice time while they were fighting. Except for the 'nice time', which was my responsibility, this was no inaccurate summary.

O'Toole was there, and Hayler; Gunner Allen was shut in, uncommanding. Of the rest, about a dozen, I knew one or two faces including a Corporal Smith, cheerful and stolid. To my great relief Hauser was added to the party thus giving me company and a second in command.

After a deal of eager but curiously ineffectual bustle we loaded ourselves into two lorries. Our morale was not bad; it was not good. It was replaced by representations of morale remembered from earlier pre-Cambrai models. We jolted to a stop – Arras. Gunner Allen made a rare emergence to speak to me.

"They say this place is honeycombed with passages and tunnels under the whole of Arras. Wouldn't mind staying here for a bit." He relapsed into silence. From what I had heard from O'Toole it was the communication, not the silence, which was remarkable.

The pause was long enough to let the men get tea. Then Hauser and I clambered onto the seat next to the driver. Orders were to proceed to a point behind the Messines Ridge. The jolt, rattle and roar of the lorry would have made conversation difficult had we wished to talk. For my part I was glad to be left to my own thoughts.

I was more relieved than I would have thought possible to have Hauser as my supporting officer. I had not lost my affection for Quainton, and I had friendly memories of the South African, Stokes. I was dis-illusioned by Quainton and dis-enchanted by the background

from which we came. The rhythmical rise and fall of the cold brilliance of the Very lights pierced the velvety blackness. We were travelling parallel with, about five miles from, the Front Line. What the devil were we up to now? I felt ignorant in detail of my task, of my place in any larger design. We had no rifles; Hauser, O'Toole, Smith and I had revolvers; six Lewis guns were manned by four men each. I did not like Lewis guns; I thought them unreliable and unsuitable for any job we had to do inside or outside tanks. They sounded 'tinny' when they were firing. Our job? – to reinforce infantry. Training? – purely technical and applicable only to the machinery, guns, engines which we had to use. Of fighting we knew nothing and we were supposed to engage one of the world's greatest professional armies. Could the nation possibly be in such dire straits that we twenty men could really be required to reinforce the Front? We were, had we known it, GHQ Reserve – no less.

Foch had decided that in no circumstances were the reserves he had accumulated to be committed to the battle. He gambled on the line holding till the great enemy attacks of March and April had exhausted themselves. This we did not know. What I and thousands of others like me were to learn over the next few months was desolation, loneliness, defeat.

Cook turned up the next time we left our lorries. "These trenches here are where Carter and I will be. They are advanced Company HQ. I'm OC Company. We shall call ourselves B Company. One mile in front is the Infantry Brigade; they are down to the strength of one company, spread out over a mile. You must spread out your six Lewis guns over that same mile. There are no supports so no support trenches – unless of course time lies heavy on your hands and you like to dig some." He gave a cold, acid smile. "I don't think time will lie heavy on your hands – we have been told the enemy has to break through at no matter what cost. There's only you lot and this bunch of infantry between him and the sea thirty or forty miles behind. There are no orders for retreat because there is no retreat arranged. You hold on – unless of course you are dead. Any questions? Of course not – there aren't any. Well, good-bye. Don't forget – one mile, Divide 1760 yards by six Lewis guns."

I divided the party into six and we advanced in open order of sections; three infantry guides were there to show us the way. I said I would be with the third section from the right if wanted.

Dawn broke about half an hour after we reached our position. I could see then that our trench lay at the corner of a hutted camp. It stank because it was full of dead horses. An infantry officer told me the enemy trenches were fifty yards in front and that they liked infiltrating through the huts to throw a grenade or two into our line and then disappear. It did not happen while we were there, but his report cost us many an anxious hour; perhaps it was well for our vigilance.

I posted the Lewis gun nearest me with a field of fire down a lane formed by the huts. Doing something physical was a great relief and I planned to walk the length of our mile to post the other five guns. As I was nearer the right flank I decided to work towards it first.

I had not gone ten yards when I found the trench had been obliterated; nor could I see where the trench continued on the far side of the burst. I set out to crawl the gap but found I was at once observed and fired on by a machine-gun. I had already fallen so much under the influence of this eerie place that I felt relief at this evidence of a human being's existence. Still, bullets are bullets and I didn't want my brains spattering out of the back . . . I began to pull myself back by my toes. This led to another burst of fire. I did not want to stay there all day. I dared not try to get up and run for it. After some minutes I tried again; same result. If this chap gets annoyed, I thought, I shan't be surprised if he takes more careful aim. I felt better when I buried my head into the mud.

After what I thought was a decent interval I again began to pull myself out by my toes. This time the response was immediate, but it was aimed rifle fire – not machine-gun. This felt personal and intimate. Throwing caution away I scrambled back as fast as I could to the remnant of trench. I was pouring with sweat and trembling.

It was queer. I had no idea where my marksman was, put for the first time, and only once again in the war, I felt engaged directly with a person who was trying to kill me personally. The fact that the encounter was entirely one sided gave it an added peculiarity of being animal – the hunted animal. I was having an unusual view of 'sport'.

I waited for a moment or two to recover a more usual frame of mind. Then I walked back to my men. I told them the way was blocked and said they had better be careful at places where the trench was blown 'in case' such spots were covered by machine-guns or snipers. I said I was going to try the left flank.

A few yards to the left I found another destroyed patch of trench. Heeding my own advice this time I picked up an abandoned rifle and crawling on my belly raised the butt slowly and cautiously till I thought it might show. At once a burst of machine-gun fire knocked it out of my grasp as if it had been struck by a sledge hammer.

I went back to my men. This time I would wait till dark before further experiments.

After a while I relieved the sentry. I told two to keep by the gun ready to fire, and the other two to start digging the trench deeper, throwing the earth so as to seal off the ends of the trench to give us some defence from enfilade fire as well as the existing protection from front and rear.

Before long Gunner Sears called out that they had reached soft mud. He took my place whilst I had a look. As I watched I could see water welling up from below; it was obvious that we could dig no deeper. I felt unable to think, at the end of my resources.

It seemed important to keep the men occupied, so for that reason more than for any other I told Sears and his mate to hollow out two upright shallow depressions in the front wall of the trench so that they could just recline in them, and if possible sleep in them as they stood. Taking over the sentry job I told them to make the depressions as strong and firm as patting with entrenching tools allowed.

23

The remains of the camp gave very good cover for any sniper who wanted to approach our line. As I was not a soldier it did not occur to me that the same might be true in the opposite direction. Had I been a soldier I might have wanted to go in the opposite direction, but as I was only a public school boy dressed up as a soldier, complete with decoration, I had not the necessary resources. I felt, secretly, that my morale was bad.

Nowadays I would not make such a simple diagnosis, but as it was I was impelled to prove my courage – the lack of it being, as I thought, my main defect. This erroneous idea was, and still is, generally held. Cromwell knew there was something wrong with his armies. He was opposed by a great man, Prince Rupert, who had courage and a high morale, but temperamentally was an amateur and could not see his problem in any terms other than those of the amateur outlook. Cromwell, who might appear to be even more of an amateur, was temperamentally a professional; his approach to his material, the 'decayed tapsters and serving men', was characteristically professional. He saw that, coming into a situation which he, like Rupert, had inherited, something had to be done to remedy the past and forestall the future. Rupert had a cause, the Royalist cause: Cromwell had a religion and a God. The god of the Royalist cause was a poor specimen of human being who, despite all his attempts and those of his later followers at sanctification, could only reform, too late, radically poor material which in fact remained the poor stuff it was. That was a bad start for Rupert's foundations. Patriotism, Edith Cavell discovered much later, was not enough. On this foundation Rupert failed to erect the necessary structure for an army at war.

Cromwell, a farmer, had learned in his contact with the real forces of nature that there is no substitute for discipline. He applied this discovery to what was, superficially, an entirely new situation. It was therefore second nature in him to realize that his soldiers, if they were to be soldiers, must have discipline as well as a cause. His God had to have qualities superior to those of a fallible and frail human being. With 'cause' and its attendant structure of discipline Cromwell had an immeasurably superior foundation on which to build. His cavalry improved: Rupert's did not. Both men had the same disadvantage, namely, coming into the story too late. The minimum conditions necessary for the work to be done cannot be improvised for they require generation of time for maturation. The seeds must be there but also the soil, the nation which allows them to germinate.

When I entered actively for the first time into the nation's affairs it was as a recruit destined as a matter of course to become an officer; I did not qualify for a vote in a general election till the fighting was over. Now, at Messines, I was re-entering a war which from my viewpoint had fundamentally altered. I could not say why I felt this; still less could I formulate the change of which I had become certain after Cambrai.

When I peered cautiously at the huts in front of me I was still untrained – not a professional, but certainly not an amateur. I was no longer obsessed with ambition to be brave; that I knew was beyond me, but I did not want to be disgraced. There was usually no danger of disgrace because there was nothing disgraceful to do – you cannot run away in company or, at least, it is relatively difficult. As a section commander I was to learn of problems associated with loneliness and isolation. As I peered into no-man's land I was to experience one of them almost at once.,

A sheet of corrugated iron slithered from a roof and crashed to the ground. I was watching that spot at the time so I knew what caused the grinding metallic sound that preluded the crash. Then the silence which was absolute flowed back and enveloped first the camp and then our party in a hideous fear. I watched. I waited for the grenade thrower. Nothing. At last, to break this evil spell, I looked at my watch. It was twelve minutes past ten. I returned to stare at the camp. The sun was shining, the sky blue. The Lewis gun, flanked by the two intense gunners, glistened like a small sinister idol, the centre

of a strange religion. There was no sound. I kept my gaze on the huts for any sign of movement.

At last, feeling it must by now be past noon, I looked at my watch again. It was not quite a quarter past ten. I looked at my watch incredulously; the second hand was moving and the sun confirmed the hour. Again I felt fear. Could I possibly last till evening? In desperation I stopped thinking about the past or future; I began taking compass bearings on every object within my limited view. To my relief my fear began to ebb away. It was an experience familiar to me in my childhood nightmares but not in waking life. It was to be repeated over and over again in this new horrid shape throughout the war till at last it began to lose its horror by force of repetition.

We took it in turns to do the simple jobs I had laid down. These changes afforded us all relief until I judged it had become dark enough for me to start my tour to the left flank.

Some dim recollection that troops always 'stood to arms' at dawn and again at dusk made me tell the men to 'stand to' regardless of the fact that they had done nothing but stand to arms all day. Experienced troops would know that no one would be likely to be prowling about a ruined camp at ten in the morning; an experienced officer would not have started to tour his section of trench at dusk. I was not experienced, not trained, not disciplined. Therefore – I set out. Having passed, on my belly, the part of ruined trench where I knew I would come under bursts of fire from the machine-gun I began my walk along the intact though ragged trench. As I did so I heard the moan of approaching shells. It was the start of the evening 'strafe'. I did not know this; to me it was all hell let loose. The entire trench system began to break loose and start skywards in great and little clods of earth. I was sure in my ignorance that the enemy had started a night attack – and in my ignorance I was quite correct.

Feeling I could hardly be in greater danger outside the trench than in it I walked, stumbled and ran along the top. So long as I remained alive and unwounded it was faster than trying to scramble along the trench and to some extent I could keep a direction. I fell down, threw myself down and was blown down every few yards, but eventually I was hailed by a voice from the trench. I stood on the top and shouted my inquiries, thus displaying my coolness under fire – I hoped. One of the men pulled me in; I may even have had enough sense to hope that someone would.

The crew had made themselves relatively comfortable and were encouraged by the presence of an infantry officer. I went into the dug-out where there were three officers. Ordinarily they would have been in candle-light but as the candles were extinguished at once by concussion from the shell-bursts they were relying on a torch, the battery of which must have been exhausted.

I was excited and under the impression that I was engaged in repelling an enemy attack, whereas they were under the impression that they were undergoing a sordid ritual – so-and-so wounded, so-and-so killed; 'shuffle the cards old man, and pass the whisky'. I cannot believe my intervention and the subsequent conversation meant much more than a shrug of the shoulders and the assumption that I was a 'case'.

I ventured that our gunners did not seem to be answering the enemy barrage. A sardonic face turned an angry look on me.

"What makes you think we have any gunners? We've had no artillery support, no air cover since we came."

Apparently he saw 'the ribbon'. Anyhow his look softened and he began to smoulder rather than to flame.

"How long have you been here?" I asked.

"Three weeks", he replied. I knew they were a West Riding regiment because I overheard one of my men ask one of theirs as we passed in a communication trench when we moved in, "Who are you chum?"

"West Ridings – who are you?"

"The fucking Tanks – walking."

I excused myself as I had to get to our left flank. I probably made some remark intended to convey good will or a desire to help. If so I cannot imagine what impression other than one of stark idiocy it created on them.

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I started off in the trench till I was out of sight of my gun crew and then continued as before. It might be daft to expose myself like that but at least I had some idea where I was going. It might be daft to leave the shelter of the dug-out. But how, in war, does one decide what is daft? The answer is that one does not, if one can help it, decide these things in war. They are decided in peace, formulated in training manuals, enforced by orders. Such is the perversity of the human animal that these prudent dispositions intended to protect against irresponsibility and uniformed improvisation are then erected into rigid barriers as a defence against thought.

Thus, after Cambrai when Quainton and others of us who began to have doubt about our wisdom in taking up arms came to the point of decision, we fell back on inertia because we had decided to fight supposedly when in a godly, righteous and sober frame of mind. The solitary exception to this convention was a scruffy, red-faced, unshaven scoundrel who, being asked by our then apoplectic colonel – appropriately named Bulk – what had caused him to enlist, swivelled his blood-shot eye on the display of patriotic ribbon before him and said, "Booze". When we learn, like the child walking, to act automatically without expenditure of thought we also learn how to avoid pain by economizing thought.

Again a shout; I jumped into the trench where Hauser and his crew were. Hauser said he had been to see the left flank gun under Sergeant O'Toole and found them in good form. Then there wasn't much point in going on to them? He agreed. He also agreed that the enemy was going to attack.

The barrage increased in intensity, but as we had no Very lights there was no way in which we could see if his infantry had left their

trenches. Then to our right I thought I saw figures. I drew my Colt and began to drop ammunition into the chamber. It gave me relief to be doing something. I heard through the din the chattering tinny fire of Lewis guns and hoped that they were ours. There was a Vickers firing about twenty yards to our right.

"Must be one of the battalion guns."

"I didn't see any when I came."

"I should have thought you would hardly be able to see anything at all. It's not a German gun anyhow", said Hauser.

As I was loading my revolver I felt it was the end, the last straw. I decided if the enemy came to grips I would empty my revolver into any German I could and then surrender 'Hände hoch'. It did not occur to me that the Germans would not be idle while I was firing or that I would still be in a dangerous place liable to be killed at any time after surrender. I felt it would all be over.

I finished loading carefully and methodically. Hauser told me, a long time after, how funny my stolid method seemed and how immensely reassuring. Out of the corner of my eye I saw the attack to our right peter out – or so I thought. In fact I could not possibly have distinguished; I must have realized this for Hauser told me I had warned our gunners to expect enemy in front and also coming along our trench from the right.

The rest of that night was made up of fitful gunfire, shells blowing in our trench, machine-guns – but apparently no response from us. The dispiriting effect was profound and only became clear when we could compare our lot with something better.

We were in that position for three weeks. I have no clear memory of this period except one day when the monotony of helplessness was broken by a display in strength by the Royal Flying Corps. Suddenly a formation of bombers and fighters appeared above our lines and swept the skies clear of enemy planes. The demonstration lasted for half an hour. For us who had seen no British planes for three weeks it was a revelation of power almost unbelievable in its majesty. Though the enemy dribbled back in his ones and twos after our planes had left we never again quite lost the sense of pride and assurance.

A similar sense of mastery was communicated by the French just before our relief. One day we were told that from nightfall we should be supported by the French artillery who were relieving ours. Our gunners were firing with worn barrels – when indeed they were

able to fire at all. The result was premature bursts so that instead of shelling the enemy we had the mortification of being peppered by shell-bursts from our own guns at the back of our necks. There was a celebrated story of a warrant officer who had fallen in his men under a flag of truce, marched the small party back to the supporting gunners of the 7th Division and offered to surrender to them. The 7th Division were proud men and did not like this bitter comment on their worn guns, honourably worn; our times did not lend themselves to such humours. We did not pretend to relish the advent of French gunners who we assumed would be even worse than our own.

The night proved restless. The French, said to be the famous Nancy Division, the 11th, the Corps de Fer, had moved in to support behind our right. The enemy, presumably having wind of the relief, were unusually active. The French responded, not with a few Very lights, but with a pyrotechnic display of rockets, 'flaming onions' – so named after their appearance in the night sky – star shells, and a peculiar noise which first resembled a beating of many biscuit tins and then became the characteristic bark of what was then the most famous artillery gun in the world, the French 75. Instead of passively enduring what we could not cure we found a screen of fire put down between us and the enemy positions.

Starved of hope as we were we could hardly bear the relief which these friendly and efficient gunners gave us that night; since the previous evening we had had to withstand six attacks on our position. I will not say we had beaten them off. We had countered them; we had fired on them. Why they had persisted and why finally they had stopped I do not know. Perhaps their nightmares were worse because hope was mixed in with them, while ours were untroubled by anything so unnerving. That night was like a refreshing rain.

The terrible disasters which have befallen the French, starting with the mutinies of 1917, have laid many brave men of a brave nation open to the imputation of degeneracy. But April and August that year gave me a short, profound insight into the French fighting man which threw a glaring and unwelcome light on the frivolity that marked some of our attitudes.

When the French infantry relieved us they were complimentary about our efforts; they were astonished at our extended line and the insignificant numbers with which we had held it. They were gay; they seemed in no way anxious to disguise their arrival from the enemy.

When they were alarmed they advertised it by the truly beautiful firework display. When the enemy put down their barrage there was nothing half-hearted about the answering 75's. And as one of our men, hardly able to credit his eyes, reported, "Sir! They're all standing on the top of the trench peeing into it before they get in!" I looked back and sure enough that was exactly what they seemed to be doing.

A couple of hours later we were in billets, two or three farm buildings in good repair. Hot water, shaves, more or less clean clothes, conspired to give an evening meal of bully beef stew a sense of luxury. Cook, Carter, Hauser and I were with fifteen men left out of twenty. Never had we known so few casualties.

An orderly brought in a message. Cook read it and when we had finished our meal, but before we had completely relaxed, he said quietly, "Sorry you chaps. Pack up – back we go. The Boche have broken through. We must man the line – quick – at Chinese Wall, before they get there. Lorries are waiting."

How cold the night had become, how dark. No brilliant white of our barrage illuminating the distant line – only the sombre spurt and immediately dying glow of bursting enemy shells to show how much closer the line had come.

This time I had four gun teams and a new officer, Osprey, under me. Cook again was in command at Advanced Company HQ with Carter as his second in command – though in theory he was the Reconnaissance Officer and marked to go back to that job if we ever had tanks again. I was to establish my Section HQ somewhere between Company HQ and our gun positions. By the time we reached our position there was not a sign of any disturbance, let alone battle and breakthrough. Thank God! Thank God! Could it be a false alarm? I devoutly hoped so. But it was not; the breakthrough was to our right.

The silence and lack of activity was soon obtrusive as even more unnerving than the chaos of shell-fire we had just been relieved of by the French. I didn't know what was happening, or what had happened. The war had become a terrifying game of chess in which we had to participate. It was difficult to find an adjustment to the fact that one had become a metaphor with which one was familiar as a debased cliché. We were mere pawns. By God – so we were!

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We were to fill a gap on the left of the Lowland Division. I spaced out my four guns with Osprey at the second post from the left. It might as well have been the tenth post from the middle for all the difference it could make. I have put this down precisely because it is the kind of precise nonsense we used, to give substance to a figment of the imagination. It was the New Religion. There was a warfare on earth in which our four Lewis guns were enrolled in the forces of Light and Truth against the Powers of Darkness – The Devil's Own maybe? But that was only a joke – this was not a joke.

The bold contours cutting the sky-line, Messines Ridge, the great crater of the old battle – perhaps one ought to patrol round it to see if any enemy were there. Sweating with fear I set out. Then I became aware of figures on the crest; an enemy patrol. I had no grenades. But I had a revolver, blast it. I could fight. No, I couldn't – I was outnumbered. I was scared to death. I did not know where the enemy were, where our lines.

They saw me and then mercifully turned on their tracks and went back the way they had come. More Angels of Mons, or just devils from Hell, or shell-shock, or simple ordinary wind-up? I scrambled back to the trench, said good-bye to the second gun crew from the right and set out while it was dark enough not to be seen, to report to Advanced Company HQ. On my way I passed a curved corrugated iron sheet which formed the roof for an ideal little but for my section HQ. If only I could locate it by map reference I could tell Cook and Carter just where it was. It is such a relief to know exactly where everyone is. When you have no idea whatever where you are yourself it is, as I discovered, an admirable substitute.

"Yes", I said nonchalantly, "I saw some Boche. No, they weren't doing anything. Going home I should think."

"Did they see *you*?" said Carter.

"I think so."

"Did they fire at you? You're sure?"

Surely, I wondered, he's not working up for another decoration; it was hellish enough to be trying to earn one I had already. But Cook was paying no attention. The covered bit of trench, in which Cook and Carter were, looked cosy I thought.

"All right Bion. Let us know when anything happens."

I found the tin hut again and crawled into it. I was glad to lie down. Above my head a small piece of mud was suspended, held to the roof by a dried grass stem. It quivered now and then with distant explosions.

I think I dozed. At any rate it seemed that the bit of mud was swaying, slowly, smoothly like a pendulum, like the pit and the pendulum of Poe's story. How my head ached, though I could not have banged it. But the guns *were* banging and the grass now was dancing, not swaying. Dancing! Jigging up and down like a corpse on barbed wire when a storm of machine-gun bullets made a breeze.

I got up and quickly crawled out of the hut. I felt it would drive me mad if I stayed there another minute. It is peculiar that so many people feel they will go mad – in another minute! – if the baby won't stop yelling, the dog barking, the telephone bell ringing – and now if the damned guns won't stop banging. No good telling them I would go mad if they didn't stop. I felt I couldn't stay there another minute!

Shells were falling close around. Perhaps the enemy had found the map reference of that blasted hut. I hadn't given it to Carter; they would never be able to find me. They wouldn't look for me anyway. Who was looking for Cohen? Or Stokes? Or Bayliss? I wasn't. I felt like a cornered rat. There was nowhere to go. 'They' were trying to club me to death. Clumsy brutes! Like trying to smash an egg in the angle between wall and floor – with a hoop. So simple really. But no; they were too clumsy to finish me off, couldn't solve the problem of how to club me to death. And I couldn't even sit up on my hind quarters and put my little paws together and pray the damned swine to let me off – just once! Just this little once! Oh God! I will never be naughty again – never! The guns were fewer! Well, maybe *once* more.

Damn it, they've started again! Oh God! I *swear* I won't. Please, *please* just this once!

I got out. Sulky, frightened, resentful – God be damned for making a cringing rat of me!

At number two post (from the left flank you remember – not that I give a damn if you don't) I could not find Osprey. I bawled his name; I became angry and yelled.

There was a slab of concrete which had been blown by a shell-burst so that it covered a hollow, probably part of an old trench. From under this crawled Osprey. Pale, watery-eyed, unshaven, he was 'like things you find under a stone', but he was a thing under a stone!

"Osprey!" I pulled myself together. "Osprey! What the hell's the matter with you?"

"Nothing", he said weakly with a voice like his pale watery eyes. "Nothing. Why?"

Well, at least he could talk. I began to swear and as I swore I realized how relieved I felt.

"Look, you must shave! You really must! You look simply terrible. And you must make your men shave."

He began to laugh. "*You* don't look too well-shaven", he said.

Of course I had not. I had forgotten that. "I know", I lied, "that's what reminded me. I'm just going to, so I thought I would tell you as well."

He seemed satisfied. Anyhow he did not go on laughing and he didn't seem to feel I should set an example to my men. Then I remembered; no tanks, no water, let alone hot water such as we used to boil on the exhausts. I got my razor out of my knapsack and had a dry shave. Another time, I vowed, I would not be so thoughtlessly efficient. It brought the blood to our cheeks – if not quite as we would wish.

Osprey had frightened me. If I really looked as he did when he crawled out from under that stone, what would our men be like? I took him with me to each gun post in turn. To my relief the men looked much better than their officers. Osprey agreed readily enough not to take shelter in that way again; so readily in fact that I was sure he was afraid of what that rat-like life had done to him.

For two more days nothing happened to break the monotony of constant, vigilant staring at no-man's land – the crater edge, the slow rise to the crest of the ridge, the grey mud so similar in all but colour

to Hill 40, inspired a state which was not nightmare, not waking, not sleep. It was an animal existence in which the eyes held sway. One did not think; one did not look; one stared. What we felt reminds me of a young child who had been sexually assaulted by the Germans in their last days of power in a village near Lille. She had been cutting some meat off a dead mule by the roadside when we came upon her. She looked up, stared and silently slid away leaving the meat as a cat might abandon its prey. While she disappeared down steps to a cellar we waited and then realized she was watching us from behind a door.

The grey scene later formed an amalgam with the scene at the Steenbeck and became the backcloth of a dream I had at Oxford – 'when the war was over'. Night after night I found myself on my belly clinging by my toes and fingers to a glistening slope at the bottom of which was a raging torrent – the dirty trickle of the Steenbeck. Towards this I slithered. If I tried to arrest my progress by sticking in my toes or fingers it accelerated the descent; if I desisted, it again accelerated my descent. I did not make a sound. I just woke up bathed in sweat.

I had reached this mindless state when word came through from Cook that we were to be withdrawn. It upset my equilibrium but it was further upset that evening because it was clear that the enemy shelling of our position was becoming protracted beyond its usual limits. I had reported to the infantry battalion commander that we were being withdrawn. He was a nice man, a regular soldier of about forty, a Colonel Stewart. He said he was glad for our sakes but would miss us and our guns. He asked me to stay near and talk.

"Let's talk about something reasonable. Let's forget this damned war which is hotting up again. I think he's going to attack." He peered out over the parapet with his binoculars, but it was already too dark to see. "Do you know the de Coverley essays?"

He was delighted when I said I did. "They really give you an impression of a world worth living in." It was almost impossible to talk because the shell bursts were too continuous; you can't shout about gentle and civilized manners. He went on talking but did not bother to try to make me hear. His face seemed in the light from the gun-flashes to have lost some of its lined, careworn pallor.

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I brought our gun crews together ready to leave though now I was sure our relief would be cancelled. Most of the fighting seemed to be over to our right by Mont Kemmel. That was where the star shells and 'Brock's Benefit' were concentrated, and that is what saved our relief – it was obvious we were not the main object of the enemy's attention.

Our orders came. Although I felt sure we should be recalled, perhaps enveloped by the attack if it spread to our sector which it was sure to do if it were successful, I was glad to go – or I would have been if I could have rid myself of the shame at leaving the infantry.

It is impossible to feel anything but amazement at what the infantry suffered in that war, and impossible to think anyone will convey it. They say that the Spanish infantry never recovered after Rocroi in 1643. When I read about it at school the phrases sank into my mind; now I can believe that what I witnessed was a disaster of that order – nothing less than murder of the spirit of incomparable men. For me the disaster was to have survived and to undergo the mortification of being watched leaving the battle by men condemned to stay.

Loaded as we were it seemed easier and more practicable to ignore the shelling. The whole back area, every path and crossroad, was under fire and to try to proceed by short rushes between flattening out on the ground would only mean that the danger was prolonged.

Carter and Cook met us. "All right?" "Yes, except the fire I told you about." We had lost no men since early that evening. A small lorry took the whole party, guns and all, racketing and jolting down the remains of the road. Cook said we had been reinforced and the

new men would be waiting for us at our camp. We didn't need more men; if they could have reinforced our spirits that would have been something; more men was nothing.

That night Mont Kemmel fell. No one knew why it was not retaken. "Our chaps did retake it", an infantry officer told me. "We got off to a good start and got right round behind it to our final objectives. Just what the doctor ordered. The French were supposed to be attacking on the other flank. But the bloody bastards didn't even leave their trenches! If they had done their bit we would be sitting on top of that place now with a decent packet of Boches in our cages!"

We were not ordered back. Though we did not know it at the time our infantry experience was over. When our detachment was withdrawn we had to pass through St Omer, the HQ of the Second Army. General Plumer happened to be there and not at his Advanced HQ. He stood at the side of the road and took the salute as the brigade of which we were part marched past. He looked, we said, like an old walrus with his white moustaches. There were mutterings of "Good old Plumer!", for we had heard that he always said "Thank you" to troops as they left his Army. Perhaps that is why troops knew they were in his Army. There was no need for him to issue orders about 'backs to the wall'.

One famous General was to review our battalion, when we were still a battalion, at Ypres. We paraded at eight in the morning. Before the great event, which was to take place at half past eight, we inspected and reviewed our every button till at eight thirty the rain came down. We had to stay on parade as 'he' would arrive at any moment. By eleven thirty we were soaked but though we had lost our shine we were still far from bedraggled. Our scouts warned us – 'he' was coming! A fine shiny car approached, slowed up. There was an impressive figure in it – the General? He leant forward so we could all see him and saluted with his swagger stick. The car gathered speed again. And was gone. "'Struth!" said a man in the back rank of our company. "Blimey! I'm wet!"

He must have been a good general to be famous; he must have had an enormous amount of work to do. Later when he fell into disgrace I do not doubt that an episode such as I have recounted would mean that he had many fewer advocates than he might have had. Had Plumer fallen into disgrace I do not doubt that many would have remembered how he had wasted time at the roadside instead of

getting on with his work. 'An old fuddy-duddy'. But he was reputed to have a good chief-of-staff named Harrington who did his thinking for him, so perhaps that saved him from disgrace. It may be, however, that generals who watch their troops march by choose good chiefs-of-staff; or even good quartermasters who do not earn fame for their army as the worst fed of all – as they did for the Third. I was only a part of the skin on a boxer's knuckles and could not know what lay hid in the mighty brain of the bruiser behind.

We were back in comfortable billets in one of the villages in the neighbourhood of the Central Workshops. As I was now a lieutenant and the senior of my rank I had a bed and clean sheets in a room to myself. I had a new uniform and new underclothes from army ordinance. The uniform was of good material and fitted me in several places. Above all, I revelled in being without lice for the first time for almost eight weeks. This meant that I did not have to make the agonizing choice between being warm and itching, or being free of bites and blue with cold. The itching of the new uniform gave me some anxious moments but as it adjusted to some of my more prominent and obstinate bulges that anxiety diminished too.

The comfort of clean clothes and a civilian bed played a big part in my mind; I often longed during later stages in the war for a repetition of that wonderful experience. The reconstitution of our company mess, regular parade hours, the routines of assimilating new officers and men, the training in infantry tactics as far as we had learnt them – I worked hard on this with my section as did Hauser who had now become commander of his section – all filled time and helped to repair appearances, but it never felt quite right.

Captain Robinson came to us as a reinforcement. He was older than the officers contemporary with me who had been the original tank commanders of the battalion in England. He seemed somewhat foreign because he was an American. Yet we did not think of him as a man of different nationality so much as of the same nationality with peculiarities which, when we did notice them, were very peculiar peculiarities. For example, he did not seem to understand our jokes. He also had jokes which were different from ours even when verbally almost identical.

One day Robinson asked Hauser and me what we thought of a German automatic pistol he had. It certainly looked a beautiful little thing. I said I wished we had things like that instead of the clumsy

great .45 Colts. Hauser said the German pistol could never stop a man dead – like a Colt.

"Stop him dead! Hat That's a good one!" laughed Robinson.

"What's so funny about that?" asked Hauser. "When you are at close quarters you don't just want to kill him; you want to stop him as well – so he doesn't rush into you and kill you before he passes out."

"Oh yes, of course, I see. You mean you stop him 'dead'. Very good."

He showed us his watch. "Where did I get that? Same place of course. I told the Boche officer to hand over his pistol and then his watch too. He seemed a bit fed up but he forked out all right. It's a beauty isn't it?"

We agreed; it was. Then Hauser said, "Isn't that what you call looting?"

Robinson said yes, he supposed you could call it that, but then it was a bit ridiculous to call it that when after all he was only a bloody German. For his part he thought it jolly well served him right.

Carter, who had come up and heard the latter part of the conversation, joined in. "Do you think then that you'd only 'loot' English soldiers?"

Robinson was becoming puzzled and rather resentful at a conversation which he felt was carrying fussiness a bit far – beyond a joke in fact.

A day or two later I bumped into Carter and Robinson again. This time Robinson wore no Sam Browne belt, and Carter though walking close to him was not talking. Carter *was* wearing his Sam Browne.

"Good Lord!" I said, "You look as if you were escorting an officer under arrest."

Carter looked angry and uncomfortable. Robinson said, "I am".

I was about to put my foot further and more firmly into the mess I had started to make when Carter caught my eye. He seemed to be begging me to refrain from making a bigger bloody fool of myself than I absolutely had to.

Later Hauser and I tackled Carter about it and under secrecy he told us the following facts. I was puzzled and indignant; I liked Robinson. Hauser was indifferent, but then he did *not* like Robinson.

Robinson *had* captured the officer; or at least the officer had surrendered to Robinson. All this was a bit vague. The officer was wearing a fur coat; Robinson asked him for it – whether with or without

threats was not clear – and after some argument he handed it over. "The rest you have heard from Robinson", said Carter.

A man called Colefax came and listened to all this open-mouthed. "Bloody ridiculous, I call it", he said. Hauser was inclined to agree but changed his mind.

"After all, it is loot – by military law. Thank God no one ever surrendered to me or I might have done the same", I said. But I didn't believe that; I feel sure it would not have occurred to me. It seemed a bit mean – like hitting a man when he was down. I turned to Carter. "Did you arrest him?"

Carter who was unusually ill at ease said of course he had not. "I was ordered to be escort. Thank God it's someone else's job now – 1st Battalion's. Personally I thought he was boasting and had invented the whole story to show how gallant he was."

"I thought he was a liar", said Hauser. "That's why I said I thought it was looting – to scare him. I was sure he had just bought the things from a prisoner and then decided to tell the tale about it."

Carter said it looked like being an expensive story. I returned to my problem. "But who do you think told on him? Who ordered his arrest?"

"What on earth makes you think anyone 'told on him'?" said Carter becoming exasperated. "You heard him yourself. He goes all over the place shouting out what a fine looter he is and you say 'Who told on him?' He probably went and boasted about it to the Brigadier himself. Anyhow, the order to arrest him came from Brigade."

Robinson was not unpopular and as the news of his arrest spread the debate became a source of embarrassment and uneasy questioning. One story was that the German officer himself complained to Brigade. This gained credence; it could even have been true. 'All's fair in love and war': such were the proverbial phrases with which one was familiar. They are spread like a carpet covering the human mind, usually dormant and dark, but becoming active and luminous in accordance with the movements of the forces concealed below.

Robinson disappeared. I am still haunted by the expression on his face – incredulous, unbelieving. "Surely", he seemed to be saying, "this can't be happening to me? You can't do this to me?" Yet warfare between civilized states should be governed by a code of law. Who says they are civilized? Was our Colonel civilized? Or our Company Commander? 'They tame but one another still'.

At about this time a letter was handed to me by the corporal of our company office. It had been sent to the Battalion HQ by the mother of one of our men who had been killed in action. Did I know who wrote it? If not, could I find out and let the company officer know?

The letter said, "Dear Madam, By the time this reaches you, you will have heard that your son, Gunner X, has been killed in action and how brave and universally loved he was. I want you to know that he was the biggest rat and meanest coward I have ever met. He was not killed in action. He was a skunk and he died of fright before he got near danger. If you have any more lily-livered curs like him in the litter keep them out of it. We don't want them endangering the lives of good tank men." It was not signed.

Robinson and this letter floated up to the surface of my mind as part of my Oxford education. The city of 'dreaming spires' was not what it might once have been. Even in sleep the dreams had an inappropriate quality.

27

What had happened to A and C Companies after the Grand Ravine? The A Company commander survived, but I did not meet him till chance threw me into his company at Oxford, and by then he could not remember, or remembered something which made me feel we were talking of different people.

"Do you remember what happened to Green?"

"Green; oh yes. I remember him *very* well. That fat fellow with rather piggy eyes?"

"I always thought him one of the wittiest and most cheerful people I ever met."

"Yes", rather vaguely. "Yes, wasn't he! I remember him *very* well."

"Do you remember what happened to him?"

"Yes, very well. He got killed. It was at Cambrai, or it may have been just before; Vlamertinghe perhaps. No, it *was* Cambrai, because I remember there was some question of his kit. He was a chartered accountant."

"No, barrister."

"Something like that – one of the learned professions; awfully good chap I thought."

What had happened to them? Stokes? Yes, I know, killed at Cambrai, but – is that all? He had gone to South Africa as a farmer and was nearly ruined, lost all his capital through five years of drought in a row. Then the rain came and all was saved – more than all. "It's all a matter of luck; if you have five years drought straight off you're for it. Still, I mustn't grumble. It taught me to be jolly careful when my luck turned. I saved something; then *this* business! So back I came." He was always cheerful in a sober way; always modest and unassuming.

Despard? I knew what happened to him of course. But I knew nothing of him before I saw him lying there, sweating, with a deathly pallor on his face. "I'm done for; I know it. That mag-pie . . . all up."

What, for that matter, had happened to me? Something queer – and this is how it happened. Sometime during those eight weeks with the infantry my section and I had to go and hold a village at all costs. The place was alive with shell-splinters and bullets that flicked by like wasps. The sapper officer in command told me where he wanted the section. I got them into position and set them to dig a trench. I then reported to him again, telling him that I had left Second Lieutenant Bridges in command because I had to go back to Company HQ to report. He was too harassed to pay much attention but told me to come to him on my way back. I gave Cook and Carter my position, showing them on the map, by which time two billycans of soup, hot beef stew, were packed into hay boxes to take to the section. I felt very grateful for Tipledy's old-womanly efficiency but had no time to find him to tell him so. I was in a hurry; I had to hurry my orderlies too, with their slip-slopping loads in the hay boxes. We must have gone a hundred yards, nearly to the village, when it became clear that something was wrong. The village was being shelled. So what? Boche machine-guns, on our side of the village! This *was* wrong. Our infantry came falling of the boundary of the village – on our side. The blasted place, to be held 'at all costs', had fallen.

The infantry fell into already prepared trenches – real, not tape this time – and there they stayed. No one had heard of my men; my section had simply disappeared. Captured? What did 'captured' mean? I was never able to discover. Not until after the war did I hear they had been taken prisoner.

Chinese Wall, Messines, Wytschaete, Mont Kemmel: all those eight weeks were spent with men I did not know – just remnants of a battalion. Had they just held up their hands? The question haunted me. In my deepest heart I felt and still feel that that is what I would do. Amazingly it did not happen; the circumstances were never quite right. Either I was not there, or the enemy was not where I was.

The next day, as there were no men, we were cleared out. I came out of it with a horrible load of guilt. Every explanation was specious, whether of guilt or of innocence. There was no relief. I was a more efficient soldier, but I was not the soldier I had been. I tried once or twice to discuss it with Hauser, with Carter. They seemed

to understand the feeling but they had nothing to say. I learned that when no one has anything to say the time has come to be silent.

The debate with myself did not cease. *That* was not so easily dealt with then or since. Sooner or later one is faced with the fact that there must be something which is greater, more important than one's own death. However great a coward one is one cannot on that or any other ground claim exemption. The obvious answer is ready to hand: life is more important and death only an unimportant terminal event. But for the coward this is not true. In the period of rest I had experiences – like a bed and clean sheets – which I long remembered. There was the green grass in which I tried to carry out section exercises in fighting; there were blue skies. But the comfort had oozed out of the sheets; the green did not remind me of the far-off hills where it was greener; the blue skies no longer reminded me of the lark-song with which they were filled in a certain field in Hertfordshire, but only that they 'sing so out of tune'.

The state of mind which I experienced bore some resemblance to states spoken of by religious people. The resemblance was close enough to stir a revulsion against and rejection of any religious idea known to me. In so far as I had changed since Cambrai, and of that I had no doubt whatever, I had become closer to, and more sympathetic with, the views of those who regarded the pious as canting humbugs – myself very much included. Quainton had not been killed; he had become the shadow of a shadow. Cohen when I saw him was an ugly joke; so was the story of the advantages of having one boot less to clean. Still, that story was not a part of Holy Writ, not even of the apocryph to the Apocrypha; it was rather a piece of dirt clinging, as it were, to the religious boot. More to the point perhaps was the story attached to Corporal Smith's burial.

When I had finished my walk through the shell-fire by being pulled into the trench, I started shouting instructions to Smith. I remember being impressed and comforted by his sturdy, cheerful demeanour. While I was facing him he seemed to stop paying attention; his face became flabby and lifeless. It was peculiar to discover that the lifelessness of his expression was due to his being lifeless; he toppled forward onto me and slithered into the trench. So the bombardment, like the bullet which had shattered Captain Edwards' brain, *was* dangerous. Of course he had not been wearing one of those bullet-proof Bibles or prayer books, but no more was I. There

was the 'whole armour of Faith'; Cohen certainly had worn that; as a Jew converted Christian he had paid a high price for it – Quainton told me so, having been on such terms with him that he could discuss those things. God knows what had hit Cohen; somehow it managed not to kill his body, but killed *him*. Perhaps he was one of those whose graves are known only to God.

Smith – or had he now qualified to be called only It? – was an infernal nuisance. In the middle of this clearly dangerous bombardment, while we expected the enemy infantry at any moment, we had to bury him (It?) While I took over the main duty of watching at the parapet the others dug. Of course it was ridiculous; anyone, any soldier would know that Smith (It) could wait. "No hurry at all", he might have said with a cheerful grin. But It (late Smith) left it all to us. Rigor set in very fast. He seemed to have arms everywhere, stiff and unaccommodating.

"Smith-y? Smithy?" For a moment I thought that his friend Grayson had gone mad and was trying to get him to co-operate. He said afterwards he was making sure he was dead.

Into this shallow scraping we finally forced him. It was too shallow and this was what finally caused trouble. He would have to be re-buried properly. Four or five of his friends, when they came to hear of what had happened, wanted to go back to the line as soon as we had been relieved and re-bury him – with a religious service.

I referred the matter to Cook because I said I thought it was risking the lives of the men unnecessarily. Cook reluctantly agreed to let them go if it were practicable. Unfortunately it was. A temporary hush had settled on the front. They went to collect the padre. It would only take an hour, they said – and that indeed was one of Cook's conditions. The padre refused – there was no shortage of good reasons and I thought Cook was quite wrong to agree anyway.

The men knew of a private, not of Smith's persuasion, Church of England, but a Baptist, who agreed (since he was by profession a minister of religion) to go with them and conduct the service.

They went; Smith was properly, that is to say, deeply (and of course religiously) buried and there were no casualties. There the matter might have rested but for two facts: Smith was popular; the padre was not. There followed a rambling and rumbling debate of which snatches would from time to time float up to my ears. After a week or so I was finally able to put the bits together.

The Captain played cards 'a damn sight too much'. This I had heard before; he was usually the main organizer of the Battalion HQ bridge fours. He never did anything; what he was expected to do was not stated, but the refusal or failure to bury Smith was clearly a point on which the charges could be hung. "The Divisional RC padre was not like that: he jolly well *had* to go." The comparison did not suggest that the RC Chaplain was a nice man – in fact he was unpopular – but that he was under orders and had to obey them. If Gunner Smallman could bury Smith why couldn't the C. of E.? Again, it was not suggested that Smallman was a nice man; he was somewhat unprepossessing, censorious and smug, but for the time being he was almost popular. This debate continued sporadically and now and then bubbled to the surface until the participants themselves faded away.

28

One day on a route march we were approaching the crest of a hill which was decorated by the unusual sight of two horsemen. Even from a distance they seemed to be spectacularly smart; one of them was carrying a lance from which a pennant fluttered. As the head of our column, now a company almost at full strength, neared the crest a commotion of orders broke out – clearly 'some ruddy general'. For the life of me I couldn't think whose army we were supposed to be in. We were all marching at attention and just before it was my turn to give the order, "Eyes right", I saw that the officer we were saluting was General Haig.

I suppose we were all glad, for once, that the order gave an opportunity for a long, hard, legitimate stare. The tramp of marching boots and the faint rustling patter of the lancer pennant in the breeze – that was all. As we marched away we heard the clatter of the horses' hooves and Haig and his escort were gone.

Amongst tank men it was held against Haig that he blamed the hold-up of the advance at Cambrai on the tank which destroyed a bridge by crashing through it. He was not 'good old Haig' as Plumer was 'good old Plumer'. He was too soldierly for one thing. He was suspect, like the rest of the Staff, but not as suspect as the politicians; no one would have said 'good old Lloyd George'.

Nor for that matter would it have occurred to anyone to think, let alone say, 'good old God' or to have any ideas about His Staff. A padre had to be pretty bad to excite any interest whatever. Corporal Smith's 'funeral' soon became one man's obsession and then faded out – just another unfinished story.

Our last Church parade in England was addressed by the Chaplain General to the Forces. His sermon had as its text 'Soldiers be

content with your wages'. "Some of you", he said, "may think this a queer thing for me to talk about when you are about to leave for the Front." Well, yes, we did a bit; I almost began to think the closing hymn would be 'Goodbye Dolly I must leave you, for I'm off to face the foe'.

May drifted into June; June into July. Then, at full strength in men, we drew our full company strength in tanks – twelve. We were once more doing tank training.

The training did not last – no one had any ideas on the subject. What was clear was that in battle tanks drew fire. That we *did* know, but how did one train for that? How were Hauser, Carter and I to discuss training before action?

A special angel committee might say, "One of you had better go into training. Who's for getting killed? Well, no good discussing that; we had better leave it to the luck of the draw. No good bothering about the etceteras."

"Etceteras be damned. You forget the people with the etceteras go on living."

"Well then, odd man out:

Heart ache, belly ache, shell-shock, death,
Head wound, leg off, blinded, death,
Rich man, beggar-man, hero, thief . . . OK?

All got your parts? Now, what about the training? Fall out on the right all those for death. Parade at the padre's tent at 11.30 for Holy Communion and short course in letters to the bereaved. The others will attend the last part for writing to the family of the deceased *after* the action."

"Oughtn't those for life to go to the padre too?"

"Life? Let me see now" – the committee anxiously study the pamphlet of instructions – "Ah, here we are now. Life . . . Life Everlasting . . ."

The officers in unanimous horror, "Oh no! Not that . . ."

Certainly Hauser, Carter and I scouted such an idea though I felt some residual belief adhering rather as egg-shell adheres to the newly hatched chick. Carter had just been awarded the Military Cross. No one had the least idea what for, though no one had the slightest doubt that he deserved it. Hauser had been recommended for the MC 'as usual', and as usual he had not been awarded it. All three of us were now really exempt from the heavy odds of the tank crew stakes

because we were now all section commanders and went into action on foot, outside the tank. In a way this solved our problem for we had all learned to walk and there appeared to be no other qualification. As I discovered later, map-reading remained useful to meet the requirements of the fiction that we were going somewhere.

Where we were going, when we were going and what for, was beginning to be asked just as the need for secrecy had become apparent to all except, according to the army, the Silent Service.

The immediate destination was not secret and all the officers knew it was a devastated village, Berles-aux-Bois, in which by some accident the 'Bois' retained its leaves. The entire battalion moved together for the last time. We knew no one in other companies; we travelled at dusk, detrained at ten-thirty and drove our tanks some three miles from rail-head to Berles-aux-Bois. There we concealed our tanks under some trees and spent the time in polishing them – which was as good a way of preparing to 'draw fire' as any.

A Guards regiment was somewhere near. The sentry over our petrol dump challenged a marauder, was not answered and fired. Our Company Commander, Aitches, who had just been appointed was rightly furious.

"Don't you realize, you damned fool, that you might have set the petrol dump on fire?"

"Well sir, my orders were to keep watch and challenge anyone. If they didn't reply I was to shoot."

Of course he was quite right. We had forgotten all that peacetime nonsense. No one had fired a rifle since we had first gone into action; no one had considered them as anything but a part of the ritual of going into battle.

"Did you hit anyone? My God, I hope you didn't. You're jolly lucky to have missed hitting the dump."

Sergeant-Major Cannon replied for our now terrified sentry. "Yes sir; he wounded Guardsman X in the leg."

"Did you do it on purpose?" asked Aitches with ashy lips.

"Yes sir", replied the sentry, "as near as I could aim at where I heard the man. I thought it might be an enemy."

The naïvety of the man created a stir; we had not yet reached the stage of connecting war with sentry duties and enemies – but we *did* know something about 'drawing fire'. There was nothing for it but to pass the ghastly news to the Guards Battalion. And though we were

now fearful of the consequences there did seem to be some sense, in an old-fashioned way, about the sentry's behaviour.

"Yes, but this chap wasn't an enemy. It's a damn serious thing to shoot one of our privates."

"For that matter", said Carter, "it's a damn serious thing to steal Tank Corps petrol."

So it was; and ultimately that view prevailed. The Guards had much less reverence for guardsmen than we had. They tried him and in addition to his flesh wound he received a stiff sentence – they probably managed to get him for a 'self-inflicted wound'.

29

A less easily assimilated experience of a Guard's battalion was my visit to co-ordinate operations with them in case of attack either by us or the enemy.

I was shown into the dug-out which was their headquarters in the part of the line they held. The Colonel, Adjutant and various orderlies were present and busy. A junior officer asked me my business and I told him briefly, but from Colonel and Adjutant I could get no attention though I had come at the time appointed for my appearance. As time passed I began to feel neglected, then nettled. I whispered to the junior officer who broke into the conversation between Colonel and Adjutant to say I was going. Both bade me good-morning in the politest possible indication of utter indifference. I was alarmed, thinking they did not know why I was there.

I expostulated, 'But sir, I haven't co-ordinated tank plans with yours."

"My good man", said the Colonel with astringent kindliness, "We shall take and hold *any* position, tanks or no tanks. Good morning."

'Good morning', I had to understand, was an order. Exasperated, intimidated and humiliated all at once, I cleared out. As I proceeded back up a dried mud track I became aware that howitzer shells, five-nines, were bursting along the track; then that they were suspiciously close. I was still annoyed with the Guards. What made it more annoying was that the Colonel's remark was almost certainly a statement of the obvious. I had seen them sweep up at Cambrai, like a very efficient housemaid tidying up warring children and putting them back, like their toys, into their proper boxes. I knew, and had even seen a little on our way up to Messines, what happened when they, with both flanks exposed, stood for three

days before Hazebrouck and resisted any attempt by the enemy to tidy *them* up. It was no good being indignant; they were magnificent, blast them!

In the meantime it looked as if *I* would soon be tidied up. If I had not had any attention at the Guards Battalion HQ I was having it in full measure now. Someone, probably yawning his head off with boredom, was passing away the idle hour by sniping me with his howitzer. The previous 'bracket' should have given him the exact range as I was about equidistant between the bursts, so at any moment now I could expect the packet right on target – me. I scurried into a scrap of disused trench and flattened out as I heard them coming – three shells together. This was personal attention with a vengeance.

It was a good shot; chunks of the trench fell on me. If only I had had field glasses I might have been able to pick out the observation post responsible. I was sure he would be watching his shooting through *his* field glasses so I got out sweating – it was a very hot day and flattening out and getting up is a hot occupation. I wondered if the Boche gunner had a cool beer by his side. Turning towards the line I stood up and, hoping he was watching, cocked a snook at him. But if he was using his glasses he would also see that I was sweating with fear – I felt he wouldn't even need glasses to see that so . . . I got a move on. I was *not* going to run. I had only another hundred yards to go before the path reached the wood which would shelter me from sight. On the other hand the intersection of path and wood gave him a perfect map reference on which to register his guns as I approached. I could not run in any case; there was nowhere to run to. It was the cornered rat being clubbed to death all over again. Nothing happened. At the edge I stopped and before diving into the wood I pulled out my handkerchief and waved it; perhaps he could see my good-bye.

Shaken and very ruffled I went in to Aitches. Cook and Carter were there. "Well, what have you arranged?" We poured over the map together.

"Well", I said, "this is their position." I traced it with a shaky finger.

"Yes, we know that."

"They are going to hold it."

"Yes. Where are our tanks to be?"

I traced a wavy line behind the Guards position. "Alternatively", I drew another wavy line, "we can if we prefer it, line up here in front of their position."

"In front?" said Aitches in astonishment. "Where are the Guards going to be?"

"Same place as before – they are going to hold it." Carter was grinning.

"Now", said Aitches, "if the Guards attack the sugar factory here", he pointed with his thumb, "that's supposed to be the direction of the divisional advance, where do they want us?" I pointed to our village. "Don't be a fool!" he said, "that is where we are now."

"I know; that is where they want us. Or somewhere a damn sight warmer."

"And what about the sugar factory?"

"They will take it."

"Is that what they said?"

"Not – quite", I admitted, "but that was the gist of it."

'That's no good at all Bion – you'll have to go back and fix it up properly."

"*You* try fixing things up properly with the Guards. They don't like tanks mucking about on their battlefields – nobody's."

I was spared further argument the next day because I had to go to a Court of Inquiry into the accidental death of a civilian. By that time the discussion with the Guards had been referred to the Brigade where as far as I know it died out.

I reported to the President of the Board, Lord Watchet. "I really shouldn't be the President. There must be some mistake – according to these papers it is my accident." He saw my ribbon. "That's very nice", he said, indicating the DSO. "Where d'ye get it?" I told him. He wagged his finger at me. "You be careful my lad. Once you get one of those things they collect others. As I always tell my son John, if you ever meet a man with more than two rows of ribbons you can be tolerably sure he's a waster." This was a novel view to me especially as it came from a regular soldier whose family had always been military. I said I thought it was unlikely I should run the risk of one row, let alone two. "Don't you believe it. Look at me."

I did. The first ribbon was a dark red affair. And it was in the right place. "When I got the first I thought I was safe, but if I get another I shall have joined the rogues' gallery myself."

He turned to the other officer who with me composed the Court. "This is damn silly. I can tell you just what happened. I was in the back of the car when Jenks, my driver, was crawling through this village – not a yard more than five miles an hour – when I saw this old crone standing on the kerb. As we came up to her she stepped smartly off the kerb to cross the road to the undertaker's opposite. I suppose she was going to have her coffin tried on and may have been a bit preoccupied. Anyhow, she fell down and broke her hip. When she died about a week later it turned out that she was worth millions of francs, the sole financial support of her son and grandsons, and now great-grandsons who aren't a day older than thirty and therefore depend on her. So they want compensation so they can all carry on till they get over their teething troubles and start earning for themselves. Let's go and get a drink. They'll have to reconvene the Court. I can't think what they are up to."

It was a beautiful day and a pleasant change from polishing tanks. Lord Watchet followed up his views about decorations and their dangers with comments on the 'hardships' of the Navy who hadn't any fighting to do and had to invent their exploits. "Not that they are a bad lot. I always liked their Grace – bang on the table and say, 'Thank God!' – except when the padre's there; then of course it has to be a long-winded affair. Why do they always think God prefers long-windedness? Or even Latin? Or both? What's wrong with 'Thank God'?"

Back with my section I found that two eminent war artists had been painting the tanks as they appeared concealed beneath the foliage of the trees. They were indeed so eminent that they assumed a proprietary dictatorial right over the task.

"Now mind young fella, if you move those tanks you must put them back in *exactly* the same position – exactly mind you!"

It was refreshing to find that getting the war into perspective meant for these two eminences the getting of perspective precisely into their pictures. "I don't think I care for your composition" was countered by "Well, I don't see why you think *your* composition is an improvement". They did not talk much to each other, and not at all to us beyond impressing upon me the vital need for tanks to be at the proper place at the proper time – to get painted.

The next night we moved, never to return. "I hope it didn't spoil the picture", said one of the gunners. Everything was of tremendous

importance: I felt I had this impressed on me so incessantly that it would be impossible ever to forget it. "Mind you put those tanks back – if you *must* move them – exactly in the same place."

"Mind", said Carter, "*absolute* secrecy. Tonight at rail-head at ten fifteen. What arrangements have you made about disguising the tank tracks so they cannot possibly show in air photos?"

I knew the answer to this; I had thought of it at Cambrai. "We have a large harrow affair towed by the last tank. On it we have all our kit to weigh it down. This will destroy all the tracks made by the whole section."

"My God, that's a good ideal Do you mind if I pass it on to Aitches? It should be passed on to Battalion."

"It's a battalion show then? Whole of one Corps?"

"It's a damn sight more than that – I can tell you *that* now. But absolute secrecy!"

"Tell Battalion; or Tank Corps HQ for all I care. But get a decoration for it."

"Decorations are not for the likes of reconnaissance officers. I shouldn't be too keen on winning your DSO either if I were you."

30

The scheme of track obliteration worked well. Reconnaissance planes reported next day that no tracks were visible. Our crews were not worn out by wearisome and inefficient spade work through hours of darkness.

'Taisez-vous! Mefiez-vous! Les oreilles ennemies vous écoutent!' The legend on the platform at Étaples was the French injunction to their civilian population – absolute secrecy! But absolute! . . . The din of the silence seemed to swell into a row. Who the hell cared anyway? We had heard it all before. The sky was cloudy and overcast. Enemy planes must have seen it – whatever *it* was.

No, only one plane had been over and that had been shot down. Our planes had orders to shoot down any enemy plane – without fail. Absolutely without fail.

So they got it? No, it was fetched down by AA fire.

It was too tiring even to bother to call the man who told us that a liar.

It was August; since it was a Great British Offensive it seemed reasonable to suppose it would rain like hell. So it was not altogether implausible that the cloud screen was so thick that air observation was difficult. But, only one enemy plane over! And that shot down by the gunners! If it weren't so bloody silly one might even laugh.

We could see we were at a very big marshalling yard. AMIENS it said. It was the morning of August 6th. "Tell one of your officers to get your tanks off; you are to take cover at once. The guides are there. We" – it was Cook speaking – "must go to Brigade HQ at once for the conference."

It was a large tent, full of officers; they were all Tank Corps. What-

ever kind of show required the whole Tank Corps in support? "They must be arranging to end the war", said Hauser sarcastically.

Silence fell on us. The General was speaking. "On your left, extending as far as Villers Bretonneux, will be the Australian Corps."

Christ! Those bastards! We did not love the Australians. There had been a local attack, which was a failure, in which tanks had taken an even worse beating than usual because the Australians had gone too far and too fast without mopping up. Uncleared-up anti-tank guns had therefore arisen behind them and destroyed the tanks.

"Those bloody tanks", said the Australians. "Too slow, too damned cowardly to keep up. We had broken right through! Where were the tanks? Nowhere – as usual!"

As I say, we did not love each other. For us their magnificent indiscipline was just indiscipline, paid for in blood – Tank Corps blood.

The General continued: "Extending from the right flank of the Australian Corps to the Amiens–Roye Road will be the 10th Southland Division and the Canadian Corps. The Southland Division will leap-frog through the Canadians. The 5th Tank Battalion will have its right flank over the Amiens–Roye Road and will be there supporting the Nancy Division, the 11th."

Australians, Canadians and the Corps de Fer: it sounded as if somebody meant business.

"The 5th Battalion will continue to advance" – just like Cambrai, German gunners permitting? – "and will then support the Canadian Corps for the rest of the advance."

The 'lecture' went on; it was not interesting, not novel. The tent was hot, but we listened. The river Luce ran across and parallel to the 5th Battalion front; there was not much water in it. In fact it was not an obstacle; 5th Battalion would find out if it was swampy. In any case there was a brick bridge across it and the 5th would cross by that. The bridge of course was not standing – it had been blown to bits when our line was stabilized at the end of the March 31st show. Still, the rubble might stiffen it up a bit. It would be much safer than anywhere else. Though of course the enemy would shell it . . . and so forth. He droned on.

"The 1st Battalion will . . ." I could relax, go to sleep even? Better not. "At Villers Bretonneux . . . 1st, 4th 5th, 7th . . ." Obviously a big show. At last. "Any questions? Right. Now company and section commanders will be briefed. Carry on."

We broke into small groups. The river Luce . . . that is what I wanted to know about. The ground was like Cambrai – beautiful except for the river Luce.

"Any resemblance to the Steenbeck?" I asked. It looked like it on the map; it squiggled about a bit.

"God no!" said the briefing officer. "It's hardly a trickle."

"That is exactly like the Steenbeck."

"My dear chap, this place is as dry as a bone. Not even a Grand Ravine to have nightmares about. Forget it! Anyhow, the Steenbeck's at Ypres."

"So long as they keep it there I don't mind", said Carter. "I hope they will keep an eye on it."

"Somebody must go and reconnoitre it", said the Staff officer. "I shall be going. What about you?" He turned to me and I agreed. I would as soon know the worst and know it myself as depend on someone else. "There's no time to spare. Will you be ready at 12.15? Right. Meet here."

We finished our company and section briefings and map scrutinies. We could think of nothing to say – but still I said it to Carter.

"My God, I hate this. It puts the wind up me."

He turned to me angrily. "Why the hell do you keep on talking about it then?"

"I don't. And aren't you?"

"Of course. I'm scared out of my wits. I'm not daft – you'd have to be daft or a nit-wit *not* to be scared. But why talk?"

I was angry and felt no better for feeling he was right. I went off in a huff and discovered that the officer with whom I was going to reconnoitre was a man well known to almost any regular soldier for his war exploits.

He had been trained from his boyhood days in a German public school to serve in the British Secret Service. His endowment of hatred had been carefully but unwittingly nourished by his school mates. He spoke German so faultlessly that he was reputed to have commanded a German regiment in the Line for a week before he 'deserted' back to the British lines. He was said to have been dropped behind the German lines by British planes when such a feat was unheard of – except on the occasions when it was linked with his name. As I have already said, I was not feeling brave although for the moment I had a meretricious courage through being cross.

We looked at the Luce; it seemed dry. We poked it with a stick; it seemed damp. I fell between some large stones; my feet had become wet. "Let's lie out here for a bit and see if we can find out anything." It was a beautiful, clear and hot afternoon. But I was shivering – only partly through fatigue. I did not feel aware of fear, but I was excited.

I started to take compass bearings as my way of keeping fear at bay and giving myself something to do; I hoped it looked military. I took bearings of the bridge in relation to the mud track by which we were to approach. I took bearings from the point ten yards beyond the Luce bridge where we were to swing left and take up our battle positions. My companion was very patient. I was grateful to him for not asking why I was engaged on so idiotic a procedure. When I began to take bearings for the rest of the battalion whose right hand company was A Company on our left, he drew the line at further topological enthusiasm.

We crawled out between two British outpost positions. It was quiet, hot and very peaceful. My companion kept using his binoculars. I tried to think of ways of dissuading him from crawling further. At last he thought he had found out enough.

We started back. "You must have got the position of the river Luce mapped out with an exactitude never before achieved." He didn't seem to be trying out his sarcasm on me. Suddenly remembering how glad I had been to know the direction of our front line trench at Chinese Wall I said, lying, "I often find it useful to know some bearings."

31

On my return the company, to my surprise, were very busy. I reported to Aitches; he said a message had come through that zero was the next morning, 8 o'clock, August 8th.

I was met by Asser, a spectacled, cheerful lad who had joined us a week earlier. I suppose he reminded me of what I and my friends had been like in England. He was about a year younger than I. I had told him to act as second in command to me and to take over if I was killed.

It was a stupid appointment. The most senior of my tank commanders who should have had the job by automatic succession was Corkran. He was pasty-faced, rather like Osprey in appearance, but with even less stamina. I had put O'Toole in his tank because I thought the crew needed a good man to strengthen it to make up for its officer.

After him came Robins, an ex-infantryman with a Military Medal. I thought he, though a very nice fellow and much superior to Corkran, was curiously dependent. Had I been more experienced I would have given the job to Greene; he lacked action experience, but was tough; he looked robust. He was not liked by any of the officers and men, but I think he, and not Asser, should have had the job. They were the same age. Greene came from a tough background and showed it. He was 'what the army is coming to', and those who didn't like what the army was coming to would not like him.

Asser was, despite his studious appearance, fiery. If it had not been out of date by that time to be aware of patriotism one would have said it burned in him with a pure flame. A brother, whom he adored, and a father who was an even greater though more roman-

tically shadowy figure, had both been killed in action, his father in late 1914.

He was bubbling with cheerful excitement. He told me the whole section was ready, ammunition all sized, engines and guns tuned up to perfection. He was proud and happy. Had I ever felt like it? I couldn't believe it. Greene I might have resembled, but Asser – never!

I congratulated him and advised him to go and get some sleep if he could. I was sure he would not be able to sleep, but I did not want him near when I went to see Corkran and his crew. Corkran was glum and sore at having been passed over; it was partly because I felt he was that kind of man that I did not want him. Osprey and Corkran had been alike in this; they did not seem able to feel with their men and yet retain their awareness that although they were men like their men, they were paid to be gods, very minor gods perhaps, but gods.

Osprey had faded away; there was a path leading away from the battlefield which was well-worn but soon became lost as streams are lost in dry land. Osprey had been sent back to administer the remains of the company, the 'administrative details', a job for which an officer was necessary, but for which an officer could not be spared. My driver Allen found the same facility available for the non-commissioned ranks; he had had to go on light duty after Cambrai. From that point of vantage he made himself useful as a tank driving instructor to a school for 'refresher' courses in driving. With great difficulty we got him back to the battalion. But back with us his driving capacity seemed to deteriorate. He was too slow, too conscientious, too careful; at the same time the driving school did not hesitate to deplore the loss of a man who was too good to be wasted on fighting tanks. His instruction was too good and his manner too amiable to be lost from a job in which some tact, especially with senior officers, was a sine qua non. The last point was decisive; I had to admit that tact was lost on the Germans. Bagshaw, our original section commander, was the first of the officers I knew intimately to seep away in this discreet and tactful way. They were not robust enough to get shell-shock; they got nothing at all.

After Messines a vacancy had occurred for a Company Sergeant-Major. O'Toole and a Sergeant Cannon from A Company were candidates for the post. Cannon was a smart – to my mind too smart – little man. O'Toole with his red face, hideous flapping ears and ungainly

physique had everything but his looks to commend him. He was a disciplinarian of whom they made fun – to his knowledge – but they did not dare to disobey. He had compassion too as he showed when he had to deal with my gunner Allen. "I don't know what's come over him since Cambrai sir. He has a silly grin. Sometimes I think I'll run him in for 'dumb insolence', but it isn't really that sir. I told him to report sick but he isn't sick." I saw Allen; it was as O'Toole said. He did not talk but every so often a private smirk would flicker across his pasty pudding face. He had never made a lively impact but this was new; he was out of this world.

Cannon, to my sorrow and annoyance, got the job. I had told O'Toole I was sorry but could say no more without compromising Cannon, now our Company Sergeant-Major. I knew he was bitterly hurt by his rejection. I went to find him.

"Well Sergeant, how is the crew? You have still got Gunner Hayler of our original crew I see. Have they shaken down well now do you think?"

He was ill at ease and so was I. He made conventional replies and then said, "Do you mind if I say something privately sir?"

"Go ahead", but I had come to see him because I thought he wanted to say something privately, although I could not have guessed what.

"Sir, I don't want anything more. I don't mean I want to be invalided out – no shell-shock for me. But this time sir, I feel I want six feet of earth and nothing else. I know it's got to happen; I feel it in my bones sir. Will you write to my people sir?"

I told him that of course I would but I did not think there was any need to think of that. I am amazed now that even allowing for my not yet being twenty-one I could say anything so silly. Both of us had had far more than our ration of escapes; both knew it.

"I'm still very sorry you didn't get the CSM job. After this show I'll ask the Colonel if *he* can't get you transferred."

"It's not that sir. I don't want a transfer. But I mustn't keep you now sir. Thank you very much for letting me talk to you sir." He saluted and went off.

He was a kind man, however uncouth his exterior. His defiant assertions – "I'm an orphan!" – were flung out, at least when he was new to the battalion, as if they were a private banner.

I went off to lie on the ground and get some sleep. The ground was hard, but I was tired. So I slept and I had a terrible dream. I awoke just as I was about to go into battle; it was unnerving to find that I was.

The dream was grey, shapeless; horror and dread gripped me. I could not cry out, just as now, many years later, I can find no words. Then I had no words to find; I was awake to the relatively benign terrors of real war. Yet for a moment I wished it was only a dream. In the dream I must have wished it was only a war.

I had to hurry for I had two jobs to do. One was to 'repair' the bridge, but before that I had to visit the HQ of the First French Division and have a word with some officers on the staff of the Nancy Division who were going to meet me there after the close of their conference at Army HQ. I told Sergeant Noyes to meet me at the bridge over the Luce with six men, picks and shovels and full battle order at 5.30 when I judged there would still be ample light for the job but not so much as to make our presence conspicuous to the enemy observers.

Our position was on a high plateau, well wooded so the tanks had ample cover. From this there sloped down the mud track leading to the Luce crossing. The full distance was a couple of miles but I could point out almost the whole journey to Noyes from where we stood. I told Hauser I was off and hurried, hurried with the dread of the dream chasing me, sometimes walking by my side in the way figures at Ypres hurried along the duckboards beyond the canal.

32

French HQ was busy. The conference had finished and I found my officers discussing it in informal groups. They looked worn and anxious but showed no trace of the defeatism which many have professed to have seen since the news of the mutinies of 1918 became common knowledge. A junior officer came up to ask my business though it was clear he had been forewarned and guessed why I was there. I replied in dregs of sixth-form French. He spoke to his Major, a few hurried phrases. The Major kept looking in my direction; he did not look pleased. When I approached him it was evident that he had been led to expect a French-speaking officer; he satisfied himself at once that that was not what he had got. He was angry but polite, terminated his interview and went back to business.

I stood alone amongst these tense men. I noticed that one of them was wearing the Medaille Militaire and was without his right arm. As I waited, at a loss to know what to do, it began to occur to me that I had been sent on the strength of my name. This I found to be the case when a French Intelligence Officer came to speak to me. Clearly he did not want to blame me for what I could not help, but it was evident that he thought French was taught in our schools and that the army staff would not send a 'French-speaking officer' without first finding out if he could speak French.

By this time I too felt that I might have been asked; I did not like being the evidence for one more example of the incurable frivolity of the English. With aid of pencil and paper I made clear to him and a French infantryman what my section, the right of the British line as far as Tanks were concerned, were meaning to do and the precise hours at which we meant to do it. This I knew by heart; it was the bare bones of the operation orders covering the interval

between zero hour and our rejoining the Fourth British Army – the Canadian Corps.

My impossible, ever-so-funny 'parlez-vous' sixth-form French meeting his, presumably, 'baccalaureate' English, was not a suitably reassuring back-cloth for a serious dialogue. I did not feel frivolous; I felt in every possible way incompetent. We declared ourselves satisfied with the result of our laborious stammering match, saluted each other and parted.

At the river Luce I met my men. I told them what to do to fill in the bed of the stream with rubble and fascines so the tanks would not sink. They had to work hard and fast because the entire battalion of tanks had to cross the Luce at this point without fail to reach their starting points. If they got bogged down in a swamp where the enemy gunners would have them helpless, concentrated like dinosaurs in a prehistoric catastrophe, the infantry of two whole army corps, one French, one British, would be left without armour.

I sat conspicuously on the mound of bricks that marked the spot where the parapet of the bridge had once been. The men sweated and worked in the bed below. I did this because I knew that the enemy were said to shell this crossing every day and it would not do to leave my men there while I took up a safe position elsewhere. I sat motionless, but "Hurry, hurry, hurry . . ." I screamed noiselessly, tense and sweating within myself. Sometimes I tried to get relief by jumping into the rubble below to help with some unusually recalcitrant chunk of masonry. My watch hand had crept to six. This was the time the gunners were reported to open fire on the bridge each day; I knew that they were creatures of habit. I walked a few yards from the bridge. If only they would start while I was away I came and sat down again and lit my pipe.

It was a beautiful evening, calm and glowing. The trees on the plateau above us were untroubled, the great clusters of leaves drooped heavily on the branches.

The men's picks, the scraping of shovels, my breathing seemed to be all. One large lump of masonry on which my tanks might have been wrecked remained. I put the whole party onto trying to roll this away. Together we were shifting it. As I sweated and strained with them – one of my intervals of relief – I listened intently for the sound of a distant gun and the following rushing crescendo of the first shell of the evening 'strafe'. The rock rolled over slightly. Once more – "one

good shove" – and it toppled out of harm's way. "Fine", I said as calmly as I could, "knock off."

"And for Christ's sake hurry up", I added as I realized that they were not showing any urgency.

It was 9.30 – when the enemy usually terminated their nightly strafe. I did not let the men have a rest till we were at least half a mile away. There they could fall out for a break and a smoke.

As I say, it was a fine evening. Even the heavy clouds which for three days had screened our army's preparations, had cleared away. It was like the Norfolk Broads when the wind drops at evening after a day of fine sailing.

Carter came down the mud track and joined me. "OK?" he asked. "OK", I replied. I sent Sergeant Noyes and the men to rejoin their sections. "And you can take off your battle order as far as I am concerned. You've done a fine job."

Left to ourselves Carter and I went to look at the bridge. "No shelling?" "Not a whisper." Still, there was no point in sitting on a spot which could erupt at any moment. We moved back to the mud track and waited.

At 9.50 Handley Page bombers were to start flying along the front; the noise of their engine's was to cloak the roar of tank engines so the enemy would not become suspicious. Soon we heard the characteristic pulsating drone.

"Not bad. If you had never heard a tank engine and were a bit hard of hearing you might, if you were a bit drunk, just possibly think a tank engine was a Handley Page bomber." I agreed. Just then from two miles away we heard the roar of the first tank engine starting up.

"On second thoughts", I said, "nobody could possibly mistake that row for anything at all. It's just a 174-h.p. Ricardo Tank engine." "So it is", said Carter bitterly.

The tanks, after the first one, helped to screen each other. As each engine started, the driver throttled down to slow speed so that the roar soon became a diffuse murmur, and the murmur became an undifferentiated noise like traffic on the roads; it was just possible to believe that the enemy could be deceived.

Perhaps this is what some German officer reported – "There seemed a very considerable increase in road traffic behind the enemy lines."

Carter, to pass the time, spread out his map. "There on your left will be the Amiens–Roye road stretching dead straight, unmistakably, for mile after mile. It is lined with poplars so you can see its direction and check your own by it." I had seen it myself even when I was lying on the ground taking a worm's eye view of the front. "Amiens–Roye road – I suppose there are poplars lining it still?"

"You just said so! Do get it out of your head that all battlefields are the same as Ypres!"

"What has happened to those ruddy tanks? They should have been here years ago". Carter looked at his watch. I hadn't seen him so jittery before. "Oh well, I suppose not. They don't seem to be making such a terrible row as they were. Still, it's about time they showed up."

So it was; and so they did. The first of the huge shapes came out of the blackness, in low gear, hardly moving, so that the idling engines could easily propel the tank forward without strain. They were exactly to time. The intense relief . . . Something made us both look back to the bridge over the Luce. It had gone; utterly and absolutely vanished behind a dense wall of fog.

33

No one had mentioned fog. There could not be a fog; the river, the banks, the low ground, all were as dry as a bone. I myself had seen it. Why, oh why, had I not reported back from the reconnaissance that there was danger of fog? I had cursed the fools who acted as if forty tons of steel could float on Ypres mud. Yet here was I . . .

I could see the report: "An experienced Tank Corps officer had been sent forward to examine and report on the suitability of the terrain for tanks. Unfortunately he thought of absolutely everything and even noticed that there was no water in the river bed, but still failed to see the obvious point that since the water had abandoned the river it must have taken to the air." There it was – thick, solid, impenetrable.

"Now what?" said Carter. I heard my own voice talking. "Let's go and have a look." We walked down and came to the wall. The next step and we were trying to see our hands. At arm's length they were out of sight.

The first tank had stopped with engine throbbing. There was the whine of a shell and the burst – a five-nine. Then more. I knew it was all up; they must have known all the time. Scared out of my wits I pulled out my lucky charm, the cabalistic figures, supposedly compass bearings, actually a record of my early afternoon fear. A torch made them just readable. I would pretend they were compass bearings, seriously taken for the express purpose of leading tanks.

Carter had some white tape. Why had I not put it down in the afternoon? Of course, I had forgotten, we could not show tapes the enemy might discover and use to make his own conjecture.

Back with the first tank I told him to stay halted and lend me three men. Carter had gone to Brigade to report the bad news at once. Another tank arrived; the 'pile-up' had started. I could have

murdered the commander when he said in a fatuous, carefree voice, "What's up?"

With the aid of the three men I translated the figures into a taped pattern on the ground. It led across the rubble that had been the bridge. It turned sharp left; it led straight, parallel to the Divisional front, at right angles to our line of advance. Then 'parallel with the Amiens–Roye road, lined with poplars, straight as a die, as far as the eye could see'.

I told the first tank to come on. Of course the tape would be chewed to bits. What would the second tank do? I did not know. I did not care. "Follow-my-leader", I said.

When our company was in position I went back to my section. I checked our company position by compass. Lumps of steel, each weighing forty tons, were disposed in a line with the correct distance in yards between them in accordance with the scheme laid down in battle orders so that the whole infantry attack was supported with tanks in correct proportion to infantry. The only problem was what the figures of compass bearing had to do with direction on the ground. I did not know what the magnetic lumps of steel had to do with the compass bearings.

Cook came up. "Ah, *there* you are". "Yes, where are you?" I asked. "It is thick", he said. "You are sure you've got it correct?" he added as if a possible danger had just occurred to him.

Aitches arrived. "Well, so long. I must be getting to Advanced Company HQ. It's nearly time." He walked off – or was he running? It must have been the mist that had swallowed him so fast. It was half a mile to Advanced HQ. According to me he had four hours in which to get there. Of course, it was foggy.

A Company appeared and took their position from us. No one had taken compass bearings. I wondered how I had got into such a mess. Had I been ordered to reconnoitre the position? The tanks for one army corps were now relying for position and direction on . . . God knows what. I had not dreamed that my compass bearings would be taken seriously by me, let alone by Corps troops.

I found Hauser. On one of his tanks was a dixie fixed to the exhaust so that boiling water was available for his shave. He was now scraping away.

"Do you always shave before action?"

He looked at me in surprise. "Of course. Why not?"

"Oh", I said, "I don't know why not; only it just hadn't occurred to me."

"Hadn't occurred to you? Why, what do you suppose all these parades, kit inspections and stuff have been about then? I always have boiling water kept ready."

I told him how worried I was about the fog; he agreed that it was very thick. I said I thought we might lose direction; he agreed that he thought it very likely. I said I was afraid we might end up finding ourselves in the river Luce. "Anyway, it won't matter if we do. Didn't you say it had no water in it?"

I felt it was time I got back to my section. A thought suddenly occurred to Hauser. He shouted it after my disappearance. "By the way, what bloody fool led us into these positions?"

"Don't know; we just came I suppose." I did not feel up to discussing the matter just then.

The fog was worse than ever. It came in great billowing masses that swirled around one's face and bandaged one's eyes and choked one's lungs. Here and there men were coughing and trying to stifle their coughs. The silence was uncanny. Could these coughs come from German sentries? I propped myself up against Corkran's tank. At least I did not have to be inside the cursed thing.

The brigade Intelligence Officer had said there were no less than four heavy guns – 9.2's – in the corner of the wood opposite us. Such guns were useless when fired by us; they made colossal craters where the high explosive shell plunged into the ground. Then the enemy put barbed wire round the top and a couple of machine-guns inside, and the British advance would be held up for days by this ready-made fortress presented by our gunners to our foes. But now? We were going to use six 12inch howitzers to concentrate on that small patch. An infantryman had told me, "The joke about an artillery duel is that they don't fire at each other – they fire at us." This time apparently these monsters were to fire at each other.

The infantry were to give the wood a wide berth because of this bombardment which was to destroy not the big guns, but small anti-tank guns which in turn were believed to be there to protect the machine-guns. It was the job of two of my tanks, Asser's, and Corkran's against which I was leaning, to enter that wood at zero plus twenty minutes, by which time our guns would have ceased fire and all enemy guns would have been silenced. To deal with the

machine-guns was thus the function of these two tanks. But why would not the smallest, least significant guns have been silenced by all this concentration of fire? The dinosaurs of the artillery would have destroyed themselves – the 9 inch because they were not so powerful as the monstrous 12 inch howitzers; the 12 inch howitzers because their own enormity and power destroyed them, made them immobile and useless. The machine-guns survived because the soft and feeble slaves serving them contained something even softer and feebler, the human brain, which was liable to ooze out of the back of the skull if that skull were deliberately perforated by yet another gun held by an even more vulnerable and feeble animal who had had enough soft human brain to imitate his ancestors and climb up a tree. So the machine-gunners, having had the wit to emulate their ancestors and live in holes in the ground, would emerge from these holes dug deeper and yet deeper when the gunners had done their dinosaur-like worst, and shoot the infantry.

Other machine-gunners, drawing on their brains, particularly the simian, tool-making and using qualities, evolved a machine-gun with a tougher skull – a tank. What happened then I – as I leant against the one containing Corkran, Hayler, O'Toole and Forman – could not imagine, then or for many years afterwards, because I was interrupted by fear, fear which became suddenly acute as the engine roared into life and at once settled into a gentle purr.

34

Sooner or later my parents would be bound to have the telegram announcing my death; the war had only to go on long enough. Already I had exhausted my quota of chances of survival. My mother and father, particularly my mother . . . There was no time and this was no place in which to pursue such thoughts. The soft, caressing mist, the great pall of blackness which had now begun to grey with the approaching dawn, was matched by the silence turning to the pulsating throb of the engines along the front. I watched the minute hand motionless, creeping, rushing headlong to zero hour.

The two men who were to be with me as runners, the Sweeting brothers, and I lifted our eyes from our hatches to where behind us were the heights of the plateau from which we had descended to the Luce. The great wall of fog was suddenly illuminated and given shape by the stabbing white flashes of our guns. For a time it was soundless like summer lightning; then the shrill, demented screaming air above and the roar of the barrage. We turned to our front; the tanks had gone and we were three men alone.

We hurried, the fast, loping Ypres walk, but on firm ground, not duckboards. It was almost a run, as if we were going somewhere. We were not; we were only getting away, as far as we could and as fast, from the ground on which we stood. I had an idea that we could somehow escape the zone of the enemy's counter-barrage. What a time he took! What had happened to him?

Then it came. It was exhilarating, like my walk along the trench top at Messines. Two of us went on. "My brother!" he screamed above the din. "Come on!" What the hell had happened to him? Lost in the fog? Stopped to do up his bootlaces? His disappearance was complete.

We couldn't 'come on'. There was a shell-hole apparently deep enough to hold both and into this we stumbled and fell, keeping our heads down as close to the earth as we could. There I tried to think. I had two hours in which to reach the rallying point where I was to meet Asser and Corkran. A quarter of an hour later I was to meet the other two tanks commanded by Greene and Robertson. This place seemed to afford immediate shelter – for all I knew as good a place as any other in which to spend my time till I was due at the rallying point.

In this supposition I was entirely wrong; it was based on the experience of Ypres where any shell-hole could be regarded as good as any other. As Carter had said, this was not Ypres and my lack of experience and sheer terror of moving once I had got into the shell-hole led to the most dangerous solution I could have chosen. The shell-fire was intense; lying there in the dark I supposed it to be universal as it would have been in any of the battles I had so far experienced.

Gradually I tried to get my head up enough to form some idea of where I was. On one of these occasions the fog and shell-fire momentarily cleared sufficiently to see away in the distance what I thought were the poplars of the Amiens–Roye road – running straight as a die into the distance. I could scarcely have believed that the sight of the road would bring so much relief. It was almost immediately destroyed; the road, now completely hidden from sight, was in an entirely wrong direction.

I could not understand it; I was too dazed by the shell-fire. Worse still, every lucid moment offered me only one explanation, and that one too terrible to entertain. With my head jammed to the earth I gradually worried it out.

The trees showed that Sweeting and I were walking parallel to the front, not towards the enemy. I tried to loosen my compass. As far as I could tell we had kept the same direction as the tanks. But the tanks, our whole battalion, had taken direction from this same compass.

Sweeting was trying to say something. He looked horribly anxious, almost ill. "What?" I shouted, putting my ear to his mouth to catch his reply.

"Sir! Sir, why can't I cough?"

What a question! What a time . . . I looked at his chest. His tunic was torn. No, it was not his tunic; the left side of his chest was missing. He tried to look. I stopped him. I found his field dressing and

pretended to fix it across the gap. And then he saw, under his left arm. . . . He sank back as if relieved, then started on a new tack.

"Mother, Mother, Mother. . . ." Well, thank God for his damned mother. Now at least I could have some peace and pay attention to the shell-fire. I pressed myself as low into the shell-hole as I could.

If the Amiens–Roye road was behind us the tanks would be enfilading the French advance, and the Canadian Corps would be without armoured support – that is assuming that tanks were any damned good anyway.

Sweeting was trying to sit up. "For Christ's sake . . . try not to be a damned fool man! Lie down blast you!" My anger must have impressed him even if he couldn't hear. I couldn't hear either but I could see his lips moving.

"Mother . . . Mother . . . Mother . . ." Then he saw me looking. "Why can't I cough sir?"

I could not stand it. Those tanks – perhaps they were enfilading the Canadian Corps? – the French First Army without support looking for that joke Englishman who understood French? I began to whimper.

"Sweeting, *please* Sweeting . . . please, please *shut up*." He shut up. I knew he would start again. I caught a glimpse of the poplars, waving. There must be a strong wind. Why did it not blow the fog away?

"Why can't I cough sir?"

Why can't you cough it away? Why can't . . . I began to vomit but I had nothing to vomit.

"Mother . . . Mother . . . Mother", he was muttering. How then could I hear him? I looked up. The shelling had stopped. The sun was shining. The fog, the night, had gone.

The Amiens–Roye road had resumed its proper place on our left. We were in a shell hole at the edge of a cart track and the track was edged on the other side by tall grasses, not the poplars of the Amiens–Roye road.

I was not relieved. "God damn it God! That was not funny." Utterly exhausted, I said "Sweeting, I'm very sorry. There will be some bearers shortly. They will take you to the casualty clearing station. You've got a Blighty."

He was too far gone to call me a liar. His eyes were glazed over. Enough life flickered into them at my words for him to say, "You will

write to my mother? You *will* write sir, won't you?" He was alive now and urgent. "Sir! You will write to my mother? Won't you?"

"Yes, of course."

"Her address is . . ."

"Don't. I have it. We have it in the office."

And then I think he died. Or perhaps it was only me. I handed him over to some infantry. "Sweeting, I *have* to go now – to the other tanks . . .". Thank God he was paying no attention to my drivel. Two men, one on either side, draped his arms over their shoulders and stumbled along with him to the casualty clearing station. Sweeting. Gunner. Tank Corps. Died of Wounds. That, for him, was the end.

35

It was a glorious afternoon. Marvellous – just the day for a battle. And now, let me see. Yes, I could get on with my job. The ground too was perfect; no mud, just right like Cambrai for tanks. In fact there was one just ahead of me – burning, burning fiercely. Every so often it seemed to be hiccoughing with indigestion as a fresh packet of shells exploded. 'It was not possible to get near it'.

In fact it was quite possible; I could have got in at the door which was open on the far side and finished it all. Out of the door hung three blackened bodies like disembowelled entrails. I knew it was Corkran's tank. So – that was the last of those of my original crew who had remained with the battalion; the last of Sergeant O'Toole.

On my right I could see the French Foreign Legion sitting in an extended line. I found an officer and asked why they were not getting on. Was it lack of one of my tanks? He could speak better lycée English than I could speak French. "Yes, we are held up. There is a machine-gun in that village there." He pointed to a village in front. "When we have had our lunch we shall not be 'held up'. We shall get him."

I waved him good luck and good-bye and set off to look for Asser. The Canadians on the left of the Roye road had swept on far in advance, apparently unobstructed either by machine-guns or lunch.

A short figure, made to look even shorter by his trying to run with his arms above his head, waddled towards me with surprising speed. He fell on his knees in front of me and tried to clasp my legs. "Kamarad kaput! Kamarad kaput!" What was the matter with me I do not know. Although I was late for my rendezvous I allowed this crazy fool to drag me by my tunic to a dug-out about twenty yards away; it was not much more than a scooped out improvisation with

a tin roof on which some turves had been planted. He invited me to go in. I pulled out my Colt. I was not so mad as to walk into a booby trap; I pushed him in first. Inside he fell on his knees again by the side of another German who was lying with his body on the floor, his head jammed against the side of the dug-out, his left leg bent sharply from the hip joint and his left boot above and behind his head. He was dead; he couldn't possibly be more dead. The kneeling German wanted me to bend down and feel his heart. I was frightened. "No – nein, nein . . . tod", I said. He burst into tears and again tried to hold me. Cursing myself for a fool I tore myself free and left him to blubber by himself. I was shaken. Obviously I was not fit to be a soldier, let alone an officer – decorated at that.

I found Cook at the rendezvous. "What the hell have you been up to? You're twenty minutes late." I told him I had been held up by the barrage; that Corkran's tank had had a direct hit; that the French had been held up but were just resuming their advance. Put like that it sounded as if I had had quite a busy day. At least Cook appeared to be satisfied. In the next war they would not dress up people like me as soldiers.

All our objectives had been taken and the infantry, gunners, engineers and signals were in pursuit. For the first time Greene, Robertson and Asser, our surviving tanks commanders, could meet as a victorious unit with less than one out of three killed. Unlike Cambrai there was no point on our front where we had been checked. The army was far beyond its day's objectives.

Cook, Carter, Robertson, Aitches and I stood beneath a tree, Greene and Asser not having rejoined us yet. "Look there!" said Carter pointing back down the road to Amiens, "Reserves!"

We had not seen reserves before. The road was a mass of troops stretching mile after mile down to the valley of the Luce. Here and there transport and guns had left the road to press on faster than the infantry. It was a clear, sunny afternoon. On the hard ground the gunners, the horse limbers, had nothing to prevent them from travelling fast on the wide open spaces. I had not seen troops marching in column since Le Havre. It was a marvellous sight – but too late. We watched in silence, all dejected.

Aitches referred to Cook. "We've got to keep up haven't we?" Yes, those were our orders. Grease up, fill up with petrol, keep in close touch with the advancing infantry for action when we were needed.

The night sky in front was lit up by fires, not ours but the enemy's as the retreating troops set fire to their dumps; for once it did not signify disaster. It might earlier have been a sign for rejoicing, but now it was only a sign for 'what next?'.

Asser's crew were sleeping under the tank. I pulled one out and told him to wake the crew. I found Asser under the overhanging snout.

"You have to go up the road and support the French on the right and the 42nd Division on the left."

I realized he was not awake. He was stiff with pain from lying on the hard, cold ground; they had all fallen asleep before having had time to put anything under them. "Do you hear me?" He assured me he did. I repeated the orders.

His crew were all asleep. I was furious and propped the first man against the tank. Now, I thought, he will hurt himself if he falls asleep again. I told Asser to help me rouse his crew. By the time we had them all standing Asser seemed to have become permanently awake. I therefore repeated the orders – this time in detail.

"You are on your own. I shall be with Greene and Robertson and two tanks from C Company to make up the section. Don't bother about the 42nd Division – you support the French. They attack at dawn. The crazy loons in command of the 42nd Div., in spite of what I had told them, will not attack till ten-thirty – without smoke – so as to make sure our tanks will be smashed before they get to the starting point. But you", it was four-thirty and still dark – "can start now. Make the crew walk and don't let them into the tank till the last moment. That may wake them up a bit. Try to . . .". I changed my mind and said no more. I was horribly afraid that the moment the crew went into the warmth of the tank they would fall asleep. Asser was now his cheerful self, amused and excited; I did not want to tell him my horrible fears. What was he to try to do? The crew were not fit to fight.

For two days we had followed the Canadian Corps with no fighting but endless hard work to keep up and maintain the tanks in fighting trim. As I had told Asser, it had been resolved to make up my section with the two C Company tanks. Hauser's section had had one day's fighting since August 8th; Homfray's and Carter's had also fought on the 10th. Direct hits and mechanical failures left them now

with three tanks between them. The proportion of killed to living remained one in three.

Clifford, mercifully, had at last been transferred to a new company to be formed in England. It was likely that Greene would be given his section when it was re-formed. Carter, Hauser and I were the only originals left.

I found my four tanks, collected together the tank commanders and went over the orders. They were not orders; they were sentences of death. Cook and Aitches had tried the previous evening to insist to the divisional command that zero would have to be at dawn. When the mind will not receive the obvious there is nothing to be done.

The tanks were hidden, each under a small clump of trees very conveniently placed, separated by an average interval of fifty yards from each other. At 10.25 they emerged and drove to cross the front line of the division at 10.30. There was no gunfire, no machine-gun fire. As the tanks crossed the line the enemy machine-guns opened up. I walked behind Greene's tank hoping, by being as close as possible, to escape the machine-gun fire.

The infantry did not leave their trenches. Terrified at what would happen to the tanks without infantry support to keep enemy gunners immobilized – a very slender hope at the best of times – I doubled back to the trench, tumbled in and begged the first officer I could find to open immediate fire. Nothing except the advance of the infantry could have saved us, that I knew, but if their machine-guns opened up . . . They couldn't; they were ready to advance. They did not fire and they did not advance.

Hauser, who had gone into action sitting on the back of one of the two tanks under his immediate command, had also run back to see what had happened. It was uncanny; nothing had happened – that's what had happened. But he was unmistakably terrified; we both were – and both perfectly safe in the trench. The troops might have been sleep-walking.

We looked at the tanks; they had nothing wrong with them. They were quietly purring their way forward and were already too far away to catch up with them even if we had wanted to do so. As there was no method of communication, wireless or otherwise, we could only stand and watch, the Colonel almost demented, Hauser and I ghost-ridden.

The tanks rolled up a gentle grassy slope. There was a soft muffled explosion. Robertson's tank opened as a flower in a nature film might unfold. Another thud; then two, almost simultaneous, followed. The whole four had flowered. Hard, bright flames, as if cut out of tinfoil, flickered and died, extinguished by the bright sun. One tank, crewless, went on to claw at the back of one in front as if preparatory to love-making; then stopped as if exhausted.

We stared, fascinated. Then we went to the Colonel, saluted and asked formally for permission to withdraw. He was in no fit state to know what we were talking about, but he nodded agreement. Two of his men gaped at us open-mouthed.

We never heard of that infantry battalion or that division again. Perhaps they had had long experience of the qualities of their General and his staff.

Like a boy learning a task set for detention I repeated mentally, "I must remember these four officers and all their men are dead." I do not remember the slightest suspicion of mourning or regret. It was as if my only concern was to avoid a social blunder by speaking as if I were not aware that 'their name liveth for evermore'. Greene, Robertson and . . . who were those two poor sods from C Company? Or was it A Company? I'm damned if I knew.

Aitches was silly and made me feel he was on the verge of giggling. Cook was tight-lipped, his eyes bright and hard. "Right. Give me a written report – now. And make it snappy. And short."

Hauser, Carter, Cook, Aitches and I – it suddenly seemed as if we had an enormous number of officers. There was Asser too of course. That would be more still unless something had happened to him.

It was only about 11.30. Time for another battle before lunch, especially if we 'made it snappy' like the last one.

"I'll see if I can find out what's happened to Asser", said Cook.

I volunteered to keep to the French zone while Cook kept to the border between the two.

"I thought I told you to write me a report." Cook's tone was icy.

God damn your bloody eyes, I thought. But I kept my mouth shut.

36

I wrote the report. Hauser read it. How could one spin it out enough to make it short? From that day to this I have had no other experience which was so utterly devoid of mystery yet totally incomprehensible. Troops can mutiny; these merely failed – to leave the trench. Staff can be hesitant; this divisional staff was adamant. Generals can be stupid; this one impressed my hidden reserves of intelligence. There were night attacks, dawn attacks, feint attacks; but not a 10.30 attack – surely not 10.30?

What happened after, I had no idea. If I had sat for an examination in which I was called upon to read the account and the complete the story I could not have done it.

Greene was dead; I did not like Greene. He was too ruthless, too pushing, out for himself too much and too often. Should I say this in my letter of condolence to his mother? "Fine officer . . . a great loss to all his comrades . . . his Colonel remarked to me the other day that he would go far . . ." So he would have, but someone had put a stop to all *that*.

Robertson? Such a nice fellow, quiet, modest, reserved . . .

Cook was back and drew me aside. "We found a bullet through his heart." I stared at him; he looked serious. I nearly said "Liar!" – what I meant was "Don't be a melodramatic ass!" What I said was "Oh". Then I burst into tears, wiped them off my face. "Sorry", I said, "I'm tired." Cook looked at me curiously. I hoped he wasn't going to suggest I had 'shell-shock'.

"I'd better go and write to the relatives", I said quickly and cleared off.

With some wads of paper, ammunition box for a table and petrol

can for a chair I started off at a great pace. "Always cheerful and a perpetual source of . . ." of what?

I suddenly remembered Sweeting. I had not written – of course I had not promised to. "Sir, you will write to my mother won't you?" I wiped the sweat off his brow with my sleeve. "Mother, Mother, Mother . . ." His mind was wandering, thank God.

And to whom am I supposed to be writing? Must be rather a nice woman, I thought. Yes, but suppose she was that fat old trollope who had turned her angry eyes on my moonface and said, "What the bloody hell!" that day in Woburn Place, years and years ago . . .

"Finished?" It was Cook again. "Good God, what have you been up to?" I told him I wouldn't be long and scribbled furiously.

'Hero and strumpet voluntary – One of the best' (Mother, Mother, Mother) 'Always could be relied upon' (Mother, Mother, Mother) 'We shall miss him'. Chorus: (all letters) 'Luckily he died instantly and could not have experienced pain.'

Fortunately someone on the staff, foreseeing the danger that a tank commander would surrender his tank to the enemy – "You know what these tank commanders are" – had provided that each tank carried a charge of high explosive. That explained that fascinating opening of the tanks like blossoms greeting the sun.

'Dear Madam, I am sorry I have not been able to write to you before about the death of your son. He was a good lad and you must have been a very good mother to him. I was with him at the end when he knew he was dying. You were the person who was in his mind in those last hours and it was your name that was on his lips. I hope you will feel proud that he loved you so much. I am, dear Madam, his officer that day . . .'

Cook heard a rumour; the battalion was to be withdrawn from the line. It seemed likely to be true of B Company since half a dozen officers and no men did not at once suggest itself as obviously useful. The next day the news became official. We could not rejoice but we were relieved. I supposed it would mean withdrawal for some days, perhaps even a week or so, to one of the villages near Regimental Workshops. Packing up was always a dismal business for me, but this time I had to pack up the effects of officers from whom I did not wish to be parted. Even Greene's death was difficult to tolerate; he had at least been reliable and tough.

The Colonel was reputed to be the only officer sad to go. He was

accused of having worked very hard to win a DSO by offering our tanks as ready for action however few remained and however worn. If so, he should have been offered half a dozen DSOs for intelligent anticipation and support of the needs of the Commander-in-Chief. Haig was perhaps the only man, soldier or civilian, who knew the war could be finished that year. Had he not held this view and forced it, it is impossible to know what price might have had to be paid by failure to catch the tide now running in our favour. What could not be grasped by high government officials, even when explained by Haig himself, could certainly not be grasped by junior officers – especially junior officers in my state of mind. I was unable to grasp anything; for once I could even feel free from fear. The loss of the four tanks was almost a physical blow, so difficult it had been to believe the sight as it unfolded before my eyes. The death of Asser was different but had the same quality of being blunt, unable to penetrate the most superficial layer of one's mind. It was in this state that I obeyed a summons to see the Colonel.

Red-faced, garrulous, healthy and smart in his yeomanry amateur way, he talked of this and that. Then I heard him saying, "Bad show what? That affair with the tanks – must have been terrible for you."

"Yes sir", I agreed. It had not in fact been in the least terrible for me but I thought it as well to keep this to myself. It was no more terrible for me than it was for him except that it went on in front of me while my eyes were open wide.

"We have now", he went on, "only four tanks left in the whole battalion. On August 8th we started with", he looked at his papers, "thirty-six."

I began to feel suspicious; what was the old fool talking about? It was most unlikely that he wanted to talk statistics to a junior section commander. Then it came.

"We have a bit of a tough nut to crack. The army commander especially wants four tanks to help with a job at Méaulte – you remember that place? The Christmas camp?"

Did I not! That's where I heard about the chap who was lucky enough to have lost his leg.

"This place is just near there – Happy Valley – you probably know it." I certainly knew it by repute.

"But sir", I said, "I haven't any tanks left. All my section and the crews have gone."

His voice was smooth, almost sympathetic, rather like the Major, I thought, only he had not been so coarse – silkier, as befits a genuine gentleman as opposed to the 'officer and gentleman' type. "Yes I know. But we want a reliable man." (That bloody DSO again?) "Winsop has all his four tanks available." (I breathed again.) "But he is not really the man I would choose for this kind of job." (I felt my breathing had been premature.)

"He has a Military Cross though sir." This Military Cross had created a mild scandal. Winsop was regarded by all the officers I had known as 'no damn good at all'. He was a military version of the 'dumb blonde' of strip cartoon fame.

The Colonel became confidential. "Bion, that MC was not my recommendation. He had it before I came here." He went on, strained, staring at me, "He is in my opinion no good. I can't help it – I'm very sorry, but there is no one I know on whom I can rely as I can on you."

Pure cajolery, I thought bitterly. In fact he doesn't know me from Adam. I had hardly seen enough of him to know more than his reputation for Irish blarney. In any case, what the hell was I belly-aching about? It was not so long since I had been complaining about being left out of an action at Ypres. Oh, for the Guards Division! Soldiers, real soldiers and above all, Orders! – not blarney. Not, "Will you be so kind as to oblige me by fighting for your country?" This was what it came to, the glorious voluntary system. It was a failure to understand that there is nothing voluntary about being attacked by a powerful, well-armed army.

"I don't think the Military Cross should be awarded to officers who are no good sir."

The Colonel still had his eyes fixed on me. Perhaps he had begun to wonder if the same rule should not apply to people who had been awarded the DSO. After all, it was a higher decoration than the MC. I saluted and went out before, as far as I knew, the thought had occurred to him. When a young man is granted a decoration perhaps he should also be given a permit entitling him to go and win it at any time in the next six months.

I took over the four tanks and set out for Happy Valley.

37

We passed by Villers Bretonneux, through the Australian Corps and on. I remember little except feeling ill and tired. There was a beautiful lake near Villers Bretonneux; sometime later, the next day, there was woodland and I felt eased by the green grass and firm ground on which we travelled smoothly. There was much engine and tank track trouble; the tanks were nearing the end of their mechanical life so we all knew we must have mechanical failure.

I was vomiting badly; I did not know till the day before the attack that I had contracted the influenza which had appeared as an unknown pandemic inflicting all armies. I was at divisional HQ trying to absorb my orders when a medical officer saw me looking ill and diagnosed the infection. He advised me to take a couple of bottles of champagne into action – "Your runner can carry it." "And if it makes me drunk?" "Then he can carry you."

Luckily the orders were simple – drive from our starting point towards the enemy and go on from there; then stop. At least, that was what I thought they were as I contemplated my trembling hands; not fear this time – fever.

It was a hot day. The rolling devastated region of Méaulte shimmered in the heat. I sweated and trembled and staggered about till I found myself back with the camouflaged tanks.

This time the action was to start at 'dawn'. It always did, unless it was obtained by the divisional commander of the 42nd Division. 'Never, never say "dawn". Be exact', said the manuals. Orders had to be '04.20' or '06.30' so that all watches were precisely synchronized. We all – tanks, gunners, infantry, the whole division – attacked at the same moment. Or I assume we did because I have never heard anything to the contrary. The Germans were not co-operating, and as

I myself seemed to be present only very fitfully my account is even more incoherent than is usual with sophisticated versions of chaos.

The first thing of which I have any recollection is sitting in an infantry trench, pausing before making an advance. The sun was hot. The camouflaged tanks at which I had arrived the previous evening were somewhere in the battle. I could not see them. My two runners had one bottle of champagne for which they showed some solicitude though they seemed more concerned for me.

A man with his chest and belly exposed was lying on the trench floor. His face showed a deadly pallor but he was breathing and sweating. Some flies were settling and crawling on his belly trying to reach a neat puncture in the lower half on the right side. The flies were periodically disturbed by one of two privates who stared dully with unspeculating eyes at their wounded mate. I pulled myself together.

"Shouldn't the stretcher bearers get him back?"

"Him? No sir – he's a gonner." I gave up.

Someone was blowing a whistle. We all scrambled out of the trench, my two runners shoving and pulling at me.

Time to advance. I felt extremely fit; it seemed queer but unmistakable that the battle was doing me a lot of good. There were a number of wounded, ours, not German; I thought it strange that they were in grotesque positions.

There was in fact nothing mysterious about it for the enemy had gone, retired, leaving the position to be held by a small rear-guard with high velocity guns whose shells had the same unpleasant quality as those near the Steenbeck – the whizzes arriving after the bangs. So one could not duck as one heard the shell approaching. This explained why the infantry lay about in grotesque attitudes and groaned.

At last I saw one of the tanks. It had stopped; the petrol feed had broken down.

"Come on!"

"Where to sir?"

"Where to? In, of course. We'll ride the rest of the way." They probably thought I was drunk. I told the tank commander to carry on as before when he had got it started again. Just then it *did* start, so suddenly that he was hurled against the sharp edge of the ammunition racks. The blow was on his temple and he lay there unconscious. I took over command of the tank; or perhaps it was the alcohol.

The scene was yellowish; not summer landscape, not autumn, not anything, but warm, and the tank was hot and stank of petrol. Nobody was about, certainly no enemy. Even the lack of mud gave a nightmare quality to the drive, for in real battles one did not travel fast and easily across rolling downland unopposed. Nor did one go for rides in tanks if one felt ill and bright-eyed.

I turned to shout to the driver. "Lots of sausage balloons up." I pointed to the long array of dark shapes looming almost overhead. Funny the way German observation balloons always looked so dark compared with our silvery shapes – obviously the Devil's Own.

I tried being jocular. "Do you know", I shouted, "I get the feeling we are being fired at!"

The driver looked tense and pale. He must be tired, I thought.

"It's those balloons sir."

Of course – it had not occurred to me! We were under direct observation; they must be concentrating on us. But in that case why were there no shells bursting round us?

"Get out!" I shouted. "All of you! Walk close behind." They tumbled out. I took over driving the tank, meaning to drive a zig-zag course with the escape hatch over me open. Then I realized that with no crew I could not steer the tank and could not drive anywhere but straight ahead. I had no sense of fear. I opened the throttle so that the tank was at full speed.

Before I knew what I was doing I had left the driver's seat and joined the crew behind. It was difficult to keep up with the fast-moving driverless tank. Then, only then, panic overwhelmed me. Suppose they were not firing at us? Suppose they did not hit us? A fully equipped tank in complete working order would have been handed over to the enemy, abandoned on my orders by its crew.

I could not catch up with it; as I stumbled and tried to run to the door I fell. Then mercifully the shell hit, pierced and burst. The tank stopped, flames spurting everywhere. In a moment it was a total wreck.

I felt bemused, unable to grasp what had happened. I only knew that I had failed in my desperate resolve to get back to the tank. Had I succeeded I could not possibly have survived. Every course I had initiated had almost immediately seemed to be an irretrievable blunder. It was not a repetition, it was not a reminiscence, but again I had the sense of being a cornered rat which a giant was nonchalantly aiming

to club to death. Even as a rat I was incompetent – like a mouse I had once seen sit up on its haunches in what looked like an attitude of prayer to Lord Cat Almighty who at that moment was luxuriously licking his paws and washing himself. I had escaped – apparently. Who knew what Lord Cat Almighty was up to during this short respite? 'Remember also the humble beasts . . .'

We worked our way back through the high velocity area, through the zone of shelled men, back to . . . And then I remembered I had on me my leave pass which the Colonel had caused to be dated as valid from 4.30 that day. I was to be picked up by a box-body car at the cross-roads of the village from which our attack had started. Of course such a point, well marked, easy to refer to by map reference co-ordinates, would be the focus of attention by enemy gunners. At that cross-roads I was to remain till picked up – alive or dead? – by the box-body.

The sun was still high. I leant against the warm brickwork and waited. The shelling was not heavy but it was accurate and monotonous. It blasted the houses of that cross-roads; they were rhythmically blotted out. I did not want to miss the box-body. I sat down on a chunk of masonry. It was like watching the ruined camp at Messines when time ceased to flow.

The gun – I decided that it must be a single one alone – was firing at extreme range or I would not have been able to hear its shells coming. I decided to lie down to save myself the bother of throwing myself flat each time. How boring it all was. I thought I heard the box-body coming. The driver was driving like hell. I also heard the shell coming – like hell. I thought it would be a dead heat.

As the smoke and rubble dust cleared I saw the box-body, stationary, with racing engine. I scrambled into the back. "Home John!" I bawled. By the time the next shell arrived we were clear of the cross-roads and a hundred yards away on the road to Boulogne.

38

I must have been fortunate in the timing of the journey for by 4.30 the next afternoon I was in the terminal stages of a Turkish bath near Russell Square. It was quiet and two old fellows were discussing an item in the evening paper.

"I see", said one mellow voice to the other, "we've been over the top again." There was a note of complacency, of pride in his voice.

How nonplussed he would have been if he had known that one of 'us' was listening hot, indignant. 'We' indeed! Who the hell was he to say 'we'? Now I can understand the genuine note of sadness for the comradeship that had passed him by, though it surprises me that I think of 'comradeship' in this context at all. I have no memory of thinking of the men of my crews in that action. I must have told them to report back to Company HQ. I remember joining with another crew who were going out of action with their tank – the only one, as it turned out, to survive the action – because I had to refuse a terribly mangled infantry soldier a lift. He was grotesque, like the German's 'kamerad'. He should have made me laugh if only I had retained my prep school sense of humour about physical deformity. "Hullo, fig-ear", we said – if we were big enough to be safe from retaliation – to a boy whose ears bore a striking resemblance to that fruit. Or, "Look sharp Hobson!", to a boy whose features were so distorted that he was known as 'hatchet face'. What fun, what wit! If only one could have seen the funny side of a grown man with his trousers full of faeces because his leg had been blown past his ear! Of course all that had been at 4.30 *yesterday*. At 4.30 *today* I was very comfortable in my Turkish bath.

"Mother, Mother . . . You will write to my mother sir, won't you?"

"No, blast you, I shan't! Shut up! Can't you see I don't want to be

disturbed?" These old ghosts, they never die. They don't even fade away; they preserve their youth wonderfully. Why, you can even see the beads of sweat, still fresh, still distinct, against the pallor of their brows. How is it done? Like the dewdrops on the petals of Rédoutés roses. Marvellous isn't it? So, so . . . death-like, isn't it? But of course it's just a trick – he's not *really* dead, you know. Please, *please* shut up. I will write, I really will. To Mother England – that old whore!

The Turkish bath was very refreshing; I felt so clean. It's not real, you know; just a kind of trick. Really, of course, one stinks. They have a way of making people look so life-like, but really we are dead. I? Oh yes, I died – on August 8th 1918. We all had a good laugh about it at the Club where the rats – there was one old chap, bald, bloated, corpse-fed, who sat on my chest one night – it made me laugh because his whiskers tickled my face . . .

"Are you all right?" I awoke with a jolt, sense of humour all gone, to find the bath attendant peering into my face. "Excuse me sir, but I think you must have been dreaming." I hurried. I had not left much time to catch my train to Cheltenham where my mother was staying to be near my sister at school.

Cheltenham was very beautiful. The weather was good too. The shops were very nice. I liked the school too; that, I thought, was very nice when I went to hear a school concert. I often said so when people asked me. I think they wanted me to be enjoying my leave, not to be dwelling too much on what I suppose they thought were the horrors of the war. In fact I was not dwelling on the horrors of anything. Yes, I certainly thought Cheltenham was very nice. I stressed how 'very' nice it was. But although I did my best I seemed unable to convey a convincing degree of appreciation. Once only I felt I had established an emotional contact and that with a maiden lady, Miss Collar, with whom I had stayed on my holidays from school when my parents were not in England.

Miss Collar was a stout lady who wore pince-nez which were always highly polished and added brilliance to the professional jollity – she was joint owner of a boarding house for missionaries – of her welcome to her patrons. I did not think she liked me, an impression which was deepened when I once heard her, in tragic tones, describing how I had helped her by scrubbing out one of the baths in the establishment. I had, I remembered, done it very thoroughly by actually scrambling about inside the bath the better to reach the

less accessible parts. I think – but I am not sure – that I had removed my boots before getting in. "And do you know", she was saying in an awe-struck whisper, "he actually used up one whole tin of Vim!" I realized she was talking about me; I slunk off thinking perhaps I may not have washed all the Vim out when I had finished. But when I saw her next she had recaptured her usual sparkle. I, however, never achieved the equanimity which I felt was expected of me.

On this occasion at Cheltenham she seemed less formidable though remaining physically undiminished, perhaps because her vegetarian diet had saved her from the worst rigours of rationing. She was ill at ease when she drew me aside to make a special and private request. After one or two cursory conventional questions about what it was like to be in action with tanks, she came to the point that was really exercising her.

"What was it like", she asked, "when you drove your tank over people?"

To this I had to give some thought. Certainly I had been very afraid, when I was leading a tank from in front, outside, by signalling to the driver through his front flap. But I had never driven over anyone; I had to admit that the experience had so far escaped me. I thought she seemed disappointed when we rejoined the banalities of more general conversation.

Relations with anyone I respected were intolerable, notably with my mother; I wanted nothing except to get back to the Front just to get away from England and from her. I can only hope she had a similar wish to be rid of me.

At last I had said good-bye and was leaning out of the train window. "Mind the door", I warned her, "it's filthy." "Everything", she said, near to tears, "is dreadful . . . I mean nothing is really cleaned up nowadays." And so we parted.

She died some months before it was certain that the war was to be fought again in 1939. Then her eyes rested on a vase of spring flowers and she was already confused. "The heads of the flowers are drooping. I can hold them up no longer. Will you hold them up for me?" She lost consciousness and died soon after.

39

The battalion was again at Blangy when I rejoined it. It had changed out of recognition. Aitches had been reported by Carter to the Brigadier for having failed to be at his correct place in our last action. Since this was indistinguishable from the arrest of a senior officer by a junior, the Brigadier had strongly advised Carter to abandon his intention and Carter had wisely but reluctantly agreed. The matter was thus forgotten and a seal set upon oblivion by the return of Aitches to England to aid in the formation of a new battalion. As few people believed he would ever be so indiscrete as to be sent to a fighting front again, it seemed to be wiser in everyone's interest if his long experience in action with tanks could be employed in high rank in a training battalion. He had engaging manners and being in this respect unhampered by the regular army polish it was felt that he would be just the man to co-operate with the new democratic people's army which was beginning to emerge.

Holden, now taking over from Aitches, was an intelligent ex-infantryman who had been heard to mutter, "Oh God our help in Aitches past" when Aitches' promotion had first been announced on parade. In fact poor Aitches died of influenza within two weeks of being posted back to England. I like to think that his war memorial would set out his military virtues in glowing terms of appropriate splendour. But I doubt it for there was something unloved and pathetic about him.

The fact that Carter, Hauser and I were the only three officers who remained of our original company served as a link, perhaps the only one, between us. Carter was set in his ways and preserved the nervous, bigoted patriotism of a colonial age; Hauser seemed to have no views but to retain a lively, irritable impatience for the incompetence

which he associated with all things British; I retained the remains of a disintegrated moral system in which I had been brought up and to which I clung because I had nothing better to put in its place.

The war situation had altered profoundly since our last refit and reinforcement at Blangy. Victory instead of defeat stared us in the face, but it wore so strange a look that it was scarcely less frightening. There were rumours that we would shortly be in action again, probably not far from the Drocourt–Quéant Switch on which the Hindenburg defence system hinged.

Ultimately we moved by companies, not to be reunited again as a battalion in action, though right at the end we had orders to move just before the armistice came into effect. But of an armistice there were as yet not even rumours. In so far as the end of the war came into our calculations, it was dismissed as a very old joke from which the humour had long departed. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the battalion no longer had the outlook in which such jokes could thrive. Not enough time in which to absorb too many lessons inevitably led to the learning of one or two and the neglect of all others. It was evident that catch phrases such as 'the first seven years are the worst', 'remember the hundred years war', had no relevance in tank warfare, but no more appropriate form of wry humour had grown to take their place. Some tank commanders escaped being killed long enough to be promoted to command sections. As section commanders their expectation of life was greater; they might accordingly survive to reach to the command or second in command of companies. For non-commissioned ranks it was virtually impossible to reach safety by promotion – as Sergeant O'Toole had shown. Slight wounds were so rare that the avenues of escape were restricted to chronic invalidism or forms of elaborate foot-dragging. After August 8th there were no senior officers with actual experience of tanks in action, and no junior officers who could reasonably suppose they had a chance of survival to higher rank. My interventions in action convinced me I was not doing my job as a section commander, but I was unable to imagine how I should do it. The prospect of action was one of loafing about on a battlefield in a highly vulnerable position both with regard to wounds – though this was no worse than for the infantry – and to reputation. The latter I had seen with dreadful clarity in the last action just before the tank was destroyed. It was to be brought home to me again before the end at Sequehart.

Looking back now it amazes me that I do not remember any occasion when it occurred to me or any of my friends to debate the military wisdom of our procedures. It is the more surprising that a critical attitude was common enough but never took a constructive form. It did not occur to me, or any tank commander of whom I heard, to report that Ypres was unsuitable for tank warfare. Someone had to think of Cambrai and apply its lessons at Amiens on August 8th. The tank commanders who might have provided the initiative and knowledge were either killed in action or too stunned, stupefied, to contribute anything.

We complained. We complained of the Guards, of the Engineers for having no pontoons or bridges available when the bridge collapsed under the tank at Cambrai; we complained that there were no reserves when the enemy's feint attack succeeded in doing what his main attack could not do; we complained of the futility of the cavalry reserve, though I remembered thinking how impressive they looked as they went forward on the evening of November 20th; I remembered thinking how impressive they looked when I saw them lying dead in scores where they had been mown down by a solitary machine-gunner who had been presented by the Scots Greys with a target he had been unable to find in the open order advances of the infantry. I had been impressed by the 11th French Division who regarded their lunch as of more importance than a solitary machine-gunner who was whiling away the time by firing at nothing in particular; I had been impressed – so had we all – by the Commander of the 32nd Division who did not believe tank officers who thought their tanks required the protection of darkness, natural or artificial, against a resolute enemy gunner on August 12th, even after the German gunner officer at Cambrai had dropped a very broad hint by leaving his mark on our company. I was again impressed when I saw a photograph in *The Times* of post-war army manoeuvres; it showed a small number, three or four, of mounted cavalry men, the caption explaining that it was of a 'Cavalry patrol bringing in a captured machine-gunner'. It did not say what bait they had used and I was too busy wondering how I was going to earn a living to write a letter asking my betters for enlightenment. Besides, wasn't the war over? Had we not won? I was at Oxford then and no one had told me that in return for such privileges I was expected to contribute intelligence to the government of the country even if, as was certainly true, nobody would pay the

slightest attention. I had not learned that any fool can engage in a successful action but that what was required, even in peace time, was the courage or brains to contribute one's quota in the face of defeat or probable defeat.

Haig had won his war, but his blunders – which he must have been intelligent enough to know – are now becoming increasingly clear to anyone who can be bothered to learn of them. Why a man with the defects common to all men became and remained Commander-in-Chief is a question which can only be answered, if ever, when it is known why an ordinary man comes to be recognized as 'great' while all other ordinary men remain ordinary.

Blangy itself was familiar but a change was taking place, confusing and made additionally complex by occurring in an unfamiliar domain, the domain of the mind, the personality, the spirit. Even now it is difficult to formulate the shift of emphasis; although the thing itself has been known to exist for countless generations there is still no adequate vocabulary for its comprehension. I can say that while the battalion was at Blangy it was receiving new tanks; it was being reinforced with new men many of whom came from mining districts and whose whole youth had been devoted to learning the 'trade' of a miner; weapons and ammunition were readily available to refit. But I cannot so easily say why there was a belief that the army was near to achieving victory over the enemy.

40

Conjecture must now take the place of facts which I was too inexperienced to observe when they were there to observe. I did not have the ability to recognize that I was in a state of inner turmoil in an external world of emotional upheaval. There were two events which had a powerfully stimulating effect upon me.

The death of Aitches was talked about in our company mess chiefly in terms of incredulity, hatred and contempt. In the course of these talks I heard from older men something of the world from which he came. It was a world of great wealth in which the values I had always taken as established, unalterable, eternal, were regarded as a curious aberration particular to the poor, the vulgar, the contemptible and the weak. Aitches belonged to nothing. I could see he was as much an outsider in his father's world as I would be if I had had to associate with wealthy gaol birds, horse-racing addicts, the questionable type of journalism that thrived on the fringes of blackmail. Of this world I know more now, but only that part of it which strives, usually ineffectually, to escape from the thraldom which is felt but not apprehended. While I felt contempt for Aitches I was never sure that I was not the same kind of coward, separated only by the thinnest of thin partitions.

The second event was that news came through from a prisoner of war telling of the death of Asser. For some reason which was unclear, but I guessed to be the exhaustion of the crew, they were unable to continue fighting and Asser gave orders to evacuate. The enemy surrounded the tank calling on each man to surrender as he came out. They were helpless and put up their hands. Asser did not. To the call to surrender he replied, "I'm damned if I will." He was apparently still holding his revolver and no enemy could take risks if that was

so. So he was shot and died instantly, being left where he was found later by Cook.

Though this story added nothing to what had already been guessed it was extremely disturbing to me. The first impression was one of utter waste; then a feeling that I could never in such circumstances do my duty knowing that there could not possibly be any other outcome. After Cambrai it was obvious to me, though even then not till a considerable time had passed, that I could have been killed a number of times over by the sniper in the tree-top. In the last attacks made before we were relieved by the French at Wytschaete I knew in my heart that if the enemy reached our trenches I could not go on fighting. I do not understand courage such as Asser's. I can easily understand all the *explanations* I have ever heard, but I cannot understand the thing itself. I have never heard of any instance of the hopeless war waged by individuals of any race or creed without feeling that in their position I could not be what they are. I cannot honestly say "With the grace of God there might I go also".

I do not know if Asser was sustained by any religious belief. In the short time I knew him he was always cheerful, modest, unassuming – how fast and how trippingly the clichés come tumbling out. The currency is so debased that the very language of love, like the word 'love' itself, can hardly be used in the presence of the thing itself. Aitches and Asser; both dead. They cannot really have been so different. 'And I, only, am left alone to tell thee'.

One or two regular army officers showed an instinctive fear of the future. One I knew was desperate to achieve a decoration which might serve as a life-belt in the stormy seas of peace looming ahead. The outcome for those who could guess at the future must have been black indeed. The prospects for the end of the war were, however, so extremely slight that I do not think that any of us seriously entertained conscious fears or hopes.

I had to take a section into action on a place called Tara Hill; the orders were based on a fiction that the hill was occupied by the enemy. I did not see any of our own or enemy troops, but it was evident that enemy gunners were still in action and had a good view of the hill which supposedly we were about to capture. After a time I decided, in view of the accuracy of the gunfire, that it was best to assume we had captured the position. This left me free to initiate an activity which I called 'patrolling the enemy position', and this in

turn enabled me to shelter two tanks out of direct fire and make the third travel up and down without any crew. Since I was sure there were no infantry present I did not have the horrors of the Happy Valley action. The only danger lay in driving the tank till it was time to swing it round to go in the opposite direction. Luckily the gunners got it before anyone was hurt.

In due course the battle was deemed to be over and with one tank less but all my men intact I was free to write my report. This I was doing somewhat light-heartedly when I suddenly remembered Lord Watchet's warning about 'two rows of ribbons' and restrained myself. The regular officer who hoped himself to be decorated if he could paint the warlike feats of his troops in sufficiently glowing colours was still at large. The reality of the danger had been brought home to me by my being awarded the Legion of Honour for the action on August 8th. The citation had a curiously plausible resemblance to the 'facts', yet I could not believe that the battle I had experienced and the one cited were the same. I liked the ribbon-bright red – and it went well with the DSO, but I found it difficult to make an appropriate response to congratulations. The first such occasion arose when our Brigadier, a distinguished soldier and a very likeable man, wanting to congratulate me, waggishly invited me to draw aside my trench coat and expose the ribbon. As it was some weeks after the award had appeared in Orders he was not pleased that I was not wearing the ribbon. He must have felt, as I did, that this was a gratuitous display of mock modesty. I had not in fact been able to obtain the ribbon but, equally, I had not tried very hard.

My report on Tara Hill led to nothing worse than being detailed for the job of OC Company in charge of base details while the other officers had a turn at action. I had long ceased to mind being left out of battle. I would not have liked to admit any deterioration but I did not want to be reminded that once I had protested at Ypres at being excluded. Nor did I want to stress too much that I would hate to be wanted for the action on August 22nd. It was with relief that I found myself turning in for a night's sleep with two other officers sharing the tent, both juniors whom I did not know. Hauser was 'up the line' to take his turn in command of his section in action.

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I must have gone to sleep at once for we all knew better now than to waste time awake if we had a chance of sleep – day or night. It was with sinking feelings that I was awoken by someone stumbling clumsily amidst our tent guide-ropes. I felt sure he was looking for the opening flap; I felt sure it would mean that he was looking for me. After a time he gave up looking and started to shout.

"Is Captain Bion here please?"

I pulled my blankets over my head and for a second or two pretended not to hear. Of course nobody wanted an officer in the middle of the night for any pleasant reason. Again he shouted, more urgently. At last I asked him what he wanted.

"You're wanted up the line sir, at once. It's urgent."

I pulled on my boots and staggered out into the bright cold night with my equipment. My three crews had been alerted and were waiting silently by their tanks. The messenger, whom I knew, was one on whom I could rely; checking the map reference to our destination I told him to get on and lead us there, the tanks following closely in line.

Even at that miserable hour it was very welcome to hear some infantry shout out as we passed, "Good old Tanks", and "Good luck". I was met by the second in command who told me the infantry were held up at a village called Sequehart. No great difficulty was expected but we must have the village.

The ground conditions were perfect as they had been since August 8th. The village dominated the far slope of a small valley. In the centre of it and easily visible was the church. Our infantry had penetrated the village but we did not know where the front line was. Therefore we must be careful not to open fire till we were really sure we were

not firing on our own. I hardly needed to tell our men that, but it was bad news that we had to fight in such confused conditions. With the poor visibility from tanks, it made it particularly awkward if we had to exercise great care in selecting our targets. I arranged with our tank commanders as I went that I would try to be at various rallying points at particular times – if wanted. In fact I thought it nonsense because I would be far more likely to see that a tank was in trouble than they could spare anyone to come and look for me. Still, it sounded as if it provided a kind of programme.

The second in command gave us his blessing; I dismissed the tank commanders as it was time for them to shut themselves in and set off in low gear at their one mile an hour crawl to their starting points. These terms belonged, as did our tanks, to the rigid conditions of static trench warfare. We were engaged now in something so close to open warfare that neither training nor equipment was adequate; what was required was a capacity for improvisation and initiative. In my days of infantry training I thought I had both. Either I was mistaken or it had been beaten out of me by the sombre misery of Ypres and the sheer attrition of war on someone unsuited to fighting. I was too tired to think; I suffered a vague sense of grievance which was made worse by the feeling that I could think of nothing about which to have cause to be aggrieved. Sergeant O'Toole had had a grievance. I felt I shared it but I did not share the hideous foundation on which he had to build his structure of patriotism and discipline. I at least had some reason to believe that England represented a way of life for which one could be expected to fight.

It was past our supposed zero hour. I walked slowly in the direction in which the tanks had disappeared. As the sky grew pale I began to distinguish the church of Sequehart. At the time I thought its spire looked magnificent. I remembered having been told that spires were intended to remind men of the God who dwelt in the heavens above and watched over the affairs of men and women on earth. Then the sun rose blood red behind the church; soon the dramatic spectacle gave way to the light of day, the commonplace village, the machine-guns and the individual shots of rifle fire.

Those who were not fighting could and did say the enemy were defeated, the war won. This was not true or relevant for any of us there that morning.

In the valley, still shadowed by the ground rising gently up to Sequehart, was one of my tanks. As the light grew I realized it was not moving. It looked as if nothing was wrong. But when I came nearer I found it had had a direct hit. The shell had burst on the track, flung it back over the tail and effectively put it out of action as it could no longer move. But the fact of its hitting the track had saved the crew; no one was injured and Reid had formed the orthodox and useless strong point disposed in front and to the left. It was then that I discovered another tank farther to the right and also immobile.

This had been knocked out by a direct hit from a gas shell. As the explosive charge was only enough to release the gas no one was hurt and the officer and one man had even escaped being gassed. I made them join Reid's strong point as there was nothing for them to do and no reason for withdrawing from action. Afterwards I felt I had been wrong. I do not remember making any decision in action which I did not soon regret, but this was peculiar in that my feeling of guilt about my last battle in the war grew steadily for many years after.

I was able to compare the full account that I wrote at the time with the impression I had years later when the details had disappeared from my memory; the feelings seemed to have remained and even grown in intensity. Thus, looking back I had an almost overwhelming sense of failure, in this wise:

There were four men all badly gassed. With help they could be made to walk. I felt it essential to get them away from the tank which I was sure would be hit again, this time with high explosive. The enemy were using three parts high explosive to one part poison gas in their bombardment. I laid out the men some ten yards or more away from and behind the tank. I then tried to get the men behind the track marked on the map, as was the track on August 8th, and therefore subject to fire. I managed the first two by making them walk while I bore their weight on my shoulders around which their arms were looped. As we went the enemy gunners opened concentrated fire on the track. At the latter stage we had to crawl, I doing most of the heavy dragging work. When I thought they were out of danger I told them to get back to casualty station while I returned for the last two.

They were much worse off and unable to help themselves. I saw our infantry retiring on the right of the village; I hesitated, not sure what to do. Two infantry men ran towards us shouting "Tanks!" They

asked me to take the tank up to help beat back the enemy. I said I could not as the tank crew were out of action; they ran back with the message. Then I realized that if only I had not sent the officer and one man to join Reid we might have restarted the engine – I had forgotten that the three of us had in fact tried to start the engine. But perhaps because of the gas taken into the engine air intake we could not shift it with our combined strength; it was an inert mass of steel. Had they been there could we, with the aid of the two infantry, have restarted the tank and five of us have taken it into action?

Confused and exhausted I removed vital parts of the guns and, stuffing my equipment with these, managed to get the last two back to safety in two more journeys across the shelled road.

The crew were now all safe but I was left confused and a prey to guilt which was more intense when later that evening I tried to explain to our company commander how one of my tanks was reported as abandoned by the crew while still in full fighting order. The simple but unwelcome answer would be that the crew had had enough of it. Still more unwelcome was the idea that I had had enough of it and retained sufficient sense of reality to know that I had only to go on fighting and I would surely be killed – if the enemy went on fighting likewise.

The debate in my mind and the debate between the Company Commander and myself – if a few desultory questions could be described as a debate – were markedly bad tempered. I felt hostile, anxious and glad to pick a quarrel. I angered the Company Commander by calling him a bloody fool. I angered myself by immediately regretting it. I was startled and surprised when Carter told me quietly that if he had been the Company Commander he would have put me under arrest; I was disconcerted to find that I agreed with Carter. In fact it was surprising that though angered, the Company Commander had summoned up enough tolerance to pass over something which was extremely rude even if one did not consider the military impropriety. I felt tired, blast them! I was frightened too. There had been a time when I would not have dared to say "blast them" – not without apologizing at once. Wouldn't *dare*? What, a great big boy like you with a DSO?

How I hated these interior dialogues – still do. No, damn it, *no*; I don't want the DSO. I don't want to be a big boy. 'Oh my, I don't want to die! I want to go home.'

I remembered the matron at my prep school. "What? A great big boy like you putting your father to all that expense for an X-ray and nothing the matter with you? You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" I was. I had burned with shame when my father had taken me to a London clinic because my foot pained me and made me limp. It was X-rayed. Then the almoner spoke with my father while I stood by. I could not understand the conversation but I did catch some words of it.

"But", she said to my father who had been speaking low so I could not hear properly, "your boy is wearing a college cap." That damned cap – I had forgotten it started so early. "If you can afford to send him to school you can surely afford to pay for an X-ray?"

My father seemed guilty. I think he blushed; I blushed for him. He was getting out a note case. It was awful. Never, never again would I have a painful foot. Still, I couldn't help limping. That fiendish matron – never, never again would I limp, pain or no pain.

But . . . I had not reckoned with cowardice. I still felt just as ridiculous. The DSO, the tank itself, were very inadequate protection. Even after Cambrai when my crew were told, I felt they looked at me as if to say, "What you? Recommended for a VC?" After Sequehart, as after Cambrai, I felt I might with equal relevance have been recommended for a Court Martial. It depended on the direction which one took when one ran away.

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After a month of rest and refitment the Colonel called together the senior officers. He and our Company Commander were both men I liked and respected – regular soldiers, efficient, quiet, unspectacular. I think we must have become veterans; Cambrai had finished off the enthusiastic amateurs.

The air was more wholesome for the disappearance of Aitches and Homfray. Of Aitches it could be said that the misfortune was a tragedy personal to him and to those under him who were expected by force of circumstances to invest him with an importance he did not have. The tragedy was repeated in the next war on a far larger scale when not only Chamberlain but the nation itself was called upon to bear an importance, loaded by history and the conditions of a present and a future, which it could not carry. Churchill himself added to the tragedy by seeming to embody the qualities which were required by the past, envied and outdated by the present, and insupportable and unsupported by the future.

In the insignificant physical and moral space occupied by myself in the First War even such trivial responsibilities as I had to carry were far beyond my capacity, my training and upbringing. To that extent I too shared the tragedy which was Aitches'. He, in so far as he can be distinguished from his environment, probably had not the personality required; the environment of great wealth, ruthless amorality, third-rate admiration, probably played its part in producing the feeble personality and would finally have destroyed it. Wealth, admiration, honour may mark already existing achievements but are poison when used as a substitute for the qualities which they are supposed to mark. They are similarly harmful when they are withheld until they mark nothing that is not already known. The individual

who will not accept such marks of recognition, the society that will not extend them, is already in a bad way and becoming worse.

Homfray with his affectation of worthlessness was striving to disguise worthlessness which was the only genuine thing about him. He was the criminal pleading guilty to avoid investigation; he was a wolf in sheep's clothing. He was known as Tape, a name conferred on him on account of his long, slender appearance by Yates, an officer of the original 5th Battalion in England. But any name would be a disguise for yet another disguise. He was nothing disguised as an enigma disguised as a fascinating problem concealed as an ordinary person concealed as the excretion he was. He stank, but luckily for him he enjoyed the odour.

I have allowed myself in the exercise of this description the experience of a certain group of feelings; now I allow myself the further exercise of naming the group of feelings; I borrow from religion the term 'enthusiasm'. Indeed, I would think it legitimate to employ this term to the totality of the experience of writing this book. I do so because I want a term to summarize and identify an element of the total emotional experience described up to the participation in the battle at Ypres.

The characteristic that dominates the part of that experience of which I was aware – emotion and the dominant aspect of that emotion – is 'enthusiasm'. The change which took place in the battalion after action at Ypres, and between that date and the termination of the battle of Amiens, I would describe as decreasing 'enthusiasm'. The dates are arbitrary, an artificial boundary in time. Similarly the locale – in so far as I have attributed it to a particular group of people, the battalion or a section or sub-group of the battalion – is equally arbitrary. It is merely an attempt to simplify a problem, the problem of an individual, myself, and the reality of one individual's emotional life. For an approximation to the reality of the emotional experience of the battalion it would be necessary to have an account of that experience of which each participant was aware. Obviously, therefore, this account cannot be taken as bearing anything but a severely limited approximation to what it purports to describe. Its value lies in its contribution to a whole which does not and may never exist.

The Colonel explained that we were to go up to the Line. Where was it? Well, he was not yet sure. The line was moving now and he advised us not to think too much of The Line.

"If I were you I shouldn't even think too much of advancing or retreating either. I keep on having orders as if the whole British Army were moving forward in one piece. That means that if the Boches hold on, or try to disengage, or counter-attack, everyone always thinks their titchy bit of battle is the whole army falling back or defeated or winning. All I can tell you is – we are supposed to be going to Mons."

A rustle of papers amongst the officers as if a breeze passed over some tall grasses, or scabious flowers by a fresh country road, or a long meadow in far-off England . . .

"Isn't it Bion?"

Oh God, what's he saying? "Oh yes sir."

"I don't believe you are listening!" Still, he had a kindly expression.

"About Mons sir. We end up where we started."

"No, where the Expeditionary Force started."

"Yes sir. That's what I mean sir."

I entered our first village very cautiously. At the top of some cellar stairs stood a young slut of fourteen; she watched me, feral, eyes intense but empty of speculation. She watched me; watched. I felt I ought to say something – "It's a fine day" – or ask where everyone was. She felt, knew, I had spoken, was speaking, would speak. That instant, soundless, almost without action, she was gone, melted into the cellar below.

'Scuse me, said the Elephant's child most politely, can you tell me the way to have a baby?

Ask the cat.

'Scuse me asking, why the hell do you haunt my dreams you pasty faced little . . . little . . . school girl? Whore?

So? I was shocked. After four years of war, and two years of combatant service, mostly fighting, I could say, "Wot the bloody 'ell!", or perhaps it was only "What the bloody hell". But sex, pregnancy even, that took some getting over. It was true after all then; the Germans *were* wicked. I wondered if she had been raped. It came to my mind in a flash; I could see it all clearly like a neat Matania drawing – like 'The Royal What-nots kneeling in prayer at Holy Communion before Battle'. What shell-fire! You could almost smell the bursting of the shells! What did it feel like when your tank went over the body? Sorry ma'am, I forgot to notice, but it didn't dream well o'nights.

This little pregnant creature didn't look at all bad – really. She had gone past the civilized state, like the mobs chasing and taunting a mother with shaven head as she strode out angry and proud and defiant carrying her baby into shelter of a house in Rouen. There is a certain dignity about the wild animal to which this little child had come. Perhaps I should have taken off my tin hat and suddenly said "Shoo!". That would have sent her scuttling downstairs quick I bet! It would have been good for a laugh in the mess.

I was tired and it did not seem funny. I was relieved when other officers had as little sense of humour as I had. Yet should an officer, brought up in all the privilege and luxury of the governing class of what was then the most powerful nation in the world, be an immature innocent with a capacity for remaining so through four years of war? 'Stormed at by shot and shell, bravely they rode and well'. Still not an idea in hell, 'noble six hundred'.

In Marcoing the band played the Marseillaise to a silent, unresponsive crowd. It came to an end and they stopped. The band master, with a flash of genius, had an idea. "Play it again", he said. This time the crowd went mad. The street was suddenly filled with flags – Union Jacks, Tricolours, a few Stars and Stripes. Where had they come from? Where had they been hidden all these years?

The excitement died down as suddenly as it had arisen, like a sharp wind, a few heavy drops of rain and then a silence disturbed by the sound of distant storm.

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Although I perfectly well knew the contents, I read the signal carefully when it reached me. It said that all troops would stand fast at the position they had reached at 11.00 hours on the 11th day of the 11th month. They were to cease fire but all the usual military precautions would be maintained. This I supposed was a way of saying the war was over.

For some weeks the command of the army had shown anxiety about what was called 'peace talk'. News of the German request for an armistice was known to everyone. We could certainly understand that if our army stopped fighting it might well be impossible to start it again. Although there was no danger, as far as I was in a position to observe, that the army would stop fighting, it was behaving like an ill-trained runner who keeps looking over his shoulder instead of pressing on till he has passed the winning tape. This was the more odd because there was no winning tape.

One of my men was walking beside his tank as it was travelling back to the camp; it was an undistinguished routine trek. The tank rode over an unexploded grenade which, being under the armoured track, burst harmlessly. But Mallard, the gunner in question, fell dead. It seemed so improbable that it took time to realize that one of the grenade fragments – it must have been the only one to escape from under the track – had penetrated his heart killing him instantly and leaving only a small puncture wound to show the point of entry.

'Dear Madam, I regret to inform you that your son . . .' was killed by accident when the war was over? Why make a fuss about it? What about his wife and children? Thank God he was too young and can't have had any. Oh yes he had though; and she was expecting a baby.

'Dear Madam, I regret to inform you that your husband . . .'. More fuss; about nothing.

Rations were bad; potatoes disappeared and the men grumbled. The company was paraded and I explained; the shortage would not last long as it was only due to the army having to give up part of its rations to feed the civilian population. The company heard me in silence. They did not believe it; they did not disbelieve it.

Six months earlier there had been a popular song with a refrain – 'The war was over last July, It says so in "John Bull"'.

"You can't believe a word they say", a private said to me on reading some current example of official euphoria.

'We are holding the enemy in our battle positions at Tincourt'. I had read the lie out to my mother. Wonderful stuff, good old tape for holding enemies in their battle positions.

"Do you know", said an open-eyed incredulous young officer, "that where I was a chap rode out on a horse, right in front of our position, outed with his trumpet and sounded the Cease Fire. Then he rode back! Can you beat it?"

"Well! What did you expect him to do?" asked Carter drily.

"Where I was", said another, "the Boches spent the last five minutes blowing off every round they had. Of course our chaps let fly a proper barrage. It might have been the Somme again – wonder how many people lost their lives in that last little joke."

There were rumours: the Guards had refused to go on parade; the Guards had mutinied at their depot.

"Sir!" saluted Sergeant-Major Cannon, "Company refuses to come on parade."

"Tell them not to be so bloody silly." Off he went.

Here was a fine state of affairs. I had not the remotest idea what to do. All this stuff about the Guards – devilish awkward if it turned out to be true. Now my own company! I felt I would break out in a sweat at any moment. Suppose they still refused. They were nearly all new men, recently trained miners; they hated the army. They did not know us, their officers. If I had not been scared I would have laughed at an implication that had they known us – what fine chaps we were, comrades in arms and all that – they would *never* have mutinied. *If* they knew us it would be a ruddy miracle if they obeyed at all.

"Sir!" I wish to hell he wouldn't make me jump by being so hellish military. It was as bad as the clicking door in the Trappist monastery

at Mont des Cats. Each time it clicked it made us all, every officer in the place, duck the bullet, curse and swear and do it again at once as the door clicked open again.

"Sir!" I knew it was Cannon. I was only pretending, to gain time, like "Is Captain Bion there? You're wanted up the line sir."

"Yes, Sergeant-Major?"

"They won't come out sir." I knew it. What do I do now? No idea. It was with surprise and relief that I heard myself say, "Tell the Lewis gun crews to fall in with their guns at once. Post them to cover the huts."

"Sir!" Blast him! Those clickings were getting on my nerves. He was back again in less than five minutes. "They are in position sir. Six guns facing the huts."

"With the hill behind the huts?"

"Yes sir."

"Go and tell the men again – 'Don't be a lot of bloody fools'." He hesitated. I knew he was going to ask me what he was to do then. I still had no idea. "If they go on being idiotic, call me."

"Sir!" Those damned clicking heels of his. Anyway it might be his last chance of being military. I wished to God I didn't feel so scared! "The war was over last July. It said so in GHQ orders." Had anyone told the Boches?

Sergeant Cannon again. "They've come out sir. They are on parade." I could have wept with relief. "I'll be out in a minute Sergeant-Major. They can stand easy till I come." What was I talking about? Of course they could – there was nothing else for them to do.

Alone in the hut I wiped the sweat off my face and tried to stop my trembling. At last I couldn't stand it any more and walked onto the parade ground.

The guns were in position, glistening. The crews were looking at me intently; I could *feel* the penetrating curiosity. The company were fuming, angry. Wherever I let my eyes rest I fancied that the answering glance was angry, resentful, humiliated.

At last Sergeant-Major Cannon reported, "All present and correct sir." I told him to stand at ease.

"Sergeant-Major Cannon tells me you fellows didn't want to come on parade. You forget the wars not over – this is only an armistice. We'd have looked a bloody lot of fools if the Boches has come over

there" – I pointed my stick at the hills behind – "and caught us while you were all stuck in there."

While the officers were preparing to move their men off to the various section exercises I watched and carefully paid attention to the Lewis guns ready for action behind. Then, before they moved off I went over to the guns and carried out a minute inspection as if it were an ordinary everyday routine. I chose not to remark that they were loaded with ball ammunition.

At last they had all moved off leaving Sergeant-Major Cannon and myself alone. "Tomorrow I want all the men to parade in sections. Give them some instruction on military law, King's Regulations and a snappy bit about the Mutiny Act." He seemed to want to say something, but changed his mind, saluted and went off.

There was some kind of football league competition in which all companies in the brigade took part. In our company excitement reached fever heat because the miner reinforcements we had received included some first-rate footballers who were extremely serious about the game however much they hated the army and the war. Keeping, without in any way being aware of it, to my groove, I showed the conventional enthusiasm for the company to which I was now second in command. I watched the football; I knew the names of the stars of the team; I knew enough football to appreciate the matches which were often skilful displays, so this aspect of my duties was not at all unpleasant. But I was puzzled and slow to understand that whether I was interested or not was a matter of complete indifference to the men. The majority of the company were reinforcements but even those who were not shared the new spirit, a spirit which could be expressed by a civil but slightly incredulous 'Who the hell are you to be asking about our boys, their matches and successes?' I was now twenty-one and had not experienced what it was to be an antiquity, a survival from a remote past.

Carter, Hauser and I were the only officers who had served with the battalion from the start in England. The Quartermaster, who of course did not go into action, was the only warrant officer; of the men there was none. Even of those who had seen more than six months fighting there was a mere handful. Though we did not realize it, we were men who had grown from insignificance to irrelevance in the passage of a few short years.

Christmas released a delayed, hectic, hysterical excitement of celebration. 'Everyone suddenly burst out singing', wrote Siegfried Sassoon. Our singing had alcoholic overtones; there were too many missing faces. The jubilation of the winning footballers was not greatly different from the jubilation of those who had survived fighting. Keep the men occupied; sport, trophies, homes 'fit for heroes to live in', anything to hold at bay the dark and sombre world of thought.

A mixed crowd of some two thousand troops toiled – it could hardly be called 'marched' – up the hill to Shoreham camp. I had been demobilized immediately after Christmas. An old woman stood at the door of a respectable but dreary house, waving a Union Jack. Anxiety about the reception she would be likely to receive from a lot of 'rough Tommies' made her voice tense. "Welcome home boys, welcome home", she squeaked. For a moment there was astonishment at the apparition. The impulse to jeer was suppressed. "Give the old fool a cheer", said someone and to this invitation the succeeding files somewhat embarrassedly responded. "They might have given us a band up this bloody hill."

At the station the train to take us to London had no lights. In the growing darkness a man clambered onto the roof of the train to protest.

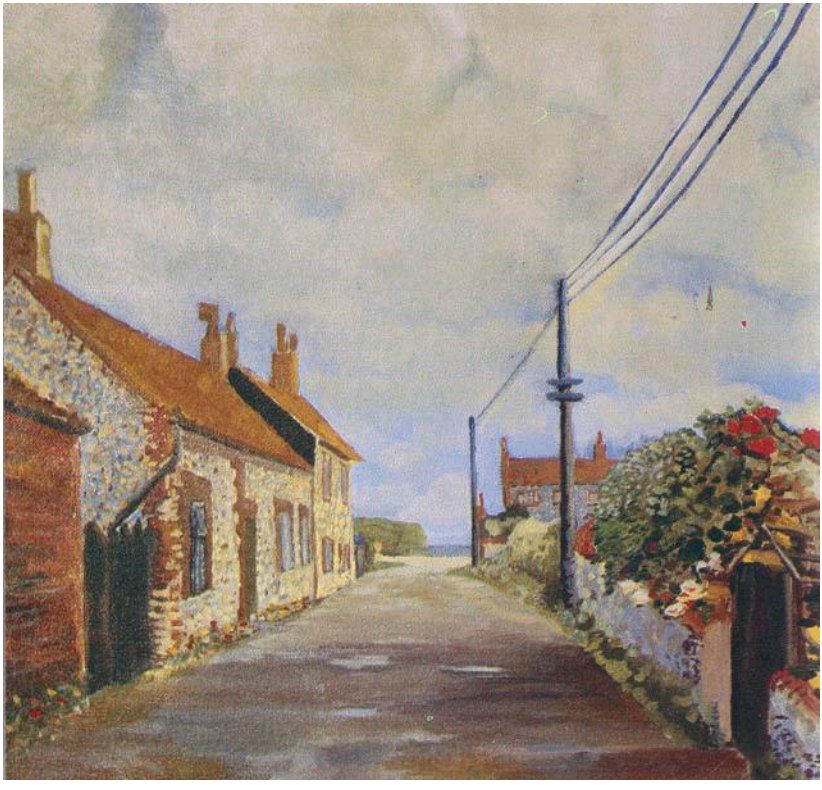
"It was the same after the Boer War. It's the same now. Ruddy heroes when you're wanted; so much muck when it's finished. It'll be the same next time as this."

And as things have been they remain. Insignificance to Irrelevance in a few years. No one could explain that if the British Empire did not share the same fate it was because of a few poets. But what can poets do against nuclear fission or, even more potent, some germ being carefully tended and nurtured by biologists of marvellous skill and foresight – as is the way with that clever tool-making animal, man?

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME II



The Little Cottage, Norfolk
Oil painting by WRB

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KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume II): 978–1–78220–230–1

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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ALL MY SINS REMEMBERED: ANOTHER PART OF A LIFE

1985

All My Sins Remembered: Another Part of a Life and *The Other Side of Genius: Family Letters*, were first published in 1985, in a single volume, by Fleetwood Press, Abingdon; this was reprinted in 1991 by Karnac Books, London.

"Envoi", by Francesca Bion, was delivered at the Memorial meeting for Dr Wilfred Bion at the British Psychoanalytical Society on 20 February 1980 and published in the *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, *8* (1981): 3–5; it was reproduced in the original publication by kind permission of the Editor of that journal.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In this volume, Bion's autobiography continues with *All My Sins Remembered*, the title of which is derived from the line, "The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins rememb'red", from Act 3, Scene 1, of *Hamlet*.

The Long Week-End and *All My Sins Remembered* cover the first fifty years of Bion's life. Partly because Bion's depressive feelings figure strongly in the pages of these, Francesca wished to give equal representation to the optimistic and loving side of the man, so she published with the second book a selection of his letters to the family, written during his last thirty or so years, giving it the title, *The Other Side of Genius*. The letters require no further introduction and speak for themselves.

The "Envoi" by Francesca Bion, which concludes the book, is taken from her contribution to the Memorial Meeting for Wilfred Bion held by the British Psychoanalytical Society on 20 February 1980.

All My Sins Remembered

Another Part of a Life

FOREWORD

The first volume of Wilfred Bion's autobiography, *The Long Week-End*, covered the period up to 1919 when he was demobilized from the army and for the first time had to face civilian life as an adult, unqualified for any profession, or indeed for any occupation by which he might earn his living. Although incomplete and only in first draft, I wanted to publish the remainder of what he wrote; but it leaves us with a thirty-year blank and, even more unfortunately, an abiding impression of unrelieved gloom and profound dislike of himself.

This sad, self-searching testimony would on its own present a false picture of the life of a man who came to derive great happiness and reward from his marriage, family and work. The clearest evidence of this is provided by his letters to us, written with no audience in mind and no need to lay stress on his sins of omission, confident of our love and understanding. Almost all his creative thinking and writing were done during these years when he was at last released from the confines of war, bereavement and a sense of hopelessness.

We make public some of these private communications because they tell the reader so much – not about us, his wife and children, but about him, the husband and father. We are proud to have been his family and the recipients of his love.

Francesca Bion
Abingdon, Oxfordshire
1984

1

Oxford University, at which I found myself the next day – my mother having already returned to India by the earliest boat on which she could find a passage – was a prospect that had aroused feelings of awe since the day I had been granted an exhibition; so the reality of Oxford railway station came as a shock. A hundred or so undergraduates milled around looking for their luggage. Once it would have been porters they sought, but now there were no porters and no wealthy golden youth to employ them. In army style we went directly to the barrows, the trunks, and hopefully to the taxi queue.

Thus opened for me a period of unparalleled opportunities to which I remained obstinately blind. I was overwhelmed before I started by the aura of intellectual brilliance with which Oxford was surrounded. Actual contact with my contemporaries intensified my sense of inadequacy. They came from schools with famous names; I did not. They came from homes with a university tradition; I did not. "Here comes Bion with his non-conformist hat on", was the kindly jest with which a fellow in my rugger team greeted my arrival to board the bus for an 'away' match. It embarrassed me, but it also brought some relief – at least it was not that bloody 'college cap'. No one said, "You there, you wearing that pious mug on your face, na poo! Finish! 'op it!" Oxford was very kind and tolerant.

"Oh, by the way," one distinguished interviewer had said, coming to the end of his time and, I suspect, his resources for believing in my suitability as a candidate, "any initials?" I was puzzled. I thought hard. At last light dawned.

"Oh, W. R."

It was his turn to be puzzled. "W. R.?. No, no! I mean MC or something."

Feeling extremely embarrassed, I owned up to the DSO and ultimately the Legion of Honour. I explained that the latter was almost unavoidable as I had been in action "near the French" – as if I 000
had contracted something contagious or infectious. He looked at me incredulously, glanced at his notes on my record – which was athletically outstanding if nothing else – and decided at last that it made sense. Obviously Dumb. I think we were both relieved. After I had escaped from the room I wondered if he had the Legion of Honour. It was only too likely.

My lack of brains, or I suppose I should call it 'intelligence', now began to be a serious source of anxiety. I remembered how much it had worried me at school although I had maintained a degree of painful anonymity because of my great skill at games and by my being placed, probably through despair of finding any suitable niche for me, in what was called the Sixth Form (History Specialists). These – there happened to be only one and I was 'it' – were understood to be scholarship candidates for one of the two main universities.

The army had given me a short respite from the shame and fear of sex, though there too I feared death in action would come to me as a sign of God's wrath and final requital. Now the whole ghastly business was back again. Games, thank God, again to the rescue. DSO, Mention in Dispatches, Legion of Honour – all very fast – fading reassurances, which at best had failed dismally to convince me, although they had a wistfully reassuring effect on those who contemplated my heroic qualities as manifested in their effulgence. Blown up, I assumed heroic proportions concealing a scholar, concealing an athlete, concealing a physical wreck, the fast diminishing victim of 'self-abuse' concealing 'masturbation', 'expulsion' and, most terrifying of all, 'General Paralysis of the Insane'. This last had a certain horrific grandeur about it like *Paradise Lost*. More often it had no grandeur: like two Canadian undergraduates, baseball enthusiasts, utterly alien objects foreign to everything I understood by the name 'Oxford', who had as their theme song an endlessly reiterated tuneless ditty, 'Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust; if the wine don't get you then . . . the women must.'

How we laughed! Those were the days! How shocked they were in the bar of that little pub! All except one fellow. Ah, but he was a knowing one. He was the manager of a small travelling theatrical company. He became confidential one evening in the Common Room

and told the two Canadians, his hosts, that they could have any one of the pretty girls in the choruses he engaged, or else . . .! He made an expressive gesture; "Oh, they know all right. Believe me they know what it is to find themselves without a job – these days!" The small fat Canadian began to drool; the tall one's eyes became hard. I was a hardened prig, but not so hard as to stop the anxiety mounting uncontrollably as I wondered why I felt so ignorant, so shocked. 'Dominus illuminatio mea'; my eyes travelled down to Oxford's towers.

Oxford was wonderful. Some power must reside in that 'Dominus illuminatio mea' – like 'Quo fata vocant, quo fas et gloria ducunt' – which could never be overwhelmed, not even by the unspeakable misery that seemed always to be threatening. There was nothing heroic about that misery; just utter loneliness and menace, the more frightening because there was nothing there, nothing more comprehensible than the snigger of a sexual joke. The theatrical manager reminded me of Clifford, the same knowing narrowed eyes, the would-be smart suit, the pointed cheap shoes and, I suspected, the same buoyant personality with a supply of self-esteem ready to flow into and instantly seal up any puncture which might lead to deflation. There were no other such visitors to our Junior Common Room.

One day in the High I saw a familiar figure, small, dapper, well-cut hacking jacket, finely polished boots, a disdainful sneer. I called out his name before I could stop myself. I knew he had seen me, but clearly had not heard me. For so small a man it was wonderful that he could command so great a height from which to look down upon Oxford and its dwarfs. "They have gone", I could almost hear his mournful bleat "Even my dear friend the Prince." But he had some wit; at least, I thought his Tank Corps Marching Song was amusing:

We'll all go a-tanking today,
For fruits of their marriage we'll pray.
If it's not a Rolls Royce
Which I'd pick out for choice,
Then a nice little Ford bright and gay.

I'm sorry he cut me dead; at the time I felt I might have helped restore his wounds, for at least I preferred him to the far bulkier, heavier mass of bounderdom that had threatened to horsewhip him. In fact I

could have done nothing for that terrible depth of misery and isolation. Where do butterflies go when the climate becomes inclement?

The poor Major. I see him now, dapper in the sunlight as he turned away from this figure from his past. But I was not as disreputable as he thought, and not as disreputable and shoddy as I was to feel when again I was to suffer rejection – far more serious than anything he could inflict upon me even in his days of glory as Adjutant.

I met Quainton in Oxford one day; he was attending a Workers' Education Conference. It did not occur to me to ask if he ever met the Major, though since they admired each other they might have established a continuing friendship, and the fact that both were sheepishly superior to me might have been compatible with a curious similarity in the lack of common interest that I felt. It was not a repulsion – that suggests something too positive – but a cold glazing of the eyes as if a thin film separated us and prevented what might have become a mutual hatred.

"How are things?" I asked Quainton awkwardly.

"Oh, fine", he replied. "Fine", he repeated with a lack-lustre insincerity.

We did not meet again. How well I remembered my envy of his frank open ways, his charm, his privileged position with the Major. "Fine!" "How are things?" "Oh fine!" The words form the epitaph for a friendship which promises fair but turns sour and ends in disillusion.

I went into the Parks. It was a lovely day; sunny, with a few fine weather clouds glowing in the blue sky. I had some time to spend for I was early for a meeting with a friend with whom I was going swimming. As I lay on the grass and waited, my mind wandered to the bleak cold and darkness of Ypres and how grateful I had felt to Quainton for his cheerfulness and sturdiness at that dark time. What a change had come: I wished I could help him as some small way of being grateful. It was impossible to get past those lustreless eyes; to talk more after that "Fine!" was an intrusion when one had been warned, "Keep off!"

Carter had come to see me a week or two before. I liked him and he liked me. He and Hauser and I had, unlike Quainton, lasted the war. *That barrier* did not exist, yet barrier there was. We could not reminisce about the war; and we had nothing else to talk about. Hauser and I never met again and we did not correspond. I could

not imagine that we would write or meet even if the opportunity had come. It seemed impossible that our shared war could mean so little: yet that appeared to be the case. But I soon realized it was not so: the experience, however short the meeting, was not forgotten; I could forget names but I could not forget the people.

2

Newman was in his study – the same that had once been the Holy of Holies of poor God – Almighty Shaw. He welcomed me and very soon we were talking about his House and its affairs. I thought he was ill at ease. His wife came in and we had tea. She was a large, florid woman, unattractive by virtue of a prominent robust Roman nose – rather like a bird of prey I thought. Her brother was the music master who had been one of the heroes of myself in common with my contemporaries and previous generations of school fellows, the composer of the militant Christian battle hymn of 'Onward Christian So-ho-ho-hol-jers on to the cookhouse door!' He and Newman were great friends and so it was no surprise that a romance had sprung up between Newman and the musician's sister. It was said, in keeping with Newman's well-known loyal and statistical bent, that he boasted that their union bound together four school families and their seventeen genealogies.

It was not an easy party. I was awed by weight of reminiscent but somehow jaded grandeur. It was not simply that the lady's beauty was of a kind that eluded me, clothed as it was in the fleshy armour of rectitude, but . . . but . . . well, when she had gone and tea had been cleared away, Newman leant forward and in confidence laid bare the mystery: he had taken to drink. In shocked and almost whispered terms he confessed. I suppressed an impulse to laughter, which was so out of keeping with his unmistakably serious distress. I had noticed that he had offered me a glass of sherry before lunch; he had I think even taken one himself. I remembered thinking at the time, how unlike the school I had known before the war when the puritan sanctity could not have been invaded by – sh – alcohol. Alas; Oxford and the West Front had disguised from my own eyes the deterioration

in my moral standards, a deterioration so great that I had not even observed the depravity of my old friend – for even as a schoolboy I had been very fond of him. I thought he looked and was as nice and amusing as ever.

Later his brother-in-law gradually made matters clear. His sister, whom he felt fraternally obliged to protect, led an awful life though she never betrayed it behind her front of cheerful calm. Of course he, partly to preserve the innocence of his old pupil, could not tell me but hinted at terrible things which were masked behind the divinity of poor old Newman – 'Dr' Newman. He blew his nose, but inadvertently in pulling out his handkerchief he had dropped a condom on the floor – he was wearing his dressing-gown preparatory to going to bed. Smartly he slid a slippered foot over the offending object lest my insatiable curiosity should be prompted into activity. I had learned years before from Misses Evans and Cuff to keep a glaze handy for slipping over my tell-tale eyes. I did not see – well, not much you know – not really, if you see what I mean – y'know.

Nevertheless, I did not see; I did not see that peacetime was no time for me. I did know, however many pretty ribbons I put on a wartime uniform, that wartime also was no time for me. I was twenty-four; no good for war, no good for peace, and too old to change. It was truly terrifying. Sometimes it burst out in sleep. Terrified. What about? Nothing, nothing. Oh well, yes. I had a dream. I dug my nails into the steep and slippery walls of mud that fell sheer into the waters of a raging, foaming Steenbeck. Ridiculous! That dirty little trickle? If blood is thicker than water, what price the thickness of dreams? Suppose broad daylight was not thick enough to keep out the terror. Suppose I was so terrified that I ran away when it was really a battle. I woke up. Was I going crazy? Perhaps I was crazy.

There was a boy in the school whom I liked. He was intelligent, a fair athlete and used sometimes to have tea with me. I thought he must have a very attractive mother – perhaps a sister. He told me that his mother was coming to visit him; I suggested he should bring her to tea when she came. When the day arrived he said she would be pleased to come. In due course she arrived, alone.

She was a large, gaunt, flushed woman. I thought perhaps she was menopausal. She was shifty, uncommunicative, breathed deeply. I thought she was hostile – didn't like me.

Still, the tea went off all right though she was not the beauty I had hoped for. In fact not very much more beautiful than Newman's consort. Poor Newman – what a battle-axe of a woman. Yet a battle-axe, I reflected, was quite a useful thing to have around if you knew how to wield it, and if the times were not propitious. Not that I wanted one.

It was not till the next day that I discovered that times were not propitious: the Headmaster wanted to see me in his study. Once I would have trembled at this inauspicious invitation; not now however. I went cheerfully.

He looked grim. He said he had very serious complaints of my behaviour. He had been informed that I had made sexual approaches – Good God! What was this? – to this same boy. Who on earth had said this? The boy, said the Headmaster, when questioned by his mother, had said he "never wanted to see that blighter Bion again."

"But", I said, "she came to tea with me yesterday and I had sent the invitation through him!"

"Yes, well I don't think she should have gone to tea with you, but I want your resignation – I think you should leave the school at once. "

I felt my senses had left me. But not all. "No", I said, "I shall be glad to leave at the end of term, but I shall not go now."

The interview ended. He would think about it. So would I – if I knew *what* to think about. The time when, filled with panic, we had all run down to the prep school when the gate to the playing field broke? When I had 'run away' and abandoned my tank at Sequehart? The cold and exciting draught at the end of school chapel sermon about poison in a boy's food?

It is true I had had enough of schoolmastering. I would have liked to have had the guts to chuck it up. But to get the sack? No. And certainly not for this nameless crime. One of this Headmaster's favourite questions to a suspect was, "Have you ever grasped his privates?" He had not asked me that, and I remembered how funny – and also repellent – the query seemed to me; I could hardly believe that the story was true. No: I would *not* resign.

Next day the Headmaster told me that since the mother did not want the boy questioned, he could not insist on my immediate removal; I was to leave at the end of the term.

It was a hideous term at a hateful place and I did not know to whom to turn. I realized years later that I should have demanded

legal advice in considering the possibility of an action for damages. But the stormy seas of sex I could not navigate any better than Palinurus. I visited the bottom of this monstrous world beyond the stormy Hebrides. How deceptively calm that term, how friendly were my friends!

It ended, but had I been unfortunate enough to be as wise before the event as after, I might still be the extremely inept and wretched schoolteacher I was then. Who is wise enough to do better than fate?

At the end of that term I went to stay with a friend and on arriving at his home I was met by the most beautiful girl I had ever seen – his sister. She had just finished her last term at school. So had I, but I was not nineteen but twenty-six. I might excusably have been regarded as a mature man of experience and a war hero to boot. She was intelligent and, as I say, beautiful: I was immature and inexperienced except for a passion for a girl at my sister's school. She had been a year older than I, and I was then fourteen. Since then – nothing. My hand trembled when the holiday came to an end and I said goodbye.

"It's awful you must go", she said.

"Perfectly priceless", I blurted out.

"What?" she replied astonished.

I nodded speechlessly to her dress which she had worn particularly for me. Her dismay turned to a joyful laugh.

Later there came a box of wild roses, freshly gathered. Then she came to London to study massage. We met. Irresponsible to the end, I proposed and was accepted; she could not be expected to see through all the war-hero trapping. I could hardly discard the blessed gift of licensed bravery covering the nakedness of which the culture, the mental universe of which I was a part, seemed luckily unaware.

3

"Why do you want to be a doctor?" the Dean of the medical school inquired. I was not going to say, "Because I want to be a psychoanalyst."

Bertie took his feet off the desk preparatory to telling me there was no vacancy for me as a medical student. In my desperation a voice prompted me to mention I had played rugger for Oxford University. Bertie put his feet back on the desk; we had not finished yet.

"But", I added in a spasm of conscience, "I had to forfeit my Blue because I tore a cartilage in my knee just before the Varsity Match."

Before he had time to take his feet off the desk again, I blurted out that I had captained the Oxford University swimming team. I did not know that the hospital had a swimming team, but I saw that Bertie was again wondering if the unprepossessing mass of ineptitude before him concealed some possibility that had not so far emerged. So did I, though even less hopefully than Bertie. The gold and enamel of the DSO, the bright red ribbon of the Chevalier, did not thaw the freezing cold within. However . . . in or out? 'In' it was.

But first I had to pass the preliminary examinations in University College, London – the Inter. B.Sc., a trivial exam for any ordinary schoolboy. However, thanks to Oxford University, I had begun to learn that I was uneducated. 'Ob, sub, super, post and pre', said Kennedy's Latin Grammar. 'A right-angled triangle' had various 'properties'. French partitive articles likewise; and . . . and . . . what else? University College taught me that there was nothing else. Back to school I went to learn what I ought to have, but had not, learned.

If I tried to assess my assets I could hardly contemplate the truth; I still wonder how I remained afloat instead of being submerged by my ignorance. I was reputed, wrongly, to be brave – only just having

escaped being branded with a cross, bronze, for valour; wooden, to mark the spot where my body lay. I was ignorant alike of love of man or woman. Visibly I was in good health; even mentally I was sombre but not depressed. I did not regard my acceptance by the medical school with any enthusiasm; I cannot now understand the solidity of the foundation of self-satisfaction and complacency that carried me through a period of failure and a prospect of even worse to come. I remained dangerously unaware of the universe in which I continued to live.

When the dons at Oxford spoke of my poor showing in Schools as due to the strain of recent fighting, I assumed that they were trying to be kind about a blockhead. I had a marvellous time, but I did not realize that that was because Oxford was a marvellous university where I had the chance of meeting and forming friendships with people of an age and outlook which could change me for ever. At school Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* had opened my eyes to Milton; to those two I have never ceased to have feelings of love and gratitude which no uncomprehending sneers of T. S. Elliot for Milton, nor my inability to grasp Ruskin's s *Unto This Last*, nor hints that he was less than perfect, have ever undone.

I had left the army with eyes firmly closed against the possibility that there might be something, known to Milton and Ruskin, beyond the shabbiness of the Great. University College, London (which, it was said, could at most contribute £11 as contrasted with the Queen's College's £260 to undergraduate education) made me feel at home. I did not like its long echoing corridors; I did not like Jeremy Bentham or what he said about his and my old college. Nevertheless I felt that here in this part of London I was more nearly in my class.

I owed much of this to Elliot-Smith who lectured with consummate ease and mastery on the brain. Why I should obtain comfort from that I do not know, for I was fully aware that I could never see my subject so clearly that I could draw a section of the brain as if seen, say, through the sagittal plane, or any other that he chose to illustrate his point. My appreciation of his lectures was the more odd as I did not feel I would ever be able to pass an anatomy exam.

I owed still more to the kindness and generosity of Sir Jack Drummond. He invited me to dinner at his home; he also took me to a dinner at the Savage Club. It was a fascinating evening: the wit and skill of the speakers there was far superior to anything I had heard in

my Oxford days. Thanks to Drummond I began to break away from the misery of my athletic failure, my scholastic incapacity, my military inadequacy from which I had been unable to free myself, being tied to it as much by my need to deny it as by lack of any chance to prove otherwise.

There was an unpretentious dining club to which Drummond also asked me. The charge for the meal was, I think, three shillings and sixpence and it relied on the College kitchen to provide it. This must have put a strain on the staff, for the kitchen was not usually intended to provide any food beyond lunch for the students, and afternoon tea which was the last meal of the day. On one memorable occasion I was flanked on my left side by Polunin who was then working with Diaghilev's productions of Russian ballet, and on my right by Sir Ronald Ross.

"Diaghilev is a remarkable artist", said Polunin. "I remember when we had completed our rehearsals for the first performance of *Petrouchka*, Stravinsky – who secretly considered the music perfectly able to stand by itself as a work of art and regarded the ballet and decor as redundant – was satisfied. Fokine, who was responsible for the choreography, was similarly pleased. Only Diaghilev was disquieted. 'No', he said, 'it's not quite right.' 'Not right?' said Stravinsky, who was echoed by Fokine. 'Why? What's the matter with it?' they challenged him. Diaghilev said nothing but remained troubled and anxious. Then his expression cleared. 'I've got it! Instead of ending with the death of Petrouchka, his ghost must appear.' The other two went off and considered the matter: Stravinsky to write the extra bars of music; Fokine to arrange that Petrouchka's head and shoulders should appear above the wall waving his drooping arms in final convulsions. They did a last and emended rehearsal and all agreed that Diaghilev was right. That was what made him such a wonderful producer; he could see what the rest of us, absorbed in details, could not see."

Many years later I remembered this story when I saw Carl Ebert's production of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at Glyndebourne. I wondered if the epilogue to the emotionally searing end, the Rake's death in lunacy, had indeed been unconsciously a consequence of what Stravinsky had learnt from Diaghilev.

It was on this same occasion that Polunin was saying, "I don't expect anyone here would recognize the language of my childhood",

when Ronald Ross overheard him and immediately took up the challenge. "Speak a few phrases", he said, and interrupted after the first few words – "Moscow dialect." "Correct", conceded Polunin, who had not met Ronald Ross before.

I was aware that my experience was restorative, but I was not aware of the hurt that needed to be restored; nor of the poison that kept the hurt festering. Today I still do not know; but the conjecture has a quality which distinguishes it from other more benign speculations: the request for my resignation from my old school and, as I later realized, my cowardice in agreeing; the sense of guilt; the bitter resentment at my experience of entertaining to tea a woman who was accepting my hospitality after she had demanded my resignation in a conversation with the Headmaster – the only common feature was sexual dread, which now, with eighty years of experience, I regard as indistinguishable from dreadful sex. For a time it was merely an athletic activity, a muscular movement which made life bearable. In this it contrasted with guilt which made life unpleasurable and did nothing to show me the way to behave unguiltily, unwickedly, unnaughtily.

'The First Class Honours degree for which his tutors hoped was probably impossible after the recent strain of fighting.' What strain? I did not remember any strain – only the disastrous injury to my knee before the Varsity match. Then the shocking disgrace.

But . . . but sir, she has just been to tea with me!

I agree – she shouldn't have done that. But *you* shouldn't have given him an expensive leather pocket book. That was most indiscreet.

But sir, I didn't give him one; all I ever gave was a small notebook with tear-off leaves.

But she said he told her he never wanted to see "that blighter Bion" again.

Had nobody ever come across an adolescent boy who expressed impatience when being badgered by a persistent mother about a schoolmaster of whom he knew nothing and cared less?

What I know now suggests that there is no shortage of people ready to display the many and deplorable qualities of one's physical and mental self. Therefore to swell the number even by one is to make a redundant contribution to what is in any case an uninteresting exhibition. So – why write an autobiography? Because it is interesting to

me to review the life I have led in the universe in which I have lived. Just now, for example, I remarked to Francesca – whom I have not yet had reason to mention – on the noise that a small distant plane was making and how sad that on this year's visit to France there seemed to be more than usual of these tiresome gnat-like mechanisms; and she reminded me that when I was staying with Dudley Hamilton in Southend I was as excited as I could very well be because on the last day of my stay we saw a real aeroplane flying! Bleriot had just flown the channel in 1906 – some four years before. Four years later it was still exciting to read Belloc's prestigious pronouncements in *Land and Water*. How knowledgeable he was. But not so knowledgeable as Kitchener of course, who made the profound invitation to join the Army for – 'Three years or the Duration of the War'. It must have been the most intelligent pronouncement that fiercely moustached mouth had ever uttered.

Studying medicine was hard work. I knew what it felt like to be me and to have the feelings that I had, but I had no means of communicating them to a person not myself. I also knew what people not myself looked like; I could only see that they did not appear to be experiencing pain. I learnt what various parts of a cadaver were called. I learnt it 'by heart'. Not so when I saw a girl medical student with shapely legs spread her thighs apart below the level of the dissecting table. *That* observation was not painfully made and I did not have to articulate it. It only required a nudge for my male partner immediately to grasp what I meant. He had no difficulty in appearing to be absorbed in his anatomical study while transferring his gaze from the cadaver to the living thighs. *Cunningham's Anatomy* taught me, with pain and difficulty, to learn what a woman was; my intimidating conscience would not allow me to learn, or even to allow attractive young women to teach me. Who would guess that an ex-soldier (successful), ex-schoolmaster (unsuccessful) did not know what a woman was, and did not know how to find out – except under the discipline of *Cunningham's Anatomy*, and then only in so far as I could exclude the medium of pleasure? I had had the best English Public School education – or so my parents thought. The conclusion would appear, logically, to be inescapable. There must be something wrong with me.

But – the spring wild roses! Of course I knew what they meant – any fool would know that, and what I knew was what any fool would

know and not a scrap more. It was at least a year later that an intelligent and wise girl medical student told me with hurt surprise, "I don't think you know what a woman is." She was quite right, and I still had many years of painful learning ahead of me.

I knew that I did not know, but that was a piece of self-knowledge of which I was ashamed and did my best to disprove. When I was chosen to play for the Tank Corps XV at rugger against the French Army team, we had leave for the match including a night in Paris. Our hosts naturally thought that the English He-men would want to go to the Folies Bergère, and as English He-men we were anxious to behave in a manner fitting He-men. I watched, unthrilled, a negro cracking a whip as he drove a supposed team of white women round the stage. Not even an erection – as I feared. One of the professional women came and sat, to my embarrassment, on my knee with her thickly painted face close to my mouth. After a moment or two she began to mock my lack of enterprise. "Ah – trop jeune", she said, not unkindly – my round baby-face needed more than a DSO and Legion of Honour to appear that of a warrior. "Ah, trop jeune", and to my intense relief she got off my knee.

I escaped. But Oxford had no curriculum that would fill the gaps in my essential needs; Oxford had not taught me how basically stupid I was. The donor of the wild roses escaped; it was long before I understood that a girl could be lucky *not* to have married me.

For many years I do not believe I thought of marriage at all. Of what is now recognized as 'sex' I thought a great deal, but it was inseparable from ideas of temptation (nice feelings), madness, purity and high ideals. Having no contact of any kind with girls was easy – I thought they were a mean selection of selfish bitches mostly anxious to tell tales and get brothers into trouble – and contact with boys was restricted to those of unexceptionable morals and preferably athletically successful. However, there were the roses. At the time they were inseparable from 'romance', innocence and love. Later I thought of them, and similarly provocative behaviour, as something that did not cost the donor much. Though it had been painful for me to contemplate any action which cost me thought, consideration and trouble – such as would be involved in finding a box, packing the flowers, taking them to a post office and buying stamps – I did not feel that this involved any such expense of spirit for the girl.

4

Oxford, London, University College Hospital, Suburbia as usual. I had not realized, and nor had my contemporaries, that the world, the small part of it that was the British Empire, was not as usual, any more than a familiar landscape is 'as usual' just before a Krakatoa erupts. The earth's crust, or the molten sea of lava beneath – as usual?

Just as molten rock solidifies into lava so did the emotional turbulence – white hot energy, revolt, rebellion – cool and solidify into further layers of crystallized debris as it welled up, not only in the world of men and women but also in that minute particle of it of which I have experience and which I am able to observe for myself. As I become aware of thoughts and feelings of my own they become identified. A gross example is this writing which is inseparable from making marks on paper: some of them are marks of a kind which conform to accepted rules of grammar, articulate speech; others do not. I cannot know what it is my intention to record until I have recorded it; and then I shall not know what I have recorded nor what it is of which I am a record. In this respect I do not differ from the fossil which is, unknowingly, the record of something which a sentient being observes and then tries to understand the meaning of what he has observed. So I have, snail-like, left my trace on this piece of paper. If I were a great artist I might leave a sculpture of the god Hermes; it would cause someone to say, "Praxiteles passed this way."

All this is damnably uninteresting. What happened to the girl who sent the roses? Do for God's sake get on with the story.

I am – blast you – if you wouldn't keep interrupting.

I am silent.

What happened to the girl? I wrote to her – I do not now know what. She came to London to study a branch of para-medical skill.

I thought I was in love. I proposed marriage one evening inside St James's Park.

It sounds just like Gilbert and Sullivan – 'I heard the minx remark she'll meet him after dark and give him one.'[1]

I thought you were not going to interrupt. Perhaps your comic opera pair would like to take over?

Sorry – do go on.

It was not funny: it hurt. It still does. I had no money, no prospects. No wonder her family didn't want it. They thought she was fooling – just trying out her skills. But her mother said that this time they felt she really meant it. I agreed, but in fact I so little believed it and knew so little about being in love that I did not understand what her mother had said or what the girl meant either by the roses or by "yes". Indeed I had forgotten till now that her mother had been evidence of the genuine sincerity of the girl's response to my proposal.

Well, get on. What next?

It was awful. I had no money; she had no money. She was not qualified; nor was I. I could not learn anatomy or physiology. I felt completely unworthy of the confidence which Sir Jack Drummond had in me; my athletic achievements were a fraudulent passport to being accepted by the Dean of the Medical School. She said good-bye, vowing eternal fidelity, at Victoria Station. What's so funny about that?

I thought Waterloo was your waterloo – excuse the joke.

No, you damned fool – Waterloo was where I left for France after my investiture with the DSO. I had said good-bye to my chalk-complexioned mother an hour before. This was when 'All troops recalled from leave' – when 'our troops were holding the enemy fast in our' (non-existent) 'battle positions'.

I suppose you would have built the Maginot Line?

That war had not even started when I said good-bye at Victoria station.

Go on: I'm thrilled to bits. She vowed eternal fidelity.

Well, no; not exactly. In fact a week or two later I was shocked to have a letter saying she wanted to break off the engagement.

In short, you mean her love had died?

No, you are mixing it up with Betty – and it was not her love that

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[1] *Iolanthe.*

had died. *She* had died. And again I felt I had killed her by not staying with her when her pregnancy was nearing term.

You blamed others for posting you abroad when they could and should have sent some younger analyst?

I did, but they were not to blame. They knew nothing about looking after people over whom they had authority. One of them was going through a crisis in which he was afraid he would not get knighted for his services; another had his time fully occupied in admiring his reflection in the mirror – the Colonel's uniform is very seductive.

You seemed to think that about the colonel of your tank battalion before he was reduced to the rank of captain. But what about your reflection in the mirror in which you saw yourself saying good-bye to Betty?

At the time I thought she was being very brave although she looked deadly pale. And I reassured her that the West Front, with the war nearly over, was much safer than London or even Bournemouth. The long distance call from Brussels to the War Office brought the reply, "Can you hear me? The baby's very feeble. Can you hear me?"

"Yes, yes" – get on with it blast you; I'm not deaf. "Betty *died* last Wednesday."

"Thank you very much. No, no, not at all. I can arrange."

You sound very efficient.

I did: I was. Brussels is a nice little town. Betty would like it I am sure. Betty? Dead, he said. She shall not grow old as we who are left grow old. Old; so old. But not improved.

I suppose – although I had the reputation of being somewhat solemn, not to say dull, gloomy and a bit stupid – I have always retained a belief that 'it can't happen to me'. A box where sweets compacted lie.[1] My music shows there is always a 'close' and all must die. But what of it? Death is a characteristic feature of life. And if death is the ultimate fact then logically it is absurd to behave as if it could be avoided. In this respect death is not a matter of practical consequence to anyone, but it is the animate, continuing-to-live object that has to bury or otherwise dispose of the dead object. If your eye offends you pluck it out: if your cancer offends you cut it out: if your mind makes you uncomfortable . . . what then? 'La réponse est le malheur de la

[1] *Virtue*, George Herbert.

question'.[1] So if you have a questioning mind give it an overdose of answers. 'I know', 'Yes, I know': when any of these labels are on the bottle be careful about the dose; learn your psycho-pharmacy and what truths are lethal.

The girl made sure that I should find out that she had said, "Even from the first I felt my engagement to Wilfred was a mistake; even while I was engaged I felt I was in love with Pat." The dose of venom made it certain that the wound would not be, like a skilful surgical operation, aseptically carried out, but would fester and remain open.

[1]Maurice Blanchot.

5

Alfriston is a charming village to visit. Lord Amulree invited me to spend a week-end at an abandoned coastguard station, National Trust property, on the cliffs a mile or so to the south-west of Alfriston. At the pub called The Tiger I heard a yokel say, "Yes, my boy's regiment has been posted abroad. Some place they call the Khyber." He hadn't heard of it, but I had; the name Khyber Pass was as familiar to my ears as were the words 'Gordon Highlanders' or 'Kitchener' or the 'Relief March to Khartoum'. Historical debris, like the 'Ridge' on which was our old house in Delhi years after it had been the home of the British Army quelling the 'Mutiny', and of General Dyer who 'saved India by a timely order to fire' at Amritsar. Of course some Indians got killed, but India was 'saved'. My parents found it most disturbing when their son began to believe stories that General Dyer's troops lost their heads and opened fire – and continued to fire their machine guns into the dense and helpless crowd of Indians milling around in the restricted square.

'Massacre' is a word; but the thing of which it is the name is . . . is . . . well, it depends on your point of view. After long experience I found that there was an artist who could show me the beauty of a butcher's shop. I would not have noticed that the Little House in Delft was beautiful if Vermeer had not drawn my attention to it. So why is it that I remained blind to the beauties of a massacre at Amritsar or of the preservation of soldierly discipline even when provoked by the helplessness of a crowd?

What has all this got to do with your friend at Alfriston?

One day I was alone at The Gold Cross, a pub at Alfriston whose unpretentious appearance could not compete with the rival, wood-timbered elegance of The Star. Baudelaire's description of the useless

glitter of a distant star and the unapproachable majesty of the beautiful woman, shows better than I could ever do the fundamental superiority of the comfort of The Golden Cross in contrast with the then fussy emptiness of The Star and its patrons. I walked to the beach and lay disconsolate and alone, lamenting the rocks and the seaweed, which made the possibility of a swim uninviting, and the lack of 'human face divine'. As if in response to my unspoken thought, a young man and an extremely beautiful young woman approached. "Hullo Wilfred! Whatever are you doing here?" It was the girl who I had grown used to thinking was my 'fiancée'. The word, with its fidgety quality of suburban and aristocratic gentility contrasted sharply with the storm of feeling in me. Before I could reply she had become aware of it and moved off on the supporting and possessive arm of the young man.

'None but the brave deserve the fair', and one thing I had learnt in war was that I was not – never could be – 'brave'. When I had recovered my composure I moved along to the part of the beach where they were sitting. I apologized for my rudeness, saying I had been surprised and disconcerted. She offered me a small apple by way of sharing their lunch. I took it and moved off. They said they were moving further east along the coast; I returned to the company of my thoughts.

Later that day I was walking along the river back to my pub when I found myself caught up by the pair. No, they had changed their minds and were going to stop the night at Alfriston. I had their company. I was wearing plus-fours – a costume which I felt did not suit me and which seemed to be more than usually ridiculous and out of place. So was my state of mind.

The next morning was cool and fine. I stood outside my pub thinking of nothing in particular when 'he' came along. He struck me as a pleasant and unassuming fellow as he came up and started a conversation. 'She' arrived. As I write this account I am aware that it might be a confession made in the course of a police statement – I shall describe the crime later. "Where were you?" she asked, surprised that they had not seen me earlier. I said I had stayed at what was alleged to be a smugglers' inn, which I thought was less pretentious than the famous Star – "not so boarding-housey", I said, remembering the days of suburban Make-Believe in Stoke Newington before the flames of World War Two had brought

poverty and dignity to the Capital of the British Empire and the World. "Oh no! It's not at all", was her 'correct' reply. I remained physically present, but I ceased to have any further conversation with her.

I am sure that must have been a terrible loss to her. No wonder you feel you are making a police report!

I cut short that week-end by making the transparent excuse that I had been recalled to London. I was haunted by that walk along the reedy path of the river. If I had had my service revolver with me I would have shot him. Then I would have shot her through the knee in such a way that the joint could not be repaired and she would have had a permanently rigid leg to explain to her future lovers. I would not give myself up because that would not be enough of a mystery to occupy the newspapers. But when in the course of ordinary routine enquiries they closed in on me I would make my report.

If I may say so, it sounds pretty dull.

Even if I had had my service revolver and ammunition – a most unlikely conjunction of events – I think I would have been deterred by that possibility. Who knows? Of course, in England you are not supposed to support your claims to masculine superiority by force – not unless you have a platoon of troops and an unarmed crowd on which to test your machine guns.

I doubt very much that a good journalist would think he could do much with a sordid little murder such as you visualized. What did you do?

Went back to Gower Street and misery. Now –

When is 'now'?

Say 1978 for convenience – I think humiliation is the price I paid for yielding great power to someone else. It seems that this is the cost in misery and suffering to any one person who surrenders power to another.

Always? Or only when the surrender is made without circumspection?

Two people who rush rhapsodically to the state of emotional bliss of perfect union pay in suffering for having evaded the toils of discovery of each other.

Reminds me of nothing.

Then try this: *She* took on a ready-made hero (certified genuine and authoritatively guaranteed) without the toil of discovering who or what *he* was. *He* took on a ready-made cosmetically guaranteed beautiful person without the toil of discovering what, if any,

difference there is between a boy and a girl, a wife and a girl, a husband and a boy, a wife and a mother, or a husband and a father.

Don't be silly – how are they to find out? It's not in the schedule of any training course.

No, they find out the hard way by going to England to school, by not doing sexual things, by 'winning' military crosses, by becoming independent, twenty-one, earning their own living and 'free' to do whatever they like. It hurts. I took a – literally – hell of a time to discover it, and I didn't like hell or the long sojourn in which I was detained. And yet I am not Milton – and even he was just a Cambridge undergraduate who wrote Lycidas, backed the wrong side, although he thought it won a war, and –

Oh well, we all know about Milton, and who reads Paradise Lost *anyway?*

I do – thanks to Ruskin, another gifted, tiresome throw-out.

You might include Mohammed and Jesus and Moses. And while we are at it, why not God? He never got into a decent club or football team.

They do these things better nowadays by democratic election procedures.

Aren't you being sarcastic?

It's possible; I'm only human. Perhaps you ought to make allowances for God – He's only divine after all, poor . . .

Devil? Surely that's a contradiction in terms.

Only a contradiction in *terms* – articulate speech is in its infancy and has not reached a degree of refinement necessary for clear thinking.

Well, so far you have only got to medical school without having the slightest success with your genitalia, for all the numerous potential mates – male and female.

World War Two wasn't much more of a success than World War One.

Are you referring to personal, private, integer success? Or social, public continuum success?

Both. The progress is difficult to assess in view of the undetermined direction.

Ah! So Homo Sapiens has a bit to learn about Cosmic Navigation.

This particular Homo-not-so-Sapiens has. How the hell am I to get through Inter. B. Sc. with my lady-love being free to do just whatever she likes?

You will have to learn to do just what you don't like, when you don't like it, and whether the result is what you like or not. See the next fifty years.

I was incapable of being interested in what I now know to have been subjects which were of even greater relevance and importance to me than the subjects I failed to learn at Oxford, though they also, I find now –

When is –

(Don't interrupt; I'm thinking) – it would be useful if I could search through the debris of my mind, the ashy remnants of what once was a flaming fire, in the hope of revealing some treasure which would reconstitute a valuable piece of wisdom – a spark amidst the ashes that could be blown into a flame at which others could warm their hands.

What about your Inter. B.Sc.?

I got through by one mark – so I was told.

You must have been a master of the art of not quite falling off the fence.

It was extremely uncomfortable.

How do you think you and your girlfriend did in the combined assault on the Inter. Marital Sc. exam?

Failed – obviously.

You certainly did not get a Fellowship at Oxford.

I wouldn't even have dared to think of it.

Or the Headmastership of your old school.

Luckily for the school and for you.

I think it is just as well that there was a sexual barrier so that you failed to marry any of your boy-friends.

I do not remember any whom I would have liked to have as my husband – or parent to my children.

Any of your male colleague's spouses?

God forbid –

Perhaps He did.

I did not enjoy Inter. B.Sc., and getting through by one mark was only one aspect of a long experience of teetering along being a remarkably lifelike specimen of a bloody fool. Yet I think I remember, or imagine – I don't even now know which – that there was a time when I was not one.

When you got your DSO perhaps.

Don't be so ridiculous. I was never such a fool as not to know

that if that sniper had aimed at me as skilfully as he did at Captain Edwards I would have been dead.

There were times when you were not obviously sensible; for example, when you left your tank –

It is difficult to relate being 'sensible' to taking part in war.

Or 'in love'.

Does anyone know what that is? God knows and He, as they say, won't split. Anyhow, I was not in a philosophical or contemplative mood, or I might have noticed that when we met again she was disappointed that I seemed to have got on very well without her.

You might also have noticed that she was only a young girl and not a mature woman. Anyhow, how much longer are you going on with this extremely uninteresting and commonplace story?

It was not commonplace or boring to me.

Well, you read it then.

It was very painful to me; there was no doubt about that part of the story.

> *It was a lover and his lass that o'er the green cornfields did pass.*
> *Prithee pretty maiden will you marry me?*
> *Hey, but I'm doleful, willow willow waley.*
> *Nobody I care for comes a-courting – therefore Oh willow waley oh –*

I think you've got it muddled up.

I don't mind if I have because I'm not telling the story of my life. Those who want to write the story of their lives have a problem: that problem is not mine, and my problem is not theirs.

I cared at one time what happened to the girl and felt it as my problem, but I was invited in no obscure language to mind my own business and told that her business was not mine. Here I am trying to tell the story of *my* business – part of which was the problem of existing.

6

The 'analyst' to whom I had gone for 'cure' said it would require about twelve sessions to dispel the anxiety from which I was suffering after my scholastic and athletic failures at Oxford. As I could muster the requisite fee for twelve sessions by using the remainder of my army gratuity, I took the plunge. In due course I exhausted my resources for the twelve sessions so I borrowed from a colleague (as he now was but who before the war had been my history master) and, since he was a kindly man, my 'analyst', who allowed me to accumulate a debt. It was in the course of being 'analysed' that I had been sacked from my job, sacked by my extremely beautiful fiancée, and was well on the way to failing to get medically qualified also. The debts amounted to about £70 to my analyst and £30 to my colleague. The sum of £100 was truly terrifying to me in my parlous state; in contrast to my finances, the acquisition of a fund of failure seemed to be inexhaustible. So I stopped my attempts to be cured.

In this context it was very comforting to be offered a chance of curing an adolescent boy, the son of an army General, by using the same methods as had been – so far – unable to achieve the anticipated cure.

Who anticipated it – you or your analyst?

I don't know how much I believed it. I had half believed the surgeon's story that my torn cartilage would be fit for the Varsity Match. But I didn't consider that a half-belief, or even a half-cure, warranted my risking Oxford's chance to beat Cambridge, and accordingly told a disappointed Moresby-White that I could not be included in the team. I did not, however, tell the Dean of the Medical School that I was no good as a prospect for the UCH cup final team. After all, having a torn cartilage was not likely to stop me being a doctor so I do

not consider myself at fault in being accepted as a medical student on the strength of my non-existent capacity as a rugger player.

My 'Feel it in the Past' analyst –

You have not explained this phrase.

He had a phrase which he used whenever the patient – myself in this instance – complained of some unpleasant occurrence. The theory was that some traumatic event in the patient's past life was 'repressed' and therefore caused him to have unpleasant sensations associated with the 'past' trauma but not related to the present in which he was living. As I contemptuously put it, "If your girl runs away with a rival today, don't worry, but feel it in the past." There is a kind of mad logic about it which was peculiarly convincing and impervious to my – then – critical capacity.

What about this infernal problem of Inter. B.Sc., learning anatomy and physiology, earning enough to pay £100 in debts, and not being sunk (without a trace of course) by your partner?

I could not find the answer.

So . . . you passed by one mark!

That is *not* funny: it may be psychoanalysis though. Anyway, Dr Feel-it-in-the-Past sent me the adolescent boy. I did not have much chance to tell him to feel it in the past because he dealt with that problem by not coming, telling his father he came regularly, and pocketing the fee which, though small, did at least defray his expenses in travel away from the General. It couldn't last: the General, smelling a rat, came to see *me*. It wasn't any good my telling him I was not a rat or to 'smell it in the past'. Another ghastly failure to add to my growing collection.

Didn't you have any *successes?*

I felt like the Indian student who is said to have added to his list of achievements 'Failed B.A.'. My ex-girl-friend's hostile "You seem to have got on very well without me", left me unable to reply, "Oh no, I can't get on without you", or, "Oh yes; I got on very well without you for years before I had ever heard of your existence." Yet I knew there was a right answer, and that I did not know what it was.

Do you mean you were unsure about its moral correctitude?

No. What added to the difficulty of the problem was that there was no moral doubt about its moral correctitude, but none the less the answer was wrong.

51 per cent seems to be your chance of success.

As a working indication it is not very helpful because it is not easy to distinguish between a score of 49 and one of 51.

At this period I became acquainted with Freddy John Poynton who was one of the chief physicians. I was, as a result of passing the Inter. B. Sc., entitled and even expected to present myself at his ward rounds. His comments on medicine, himself and his fellow learners were always pleasantly astringent. "The Vandenberg test of liver function", he said, "is extremely accurate. In cases of certainty it is always certain and positive; in negative cases it is negative; in doubtful cases it is doubtful." In other words, I thought, in real life it is useless. But in real life tests *are* useful as a way of appearing to support the existence of an impartial, scientific procedure on which one can rely as a substitute for one's own fallible judgement. The fallibility of my Self had by this time been amply demonstrated; nor was I able to feel any greater conviction about Selves other than mine. For example, Dr FiP had assured me I could never find another mate to equal 'her': this was certainly in accordance with my own opinion and clearly with the opinion of the Lady herself. But there was no available evidence to convince me that anyone, least of all myself, could fall back on my Self. There was no one else: I had tried God, but whenever I fell back on my faith in God I felt I was making a fool of myself and such religious experience as I had; there were 'Nigger' my prep school master, Chips, Chas, Bobby, and Sammy who could never understand why his dog, known to us boys as Sam after the Headmaster, would not answer to his proper name when called. Now I can see that the poor animal did not know his proper name any more than I did. As God had not been a great success, it was hardly surprising that the various human beings whom I had admired, adored and worshipped turned out to be inadequately equipped for the part I wanted them to play. Also, I seemed to lack the qualification to be an adequate human being even in the apparently lowly role of worshipping or adoring from afar. This made things difficult because the hospital, with whose wards I was now to become familiar, had a truly remarkable staff – Wilfred Trotter, Charles Bolton, Freddy John Poynton, Julian Taylor, Batty Shaw, Bill Williams, and He of the 'butterfly percussion', so remarkable because when he percussed a chest he did so with such delicacy that the unbelievers, including me, could not understand how something

so ethereal as his palpations and percussions could yield any information at all. Still, he was Irish and I tried to believe that he shared with his race the quality of being 'fey'. Being 'fey' I understood to be a spiritual quality not quite holy but not quite devilish either. After one of these ethereal examinations he would draw us aside out of ear-shot of the patient, thus demonstrating the delicacy of his concern and arousing the patient's curiosity to a fever of impatience to hear what was being said about him. One of the physicians' clerks would be sure to pass it on later; I could not because I was not one of his clerks. But even if I had been, I could not have passed on his diagnostic summary, which was communicated in terms as delicate as his examination.

Charles Bolton was as earthy as – I shall call him MacWhitter – was spiritual. But at least I knew what he meant, though I was not medically sophisticated enough to appreciate what he said. I was careful to carry out my clerkly functions to the best of my ability, as Charles – for all his easy-going manner and assumption of disillusioned devil-may-care-was not a person I felt disposed to be casual with in professional activities.

Wilfred Trotter was small and neatly but powerfully built. His strong hands had a beauty which could not by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as the product of a manicurist's cosmetic skill. I remember the near horror with which I saw him enter a skull with powerful blows of a mallet on the chisel he held. Such was his control that he could and did penetrate the hard bone and arrest the chisel so that it in no way injured the soft tissue of the underlying brain.

Once a week he saw, with his attendant dressers of whom I was one, new and old patients who came up to the hospital from their homes and work. Julian Taylor also had his out-patient clinic and it was therefore. possible to observe the contrast in styles of two brilliant, world-famous (at that time) technicians at work.

Julian Taylor found it difficult to tolerate fools gladly. This was particularly noticeable to me from my centrally placed position of the fool. Now I would allow myself the favourable title of ignoramus rather than fool; I also think it wiser to regard the patient as ignorant rather than foolish – though of course he could be both – and I was in no position, in view of my knowledge of my history, to be in any way confident that I was not both.

This point had been penetratingly clearly brought home to me by my ex-girl-friend. I was aware of her sneering contempt when in one of my last talks with her – it was in the bustle of Trafalgar Square – I tried in tongue-tied confusion and humiliation to behave as if she should keep me as a suitor. I thought it most unfair that I should be so humiliated by her, and at the same time that I was blameworthy for being so contemptible. Later I understood these matters better, partly as a result of experiences such as those which I am describing when I compare Julian Taylor and Wilfred Trotter.

J. T. could not tolerate the response to his enquiry "What is your trouble?", "It's my kidneys doctor." "Kidneys! What do you know about kidneys!" (or liver, or stomach, or whatever other anatomical structure or physiological function to which the patient chose to refer). It offended both his medical knowledge and his sense of propriety. The patient, frightened at having given offence to such an eminent authority, would close up and volunteer no further suggestions lest a further storm be evoked.

Trotter, on the other hand, listened with unassumed interest as if the patient's contributions flowed from the fount of knowledge itself. It took me years of experience before I learned that this was in fact the case. When a patient co-operates so far as actually to present himself for inspection, the doctor from whom help is being sought is being given the chance of seeing and hearing for himself the origin of the pain. No need to ask, "Where does it hurt?" – though it would clearly be a comfort to have his query answered in a language that he understands. The anger that is so easily aroused is the 'helper's' reaction to an awareness that he does *not* understand the language, or that the language that he *does* understand is not the relevant one or is being employed in a manner with which he is unfamiliar. Trotter's undisturbed friendly interest had the effect of eliciting further evidence from the patient; the fount of knowledge did not dry up.

It was said that when Trotter did a skin graft it 'took'; if Taylor did a skin graft – with equal or maybe even greater technical brilliance and accuracy – it did not take; the body rejected it; it was sloughed off. This I did not see, but that the story was told was itself significant of the impression that was created by the two men on their students.

Trotter's lectures seemed dull; there was nothing dramatic or spectacular about them. The reason for this lay partly in my own ignorance which precluded the pleasure that I might have obtained

had I known enough about the matter on which he lectured, although when Elliot-Smith lectured on the brain I could see the brilliance of his spontaneous drawings on the board. Trotter did not draw such aids to comprehension but he spoke with an authority, a mastery of the subject which was unmistakable.

Oh, my God! Just as I was hoping to go to bed this ruddy woman has to come down the slope (not slippery) into Casualty. "Why do you have to come at midnight? Couldn't you have come earlier?" She is apologetic. She knows it was wrong not to come earlier, but she has three kids who had to be fed and as her husband has deserted her she has no one to leave them. . . . "Oh all right! All right! What's the trouble?" What a bloody nuisance these poor women are – why can't they marry faithful husbands? Who knows? Why does a skin graft take? Why does it slough off? The operation had been properly, technically performed. They were married in Church, but the marriage did not take, so now – no bed yet. I could yawn my head off. But if I go to sleep what dreams may come? Who is to be sure that they are 'only dreams'? As for this autobiography . . . Truth? Or cosmetically acceptable fiction?

Do you mean, Mr Trotter, that I have to know what I am talking about? Do you think I might find a girl who would want to be married to me? And be a parent to our children? She might think I was brave; on the other hand she might not, and I don't like that much. Betty, pale-faced even against the unusual snow of Bournemouth, tried to believe the men were all right – my Colonel, my chiefs, and even my self. And for that I have never been able to exempt myself from cowardice. I didn't know. I didn't know – no, but I should have known.

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The operation was a simple one, not likely to present any difficulty to a really capable surgical technician. Clearly there would be no point in alarming the parents of the child in advising the operation for cleft palate. The anaesthetist was capable; she was also beautiful – no point in alarming anyone by causing them to question her cosmetic qualifications. They looked beautiful in the curriculum vitae. It was a beautiful curriculum vitae; it was also a beautiful day and the surgeon was in a good humour. He and his anaesthetist engaged in amusing banter as the operation proceeded with exemplary smoothness.

"I think her heart has stopped beating sir", said the House Surgeon.

"Good Lord!" said the surgeon. "Quick! When? . . . Massage her heart!"

No good; no good. The child is dead.

No more. Quite spoilt our day. House Surgeon's job to tell the parents – there's been a slight mishap. As you would know – anyone would know – there was nothing technically wrong with the operation. Of course Wilfred Trotter wouldn't have known it was a fine day and just the time for a little harmless banter – he took things so seriously. He was a bad-tempered man; I even knew him be bitingly sarcastic about his extremely able theatre sister. "But Sister", he said, "I didn't ask you to answer back!"

Even Trotter made mistakes; I was not swearing when I clicked my tongue with vexation at not being able to grasp yet another Spenser Wells. Yet . . . yet . . . The operation was over and he was sewing up the wound. And I, and no one else in the relief at the completion of a tense and dangerous operation – not technically simple like a cleft palate – noticed that needle lying in the wound. Damn it! Why the

hell should I risk getting half-murdered by opening my mouth? Simpler to let them find out in X-ray afterwards.

What a funny voice! Who is that talking in the theatre? That bloody fool again?

"Sir, there's a needle lying in the wound." Such a queer voice.

"Needle? Where?" Not at all funny voice – angry.

"There sir."

He picked it out and completed the sewing up.

"There", he said, handing me a piece of blood-stained thread, "that's what you want isn't it?"

I think I could have worshipped Trotter for that remark and gift. Not particularly witty or brilliant, but unmistakably said as only a great man could say it.

What about the mishap with the child?

All ended well by the House Surgeon telling the parents there had been a . . . misfortune. "Nothing serious?" asked the mother. No, no, not serious. Only your child is dead. They will get over it. Now – what about the body? Would they like the hospital to make the . . .?

As the reinforcements entered Singapore harbour, Julian Taylor had to pack his kit as he was to be senior surgeon at the Military Hospital. It was time to land. Unfortunately two of the most powerful battle-cruisers in the world had just been sunk by Japanese dive-bombers; the decks were not armoured sufficiently powerfully to protect the magazines against that sort of suicidal attack. So two powerful insurances against the loss of Singapore had disappeared, and Julian Taylor, with the rest of the reinforcements, landed into captivity. No doubt Taylor was able to teach the Japanese surgeons a lot about the technique of surgery. Of course he would have the best para-medical services and most attentive surgical audiences during the hours of daylight; not much opportunity for banter because you never know if the Japs understand a joke. J. T.'s sense of humour I heard was also never the same again after the mishap of being delivered, thoroughly technically equipped but otherwise as right as rain, into the hands of the Japanese all waiting and anxious to learn.

And the sailors and soldiers?

Well, any survivors could make (Great) Britain fit for heroes to die for. The contestants in the Third World War will have to get on without the British Empire. But how was I to get on without anyone

to advise patients to come to me? The adolescent boy was getting on; whether very well or not I do not know, but certainly without me. I would soon be licensed to practise medicine, but I knew virtually nothing about medicine and I was shortly to discover that the 'psychoanalysis' I knew was better suited to financial manipulation than the 'cure' of – souls? Can I minister to minds diseased? I was not capable of being any sort of parson. And the new problem which faced me was as unexpected as I now find it difficult to describe.

There was a practice, followed by certain people and strongly disapproved of on ethical grounds, of recommending patients to go to practitioners who consented to pay so much cash in return for each patient received. This method, known as fee-splitting, meant that a doctor who had achieved high position could make a very considerable income by sending patients who consulted him to one of these financially tied physicians or surgeons. The objection to this practice was of course that the patient would not be recommended to someone who would be most likely to know how to treat his ailments, but to someone who was willing to pay a percentage of his fees to the doctor first consulted. All the doctors with whom I associated were audible if not vociferous, in condemning such behaviour. It was accordingly something of a shock to me to find that Dr FiP expected me to pay him a percentage on every patient he recommended to me, and then and there proposed that I should enter into this business relationship with him.

"But Doctor," I said with all the naïvety and indiscretion of which my late Headmaster (now happily united with his Maker) had accused me when demanding my resignation, "isn't that fee-splitting?"

"Oh no, not at all", and he proceeded to make it clear to me, in ways that I regret not being able to make clear now, that this was not so.

However, though I may have had one other recommendation – thus proving the disinterested nature of his favours – our close collaboration wilted, dropped and died. I had learned that if I could not find some way of recommending myself to the favourable attention of some member of the universe of which I was a member, I would cease to be a member of anybody or anything at all.

I therefore rented a prestigious but sordid room in Harley Street and thereby launched myself on my first step as an artificial

representation of what I hoped looked like a Harley Street Consultant. The consultants to whom I had become accustomed, with the exception of the Lord of the Butterfly Percussion, had seemed to me to be persons of substance. If I, as I hoped, was a person of substance, I had not so far discovered any substance of which I should be glad to be composed. I was a nothing. "Feel it in the past", I used to say. But anything that I felt, I *felt* in the present – and most unpleasant it was.

What were your feelings?

My analyst was a charming and intelligent man. I thought he was proposing a fee-splitting association; I was shocked. This could have been a non-conformist moral theory – like the others I had learnt or acquired or taken for granted in my suburban, Misses Evans-Cuff culture. "I know what *you* would like – run down to Spivey's for me and get me . . ." I did not like it any more than I would like to join a partnership, have paying patients and part with a percentage of the fees. Clearly I did not like to run errands even if I hadn't anything else to do – or anything I could say I *had* to do. I did not want to spend my time or my money in the way that *they* knew I would like. Using up a whole packet of Vim – that I *did* like. It would have been no good saying, "I know what *you* would like – for me to use a whole packet of Vim taking the enamel off your bath. You would love it!" No one had asked me if I would like to lay down my life for my country. For a long time I thought I would get away with it until it became impossible to be insensitive to the evidence that if I went on going into battle I would be killed.

My cousins – Marguerite, Herbert and Arnold – were not like my analyst or my suburb. They came from the suburbs: Blackheath, S.S.M. – School for the Sons of Missionaries. But although the difference was unmistakable, I could not say what it was. These cousins asked me out during one school holiday and gave me one glorious day of freedom from what I now know was a virulent, vigorous, overpowering culture of non-conformist Protestant cant. Marguerite had made a curry such as I had not tasted since I had left India when I was eight. Then they took me to see a matinee performance of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. "Why does he say there are two damned spots of mud on his polished boots?" Herbert not only knew, but he didn't mind explaining. Trotter could not possibly help knowing I was a fool, but he was able to respect my feelings. I loved Marguerite and

Herbert and Arnold and Trotter though I could never have dared to admit it. Today, thanks to greatly increased knowledge (psychoanalytic), everyone knows that I had a 'hetero-sexual, homo-sexual, gastronomic love' for my cousins. And that of course explains everything – except to me.

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And now this war – with Germany of course. Ridiculous. Why is it that nobody did anything about it while I've been busy getting qualified? Well, thank goodness Mr Chamberlain had the sense to go and see Hitler and it has all been settled.

So I could go for two or three weeks to Church Farm, Happisburgh, in Norfolk, with a party of friends including actor John Glyn Jones and actress Betty Jardine. That at least was a success: Glyn Jones was extremely amusing; Betty Jardine, whom I had seen in *The Corn is Green* as Bessy Watty and also at the Players Theatre, was not so amusing, nor as attractive as I had expected, but was likeable. She was obviously a very fine actress. Nuisance about Hitler though.

I went on from Happisburgh to the south of France, passing through Monte Carlo which was on the route but otherwise uninteresting; nice petunias in the central square seemed to fill the neighbourhood with their glorious odour. But it was not sufficient to screen the less appealing stench of Hitler and Nazi Germany. It was easy to believe that the stink of the corpse of Imperial Germany mingled with the stink of decay from Imperial Britain was what the athletic perfume of post-war Oxford had failed to disguise in 1919. This was twenty years later and I still could not get the smell of Glory out of my hair. Roquebrune and its orange blossom, a walk to Monte Carlo, a good dinner and not very expensive vintage champagne, the soothing rhythm of the surf below my window – it was very agreeable. But I had no company except my thoughts, and twenty years had not been long enough to establish these with sturdy roots. I cared for nobody enough to form a dense, impenetrable barrier against . . . but surely I could not be called up to join the dis-armed forces of Very Great Britain? Once you have learnt, have been really taught that you are a

coward, no amount of official certification by the highest authorities is any more use than the first aid bandage slung across the gap where Kitching's chest wall should have been; it could not render invisible his heart beating away his life.

I would be called up or volunteer for the medical services. The not-so-glorious RAMC . . . Stretcher bearers! Stretcher bearers! Coming sir! Coming. Nice bit of water skiing today sir! Put you right in a moment! No thanks; I can swim anyhow. What about a nice Second Class in Finals sir? Or a Rugger Blue? The Nazis are on the verge of collapse; my sister who works for a fellow whose father owns a mine in the Ruhr, she knows for a fact that they *could not.* . . . Yes, thank you very much. I feel fine.

Time to get back to Harley Street. A nice cushy job in Hobart House perhaps.

Hobart House? Never heard of it.

It's just near Buck House.

You mean Buckingham Palace?

That's out of date now. Democracy has broken out. Oh no, not National Socialism; that's only in Germany.

I returned and gave my landlord notice as I thought there was no point in paying rent for a consulting room I could not use. My landlord was anxious that I should leave the Gordon Russell heater in place. So was I. It was utterly ineffectual, but it gave off a warming coppery glow – that is if you could not tell the difference between hot and cold but could use your eyes for purposes of self-deception. Not now – feel it in the past. So, if you did not like the present you could build yourself a beautiful cocoon and warm your hands and any remnants of a heart in the expensive cosmetic achievements of Gordon Russell. Yes, he could keep it as part payment for rent and the earlier termination of my lease.

I joined the army. As a major.

So you went on where you left off.

Not quite. The bilge had increased and what I thought was courage was only froth. I do not know what had happened to the spark of sincerity which had been blown into a flame by Marguerite, Herbert and Arnold. The years of this Second World War hardly bear being thought about. The froth, the bilge, the sanctimonious cant, submerged but never storm-tossed and therefore waiting, waiting unimpaired to take control. Surely, I thought, there must be some

remnant of decency left? Or was it all 'feel it in the past – it will pay you just as it paid me'?

What had happened to the spark of sincerity?

Just before the war I found I could not stand the 'feel it in the past' conspicuous consumption of erosive and corrosive glory. In spite of being warned that psychoanalysts were a lot of Jews, foreigners and psychopaths – most un-English in fact – I went to see John Rickman. In those days he was blunt-spoken and frighteningly impatient of cant. I liked him; I agreed, with great misgivings, to start analysis. To my surprise his interpretations appeared to me to be reminiscent of common sense; they reminded me of real life. I was astonished because common sense did not seem to be grand enough. Rickman's interpretations and his behaviour stirred up the dead embers of the pile of rubbish which was all that I could see of *Sesame and Lilies*, *Lycidas*, Colman's sunny study, Gilbert and Sullivan, 'days of fresh air in the rain and the sun', Oxford University, University College London, Jack Drummond . . . ashes . . . ashes. . . .

Drummond and his wife and child, on holiday in a caravan in the south of France, had been murdered. The trial was a farrago of lies which were so non-sensical that the successive declarations, "Now, I will tell you what really happened", could have been the refrain of a musical comedy – but for those three corpses. Rickman, however, seemed to be familiar with murder and that it could occur in France and England as well as in Soviet Russia, where he had lived.

I thought Rickman liked me. (Ah ha! I thought so – counter-transference!) But there was some kind of emotional turbulence, with its high and low pressure areas, which extinguished the analysis as far as Rickman and I were concerned. It stopped; though not before it had also extinguished any spark of respect that might have been entertained for me by my pre-psychoanalytic colleagues, and before I had penetrated far enough to be independent.

I was ordered to report to Western Command. So, with my travel voucher, up to Western Command I went. I found my way to the Medical Headquarters and was civilly informed that I should really have gone to Aldershot. "But . . . well, you know how things are in the army", the Colonel said before dismissing me. Fuming at the waste of time and money before recalling to my comfort that it was not now my time and money because I was being paid, I caught an express which happily was just leaving for London, rang up Betty Jardine and

had a very pleasant dinner at Quaglino's before I 'proceeded' – in the army I never 'went' anywhere – to Aldershot the next day. As I remember it now, that was the last time I experienced any sense of amusement for many years. Frustration, futility, anger and humiliation were commonplace not only to me and Betty, but to the society of which I was a member.

At Aldershot perfunctory squad drill was carried out as if it were, and indeed as it was, totally irrelevant. The title of the Corps, we were told in a lecture, was the R for Royal, A for Army, M for Medical, C for Corps. The regular officer who was lecturing said they did not want any such indiscipline as had led, in the 1914–18 war, to the RAMC becoming known throughout the Army as the 'Rob All My Comrades'. Well, I thought, thank God they learnt something in the First War. There were brave men in the medical services just as, I had very good reason to know, there were cowards in the combatant regiments. I likewise had learnt that I did not want to become infamous as a coward any more than I wished to be famous for being what I knew I was not. And now I was supposed to be part of the psychiatric service – dealing with the psyche. Not the soul exactly – that was the job of the Chaplain's Department – just the psyche if you know what I mean (because I don't). We had to tell the authorities if the man who was offering himself, or was offered by someone else, as suitable to lead his fellows in war had the right kind of character (soul, disposition, super-soul, id, ego, or super-ego?) for the job. The physicians went into the physical qualification that presented itself; the bodies and minds of the selectors were assumed to be adequate. The only one about whom I had any private information was myself, and I could safely say that I knew *I* did not want to go into any battle.

At first I was not engaged in choosing officers; nobody gave me any orders other than that I was to report for duty at Craigmile Bottom Hospital. Nobody there knew what to do with me so I was put in charge of 'shell-shocked' patients.

The first one of these was Polish, could speak no English and was said not to be getting on in the army. With him came another Pole as translator; but he could not speak English either. The interpreter was a man of predominantly cheerful disposition and was clearly ready to co-operate. However, by tapping his forehead, and similar signs, he made it clear that his compatriot was mad. With some difficulty, and the remnants of the French and German I had learnt at school, I

explained that I wanted to know what the patient was saying. This put my interpreter in a quandary: he tried hard to explain to me that the poor patient was 'mad', 'dotty', 'balmy', and therefore that he was talking nonsense and there was no point in his repeating to me what he was saying. However, he humoured me enough for me to gather that the patient had been in Warsaw and the Nazis . . . the Nazis. . . . At this point his sense of humour overwhelmed him and he burst into uncontrollable laughter so I was never able to join in the joke about my patient and the Germans in Warsaw – beyond its being excruciatingly funny. While he wiped tears of laughter from his eyes and tried to adjust to the further hilarity of my taking this crazy man's statement seriously, the patient himself sat looking at the interpreter with undisguised disgust, and at me as if to find out how long he had to participate in the trio. After a while the interpreter tried to control his mirth, but as soon as he managed to listen to the patient his sense of humour became too much for him. He excused himself saying that he had never previously had the experience of listening to mad men and consequently had not realized that they were so funny. I began to be afraid that the possibility of having such an amusing life would lead him to take up training to become a psychiatrist himself. As I had to do a ward round I seized the opportunity to end the 'consultation'.

The hospital authorities had no idea what I was supposed to do any more than I had. But this state of affairs was not regarded with equanimity by Western Command who saw no reason why I should be treated any differently from any other medico with the rank of major posted to them for duty. However, I understood that in fact I was to be transferred to the hospital that was nearer to Western Command Headquarters so that I could have access to the Highest Authorities and could thereby bring my influence to bear. I do not think Western Command wanted to have any influence borne on them by anyone; I had the curious fantasy that if the Germans had by any chance landed in Western Command they would have been defeated by the sheer inertia of the troops of which it was composed – and I myself was no exception to the prevalent lethargy.

Ultimately I obtained a pass to visit all the various units, including a Royal Navy establishment. The regular naval officer in command had been a Chief Petty Officer and had risen from the ranks. It must be remembered that an officer, RN, was traditionally no sailor but a gentleman: an officer who was a Royal Naval Volunteer Reservist was

a ranker and neither a gentleman nor a sailor – like the Mercantile Marine, ex-sailors but no gentlemen. This commanding officer, whom I liked very much, seemed to feel his position keenly; it soon became clearer to me what kind of difficulty he had to face. His wife, whom I also liked, had no problems as far as gentle birth was concerned, but . . . she had married a man who had risen from the ranks. She had therefore lost caste and had become, like my dear ayah, an untouchable.

The WRNS, unlike the ATS, was not under the same disciplinary code; there was therefore no military crime with which a Wren could be charged if she chose, as did one of them in this camp, the occasion of a ceremonial parade to cock a snook at the Camp Commanding Officer. With all the traditions of naval discipline behind him, and all the solid and gentlemanly traditions of privilege in front, the poor Commandant was at a loss. No Kings Regulations, no Debrett to be his guide; he had met his Trafalgar. Lord Nelson could do nothing for Lady Hamilton, and where Nelson failed it would be hardly fair to expect the Commandant to succeed. Besides, the Wren, unlike Lady Hamilton, was on the other side: the Commandant thought that a Wren officer would have to cope with the unusual Wren, private, able-seawoman. Poor man; he was glad to talk to me because he was so unused to finding someone who wanted to listen. Luckily the problem was no part of my psycho-job – psychoanalysis? psycho-therapy?

Robert Bridges, although he was Poet Laureate, had to dare to be a poet and take the risk of finding that he was not one, that poets are born – not made. He had good reason for knowing that there were such creatures because of his contact with Gerard Manley Hopkins who was a poet but was never made Poet Laureate. Poets Laureate are made, not born: I was made a psychoanalyst, but it soon became clear that I had not been born one. I could not imagine what I was supposed to be or do on the tour on which I was engaged when I met the British Lion whose non-existent tail was being twisted by the insignificant Wren. I went on with my tour – of which I knew no more than I knew of the ward round I engaged on as an escape from the hilarious Pole and the mad survivor from Warsaw.

Betty and I visited a unit in which the officers and men were rehearsing a variety show. One item included the popular song, 'Roll Out the Barrel'; they could not get it right. Betty told them to keep the time constant but halve the amount of action they were trying to

cram into the time available for the words; they took the advice and the entire performance sprang into life. The unit and its C.O. were pleased and grateful; some of it overflowed into being glad that I, the Command Psycho-Whatnot, should come again.

On another visit the commander of the unit and his wife were kind enough to ask us to lunch. It was most successful – and amusing. The wife was very envious of Betty's curl of white hair which showed up against the background of dark brown. This, it appeared, was then most fashionable so Betty was in the height of the vogue, but lucky enough to be natural and not a cosmetic cheat.

Our hostess said she used to be able to sing once. When she essayed a few notes it was to demonstrate that her voice had now gone. "But", she added defiantly, "I could sing once." She was in fact Lottie Collins who had starred in *The Maid of the Mountains*. I asked if she regretted the Old Days. "No! Once I vowed I would be rich, I would marry a lord, and I would marry for love. I have done them all – so why should I regret?" She did look enviously, laughingly at Betty's hair; she knew that Betty was in *The Corn is Green*, but her envy had the laughter in it which was also friendly.

9

What about this Command Psychiatrist job?

I had to get on with my command performance, so we did not dally over much but moved on to the hospital where all was well organized and miserable. I asked one man what he was doing. He was doing "Occupational Therapy". This sounded as if it were something similar to what I was supposed to be doing; 'therapy' at least sounded familiar although I had no idea what my 'occupation' was.

"Yes, but what are you *doing*?"

He seemed sheepish as he said he was sewing a doll's dress. I looked at his steel helmet, his rifle and bayonet and other kit; it was all laid out in meticulously correct order. There was nothing wrong with that military hospital; nothing wrong with the 'military' part of it anyhow.

"Do you use these" – I pointed to his helmet and rifle – "for sewing dolls' clothes?"

He looked puzzled and I checked myself. After all he could hardly be held responsible for his equipment. And for me to press the point would have seemed to be verging on sarcasm. Anyhow, what was I doing with my military insignia? Loafing around Western Command?

At my next unit the commanding officer suggested we should take a stroll together. He would bring his gun because he might be able to augment the mess rations if he shot some pigeons.

"But they are cunning beggars I can tell you. If I were to point my cane at them they wouldn't mind in the least. Yet if I point my gun – or even carry the thing – you can be sure they won't wait to see. But they'll be around again immediately I go into the next field. "

Pigeons know the difference between a gun and a walking stick; they would not be impressed by a social symbol of officer's rank – not

enough to fall down dead, though I have known a partridge with chicks trail an apparently wounded wing away from its brood. In the meantime what was I to do to justify my rank and prestigious title of 'Command Psychiatrist'? Theirs not to do but die; theirs but to command and fly.

J. R. Rees came to see me. He wore brigadier's insignia so I thought I could put my problem to him. He was an old friend of mine so I did not stand on formality. Neither did he; he made it clear to me how extremely successful they had been in getting the notice and support of the Army Commander. Had I seen the Army Commander? "Good God! What the hell could I say to the Army Commander even if I got an interview?" The mere idea! But the others had 'sold' the Matrix Test which was simple and effective and had been taken up with enthusiasm by the Army Commander.

Nobody, least of all myself, could have been surprised when my old friend had me removed to a lesser post where I would be more in my element. So, in a week or two I found myself and Betty driving away from Western Command to the Area Command at York. I was angry and hurt. What else poor Rees could have done I do not know and did not much care. I had got the sack. Betty must have been trying to believe that she had not made a terrible mistake in marrying a bad-tempered failure; I likewise was not in a frame of mind in which I wanted to admit even the possibility that this could be true.

A miserable journey. "Don't snatch!" she said in response to my impatient gesture to look at the map. I was rude; and anxious. Eventually we stopped for the night. Was it Bosworth? Or another scene of someone's Civil War victory? How was it possible to remain so ignorant of the history in which I had been alleged to have an Honours degree? It certainly did not illuminate that bit of history in which I was participating by driving my car from Chester to York.

The two colonels to whom I was subordinate were as civil as their station in life called on them to be. But in war there is no particular reason for joyful anticipation of the prospect of prolonged co-operation. They suggested a billet in Whip-ma Whop-ma Gate. No, they didn't know why it was called that. I was made aware that that was the kind of idiotic remark, a display of irrelevant curiosity typical of a psychoanalyst – or more exactly of me, the Elephant's Child, one who does not learn for all its questions. Betty was as curious as I was,

but she too learnt not to ask silly questions; there was a war on and no one could waste time on such –

How was York Cathedral? Had they arrested the ravages of the death-watch beetle?

York Minster couldn't be cared for in wartime.

What about Beverley Minster?

There was no time to visit those old sites. And luckily for us all, the two ancient Britons and I did not have to do any business together. I was to visit the 11th Armoured Division and its General Hobart. This took me a long way out of York.

After reporting to Divisional Headquarters I went to see the Colonel of the first unit on my list. I entered and saluted. There was something vaguely familiar about . . . he reminded me of . . . Yes! His name was Willis. I had just been awarded the DSO and was talking to a fellow near Merlimont Plage. He was upset because he had just been invalided out of the Navy for defective eyesight, which was considered to be good enough for a commission in Tanks. Land ships were no use to him however; the Royal Navy was all that mattered.

He didn't recognize me but it was the same young Willis that I knew. Last time he had felt at home because I had at least a week's acquaintance with the Royal Naval Barracks at Chatham: this time it was I who felt pleased because I knew he thought highly of me and I was feeling the need for recognition.

I explained that the idea was to get rid of any soldiers with poor ability who therefore would not be likely to make good Tank soldiers. I added with emphasis that I did not back the results of a Matrix Test against the seriously considered view of an officer about his own men. He seemed relieved; he suggested I fix up details with his adjutant. So I felt I could venture an excursion into informality.

"The last time we met I was in the 5th Battalion", I said.

He looked up in surprise. "Bion!" he exclaimed with the relief – which was mutual – that must have been experienced when Crusoe and Man Friday met; like the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land.

Is there any desert such as a sojourn amongst non-combatants?

Only once more, before I said goodbye to military service at the end of the war, did I have such relief. The farewell to non-combatant experience did not, and could not, bring me relief, but I did not

realize that it might be possible to know too much; the dose has to be regulated in accordance with the degree of stamina or resistance the soul can command.

I am: therefore I question. It is the answer – the 'yes, I know' – that is the disease which kills; it is the Tree of Knowledge which kills. Conversely, it is not the successful building of the Tower of Babel, but the *failure* that gives life, initiates and nourishes the energy to live, to grow, to flourish. The song the sirens sing, and always have sung, is that the arrival at the inn – not the journey – is the reward, the prize, the heaven, the cure.

What about Colonel Willis?

Oh! Of course. "That's right. The same. Merlimont wasn't it?" Better not ask him about being a regular colonel in command of a cavalry regiment (armoured, as they call it, but the only armoured part of it that I had noticed was the state of mind).

"I was seconded to the Cavalry – used to be the Yeomanry – to give them a stiffening of regular officers."

Privately, I don't think you are rigid enough Willis – too much of the sea about you. "How do you like the Cavalry?"

"Better than Infantry, but they say ridiculous things like 'his tank was shot from under him' when they mean his tank was knocked out."

Or his Navy was knocked out when they thought they had only got rid of a keen young lad for defective sight.

"Of course they don't like Hobart much." (So I had noticed.) "He is at heart an engineer and when he inspects one of his battalions, instead of doing it properly like a regular cavalry officer would, he puts on overalls and gets under a tank with a spanner."

"Yes, I can imagine they might hate that."

"And what made you take to medicine?"

"That's a long story – I hardly know myself. I don't like this war much."

"I don't think Hobart does either – wants to be at the Front. So did I, but there was hardly a front to be at."

"The Boche were a bit too mobile for the Maginot Line."

"The Maginot Line wasn't mobile enough."

"Like our old tanks."

"Oh yes. Now the old top speed of 4 m.p.h. is about the lowest they go."

"Have you got Whippets, or the heavy tank we had in the 5th Battalion?"

"We haven't either. There are only one or two tanks – enough for Hobart to inspect."

There'll always be an England – unarmed, betrayed, 'bitched, buggered and bewildered' was the slogan. Am I not supposed to be one of the Governing Classes? What for? Full Blues at games of one sort or another? Guzzling? Gourmet meals? Decorations? What, me?! Should I have been agitating for arms for the Armed Forces – tanks, aeroplanes, ships? No. No, just feel it in the past. Support the Establishment. And as things have been, so they remain. Does it matter who 'governs' England, Europe, Africa, the World? Or 'quis custodiat custodes'?

"I'm supposed to be seeing the General at lunchtime so I had better get off. What's he like?"

"He's a very good sort, but has put the back up the Powers-that-be and he is fed up because he can't get employment abroad. As he doesn't believe the Germans will land here, and nor do the Cavalry, he doesn't see any point in fiddling around with tanks which are out of date anyway."

"So they think horses would be more up to date? Or more picturesque?"

"I shouldn't ask him if I were you. He's pretty prickly and the war is a sore subject with him. Well, good luck – have a nice lunch. I doubt it though – they have an awful Mess; and Hobart, unlike the rest of his staff, doesn't care what he eats."

When I had walked and thought my way to HQ, I had still not digested what I had learnt so far.

"Ah! So you're the new psychiatrist. I don't want any mental defectives – I need intelligent people for my unit!"

"Yes Sir. That is the point of these tests."

"Matrix? I know what they are supposed to show, and most psychologists I have met seem to be pretty intelligent. They don't always, starting with myself, seem to be particularly wise though. Come on – say something intelligent."

"I am ready to start testing at once."

"Good. Fix it up with the units."

"Of course tank crews have to be more than simply intelligent sir.

" "I don't want any half-wits. The crews have to be intelligent."

"Certainly sir. But . . ." I wasn't doing very well. 'But me no buts' seemed to loom as the possible outcome of this talk. I decided not to risk getting involved in a conversation about Minds and wise agricultural labourers.

The meal having left my hunger unappeased and my misgivings augmented, I set out. There was no hope, and I harboured none, of any of the friendliness and co-operation that I had received from Willis. His was in fact a regiment in which the privates were mostly men of good education and I had reported to Willis that I saw no reason for not leaving good alone. Not so Hobart.

"What? You don't think any transfers necessary?" he bristled. The mere fact that I had reported so favourably aroused his suspicions. It was clear that he had anything but a favourable impression of his Division. I could see that though I might not recommend transfers, there was no difficulty about finding someone who wanted me transferred. The infantry battalion had far the best results and for once I thought the tests did not conflict with the impression that I received in interview. Hobart did not mind having intelligent infantry, but he was unshaken in his dissatisfaction with the intelligence of the cavalry.

And now for a meeting of the Command psychiatrists under the chairmanship of *the* Army psychiatrist (civilian). For me the highlight of this parade of our massed intelligence was one report: 'When the cavalry had horses, if the horse had a mental age of five and the rider a mental age of two, the respectable total could be assessed as a mental age of seven. But if the rider has a mental age of two and his mount is an inanimate piece of machinery, the combined mental age remains two. And this is not enough.'

This seemed to me to be an observation which was both entertaining and illuminating. It also came near to compensating for the exercise of compulsory attendance at a Command Conference. I cannot believe that the discussions I heard had any relevance to the selection of troops for battle or the selection of privates for training as officers. It was too late: fighting men and their leaders have to be grown. If the aim is to grow food should one not select the conditions which would be most conducive to the growth of the crop which is desired? It is not scientific to say, "Let there be land" and then, "Let there be peanuts." If one has land it would seem to be wise to experiment – to find out what would be likely to grow on that land. If the

land appears to be ideally suited for the growth of a Wehrmacht, whoever owns that land will have an advantage over a land that is suitable for growing thinkers, or poets, but not soldiers. If the land is surrounded by sea and the proportion of land to water is correct, then a similar advantage would seem to accrue to the aim of growing sailors or a Royal Navy.

Can we recognize the minimum conditions necessary for the growth and nourishment of a population of sailors, airmen, poets? Or will they decay and die leaving only a shell, as the accepted rules for a poem might stifle rather than protect the growing germ of thought? The pre-Islamic ode, with its almost obligatory description of the camping site and its previous occupants, hardly seems to afford the minimum conditions necessary for the growth of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, or Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale', or an Impressionist painting.

Excuse me – don't you know 'there's a war on'?

Just the thing for poets! Arjuna, don't argue! Krishna knows best!

10

Clifford Scott and Rickman both suggested that I should be posted to Northfield Military Hospital to take charge of the Military Training Wing. Lt. Colonel Pearce had agreed to put up with the consequences. He, like Rickman, Scott and myself, was an amateur medical soldier; he knew nothing about it but his badges of rank gave the impression that he did. I was still suffering from the DSO that had been inflicted, with my collusion, on me: the Senior Psychiatrist was suffering from having to appoint officers to the Shell-shock (as it was called) Hospital. None of us knew what shell-shock was or even if it existed outside the imagination of soldiers like me and Sergeant O'Toole who had to cope with the 'dumb insolence' of the little board-school slum-dweller, Allen, who had been considered to be just the stuff that heroes are made of, coming from a land fit to be loved by slum-dwellers who would want to die for it. Many thousands did not sing, 'Land of Hope and Glory', but 'Oh my, I don't want to die, I want to go home.'

Well, there it was: Military Training Wing, Northfield Military Hospital. All yours, Major Bion, DSO, Legion of Honour. Just the thing you would like to do, you Vim-wasting, bath-scrubbing, bloody little Oxford University Darling. If only I had a nice disposition like the little dog at Windsor Castle who had learnt that he would get a sweet biscuit if he lay on his side, I too would wag my tail and there would be no trouble.

I went to the programme room. Betty had gone back to London as the cast was touring with *The Corn is Green*; London hardly seemed the place for theatrical entertainment while the bombs were dropping. The chart showed all the possible activities available for soldiers who were being 'rehabilitated', that is to say, those who were on the

journey to return to their units, cured – of what? Their love of fighting for their country? Love of the privileged darlings of Oxford? Or love of the Military Training Wing? Perhaps I should find out. But this is thirty-five years later and all I have acquired are a few more questions. 'No doubt but ye are the people and wisdom shall die with you.' Job was a sarcastic old devil; no wonder he was never popular.

I was impressed by the chart – the number of facilities, the actual administrative feat of time-tabling. I wondered just how effective these therapeutic activates were. It seemed late to be arranging these facilities *after* war had broken out and the men who were supposed to be fighting it had, supposedly, 'broken down'. Nevertheless I presumed that titles of centres such as 'Engineering Workshop', 'Carpentry Workshop', 'Art Workshop' had a meaning. I found three or four privates languidly waving dusters at the windows. They were not saying, "Goodbye".

In the days when 'Art thou weary? Art thou languid?' together with 'Summer suns are glowing' were my favourite hymns, I was depressed; I thought that I would become depressed if I saw much more of Northfield Military Hospital. I asked them what they were doing. "Orderly duty, sir." I suggested they should wave goodbye to the windows and come with me to see what the rest of the hospital was doing.

I have already described the experience of Northfield Hospital elsewhere.[1] Now that I write an autobiography I can be frank about how it feels to have been, once, a participant, and now a *laudator temporis acti*. Predominantly it is a matter of regret that an opportunity to achieve something valuable was precluded by being petty. Pearce could not have been expected to know any better and he needed help. So did Rees. It is therefore hardly surprising that they blundered. I could have helped them to avoid the worst blunders. But by stressing their blunders and indeed behaving in a way that made it clear that I would get them into further trouble, I deprived them of help and contributed to their making further blunders. About my Self I knew very little; about Pearce and Rees I knew nothing. It was like the relationship between my crew and myself and the forty tons of useless steel sinking fast below the mud of

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[1] 'Intra-Group Tensions in Therapy', in *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers (1961)*. [Volume IV]

Hill 40; the Staff should have known about weather and ground conditions on Hill 40 in August.

How?

By asking their Intelligence Officer.

How would he know?

By being chosen for the job because he was intelligent. Clough Williams Ellis was very intelligent; that is why he asked me where I thought the subsoil turned to the alluvial. How the hell should I know?

You had been taught all about the Flood in Scripture; in Geography you had learnt about subsoil from Becker Shaw.

I did not like Becker Shaw. Anyhow, I didn't know that I would one day owe my life to paying attention to floods and things. And I was too frightened that a 5.9 Howitzer shell, or even a 9.2 would land on my tank just as one had laid a pill-box on its side.

What about Pearce and Co.?

It's too long a story to go into all that now. Pearce told Rees, and Rees did not need any telling, that it was dangerous to have people as 'intelligent' as Rickman and me around because either we should blow up the Military Training Scheme (and the whole of Army Psychiatry), or one of the Big Guns would fire at us, and they – Pearce or Rees – would get hit.

So: what happened?

Rees had us posted off to where we could do no harm. So I shall never know what would have happened if privates in the Training Wing had caught the habit of asking questions or having opinions of their own which they might be able to hear in the silence of the sleep time when their fancies could become free to roam like the wind. In fact I think that some of the bees may have escaped from my bonnet.

I took the opportunity of meeting Betty on my way through London. She had by this time become more reconciled to the fact that I usually got the sack when my presence became obtrusive. Lunch was gastronomically pleasant – at Scott's – but both of us were simmering and therefore capable of boiling over. In less pictorial language, we considered the possibility of accepting an invitation to dine with Buchanan Smith who was in overall charge of the Military – in contrast with Medical – appointments in Officer Selection. So, we could have exposed the financial chaos of Northfield, and the mental chaos of Rees and Pearce which was responsible. But . . . but . . .

Disloyalty?

No. Any Scot who had 'Smith' tacked on to his name was pretty sure to have rebellion in his veins from the days of 1644. And anyhow, the organization that Rees and one or two amateur soldiers had built up was a structure that was more meritorious than evil – or so we thought. It is curious to reconsider past happenings in the light of the experience which, presumably, should have led to an accumulation of more knowledge, and to find that in matters which are basic the inadequacy remains; but the awareness of the one domain that lies unknown, undiscovered, can bring fresh poignancy to the discrepancy.

I duly 'proceeded' to my new posting which was in a suburb known as Selhurst. The commander of the unit was the youngest brother of a Field Marshal. As he was also a regular soldier, a guardsman, he was not intimidated by the machine of which he was a part, or by the latest of the 'temporary' gentlemen that he had temporarily inflicted on him. His easy-going ability to take life as he found it, without any urgent compulsion to reform it or the people in it, struck me as a welcome change from the psychiatric and not at all gentlemanly pyrexia in which I had been living for the last few years.

Betty, now no longer on tour with her company, was again acting to full houses in London and living with old friends in Pont Street, not far from Sloane Square, where a dilapidated sign indicated that the cinema was OOL, LEAN AND UMFY – the eliminated C reminded me of the village in Norfolk known as Larling. She was able once or twice to visit me at Selhurst and shared with me a liking for my amusing and intelligent Colonel. She became pregnant and we looked forward to the day when we should have a child. There also seemed a chance that the war would not last much longer.

I was interviewing officers who had been liberated by the Eighth Army from their captivity after the surrender at Tobruk. One had heard me lecture in the days when I was a War Office Selection Board psychiatrist.[1] "I don't remember what you said, but it was very amusing." Another found it very difficult to reconcile himself to the fact

[1]He interviewed 1,400 men between 3 March and 6 August 1943. The notes he wrote on every one of them, varying in length from a few lines to a whole page, remain unpublished. He bound them together in a book of almost 300 pages, many of which are stained by the water used to extinguish fire bombs on the roof of the house in Pont Street during air attacks on London.

that he had surrendered. I discussed it with him and said it must be very difficult to know what to do when you have no time to think. I had never forgotten that Asser did not surrender and was shot through the heart. We, who are left, grow old – Asser did not. "After all", I said, "if you had been killed the Army would be an officer short and you could not escape or be freed to do more." Even now we should have to debate for a long while to decide what would be the intelligent thing to do.

Even then, there is the problem of what would be the wise thing.

I interviewed some four hundred officers who had been prisoners of war – presumably on the grounds that they needed rehabilitation.

Later I learnt that they had not been shell-shocked or demoralized or forced into an impasse (such as I had experienced when I lay beneath a tin roof watching a piece of mud swinging rhythmically at the end of a straw each time a shell burst) but that each one had reacted according to his own nature. Many years later I heard a psychiatrist – who had not been to Vietnam or any other front – state that all those who had been taken prisoner had been 'brain-washed'. 'Washed in the blood of the Lamb' seems less revolting and improbable as a cleaning material, but no less unilluminating.

I take it that someone felt 'better' because there was a psychiatrist ('me', God help me!) available to see that they needed help. All the poor, unprivileged inhabitants of the Military Training Wing had similarly been subjected to a dose of 'Me plus Rickman', and Northfield 'minus Rickman and Me'. I hope they all felt better and are now 'fit to be heroes' in the Third Instalment (nuclear fission phase) of the War to End War. From what the physicists say it may well achieve that end. "These are fascinating times we live in my dear Bion", as an elderly acquaintance used to say to me. I hope it will be an equally fascinating time to die in.

Shortly after this the Authorities decided that the Western Front required the presence of my Colonel and his unit. I did not find out why, but by this time my contemporaries must have realized it was no good asking me questions such as, "What are you doing in Selhurst?" (or Brussels, or Cambrai, or Timbuktoo had I been sent there).

Betty had to make her last journey on her own, telling herself her last bedtime story about two nice men who were really being very brave and so considerate and kind. One of them was her husband, and I still cannot help hoping that she was not deprived of

the comforting lie that he was really a man and a hero, and not just an artificial representation of a man stuck up in the show-case of a universe signifying nothing and tricked out with psychoanalytic dummies intended to fool the psychoanalytic church into believing that there are real souls that require to be humanized. What if there were thoughts and feelings and souls looking for a home? 'For though the Body dies the Soul shall live for ever.' 'Summer suns are glowing' – Oh no! Not again Bion – 'over land and sea. Happy light is flowing' – for you but not for me. 'The bells of hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling' for her but not for me. The Body lives for ever.

11

The RAF were fed up and started the lorry with a jerk so as to throw the blasted bunch of officers out of the back. It was a short flight; I was decanted out at Croydon airport. Then Southbourne and the baby – a cheerful little mite and apparently glad to see me. My mother and father were anxious as if they expected me to be in a bad way. Would I consent to have the baby adopted? Of course there would be formalities. . . . I was too outraged to understand that it was intended to be a serious question. Thick, slow-witted as ever, I undid the mass of ordnance towels I had been allowed to buy – and, crowning glory, zip fasteners! How Betty would have . . . she had mentioned how awkward it was never to be able to get zip fasteners for a number of jobs she would have to do – especially when the baby was born. When? That was *now*.

People were very helpful; someone said they knew of an arrangement that could temporarily provide the baby with all the care needed for the first year. "No", I said. I seemed unable to think of any other word to use.

I joined the suburban souls of sub-men and sub-women with sub-souls. I did not know who to be or what to be when death took my mate who was not a coward, and left me with a baby and £8000 to get on with. The £8000 we had saved out of my pay 'just in case'. In case what? I would have done better if I had had the sense to make the best of a bad job. In fact it seems now that it has always been the bad jobs, the hated jobs, the terrifying jobs that have made some sense of me.

The war, so they said, ended. Tub-thumping Montgomery, who fortunately knew how to thump other things besides tubs, broke out of the bridgehead at Rouen, trapped the big German forces sent to throw him out of France, and with the aid of his Air Force destroyed

a considerable number of Wehrmacht. Later, the ability of the American forces to thump tubs made me aware that thumping tubs has a long history and great achievements to its credit: thumping one's own chest can produce a sound though the reverberations may be slight; the brave music of a distant drum has often attracted attention; a boxer can attract much attention by thumping, in a drum-like manner, someone else's chest; combined with musical sounds such as singing it evokes widespread response. The response is lethal for some individuals. I could elicit agreement from Betty to going abroad in response to the call of duty – 'I could not love thee dear so much, loved I not honour more.' What killed Betty and nearly killed her baby? Physical malformation? Incompetent obstetrics? Callous or indifferent authorities? Or the revelations of the hollow nature of the masculine drum that was being so loudly beaten by her husband's departure? Or was there something false about the psychiatric tones, the psychiatric pressure waves that were being set up? How would a sensitive conductor feel if God or Fate or the Devil condemned him to an eternity of eliciting a harmonious response from a tone-deaf, malicious, instrumentally armed orchestra?

We won the Second World War? The only part I noticed was that I was spending my resources of military gratuity, being the only psychiatrist I knew who ended in the same rank as he started; and I am proud to say that I at least allowed myself to recognize that one ended, as one started, by not existing. 'Man that is born of woman has very little time to live. He goes up like a top-gallant foresail and down like a small flying jib', as some poet has succinctly described it. I hope Betty enjoyed those brief years of fame that she had in fact achieved. Her baby – our baby – was now dependent on a woman who had given her mother such shelter as could be afforded in smoky, blacked-out Slough, and now cared for her while her impecunious and unsuccessful father contemplated the rainbow-hued future.

I cannot remember being awarded a Victory Medal, but I am sure that a grateful establishment would have inflicted one on my completion of so many years of undetected nothingness, the ribbon designed in lavish colours of a nightmare of a 'morning after the night before'.

12

I heard of a cottage in Iver Heath – all the modern, British-style, conveniences – to be auctioned. With the best legal opinion from a very capable solicitor, who later came 'unstuck' by falling into the lawyer's booby trap or 'occupational neurosis', my bid of £8000 was successful. By curious chance I overheard a conversation in my Dorset Square Hotel between two well-informed and financially knowledgeable gentlemen who were talking in undisguised tones of mingled amusement and amazement about a fool who had just paid £8000 at auction for a mere workman's cottage. Could folly go further? And what were things coming to when that sort of fool could have £8000 to throw away? This story had an unpleasantly evocative quality. I listened; in fact I would have had to be deaf not to hear. My cottage was not in a particularly desirable neighbourhood either – poor train service and no buses worth talking about. Could that fool possibly be me? It could; it was.

In two particulars it was wrong: I did not have £8000 to throw about from lavish resources, and there was a bus service that I later had a good reason to talk about as one of those buses nearly killed me. Otherwise, I found on joining the conversation, the facts were correct and applied to me – a very close, if not exact fit.

I moved from Dorset Square to the cottage at Iver on the same day that the family looking after my baby moved in from Slough. The cottage was well built and adequate to shelter from rain. The garden included fine apple trees and ample ground for vegetables for the entire household. In conformity with the would-be prestige proper to a successful doctor, but not in conformity with the failure that bitter experience had taught me I was, I acquired a consulting room in a house in Harley Street. After a surprisingly short period I

was amazed to find I had enough patients and such an acute shortage of cash that I had to work from nine to six on week-days, and nine to two on Saturday and Sunday. It was luxury and enough leisure for the acquisition of wisdom. I could not say I was a man learned enough to acquire wisdom; such thoughts I dismissed from my mind.

In the cottage garden there was a bush of wayfarer of which the leaves had turned deep red. I would not have remarked its presence but for the fact that the baby had forgotten me and expressed her displeasure at being held in the clumsy arms of a strange man. By chance her flailing limbs met the leaves of this plant and set them dancing. Fascinated by the sight, her cries ceased and her struggles changed to dancing in sympathy with the leaves. I was forgotten – and almost at once forgiven. In due course we moved on to other investigations.

I acquired a strongly built bicycle, said to be used by the police force and therefore adapted to a heavy load. With this was a carrier in which the baby could sit so that she had an uninterrupted view such as a pilot might get from his seat in an aircraft. I provided the motor force. Thus we would set out every Saturday to have tea in Denham village. It was not, gastronomically speaking, a remarkable tea but the ride there and home was an event that had a profound and deeply satisfying effect on me. I hoped it had a similarly profound effect on Parthenope.

Parthenope?

It was the name that Betty and I had decided should be the child's if it were a girl. Immediately after the event I wanted the name to be her mother's; then, that the name which had been born in the last agreed action of our life together should stand. 'Illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat Parthenope. . . .'[1] All that I had to do was to equal Virgil to fulfil any part of the contract – another certain failure, but *that* one I could not mind!

The week was not so satisfactory. Some problems were obvious: I had to have money to feed myself and the other inhabitants of the house. If enough patients wanted to see me I could be paid by them for . . . For what? The beauty of my physique? My knowledge of medicine? I had no assets in either respect even with the good fortune of having existed through two wars without being physically

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[1]Virgil, *Georgics Bk. IV.* 'At that time I, Virgil, was being nourished by sweet Naples. . . .'

mutilated. Even my injured knee had been acquired trying to achieve athletic fame. Further debts that had been incurred did not obtrude into my awareness any more than they did, as appeared later, with the rest of the country.

Well, you've had a nice big war – two in fact – so now what about this little item? Excuse me, it's the Bill.

What? Do I have to pay for it too? You didn't mention that to me in August 1914.

Ah, but I did. Die for your country! Like that clever little doggie at Windsor.

Yes, but he didn't die. He went on wagging his tail.

Yes, but you have gone on living. All you have to do is to wag your little tail too!

I only have a vestigial tail – I can't wag that.

No, but you have a couple of nice cerebral hemispheres at the other end of your anatomy. Why don't you use them?

I thought my parents and grandparents used them.

Sorry sir, they were too busy adoring their Maker.

Oh well, all right. Just put it on the bill. Two great wars and victories. I'll pay later.

Yes, certainly sir. In whose name shall I make it out? Your baby's? Or her children's children?

I couldn't think of all that and no one –

Oh come now; what about Oxford University?

– said I had to *use* my brain. And how do I *think* anyway? Especially with you interrupting the whole time.

Sorry sir. I'll just put it down to your daughter and her offspring. She's too young to mind anyway.

Here, half a minute – I didn't say that. He's disappeared without waiting for an answer. And it has quite spoiled my week-end. How can I wag my vestigial tail when I am made to think? Obviously – work at both ends, below and above the umbilicus, caudal and cranial.

13

I became acutely aware of a sense of gratification when the bus stopped beneath a magnificent beech tree and I got off to be met by a small figure, now a toddler, doing her best to run to meet me. Her eyes were almost closed in the throes of concentration required for mobility and the equal necessity for concentration on where she was going. At last the perilous ten yards would be achieved and tiny arms strove to meet round my neck. A rapid change into week-end clothes, and then the cycle ride.

All this gratifying world now began to be invaded by thought. The calm fascination of picking, coring and slicing the excellent and plentiful Bramley apples preparatory to bottling them in a sulphur preparation for storage in an array of huge jars discarded by the sweetshop, became troubled by the doubts which flowed over the boundaries of my consulting room and the week's work and seeped into my private life and home. It was no longer private.

The invasion could not be repelled or contained. It is an invasion if one allows oneself to be aware of it; unfortunately it does not cease to be an invasion if one chooses to be, and succeeds in being, unaware of it. This should have been evident when the country had ceased to be aware of German aspirations to break out of the limitations thoughtfully provided by the 'victorious' allies in 1919. Had the allied powers not given the German authorities a plausible reason to feel enclosed, perhaps they would have had to realize that the compositions of Wagner, the lucubrations of Goethe, no more afforded adequate scope for expression of the Nazi violence. My present invasion of the realms of speculation about International Relations did not solve my resistance to the confinement of being satisfied with my home and professional life.

Rickman tentatively suggested that our war experience precluded the possibility of pursuing my analysis further. With this I agreed, for I had already considered the possibility of approaching Melanie Klein.

Melanie Klein, of whom I had heard and had had some chance of observing from a distance on one or two occasions, was a handsome, dignified and somewhat intimidating woman. My experience of association with women had not been encouraging or conducive to the growth of any belief in a successful outcome. However, I went to see her. I tried to indicate that I was worthy of her consideration, but she did not understand, or chose not to know – I don't know which – the enormous significance of the DSO. As I had not succeeded in believing that it was more than a cosmetic cover for my cowardice, the reality of which was never in the least doubt since I knew what it felt like to have *my* feelings, I thought that her ignorance might be reinforced by her disbelief in my masculine excellence. I had, in short, no evidence to support my application. She nevertheless agreed to accept me. How I was to pay my fees and read the psychoanalytic theories of Melanie Klein – I had looked at them and could not make head or tail of what I read – I had no idea.

My analysis pursued what I am inclined to think was a normal course: I retailed a variety of preoccupations; worries about the child, the household, financial anxieties – particularly how I was to find the money for such psychoanalytic fees *and* provide a home and care for the baby. Looking back on it I think my gifts as a sponger might have qualified me as a mendicant friar – unless of course that profession has some method of collecting from the friar such money as he collects or secretes. Mrs Klein remained unmoved and unmoving. I was very glad that she did, but that did not lead to the abandonment of my grievance. I suppose, reconsidering the matter, I expected to be supported in what I considered to be very moderate affluence. Why and on what grounds I thought the community required my continued existence is a puzzle, especially as I am now not likely to be eligible or desirable in any society – socially or militarily. Melanie Klein, however, was not easily led away from her awareness of a universe that is not subject to the needs and wishes of human beings, even when they came to her for analysis.

When I fell ill with jaundice and could not attend my sessions I still had to pay for them. As I had to pay for my illness by not being

able to charge my patients fees for sessions *I* failed to keep, it did not take long to learn that illnesses or misfortunes are very expensive luxuries. Accordingly I turned up for one of my usual sessions without seeing any particular need to warn her that I was 'cured' – according to my doctor I was not – and that I was about to keep to my usual schedule. Mrs Klein was therefore taken by surprise and could not see me as she was fulfilling another engagement which she had made since she did not expect me. I returned to Iver.

I did not check my next account to see if she had charged me for a session which *she* had failed to keep. It may have been because I wished to preserve a grievance or because I had no expectations of obtaining redress; I do not know which.

I recovered, went back to work and my own analysis, swore 'never to do it again' and, as usual, invariably did again whatever it was I had sworn not to do. I was assiduous in my psychoanalytic sessions. When I was given an interpretation I used very occasionally to feel it was correct; more usually I thought it was nonsense but hardly worth arguing about since I did not regard the interpretation as much more than the expression of one of Mrs Klein's opinions that was unsupported by any evidence. The interpretations that I ignored or did not understand or made no response to, later seemed to have been correct. But I did not see why I regarded them as any more correct than I had thought they were when I refuted or ignored them. The most convincing were those that appeared to harmonize with what I knew, or what Mrs Klein said, about my personality. She tried to pass on to me her interpretations of the material of which her senses made her aware. But to become efficacious her methods were dependent on my receptivity. This is in no way different from any other form of human assistance – there must be someone or something willing to receive.

How banal is this conclusion! How obvious! And how perpetually that fact becomes clear and how frequently ignored. Yet a willing cooperation in teacher and taught is difficult to achieve when the participants are human. This banal observation seemed to be more than usually bitterly resisted when it was I who had to listen to what my senses told me, even with the assistance of Melanie Klein. But as time passed I became more reconciled to the fact that not even she could be a substitute for my own senses, interpretations of what my senses told me, and choice between contradictories. I did not become more amenable to her views but more aware of my disagreement. None

the less there was something about that series of experiences with her that made me feel gratitude to her and a wish to be independent of the burden of time and expense of money and effort involved.

At last, after some years, we parted. She, I think, felt I still had a lot to learn from her but she agreed to the termination – partly no doubt through the realization that enough of WRB was enough.

I was, however, mistaken in thinking that we had seen the last of each other and that I was free to go. But I shall not anticipate that part of the story.

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I regained non-analytic consciousness to find I had a baby, a home, no wife but a simple, shrewd and helpful woman, and a father to whom I had offered my home since the death of my mother left him unwilling to live in a house haunted by memories of a dead partner who had shared a tempest-tossed and responsible career with him. I also acquired a practice without ever having come to a deliberate, conscious and voluntary decision to do so. I was paid, but since I had no money of my own beyond the remnants of a gratuity long since exhausted and a fund originally intended to support my wife and child in the event of my demise, the outlook seemed bleak. It was redeemed partly by the fact that my professional work was interesting, if not particularly valuable to the world in which I lived. Still, I hoped it might become so, as I felt no urge to devote myself to money-making.

I learned to stifle the wish, constantly awakened, that my infant's mother could see her and that we three together would go and have tea on Saturday afternoons. The facts were otherwise. Even the fact that I was not unhappy was something I resented. My father could not resist the temptation of making himself miserable by concentrating his mind on some improvement that should be made by himself, or myself, or both. I knew, and resented knowing, that he was right in so thinking. But what improvement?

A wife, of course. I did not need a psychoanalyst to tell me that. But *what* wife? I did not know of anyone, did not want to be reminded of Betty, did not want to be reminded of the girl who chose not to choose me.

That winter was very cold. The train in which I went from Uxbridge to Baker Street had automatic doors. These were opened at

every station and left open so that passengers would have plenty of time in which to alight. Those who had not arrived at their destination found the time was adequate for losing any heat that they had acquired since awaking.

Harley Street in the Good Old Days was filled with real doctors, compassionate, highly qualified technicians. I could not be one of those as I had largely wasted my chance of becoming even technically proficient. But I could assume a plausible representation of one: the address on my headed notepaper, a gold medal for surgery that I had acquired in much the same incomprehensible way as I had won first prize for making a sandcastle at Hastings. After all, if your prize causes you to win a prize why not collect it? So, there it was – a Harley Street Specialist.

In the meantime patients came and paid. My fees, though small, were wealth to me and I could even afford – financially – meals that were bad for my health. So I could escape from the pains of indigence into the pleasures of gluttony.

Yet now I felt as never before; numbed and insensitive. That something was wrong, must be wrong, was brought home to me one week-end when I was sitting on the lawn near the house and the baby was crawling near a flower bed on the opposite side of the lawn. She began to call out to me; she wanted me to come to her.

I remained sitting. She now made to crawl towards me. But she called to me as if expecting me to come to fetch her.

I remained sitting.

She continued to crawl and now her calls became distressful.

I remained sitting.

I watched her continue on the painful journey across the vast expanse, as it must have appeared to her, that separated her from her Daddy.

I remained sitting but felt bitter, angry, resentful. Why did she do this to me? Not quite audible was the question, "Why do you do this to her?"

The nurse could not stand it and got up to fetch her. "No," I said, "let her crawl. It won't do her any harm." We watched the child crawl painfully. She was weeping bitterly now but sticking stoutly to her attempt to cover the distance.

I felt as if I were gripped in a vice. No. I would *not* go. At last the nurse, having glanced at me with astonishment, got up ignoring my

prohibition, and fetched her. The spell snapped. I was released. The baby had stopped weeping and was being comforted by maternal arms. But I, I had lost my child.

I hope there is no future life.

I had begged Betty to agree to have a baby: her agreement to do so had cost her her life.

I had vowed to look after the child. It was not a promise to Betty; it was an unexpected vow to myself. It was a shock, a searing shock, to find such depth of cruelty in myself. I have since often recalled Shakespeare's words: 'Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remembered.'[1]

[1] *Hamlet*, III.i.

THE OTHER SIDE OF GENIUS: FAMILY LETTERS

I

LETTERS TO FRANCESCA

1951

The Homestead, Iver Heath

March 22

Francesca dear,
This does not seem to be a very sensible time in the morning to start writing you a letter but then I feel I cannot wait till tomorrow. Besides this is not *really* a letter but just a note and tomorrow I shall write a letter.

I walked back with a great wind blowing hazy clouds across a moon which was never visible but made all the trees stand out a deep grey against the silvery meadows and water. And all the time I could see you, and still see you, looking more ravishingly beautiful, as you did all the evening when I was with you, than anyone could believe possible. You were kind to be like that.

And here I shall have to stop for my thoughts will not flow freely when I feel that all I would say cannot be written – or certainly not when I keep thinking of mundane things such as whether I shall be in time to catch a morning post with this, or even whether there is a morning post on a Good Friday.

So, goodbye dear Francesca till tomorrow when I shall be writing you a letter. Remember me, please, to your Mother and give her my best Easter wishes.

Dear Francesca, bless you.
With love from
Wilfred

March 23

Francesca dear,
. . . My mind is so filled with last night and next Tuesday that I don't find I concentrate very well on the present. Not that today has been exactly the sort of day that insists on being noticed; the morning was pleasant enough but since then it has come down in buckets. I am rather lucky because I love weather – all sorts of weather. I think there is a lot to be said for being born, as I was, in India. To me, rain was of course the great event, the monsoon, and I can even now, though I

left India when I was eight, recapture the thrill of the smell of parched land rain-soaked – something of an effort these last two months . . .

Saturday morning. I felt so tired that I dropped off to sleep thinking I would wake half an hour later and write some more. Instead, though it was only 10.30 when I went to sleep, I found when I awoke it was ten this morning. This always happens when holiday breaks come. I don't remember that I must be tired, because I don't usually feel tired, discover I can do no work, and then have a deep sleep and feel better. I am now trying to write this, alone in the house with Parthenope, to a continuous stream of interruptions from P. who wants to know everything from, What shall I do now? to, How do you spell oranges? I think one should learn to develop a split mind for doing two things at once and talking about another one, all at the same time.

I have just seen a notice in the paper about *The Consul*[1] from Alan Dent in which he is most urgent that everyone should see it. It has only a week to go and I wondered if it was so good that you would care to see it again and would have the time to come with me if I could get seats. I could ring up for seats on Tuesday, I expect, because I doubt whether Alan Dent's notice will have the effect of filling it up.

It looks a pretty gusty sort of day for the boat race. I shall watch it on television (or rather I shall have my eyes firmly fixed on the launches in the vague but unlikely hope that I shall see you) but I don't think there is any doubt that Cambridge will walk away with it. If it blows clear, and there seems some sign of it, you may have a very enjoyable time; there is something very fascinating to me about the preliminary excitements. Even when I was taking part I rather used to enjoy 'having the needle'.

Parthenope has stopped asking questions and is now telling herself fairy stories, "so you can't hear", and the silence is almost as devastating as the interruptions . . .

March 24

Francesca dear,

. . . We duly saw Oxford sink on the television and I hoped you weren't there. Even a launch would have been an uncomfortable experience on such a day, not to mention the disappointment of 'no race'. It is astonishing how clear the television pictures are, even expressions are visible.

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[1]The opera by Giancarlo Carlo Menotti.

It is a marvellous moonlit night with the wind sighing gently in the pine trees. There is a line of Flecker's which goes:

For pines are gossip pines the wide world through.[1]

It has always stuck in my mind since I first came across it when I was at Oxford. Arthur Bryant[2] and I used to learn quite a lot of verse when we were up. But I think I learnt most during the first world war. My biggest feat was in 1918 I think when our battalion had no tanks left and I and a dozen of my men had to fill a gap in the line with our machine guns. Our last night before relief I was with a colonel of the Royal Scots and it became clear as we were talking that a German night attack was starting. As everything that could be done had been done he said, Let's talk about something decent. Have you read the de Coverley essays? I told him I had, so we talked about Sir Roger de Coverley and Will Wimple and the rest while the Boche in his little way shelled our waterlogged line of shell-holes and earthworks to bits. The colonel got killed a little later, and I, still having nothing to do, learned off 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' from a Golden Treasury I had with me. As it turned out we were only on the flank of the attack and were relieved a little before dawn. I don't think I remember much of either now though funnily enough I can still repeat a good deal of Virgil that I learnt at, though not 'in', school. I hated Latin lessons but used to like the sound of Virgil so I used to learn bits. We never 'did' the Georgics which I think the best of the lot.

Easter Sunday. I want to add more to this before I go to catch the Sunday post which goes at tea-time. It is still a lovely afternoon and has all the promise of Spring about it. Many birds are singing and for the first time I have seen in this garden what I think was probably the lesser spotted woodpecker; the green woodpecker that makes the lovely laughing call is quite common and often lands on the lawn, despite our cat.

I shall try this afternoon to finish off corrections of a first draft I have of a contribution[3] to a book edited by Roger Money-Kyrle.[4] The sky has become rather grey so I daresay there will be more rain

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[1]James Elroy Flecker, 'Brumana'.

[2]Sir Arthur Bryant, the historian.

[3]'Language and the Schizophrenic' [Volume IV].

[4]M. Klein, P. Heimann, & R. Money-Kyrle (Eds.), *New Directions in Psycho-Analysis* (London: Tavistock Publications Ltd., 1955).

tonight. Poor bank holiday people! – they have had a wretched Easter so far . . .

Dear Francesca, goodbye: I did not know four days could ever pass so slowly.

March 26

Francesca dear,
There does not seem the least chance that I shall be able to write a letter any more than I can do anything else but I want to send something by post before it goes. I cannot correct my draft or do anything sensible . . .

I took Parthenope for a walk this morning in a slight drizzle of rain. Despite the fact that this is nothing but a country slum, the worst kind of slum of all I think, it was very pleasant as it was warm and the birds were singing. But the hedgerows are surprisingly backward. I usually reckon on a green blush in the hedges by Lady Day[1] but although it has not been cold there is nothing. It looks almost as if they did not like the rain.

I stop every now and then to think about tomorrow and indeed there is nothing else whatever in my head and I can't just go on writing to you saying, I wonder if you will have a blue bow in your hair, or the yellow one, or the mauve one (if 'bow' is the right term) and whether you will have one at all and – this you will think strange – what you really look like. I almost have to try to remember by the photographs you showed me! And I am frightened I shall just be struck dumb like a blithering idiot; even now it makes me catch my breath when I see you in my mind's eye.

I have taken so long over this worthless epistle that I must now seal it up and take it to the post. Be patient with me dear Francesca.

March 28

Francesca my darling,
This is only a note to say I love you. What a pity it would be so dull if I only filled the page up with those three words because they are the only ones that seem to go through my head. How wonderful to be John Donne and able to write you 'The Extasy'. How enviable

[1]March 25.

to pour out 'La ci darem' la mano' instead of remaining chained in inarticulateness.

Well, there it is; so I shall have to say instead that I had a long wait at Baker Street, did not bother waiting, perhaps fruitlessly, for a taxi at Uxbridge, and so walked home without being smothered in rain or swallowed up in a snow drift. Parthenope was crying out just as I came in, presumably with a nightmare. How people can think of childhood as 'happy' I do not know. A horrible bogey-ridden, demon-haunted time it was to me and then one has not the fortitude, or callosities perhaps, with which to deal with it.

I am finding it very difficult even to take any notice of the daily life around me but look forward yearningly to our next meeting. I am going on writing this in the morning as my eyes were too heavy with sleep last night. It takes me an enormous time to write these letters because I stop at every other word to think about you, or I should say to dream about you.

On second thoughts I don't think I want to be Donne or Mozart (perhaps in the event it is just as well). I don't think even they can have found it very satisfactory: really all I want is to be able to be with you. I feel quite worried that I can think of nothing else because I do not want to become a terrible bore. I am very glad you don't want to be Vicereine: not only because it would mean having to reconquer India. Even in my insignificant life there are so many demands on my time that I feel I have no private life and you must have so many friends who will certainly not let you go, as well as your work, that I shall have to learn how to remain cool, calm and collected in face of great frustration.

Francesca my darling love I worship and adore you. These are the words that you must understand are disguised in the volume of poems I gave you last night. People can think it is just a date.[1] I hope my life, our life, my life that now belongs to you, will be of such a kind that the whole world around us, but more particularly you yourself, will know that they must be true. Francesca darling, does this sound very solemn – too solemn? I feel it all. I don't feel a bit like what I expected to feel and yet I thought I knew . . .

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[1]The complete poems of Robert Frost. [The book was inscribed '28.iii.51'. *Ed*.]

March 29

Francesca, my darling love,
To-night I had the good luck to get a lift in a taxi that was just moving off with a fare to Iver Heath so I had no wait at all and no walk through a dismal drizzle of rain. What a wonderful evening it has been. 'The Consul' was an immensely moving experience and what added to the depth of my happiness was the knowledge that but for you I would not have had it. Your presence pours a soft radiance of joy over my life . . .

I was just settling down to go on with this after lunch when Ken Rice phoned through. I find it hard to say why I felt so tongue-tied when he spoke to me but I just suddenly felt, when I knew you had told him, that what he was saying was about something so terribly important in my life that I could hardly keep a tremble out of my voice any more than I could keep it out of my hands as I held a wobbling receiver to my ear. Similarly I feel very nervous about ringing anyone up myself although I have now told Mary Hall, the wife of a very old friend of mine who is the medical officer for Bucks; I was best man at his wedding before the last war.

Everything seems to have gone out of my mind but the thought of seeing you again tomorrow. In my heart I hear the proud love of Handel's music to –

> Where'er you walk cool gales shall fan the glade;
> Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a shade;
> Where'er you tread the blushing flowers shall rise,
> And all things flourish where'er you turn your eyes.

To me it means one thing and one thing only, for now and for ever, my darling Francesca.

It has been a lovely day, cold but sunny and clear with maybe a promise of something good for tomorrow.

I have just discovered that it is nearly time for the last post so I had better seal this up and post it. My letters to you have no ending – no sooner have I posted one that I start writing my next one. But for the present I shall say goodbye. My darling sweetheart Francesca I love you; I love you.

April 1

Francesca darling,
It is very doubtful if I shall manage to write anything at all as I have by my side Parthenope painting, sworn to vows of silence, absolute and eternal, till released by me. But the Trappist vows are, I find, not absolute but relative when it comes to practice, so do not be surprised if this letter is disjointed and has a harassed and worried tone. I can't stop writing even for a moment as it is the signal for an outburst of requests, questions and so on. The silences are of much the same duration as the 'bright intervals' we hear about these days.

I woke up at what I thought was five minutes to nine but only to discover, on closer inspection, that it was a quarter to eleven, having slept like a log from the moment I dropped my head on the pillow. Pretty late it is true. I tried to ring up Sutherland before lunch but found he was out – at least the phone remained unanswered. But I did get Trist, complaining bitterly of overwork, who was very pleased at the news.

Bless you my dearest sweetheart for all you are. How much you mean to me I cannot say: I want to feel that I shall be able to go on trying to find ways of saying it through the years.

I wonder if I shall be able to get on the track of a ring at all tomorrow. I want to find a ring which does not show all its secrets to the stranger. It would be wonderful if we could find one with a deep richness that made you feel it had a fire glowing within it to warm your heart and make you feel: The man that gave me this loves me for myself alone and forever.

Parthenope's silence has been a tour de force but if you are at the receiving end of it it is not conducive to concentration. The actual moments when she is not talking are even worse than the questions, it is so painful to see the agonized efforts required to refuse utterance to the latest inspiration.

My love dear.

April 1

My darling love,
A most exhausting day; I have been compelled to be made an April Fool so often by my enthusiastic Parthenope that I am quite worn out. The stimulation of surprise, indignation and mortification demands

histrionic powers that are quite beyond me without the exercise of great effort.

Your remark that you did not know what relatives I have has made me think I should devote this letter to letting you know about the awful sort of family that you are now about to become a member of – the Bions. The first and fundamental thing to realize is that they are all, as far as I am aware without exception, completely cracked. This is the more difficult because they possess a sort of cunning that has kept them out of the loony bin. I haven't been able to keep track of them all so I shall concentrate on the most important members.

First of all there was a grandfather Robert Bion who was some sort of missionary in India. I don't know anything about him although there is a pamphlet knocking around somewhere proving that he was a 'fine man'. He had three, or maybe four, sons, one of which I knew as Uncle Bertie who married someone called Irene, worked in the Indian railways, once gave me a tip, and disappeared, for ever as far as I know, from my young life. There were then three brothers: the eldest my Uncle Walter, then my Uncle Rupert and last my father. All are now dead. To prove they were quite mad they married three sisters of a family called Kemp – probably missionary or 'off' missionary in the sense that builders and decorators talk about 'off' white when they mean cream coloured. The eldest married my Uncle Walter. She was my Aunt Helen who was as mad as her husband. Then came my Aunt Alice who married my Uncle Rupert, and last my mother who was called Rhoda. All had children. I shall take them in turn starting at the eldest, my Uncle Walter and Aunt Helen.

Oh, I had forgotten: there was another uncle and aunt but I don't think I ever saw them and have forgotten their names; missionaries, but I always had some contact with their children, Marguerite, Herbert and Arnold. The reason I have forgotten them is that I was very fond of them and they were all quite sane and therefore only resembled Bions because they had the same name. To me they were always something special as you shall hear when I come to them if your patience has taken you so far.

Darling Francesca: I have just been in a day dream again thinking with longing of your dear presence. I find that quite trivial moments seem fixed deep in my heart; for some reason moments such as one when, after l went to look for a taxi when we came out of Kettner's, I looked back and saw you standing waiting in the distance under the

theatre. There seems no reason why one particular moment like that should be so clear to my sight but so it is. And I long for the time, though I grudge it too, when I shall be able to bring my friends to you to meet you. I feel so proud of you, my true and only love, that I want to have people see you while I stand by and say, There! Look! Aren't I a fine fellow to have such great happiness? Have you ever seen such a beautiful woman as my Francesca? my darling Francesca?

Your letter came this morning together with one from Jaques congratulating me. I had to put it in my pocket and keep it for a long time before reading it so that I could keep saying to myself, I have a letter from Francesca, from my darling.

It's no good trying to go on with the family history now and in any case it is time I was getting ready to go up to Town. I am very anxious to find a ring which you will be very fond of even if we have to wait a little while to find one which is just what you would want to have. I cannot hope to find one that will satisfy me, that I know, but I think if you are particular about it and don't let yourself be hurried into something that does not feel quite right I shall learn to love it because it is yours.

And now my dear love I shall have to stop. With all my love Francesca my darling.

Till I see you sweetheart, goodbye.

[Undated]

Francesca my darling,

I have just got back from the group so I shall try to dash off a short note to you. I found the discussion interesting and I am pleased to say that although I found myself handicapped by my lack of reading which is always my weak point I made up for by my ability not to lose sight of the wood for the trees. And again I think my contribution licked the discussion into shape and gave it a meaning and coherence which it had not before. There is great pleasure to be had in a group which so quickly grasps one's point and seems so ready to acknowledge the value of the contribution. Very egotistical perhaps but I confess that it pleases me.

I have just remembered that I shall be free on Saturday morning as I need not go up to Town till late – Melanie is off work. It will probably be a good thing if I put in some work here arranging for the house to be sold or at least tidied ready for sale.

My darling you looked quite breath-takingly lovely today; even now I feel the thrill as I see you in my mind's eye. How I long to have you in my arms. And then I think how much I just want to sit and watch you, my dear sweetheart. Once I start thinking like this it is goodbye to all letter writing. I go into a daze of happiness and there is no more question of 'dashing' off a note to you . . .

Now my dearest I will stop. I shall try to go off to sleep. All my love to you my darling.

April 6

Francesca, my darling,
It was kind of you to give me such a lovely scarf; I say 'lovely scarf' but I am really very well aware that to me the really exciting thing is that it comes to me from my darling. As for the note, I was torn between my desire to store it up and save it for carefully reading every word, and my desire to tear it open and read it at once. I think I behaved very well don't you? Quite nonchalant and calm and collected all through tea-time and all the way back to Harley Street. Then I *had* to open the main envelope but I kept the letter burning in my pocket till the interval between the first patient and the next. Now wasn't that an admirable display of phlegm? My dear, what an adorable postscript! I don't know how I got from Harley Street to Iver without any awareness of the intervening stages. One of these days someone who knows me will see me in the train, and then whatever will they think? Sweetheart, it would not surprise me at all if they were to think I must be in love.

Darling Francesca, I can hardly write a letter. I need hours to think about the scarf; then I find I need hours to think about the letter; I hardly have time to think about either when I realize I must have a long, long time to think over carefully and slowly every detail of your astonishing loveliness as you sat at tea. The scarf about your shoulders, your ear-rings, my heart beats faster as I see you again as I write. In my heart I feel that there is a present such as no one in the world but you my darling could give me, a present that fills me with such deep joy that it is almost pain. I never believed that the Tavi[1]

[1]The Tavistock Clinic and The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, then in Beaumont Street, London.

could be a beautiful place to me but 'where'er you tread the blushing flow'rs shall rise' . . .

. . . I feel the one thing that can make all things possible already exists, and that is that between you and me there is already an enduring love that cannot be easily shaken even in this uncertain and painful world. I am more thankful than I can say that something gave me the courage to know that when I found that you had become the first person in my heart, that was the right and proper foundation without which one would build in vain, no matter what one tried to do. In my heart today I knew when I put your portrait over the mantelpiece in Harley Street that it meant what I deeply felt. Something seemed to whisper to me, sharp and clear, That is right, that is as it should be; do not be afraid. Darling Francesca, without you I am nothing.

> 'Sorrow follows folly as the berries grow on holly and –
> Oh! 'tis folly – to be afraid of love.'

Francesca darling, you are a miracle that has happened to me, a miracle that I do not understand or ever want to understand. Enough for me that it has happened.

It is now Saturday evening and as usual I have been sitting in front of the paper unable to go on because as soon as I think of you I become lost in a day dream of seeing you again. I must tell you of the tragedy of the Second Cup of Tea at tea-time yesterday. I became aware of it with a flash of annoyance just as I got up to fetch my second cup and realized, when it was too late, that all the time I was away fetching it I should not be with you. The tragedy arose because, ever since I had first seen you at the Tavi, I had taken to paying for more than one cup of tea, although I didn't want it, because it gave me an excuse not only to hang on longer over my tea and therefore see you as much as possible, but also a double chance of being at the tea urn, perhaps at the same time as you were. So, automatically I carried out my usual technique without thinking, and found of course that I had lost precious moments out of what was already a very small supply.

. . . When I ring you up again soon, happy thought, though I know I shall be tantalized almost beyond endurance, I shall ask you if you think I should fix up the Halls for tomorrow tea-time. Stevie Hall is a very old friend of mine. He was just at school with me though much junior and I didn't know him except as a name. But we have always

kept up a contact ever since; after the first war, I became engaged to his sister for a short time though I completely lost all contact with her. It is hard to be objective about someone you like, especially if he likes you sufficiently to ask you to be his best man at his wedding. I think of him as one of these alert lively people, always very successful at school – he became Head Prefect before he left. He has got to the top, or thereabouts, of his particular tree; reads a lot, meets interesting people and plans to send his boys to Eton which is a school I admire but would in no circumstances be my choice even in the unlikely event of my being able to afford such a place. They seem to me to let far too many boys go hang and after all they are only children and need care.

Last night I told another of my old friends. He is George Mitchell and dates from my arrival at Oxford as an undergraduate after the first war. George is a bachelor and looks it. We meet perhaps once a year and then not at all for some years. He is bald-headed, thin, dyspeptic-looking, careworn, filled with a kind of canny realism that he partly inherited and partly acquired at Rugby. You would be right in supposing he looks a decrepit old city magnate; but he was born looking like that, of that I am convinced. Anyhow he was exactly like that at Oxford. He and I used to go and argue philosophy with Paton, now professor of Philosophy at Glasgow University, then a don at Queens which was the seat of learning that George and I graced with our presences. His brains rather intimidated me then, but I have since grown to think I have more – I mean I began to think so even before the last week; I don't count since our engagement because, as you know, I have now become quite convinced I must be a very remarkable person. He busies himself in good works – Leader of the Opposition in the L.C.C., something-or-other running University College Hospital (where I trained). He was on the Stock Exchange but gave it up as he didn't like money-making. He must in fact be very well off I imagine, as he occasionally buys a good picture; I think he gives shrewd and good business advice to people who would otherwise not be able to get it. The cultured Rugbeian is a nice man to meet but there are some rough ones – many I daresay if one knew those that had not gone on to a university.

Darling Love, I have sat in front of this sheet blankly for half an hour since I wrote the previous lines simply thinking how wonderful it felt when you said you would ring me up tomorrow morning

before you left to come here. It is like the P.S. and P.P.S. to your letter. I think it utterly wonderful that you do that for me. She does it for me, I say to myself, trying to grasp it.

Dear Darling Francesca: I have taken so long over this that I must stop or I shall not have time to sleep. I long for you.

Dear love, goodnight.

April 10

Francesca my darling,
Even though it is so late I must just send you this tiny note. Sweetheart it was lovely to hear your dear voice: I worked quite well all day I think, and really quite enjoyed meeting Ken largely because he knew without my saying anything how deeply I felt about you and what a tremendous thing it was for me that such a beautiful woman loved me; yet when I found I could not get through to you I suddenly realized how badly I was missing you and how much strain it meant. I suddenly felt tired out and from that time on the hands of the clock simply crawled. I felt I must get home to the telephone, that I could hardly endure another moment without the sound of your sweet voice. And yet I managed to read some Fowler[1] on the way back, sensibly too, so it must be a good sort of agony. Dear Sweetheart, my work is coming alive; the dull numb mechanical routine into which I have fallen is bursting wide open and it is all you my darling, my darling Francesca . . .

April 11

Francesca my darling,
Another good-night note from me which I expect will be a good-morning note to you. We had quite a good meeting although I felt a little too much in the clouds to take a proper part in it. There is something very satisfactory about working in a small group of five people all of whom have a keen intelligence and a good grasp of the subject. But they started by each congratulating me very warmly on our engagement and if anything was needed to send my mind chasing off to the place where my heart now rests, that provided it. I really must start reading some psychoanalysis soon or people will think you

[1] *Modern English Usage* (Fowler, 1926).

have made a very queer choice. Dr Heimann, who is the best in the group by far, is very insistent that we live in St. John's Wood – I knew she would be. She is a very warm-hearted woman.

Darling! Monday is all right: the patient I was to see cannot come till May so a great cloud is lifted from my heart. Can you keep Monday evening at 7.30 free?

Even the short time tonight was a great solace to me. My sweetheart you had put in day's work and I really did not hope to see you although I expect, after my experience yesterday, that I should have felt dreadful if I had had to go right through till tomorrow without a sight of you. Dear Francesca – how much you mean to me.

I felt so happy when you spoke of a nursery. The mere thought of *our* children is inexpressibly sweet to me. You have given Parthenope back to me and made me feel what it is like to have a child. You cannot think how terrible it has been to feel all the time that every day she was becoming more lost to me till at times she hardly seemed my child at all. I know now, and rejoice in knowing, that miraculous as it seems to me that it should be so, yet my love matters to you. And deeply as I feel this I yet feel infinitely happy to think that you may know a still deeper love than this and that is the love for your own child.

Darling Francesca; may you have a very happy week-end. You will be in my heart always, a glow of happiness that is my darling Love.

April 12

Francesca, my darling,
I have just been thinking of the house,[1] having read the detailed description on the way home. I wonder if you think it will need a lot of painting or if you think that there is enough of it 'liveable in' to do some of the work ourselves when we are in. I have both a petrol driven pump and sprays that will do whitewashing very efficiently and fast, and an electrical paint gun. We could use these ourselves if you felt inclined to make a hobby of decorating, say one room to suit our own tastes . . . But I must not go on like this or I shall have

[1]Redcourt. [Soon after marrying Francesca, Bion sold the property he had bought after the death of his first wife, Betty Jardine, and the couple moved into 'Redcourt', a substantial house in Croydon, Surrey. *Ed.*]

imagined a totally impractical dream house which will make me feel quite dissatisfied with any real house we are likely to meet.

Darling, your choice of ring[1] seems to me to become more and more right; it looks lovely on your hand; you must be able to do something even to diamonds . . .

April 13

My darling,
As usual I was too overwhelmed at tea-time to be able to say anything then or afterwards. It was a great comfort and pleasure to me to have your letter. I am sorry I could only give you my tiny scrap. Actually I had felt exactly the same – that you and I ought to see the house together, but I was torn by the thought that you were having a very hard rush of work and were already much too tired, so I thought before suggesting it I would wait till I saw you today.

I have had some nice letters: indeed one of the things that has touched me has been the amount of affection and good will there is to us. Needless to say those who know you have no doubt at all that I am a very lucky man, a glimpse of the obvious, but how good it is to hear you praised and feel the affection and pride in which you my darling are held. My solicitor wrote a very pleasant letter. John Bowlby wrote very kindly and Sutherland, whom I rang up to-night and who is only just back from holiday, said that everyone in the Tavi is delighted and he sounded as if this were no conventional phrase. He also said that all the women in the Tavi that know you say how much they like you. John Rickman wrote congratulating me – I don't think you know him though. Then I got a very charming letter from Colonel Alex – the brother of the Field Marshal and my late CO – sending us both good wishes from himself and his wife. I am very fond of Alex: I always got on with him very well indeed. He wanted to know when the wedding is . . .

And – what are we going to do about the wedding? It sounds to me as if we shall have to put if off till we have saved enough money to hire the Albert Hall or Olympia for a reception!

I asked a taxi man today and he told me that from Victoria to Harley Street would take 10 minutes at most in the morning, as the streets

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[1]A French diamond ring, dated 1740. [To my everlasting sorrow it was stolen in Rome, in the late 1970s – probably 1977. *F.B.*]

are clear, and would cost 2/– or 3/–,[1] so that is obviously the answer. I am hoping this may mean that I could leave home (home!) at about 8.50 instead of 8.15 and that will make a big difference to me over the week. But I notice already that whereas before (Before Francesca) even one late night a week left me tired out by the week-end, now tonight I feel as fresh as paint. I feel quite troubled and guilty at all the work you have been doing. It is wonderful to me that despite the tiredness you feel, you look so wonderful. I like to hear about your "horrible conceit"; my only comment would be to quote the Frenchman's remark about Curzon – "immense orgeuil – justifié".

Darling I must stop although I feel I have not said a tenth of what I want to write. Goodnight, dear heart.

April 17

Francesca, my darling,
The sound of your voice has made me feel so much better that I must just write this little note. Already I feel impatient for tea-time. You cannot imagine how good I feel when you say you will fetch me a cup of tea. Darling, I love your doing things for me: I am just not used to it, that's all. I look at you and I can hardly believe my eyes; then my heart tells me it is really true.

Dearest, I *am* looking forward to Mrs Riviere's party. She is a somewhat formidable woman, but a well-wisher of mine and I anticipate feeling a very proud man when I appear in 'public' with you. I have a feeling that the evening will end with some more people thinking I have 'very good taste'. I shall try not to go round saying to people, "Aren't I *clever*!" but I expect I shall *look* like it whatever I do.

I've spent so long about this I must stop. Goodnight my darling: goodnight Francesca my dear love.

P.S. There are some kisses at the bottom right hand corner. They are rather crowded together.

April 21

Dearest,
I am waiting for the telephone to ring and for the sound of your

[1][Shillings; 10p and 15p, respectively, in today's money. *Ed.*]

dear voice. So you must not expect a letter from me; it is just not possible in these circumstances: I shall fall back on a dreary recital of the history of the Bion family in order to kill time and provide me with a soporific. Indeed it may serve a useful purpose by acting as a soporific for you too. To begin then I shall introduce you to the senior branch – the Walter Bions.

My Aunt Helen was a formidable woman, by nature kind but shrill and embittered by being married to my Uncle Walter. She had I think natural ability and must have been a very beautiful girl as she was handsome to the end. My Uncle Walter was the eldest of the Bion brothers and was described as a saintly and learned man reported to be able to read the New Testament in Greek. Actually he was a horrid little man who was happily as incompetent in his meanness as he was in his work. His incompetence at his work led my Aunt Helen to call him unworldly and from that it was but a short step to canonization as a saint. His temper was made no better by the manifest superiority of his two younger brothers, Uncle Rupert and my father, who were in their respective spheres brilliant and, it goes without saying when talking of Bions, impossible. Uncle Walter ultimately got a job in the Meteorological Department of the Indian government. In spite of the fact that for nine months of the year the sun beats down on the entire peninsula with pitiless heat, and the heavens open for the remaining three to drench the land with rain; in spite of the fact that the department refused resolutely to give my uncle any promotion whatsoever; so powerful was the effect of his mere presence on the pay-roll of the department that the predictions of the meteorological office were suffused with the glow of his incompetence and were hailed as masterpieces of comic mis-statement until he was forcibly retired to live in Upper Norwood where he devoted his energies, if such a word can be applied to a moribund amoeba, in equal proportions to church-going and the dissemination of a sort of mischievous religiosity through his household. The household consisted of my poor aunt, my shrewish cousin Beryl, now happily lost to sight, and a mongrel dog which suffered from delusions of persecution. The dog and I led to a family row, thuswise: my father and mother and I were visiting them for tea. Quite forgetting the appalling consequences that were almost certain to follow any display of bonhomie in such a household, I waved my hat cheerily at the dog. It immediately set

up such an uproar of barking, snapping, foaming at the mouth and so forth that my uncle rushed out saying he would not have me ill-treating the dog. My father, hearing the racket, rushed out in his turn and, thinking I had been bitten by my Uncle Walter, became extremely angry with my uncle. Aunt Helen stood pale-faced and erect unable to speak. My mother then appeared but by this time the scene was of such indescribable confusion – Uncle squeaking, Dad thundering maledictions, dog barking madly and self trying to find a hat peg – that she could make nothing of it. We had a very frigid tea, which was not unwelcome as it was an exceedingly hot day, and the two families did not speak to each other for a year or more.

My cousin Beryl was known, even from early childhood in India, as a horrible little sneak and was detested by her brothers Cyril and Melvin. Aunt Helen, who believed all her children to be extremely gifted, insisted she could sing. So every morning before breakfast she could be heard, in a thin quavering voice, singing very flat a song called, I believe, The Mountains of Marne. It used to bring tears to my aunt's eyes but she must have had some glimmering of the truth somewhere because she never unleashed Beryl to sing at anyone; always only 'practising' at the crack of dawn.

I liked my aunt. She used – I should say that all this was when I was 21 years old – to tell me ecstatically about India. The beauty of the birds particularly entranced her. "They have", she used to say, waving a languid hand as she sought for the *mot juste*, "such *glorious* foliage." "Plumage, Auntie", I would correct in my pedantic way. "Wilfred", she would reply in half mock anger, "don't put me out. You know very well what I mean." "Yes, Auntie", I would reply submissively, "I do; you mean plumage." My uncle would sit with furrowed brow reading an illiterate religious rag called 'The Life of Faith'. As far as I know he never read anything else not even the New Testament 'in original Greek'.

Poor Uncle Walter; right at the end when he was eighty odd he had a temporary phase of sanity and, realizing that he had wasted his life, became extremely cross with everyone and everything, so they shut him up in a loony bin. I always thought it very hard lines as it was really the only time in his life when I heard him say a sensible thing.

His eldest son Cyril, mad as a hatter like the rest of us, taught himself how to paint, but just had enough horse sense to marry, to the

family disgrace, a very nice girl who was a shop assistant somewhere or other. She had the sense to make him get a schoolmastering job in Ireland where of course no one would notice anything peculiar, and there, as far as I know, he is still at large.

Melvin was a great hero of mine when I was six. He became an engineer, married and lived dully ever after.

I had nearly bored myself to sleep when . . . the telephone bell rang. So I cannot possibly return to this dreary subject again. My darling, how sweet it is to hear your voice. I feel very excited about the house, very excited indeed. And very guilty to think of all the work you have been doing while I sit about gazing into space gaping like a goldfish wondering how to pass the time till I see you again.

It is no good: I can't go on. I just see your dear face and dream of you, longing to see you and thinking how wonderful it would be to see you the mistress of the house. Darling I hope it will be as happy a one as you deserve and I can't say more than that.

After a long pause I have realized that unless I pull myself together and write some family history I shall never get to sleep. So I will end my account of the Walter Bions by two more pieces of information. Besides the paranoid mongrel there was a cat. This creature, which I had almost forgotten, was, unlike the dog, extremely depressed. There is nothing more to say about it; it was just extremely depressed.

My cousin Cyril used occasionally to visit them from Ireland. They all hated each other in a most malignant, noisy, and monotonous way until one day Cyril galvanized the whole party into stupefaction by maintaining – he still does I think – that Uncle Walter was not his father.

The effect of this on my uncle was bad enough but nothing at all compared with its effect on my poor aunt who instantaneously realized, since apparently he still considered her his mother, that the physiological implications of this, if translated into sociological or, still worse, theological terms, invited very sinister interpretations of her morality however flattering they might be to her charms.

Darling, it's no use trying to write more of this but I think I have written quite enough to send you to sleep if not myself. My mind and heart are all yours. I feel that we are on the start of a fine adventure and though I am filled with joy I think it a most solemn and happy thing. I know there will be plenty of difficulties to overcome but with you I feel I can face them with real happiness. We shall not be well-off,

but I see so many who are not a ha'p'orth happier for it that I am full of hope that your home will be a happy one.

It is very late my darling so I shall say good-night. Dearest I love you.

With many, many kisses.

April 23

Francesca my darling,
I cannot promise more than a note as I am anxious not to stay up too late but this will be to send you my love. It was good to see you for a short time to-day and good to hear your voice on the phone. But I think we will have to get used to the frustration that both of us must feel just now – not an easy thing for either of us. If these feelings did not exist, disagreeable as they are, one would really wonder why they did not.

I am already looking forward to next Saturday; it will be our first appearance together and though it will be a small gathering I think it will be fun. There is something exciting about learning to act as a team.

Monday is always something of a strain for me. I find I have not got into the weekly rush and nearly always take far too long about dressing and such like, and so start off by being nearly late. And then it is a very full day so I am glad to see the end of it. Nevertheless in spite of the appearances I think I am doing good work with my patients even if I do not make any progress with my papers. So I don't think the upheavals are really very bad for me.

My darling, I was very, very glad to have your loving letter this morning. It made my work easy for me and it made it far better than it could have otherwise have been. Your love is the most precious thing in the world to me and when I have that, you need not think I need more. I am a very ordinary sort of man my dearest, but with your love I shall also be a happy one and no one can ask more than that. Success, as the world rates it, and outward show are quite agreeable if they come along but they are very much by products which I think come a very long way behind ordinary contentment and happiness. If I can be the same for you then I shall be happy indeed and we shall have all the foundations for a really happy home, and the opportunity of sharing it and spreading it in a modest way to others less fortunate.

I know of nothing more satisfactory than that.

And now my dear one I must stop as it is already late. I look forward to seeing you again though it seems a long time ahead. With all my love dear Heart and keep cheerful.

April 24

My darling,
Despite my good resolutions I cannot help just writing you this to say what a heavenly evening it has been. I seem unable to exist without you and I cannot understand how I have survived all these years. Even on a poisonous day like yesterday I knew my work is far better than it has ever been so far. And to-day you simply made the strains roll away. Darling Francesca, how I love you and how I wish I could be with you always.

The group meeting tomorrow night, 'to-night' it will be when you read this, will I am sure make me feel dreadfully ignorant and guilty because I cannot read or write a thing just now although my work with patients is far, far better than it has ever been.

My darling sweetheart I must stop. Once I start on a letter to you I go on thinking of you between every line and word, and I shall end up by being a wreck for want of sleep.

All my love to you Francesca my darling.

Wednesday morning. Good morning my sweetheart. I hope you are well. I am feeling so impatient about seeing you that I have begun to wonder if I was right in thinking so easily that we should let the negotiations for the house take their course, or whether in fact it would not be an advantage for us to have possession of it as soon as possible. If we hurry the contracts it could mean we were free to start working on it – cleaning, repairing, taking in odd bits and pieces. Which is best for you?

April 26

Francesca, my darling,
As I caught a glimpse of you disappearing down the passage before the train doors closed I felt in my heart, There goes my darling; there goes my Life, my All. I love you my dear one.

And that is really all I want to say. Except that I enjoyed this evening so much and feel so refreshed by it that I can hardly reconcile

myself to the idea that I really must go to sleep if I am going to do any work at all . . .

April 28

My darling,
I hope, despite the exasperating ending, you enjoyed the party. If I had realized what was happening quicker, I should have stuck to our departure, but T. had offered the lift in front of Mrs Riviere before I could think of an excuse. I couldn't very well say I'd rather miss my train with you than miss it with T. – which I duly did. I hope you got home easily at least. It was only made supportable by the thought that I should be seeing you very soon. I couldn't see how you were getting on but I hope you found it interesting.

As usual I go off into a maze thinking about seeing you tomorrow. You looked lovely to-night; Mrs Riviere said she hoped you were not going to give up music altogether. I think she liked you very much and was genuinely pleased we had come. It was very kind of her to ask us because I rather think it was for our benefit. As she is one of the kingpins of the psychoanalytic world it was a great compliment. Dr Segal is the bright star in the firmament of my generation of psychoanalysts. There is one thing about the psychoanalytic world-we may all be freaks but there are very few I meet who do not seem to me to be intelligent and interesting people; I believe we shall be happy in our social occasions. I have always longed for an intelligent home in which children become accustomed to the company of intelligent people and the sound of good conversation. Perhaps now, through you, I shall have my wish and I hope you will feel, as I think we may, that we can find a social life as well as a happy domestic one.

I thought it a glorious day; from the time we met at Redcourt I enjoyed every second of it and each second was packed with a minute's worth of life. Darling Francesca, I long for our home with a deep yearning. You have made me so happy I hardly know how to live. Dear Darling Francesca, I love you.

April 29

Francesca, my darling love,
I am not really breaking my resolution because I got home very

quickly, have had my bath, and just want to write a note to give you tomorrow night.

And what do I want to say so urgently? you will wonder. Well, simply that I love you. My darling I love you. You have done and are still doing something very wonderful to me my dear one. I just feel very happy: so inexpressibly happy. Even my crusted and hardened armour plate of fossilized worry seems to be shaling off each time I see you. I enjoyed every moment of today although I have only the vaguest idea what we did; it is just having you near me.

I feel I can hardly wait for Redcourt. It seems years and years since we thought of finding a house; and yet according to the calendar it cannot be so long.

My dear there is so much I want to say there is no time to say it and I suppose I shall have just have to end up the letter and give it up as a bad job. I am looking forward to tomorrow evening very much indeed although I hardly know how I shall get through the week. I feel as if I were half a person without you. I enjoyed the party with Mrs Riviere very much; I felt she had taken to you and knew at once that I was a very lucky man indeed. I think she has always had something of a liking for me – and she is not exactly easy to please – but yesterday I thought she was convinced that her good opinion of me was proved by your having said 'yes' to me. And I must say I think I am a pretty fine fellow myself, because otherwise I could not have become engaged to you, could I? I really think I must be. In fact there is no doubt about it at all – now.

Francesca my darling sweetheart, goodbye, goodnight my dearest.

May 1

My darling Love,
Just a note to tell you I love you. It seems silly to have to write you a special note to say that but it is so frustrating not to say it and anyway why the hell should one be bothered about its being silly or not. So: I love you. I love you.

Sweetheart, don't overdo the work to-night. Someone or other said, when you have too much work to do, don't do it. We both have too much just now. I shall go to bed early tonight and I shall go to sleep. Please try to do the same for my sake.

Darling Francesca: unless you have locked your case I shall put this inside it together with a small scattering of kisses.

May 1

Francesca my darling,
It was tantalizing to hear your voice on the phone, tantalizing but sweet all the same. I wish to have you in my arms – but there it is, just a telephone receiver; maddening.

I got back just in time to see Parthenope before she dropped off to sleep – clamouring for more food; she's reached the ravenous stage. She wanted me to tell her "about your boarding school". So I described a school concert while she got through some more food and then she dropped off to sleep. These meetings have a touch of sadness for me as I always feel the barrier of reticence that so often exists. At each week-end she seems more at home and then during the week one is cut off again. I makes me feel that I am not available for the help I would longingly give. She likes to be called my 'big' girl but I always long for her to be my baby still . . .

May 2

Francesca, my sweetheart,
I have been thinking about our marriage. I feel that the beginning of June would be a very good time. I wish it were possible to arrange it in a way that gave us a chance to have a honeymoon, but I think this would be very difficult. From the point of view of work I am inclined to think I ought to work through till about August 8th and make the summer break four weeks – usually it is about five. With a little luck we might then have honeymoon either at Christmas or in Spring. By then we should be a bit settled in and know how things are shaping for us.

I suppose the best day for the marriage and reception would be a Saturday? We shall need to get out invitations pretty soon. I hope above all that in spite of difficulties it will be possible to arrange it so that it will be a really enjoyable thing for others so that they can share a little of the happiness that it means for us. To me it means more than I shall ever be able to say my dearest Francesca.

My dear I find it almost impossible to write to you. I go off into a day-dream at every other line and the result of hours is just this miserable little scrawl of nothing in particular. I am sure I should be thinking of all sorts of business details but somehow they all go clean out of my head. I live a sort of double life; one

with my patients trying to keep to the exacting job in hand and also the monthly detail of accounts and such like; and the other centring in the all-absorbing thought of you my dearest. It is no good doing any more except to say that as always I love you my darling Francesca.

With all my love.

May 3

Francesca darling,
If I followed your advice on the phone I should start by writing June 9th followed by a short pause, and then June 9th, with some exclamation marks written in some sort of fiery substance not yet invented alas. Then I think: if this is a dream it is the longest and most marvellous dream I have ever had; if it is not a dream, then I don't know how to contain myself. My goodness, I think, how lovely, how lovely she is. And she has promised to marry me. How extraordinary! I must have got myself muddled up with someone else. Whatever shall I do? Will she be very disappointed when she finds out what a dreadfully ordinary person I am? And then I feel rather sad. And then I begin to hope that you like rather ordinary people and that you really know I am ordinary and love me just the same. Is that right? Do say it's right. My dearest Francesca, if only I could tell you how I feel. How excited and how nervous. Will you really love me when you know how tired I get when I am fagged out with work? But you must know even now how dull I can be and how tiresome.

I am trying to think of some way we could arrange a honeymoon. I feel it would be a great help if we could manage some time alone together without having to wait too long for it[1] but there is no doubt that the practice is a very serious tie which really dictates our movements very exactingly. But I think it is gradually taking shape – these things have a way of becoming sorted out as one considers the possibilities. It is such a queer business trying to think clearly when for ten hours a day one has the exacting task of being absorbed in the preoccupations of a number of people all of whose holiday arrangements and so on have to depend on those we make ourselves. Not to mention that any of them are liable to commit suicide or some other less spectacular – and in one case more spectacular – indiscretion. I

[1]We waited for seven years. In the summer of 1958 we spent a week in Paris.

have been so much in the air for so long now that I hardly know how the poor things are doing.

Darling, I don't think I've written this any faster. I just have to stop and think how lovely you look. I must be infatuated don't you think? And yet I know I am not. It is just a sober statement of fact; I love seeing your dear face and feel so proud when I feel your arm in mine. Goodnight my darling, darling Francesca. I love you my dearest.

May 7

Francesca darling,
Just a goodnight note. I am feeling a great mixture of relaxation after the week-end and growing frustration at a return to the week. I do not want to write to you – I want to talk to you and have you in my arms. And I feel a bit grumpy at having to clamber laboriously back to the techniques of living without you . . .

Darling I did enjoy the week-end: even that little taste made me feel as if life has suddenly become more spacious. Dearest as soon as I start writing this I find I get lost in reverie. I don't know how I shall last out the next four weeks. Every now and then I look round and wonder why I can't stay up the whole night packing. Or why some kind person has not already been and offered to buy this house at a sum of money we should approve. But I suppose it will begin to happen. I don't know how we shall spend our last days here. We shall have to live on what we can pack in a few suitcases and have our meals standing up. Dear sweetheart I cannot think how you manage to get any work done at all, leave alone concentrate on it.

Goodbye for the present my darling. I hope you are feeling pretty fit despite your exertions.

With all my love dear Heart.

May 9

Francesca, my darling,
. . . I think I would like to ask Stevie Hall to be best man. Have you any views? He is an old friend, probably the oldest I have.

It was lovely seeing you for our two fleeting meetings. I hardly thought I should see you for the first but since you had not picked up my note I thought I might just meet you coming round from the Clinic. It gave me an excuse for fresh air. And you came like a breath

of spring. When I see you I feel, There's my sweetheart. And I am beginning to feel it really must be true. I love you dearest . . .

And now I find I can hardly go on for thinking of you. It seems a terribly long time to have to wait till 5 o'clock tomorrow but I suppose we are luckier than many people in that we see each other as much as we do.

I heard today that someone in the Clinic had said, Just look what a beautiful ring that girl is wearing. It was you. Personally I would say, Just look what a beautiful girl is wearing that ring . . .

May 12

My darling,
I thoroughly enjoyed today's meeting short though it was and even though I manage to get so jittery; I shall improve no doubt. But six years of anxiety centring on the life of a small daughter and how she develops have made me get into a groove of anxiety – trying to be father and mother in one and quite unable to resist the deep urge to do this without feeling worn out . . .

May 17

Francesca my darling,
After our phone call I don't feel that I have anything immediately to write about except to say again that I love you, and to do that with the usual feeling of the inadequacy of words. It needs a full choir, orchestra and organ. However, they are not available at the moment . . .

. . . I so deeply feel that we can build a really happy life and home that it almost makes me afraid. One has seen so many people who seem to have everything with which to build up something really worthwhile – and then they have just frittered it all away till all that is left is a monument to ineptitude and pettiness. The most ghastly fate, made all the more tragic because it is so unspectacular; just a failure here and another little failure there, multiplied a few hundred times and the trick is done. Well, we must hope to do better; you will have to help me play my part better than I have managed so far . . .

May 18

Francesca my darling,
If I had any strength of will I suppose I should just go to sleep and

be content to wake up in the morning but as it is I can only muster enough consideration for you not to ring you up, which I would do if I did not hope you are now in bed, but not enough to refrain from trying to write a few lines to give you in the morning.

I wish everything did not take so long. And sleep takes the most time of all – one must simply sleep so many hours and that is that; there is no way of sleeping in a hurry and getting it done with.

I feel that probably it would be best if you did not have the fatigue of the journey to Iver on Sunday because there is a terrible lot to do and the journey both ways is a lot to pay for what may be a limited amount of benefit. I shall be livid with frustration at not seeing you, and shall work myself into a lather of irritation I do not doubt but I think it will be good for me to make this small sacrifice if it gives you a chance of a little leisure. I do not know how you manage to get through so much and remain so sweet tempered about it. You fill me with admiration and envy till I get quite humiliated at the thought of my selfishness. Tonight passed with maddening speed and I felt I had wasted the fleeting moments not only for myself but also for you. And now as I try to write this I gaze at your photo and wish it was you. I am sorry my dear; but I wish I could make you feel how much I feel what you do for me.

Well, my dear, it won't be long after I have handed you this that I shall be able to see you again and if I can't do much else I shall at least be able to look at you and indeed that is a great deal.

Francesca darling, Darling, my dear love, goodbye for the present . . . Saturday morning in the train. I feel as excited as I always feel at the thought I shall see you soon. This train shakes so much I cannot write . . .

Good-morning my dearest.

May 19

Francesca my darling,

. . . Ought we sometime to think of what guests at the Reception might want to mix with others there unknown to them? Or do we just let them mill around and think what odd people the others are and how odd we must be to know such queer fish? I think I ought to keep a list of guests to get the names well into my mind beforehand. It is good to study these details because so often the difference between

an indifferent show and a good show depends on some such little preparation, even though on the actual occasion it may not seem to count for much.

The thought inspires me to embark on another instalment of Bion history. So here goes: I hope you don't mind?

Roy Bion, 'Noah', belongs to the Rupert Bion outfit. My Uncle Rupert was married to my Aunt Alice. He became enormously wealthy, by Bion standards, but lost it all in the end. He was an indigo planter in India and could have ended very wealthy but was so annoyed with Congress and Ghandi that he preferred to go down fighting rather than sell out at a profit which he might have done. He was a very stout genuine soul with all the Anglo–Indian merchant's ignorance of culture and indifference to everything except hard work and personal comfort. His sons were Euston – I think they must have meant Eustace but got mixed up with the railway station – Ken, Roy and Laurie. His daughter was a minx of the name of Gladys. I only knew them when in England since I never went back to India after eight.

Whenever I came across them I was impressed by the atmosphere of luxury and indescribable chaos. Euston and Ken, as befits young men at Trinity, Cambridge, and New College, Oxford, were painfully ashamed of their family and painstakingly determined to lick it into shape. Uncle Rupert was humorously charmed by an appreciative awareness of the fact that he himself was the source of their greatest embarrassment. He recognized that he was the formidable barrier to any real advance in the social scale. When I was about ten I spent a few days at their house in Bedford. At the time Ken and Euston were pursuing two young women of the Bedford aristocracy and were doing their best to hide from these young women the dreadful nature of the home to which they had perforce to invite these elegant nymphs. As I remember them they must have been two quite ordinary, quite nice, well dressed girls but beyond that I can say nothing as even then it was fascinating to me to observe the contortions, the painful angular manoeuvres to which Euston and Ken were reduced at lunch and subsequently when they were present with the two ladies. My uncle in turn must have observed me for he tackled me, when he found himself alone with me, something after this style as one man of the world to another.

"Well, Wilfred, and how do you like my house?" Here he paused and as he puffed wheezily in his chair looked at me through his screwed up little eyes with a quizzical expression.

"I think it very nice, Uncle", I replied, secretly awe-struck at the luxury.

"Mm – Euston tells me that it is not in very good taste. Of course I don't understand these things, but what do you think Wilfred?"

"I don't know, Uncle. I think it's awfully, well awfully nice, Uncle."

"Mm – but you know Wilfred, Euston says that at Trinity they would not think much of it. Trinity is a very fine place, you know Wilfred. They wouldn't have anyone like you or me there; at least they might have you but I don't think they'd like me there."

This would be beyond me so I swung my legs and said nothing. He went on, "Euston says we ought to have another car. He says that a Rolls Royce and a Sunbeam aren't enough but I tell him he has his own car. Now what do you think Wilfred? I've always heard the Rolls Royce was a good car".

"What would you do with another, Uncle?"

"That's just what I say to Euston, Wilfred", my uncle beamed back at me.

"Perhaps, Uncle, you could tow it behind the Rolls – like a sort of dinghy, Uncle", I replied entering into the spirit of the thing.

"He says I ought to get up earlier in the morning. What do you think?"

"I like lying in bed, Uncle."

"I can see, Wilfred, that you and I would get on famously together. What is the use, I always say, of getting up when you are on holiday and there is no work to do?"

And so on.

Euston was a nice lad but I think he had the most resounding inferiority I have ever come across. The result was that when war came he had to go into nothing less than the Horse Guards. For a couple of years the Horse Guards never went into action though they were in France – it was no war for gee-gees.

His desire to fight got the better of his inferiority, so, fed up with burying the dead, he joined what was then the Royal Flying Corps and was finally killed in action.

Ken who was a very handsome man was, I always thought, rather an unpleasant one, selfish and vain and rather unkind. He

was killed in action in the Sherwood Foresters after winning the Military Cross.

Noah came next. A dreamy, rubber-faced lad with an expression like a cocker spaniel pup. He salvaged the wreckage of the indigo plantations, worked till he felt he had made ample money to make further work unnecessary and packed up. He never had any use for work anyway. The comfortable and unintelligent life for him every time. He married someone who makes him shave and dress but does not otherwise bother him I imagine. I forget her name; it may be Maud.

Laurie married a Jewess called Yvonne. She struck me as a tiresomely alert and unattractive woman. I don't know what has happened to him. They divorced, which was in no way surprising. It must have been wretched to be married to either of them.

Gladys was a nasty little minx who looked and behaved like a gipsy. At one time she went on the films and appeared in a crowd scene in *The Wreck of the Titanic*. It has always been one of my most pleasant thoughts imagining Gladys sitting amidst the ruins of a cardboard Titanic soulfully singing, 'Nearer my God to Thee'. She must be knocking around somewhere but I won't have anything to do with her. The last I heard of her was when she left her father to it when he was dying in Weston-Super-Mare. I went down to see the old man just after she had left. He was in bed and his heart was conking out. He told me the doctor had seen him and said he should go to a nursing home but he wouldn't unless the doctor could promise that he would be dead within the week. He couldn't. He left, telling him that on no account was he to leave his room. No sooner had he gone than my uncle, who was not impressed by life since his wife had died some few years before when they were in Australia – a long and painful illness of some kind – skipped out of bed and got into a cab. In this he went to the local undertaker and arranged for his funeral. "I couldn't", he said, "get Gladys to do this as it would have upset her."

When I left him I thought I had better go and find out if all really was settled before I returned to Town. The undertaker I duly found, a very much shaken man, who indeed confirmed that everything was fixed up. He wound up by saying in an awe-struck voice that my uncle had haggled over the cost of the funeral and had finally beaten him down to do the whole bag of tricks for £20. Poor man; it must have been an unnerving experience trying to maintain his

professional unctuosity while arguing finance with the prospective corpse. I went back to my uncle's hotel to say goodbye as I had to be back in hospital. He kept his sense of humour to the end and was, I think, amused at my somewhat nonplussed embarrassment at a final farewell. I couldn't very well wish him a pleasant trip and yet that was about all his manner allowed to be appropriate.

Now my darling, I must stop this drivel. It helps to pass the time till June 9th. I love you always my darling.

My dear love, goodbye for the present.

May 23

Francesca my dearest,
Even the telephone has a most disturbing effect on me sometimes, particularly when you are using the other end of it. I am now confronted by a white piece of paper instead of a black plastic phone receiver and don't find the change makes me feel any cooler or calmer.

Darling Francesca, words are very unsatisfactory things sometimes and this is one of them. If I could hear you speaking them it would be a different matter – provided it was from somewhere nearer to me.

I suppose I ought to pull myself together and write business; I shall try. The reception: Jack Drummond[1] is a very nice man. He is of course a very good biochemist but he has also travelled all over the world as far as I can make out and done it in all sorts of conditions . . .

May 26

Francesca my darling,
In the train coming back Parthenope wanted to smell my tobacco. She said she did not like it. I said, in tones of surprise, Don't you? She said, No; but then of course I am a woman! As she was utterly serious she could not understand the sensation this caused among the other passengers.

. . . I fixed up with Brown's Hotel as I told you. I think it was the best arrangement and though expensive I felt we had avoided extravagance on the one hand and on the other the sort of parsimony that can make people feel that an occasion that should be happy and is important, has been turned into a rather uneasy congregation of people wondering if they ought not to club together to provide money

[1]See *Another Part of a Life,* chapter 8. [this volume]

for a couple who have hit on this method of raising the wind. I don't think any but the most uncharitable would think either extreme had been achieved: and let us hope none of them would be present . . .

June 5

My darling love,
Just a very short note to say how much I love you and how much I appreciate the enormous amount of work you are doing. I feel terribly in a backwater pegging along with patients exactly as if nothing was happening . . .

The new owner of the house was round this evening. He seemed a very decent sort of man and quite pleased with his purchase. I think he has reason to be and it may suit him. For myself I am more than ever relieved at being rid of what I am convinced is going to be a liability before many years are out.

Darling sweetheart I love you and hope I shall make you very happy.

June 9

Francesca, darling love,
My last letter to you before our marriage must be simply to say I love you my darling and – you make me feel so proud.

It is hard to realize how much this means. June 9th 1951. For ever and ever my dear darling I love you. I hope that you will be happy whatever may come our way, and that I may make you so.

Redcourt

To Bournemouth July 9

My darling,
. . . I wanted badly to do some serious psychoanalytic work but I found myself unbelievably shy of starting it. I really have become terribly out of the way of reading it, not that I ever did much in that way at any time. There are few psychoanalytic writers who write clearly and those, except Freud, are not always the best psychoanalysts. Still, one ought I think constantly to revise and keep what has been written, by a few of the best at least, well in mind. How this is to be done, with the general reading that I also consider essential, no one knows.

. . . The house is very empty without you and Parthenope – not that she makes her presence felt at this hour – and I shall go to bed early.

Sunday afternoon. I have written my short piece about Rickman[1] and that must go off tomorrow . . . I would have written something not banal but there is a convention in these things which must be adhered to – at least it is risky to depart from it very much.

Well, my dear wife, this house is lonely without you. I would look up as I write this and see you opposite but alas it is not to be, and a fortnight is a very long time to wait. It is nice writing, my dear wife: Francesca my darling wife: how I long to – but it does not bear thinking about.

I hope you are having a fine day. It is lovely here . . . there is a good breeze, warm and caressing. And there has been plenty of sun. If it has been like that at Bournemouth then I hope you have had a good day on the beach and feel the cobwebs all blown away. Get well pickled in the sea too. I think it makes one's skin really fit to have the stimulation of the salt water and sea air. I have no doubt Parthenope is revelling in it . . .

July 9

My darling wife,
My darling Mrs Bion: How are you now my dearest Mrs Bion? It makes me angry and sad to think that owing to my stupidity over stamps you will not have had my Sat–Sun letter this morning. But I hope there will not be any more delays.

I very unfairly had two letters from you this morning and was so glad to get them that I couldn't bear to open them as I wanted somewhere absolutely private where I could read them without any rush. Thank you for them my darling wife. They were very welcome and interesting. It makes me hope that you are having an enjoyable and happy time.

It also makes me feel more than ever that I would come down to Bournemouth for the next week-end but even if you were able to arrange for me at the hotel, which I suppose is unlikely, I feel troubled about expense. I suppose it is irrational to be disturbed over the way they go on delaying settlement of the Homestead but it does bother me.

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[1]John Rickman died on July 1.

. . . I am very interested in your news of our daughter – shivering with cold and sniffling has never been accepted by her as anything against swimming.

Darling Mrs Bion; yes, I think it looks very nice. So does she. Sleep well dearest – if this reaches you at night.

Your loving husband.

July 9

My darling Wife,
The sound of your dear voice has really put some life into me in a most magical way . . . It has even had the effect of making me get out my own group paper[1] and look at it. There really is a big difficulty about this. I think that to psychoanalyse patients properly – and I think I am doing this quite well at the moment – one has to keep one's touch concentrated on that sort of outlook; one should not do something too close to it – either analysis only or else something quite different, a complete change. They say you should never play a game with a stationary ball, like golf, when you are trying to play well in a game with a moving ball, like tennis. It is something of that sort. Anyhow I often feel after throwing myself into group work that I do very bad analysis just after it. Of course it may be illusory.

The other paper I spoke about was an expansion of my membership paper.[2] This is I believe a really good paper and it very badly needs expansion and publication. Probably I had better concentrate on that at least till the summer holiday. However there is no harm in keeping the thread of the other in mind so I can get off to a flying start. It is maddening when one's interest shifts from a subject too much.

My darling I love you: I can't tell you how much better I feel for hearing the sound of your voice on the phone. I feel jealous and envious of Bournemouth to think you are there and I'm so far away . . .

P.S. Since June 9th 1951, your husband. How satisfying it is to write that. Your husband. My darling wife Francesca.

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[1] 'Group Dynamics: A Re-View'. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 33* (2, 1952). Also in: M. Klein et al. (Eds.), *New Directions in Psycho-Analysis* (1955). [See 'Re-View: Group Dynamics', in *Experiences in Groups*; Volume IV.]

[2] 'The Imaginary Twin' [Volume VI].

July 10

My darling wife,
This must be a very short note as it is late and tomorrow is an early morning and late night. The only merit of it is that I hope it will make the time go faster. At least it is Tuesday night – but really! only two days gone!

I am just back from supper with Ken Rice. We met at Maison de France. Quite a good meal for a change but how I grudged the time. I was sorry because I like him, but at the moment it reminds me only too poignantly of bachelor days so I felt ungrateful.

I have been trying to sort out income tax in intervals between patients to-day. Really one wonders if ever one will have time to do any real work. And yet when one is hopelessly in arrears with routine Income Tax stuff and already feels desperately tired, it is hard to know what to do. I feel guilty but I am already doing a 50-hour week of patients and that is nearly too much in itself.

I have come reluctantly to the conclusion that I shall absolutely have to put up my fees after this summer. I am sure I am charging far too little. It is a very great nuisance but it is doing neither me nor my patients much good. People not one half as good as I am are charging more . . .

July 11

My darling wife,
Just as I thought the postman would not be in time he came, so off I went to Town with your letter snug in my pocket.

When I read your account of the early morning I reminded myself that holidays are only work disguised so as to look different from work!

Needless to say your suggestion of the week-end agitates me. I would love to come especially if I could get off on Friday night. It would help to cut short this intolerable pause I suppose; I never knew time drag so horribly. It would be awful if it made the remaining time seem to go even more slowly – if such a thing is possible.

I have been to a business meeting of the Institute. The first 3/4 hour was spent in talks by various people in memory of Rickman. Rather stiff and too formal for the most part but Money-Kyrle spoke well – he who wrote the obituary in *The Times.*

Darling wife, I love you dearest. I don't want to go on writing so-called news. I quite enjoyed the meeting but I spent most of it thinking complacently and very happily about you. Two people told me how well I looked and I knew they both knew it was you. This gave me much pleasure. But – my goodness how the days drag. It is too painful to realize this is only Wednesday. I really thought the fortnight would be soon over, or told myself so till I believed it. I know better now and cannot keep up the pretence . . .

July 12

My darling love,
You cannot think what a thrill it is for me at the beginning of the day to see your handwriting on the envelope in the box – and with what depression and anxiety I approach it in case it is not there. I say to myself, Of course there won't be one today because the posts will be irregular. Or, she may not have time. Or, well, why should she write every day anyway? And then . . . ah! there it is; I can see something in the box even through the glass doors. I am writing this immediately when I have just opened your letter, in the short space between two patients, but have only read the first sentence . . .

I am sorry the weather has been poor as I believe it would be very good for you to get plenty of sun and air – also sea bathes. Also I agree with you that an absence of me is doing you no good. I am the medicine you need all right. Plenty of me, day and night, for ever. We shall have to arrange it . . .

Well I have just spoken to you on the phone and that has put everything out of my head except the thought of our meeting. Truly I never felt a fortnight could possibly be such a weary agony of waiting. I don't know how I shall last out the next week. This one seems to have been almost as much as I could stand and heaven knows it has been easy enough . . .

July 18

Francesca my darling,
It is *still* Wednesday: I never knew it go on being Wednesday for so long before. And I sit about filled with the most gloomy forebodings feeling that the house never will be sold or, worse still, that the bank, the solicitors and the agents between them will get all the money. I

don't quite know what lesson one should learn from all this but I am sure there is something. The assistant bank manager said to me, "These solicitors are *all* rogues, *all* of them. You may have paid for the house but who knows if the vendor has the money yet." I thought he might have added banks to solicitors but did not say so.

I think as you do about children. Anyhow I feel that we could at least do our best to make a happy home which people who do not love each other cannot do. Whether our best would be good enough no one can tell but the idea of it is thrilling . . . It is tragic how often parents hinder rather than help the development of their children: and the child is always so helpless, so little able to contribute to a harmonious home. Like as not it quite unconsciously sets about making mischief or difficulty.

I have been doing some of my group paper in the interval when a patient was away. It is not good as it stands but it may be possible to expand it into something worthwhile. It has possibilities. As usual I find myself brought up short by the lack of time to do all one would like. And yet if I had more time I should probably do what everyone with time seems to do – waste it. I think really I get through a great deal of work but I am apt to forget that I have done ten hours of patients and wonder why my mind is not fresh. Luckily I have a great capacity for being lazy and I think this saves me from overwork. Rickman I don't think ever attached enough importance to this, perhaps by temperament, and I think he wasted himself very badly. He had a very good brain but I think for the last ten years there was a falling off. He did not himself realize it luckily. The surprising thing is that so few others noted it either though it was very marked . . .

. . . I find I cannot contain my impatience. Two more days might be two months I feel it such a drag. It is as if it were such a frustration that I can hardly look forward to Saturday. I love you my darling wife . . .

July 19

Francesca darling,
I was very glad to hear your voice to-night as I haven't had a letter but it was all too short a talk. Also I was so pleased at hearing you that I could not think what depression you were referring to – it had all gone at the sound of your voice.

. . . My dear, the nearer it comes to Saturday the more I feel I can't bear the long wait. Really I do not know quite what you have done to me: I seem totally incapable of getting on without you! And I am sure you will think the house is a pig sty and quite topsy-turvy.

It has not felt a satisfactory day's work today. I think patients are all very much in need of a holiday as I am and it is difficult to keep a track of them all. They all seem to want to stop treatment, even the most unsuitable for ending. Since one feels like stopping oneself, it is not very easy to deal with.

July 20

Francesca my darling,
Just a note which I hope will be in time to reach you before you leave Bournemouth. It is to send you my love and to wish you a very pleasant and comfortable journey and to remind you that even if you don't you will soon be having the outstanding pleasure of seeing ME! Even so you will not I fear have such an exciting and altogether stupendous pleasure as I shall be having because I shall be meeting YOU. Now isn't that nice for me?

Darling, darling Francesca. How I long to meet 'my women' (as Dr Heimann called you, rather amusingly I thought). Give our daughter a kiss from me.

My sweetheart: what ages you have been away. Tell the driver of the train to get a move on please. I shall be seeing you soon, you know.

July 21

Francesca my darling,
You wouldn't think it but I have already been writing this letter for half an hour. And yesterday evening I couldn't even get this far.

Very shortly I shall be setting out to meet my darling wife . . . I keep thinking I am at Waterloo trying to pierce through the crowd of passengers coming. My goodness where are you? I hope you haven't missed the train. Surely by this time I should have caught a glimpse of you? If you had caught the train – Really it is terribly careless of you; I believe you have missed the train damn it! You might have known I wouldn't be able to bear it if you – Ah! – she hasn't missed

it! Bless her! my darling girl. My darling, darling girl. What a time it takes to get through this crowd. And even when I do I won't really be able to kiss her.

Darling this is hopeless. I can't stand it and I'm off to Waterloo. I ought to have got the Hoover out or gone and picked some raspberries or something. It's like waiting for school term to end. Or leave to come due at the front when a battle is on and you think you may get killed or, worse still, trip up and sprain your ankle and miss your turn that way. It's like, well, I suppose it's only like one thing on earth – meeting Francesca when she is your darling, darling wife.

There is *nothing* else like it. Only that. . . .

1952

Redcourt

To the Mayday Hospital August 13

My darling wife,
. . . I feel more and more how happy and fortunate I am, even if it does mean the most agonizing frustration too.

I had a pleasant surprise and relief to-day as my patient – 'the' one – turned up and was not quite so virulent as before; but what was better, when his father arrived, he started off by saying that both he and his wife were *amazed* at the change in the boy. He said he was kind, considerate and with a marked sense of responsibility, and that they had never known him like that before. I told him I was very glad to hear it because of course what I saw was all the anxiety and conflict and hate, and that although I could *deduce* progress that was not the same as an independent witness. Now aren't you pleased? I am. It is one of the things that goes towards making one feel that all the sweat and blood of this business is well worth it – not that one always has such appreciative parents. It is a great load off my mind and it is very gratifying to me because it makes me feel, *What* a *clever* husband you've got! . . .

The patient's father, by the way, had seen *The Times* announcement and gave his congratulations.[1]

Darling I can't bear going on writing this as all the things I want to say won't come out in a staid and respectable manner as befits a husband married to such a clever and beautiful wife . . .

August 14

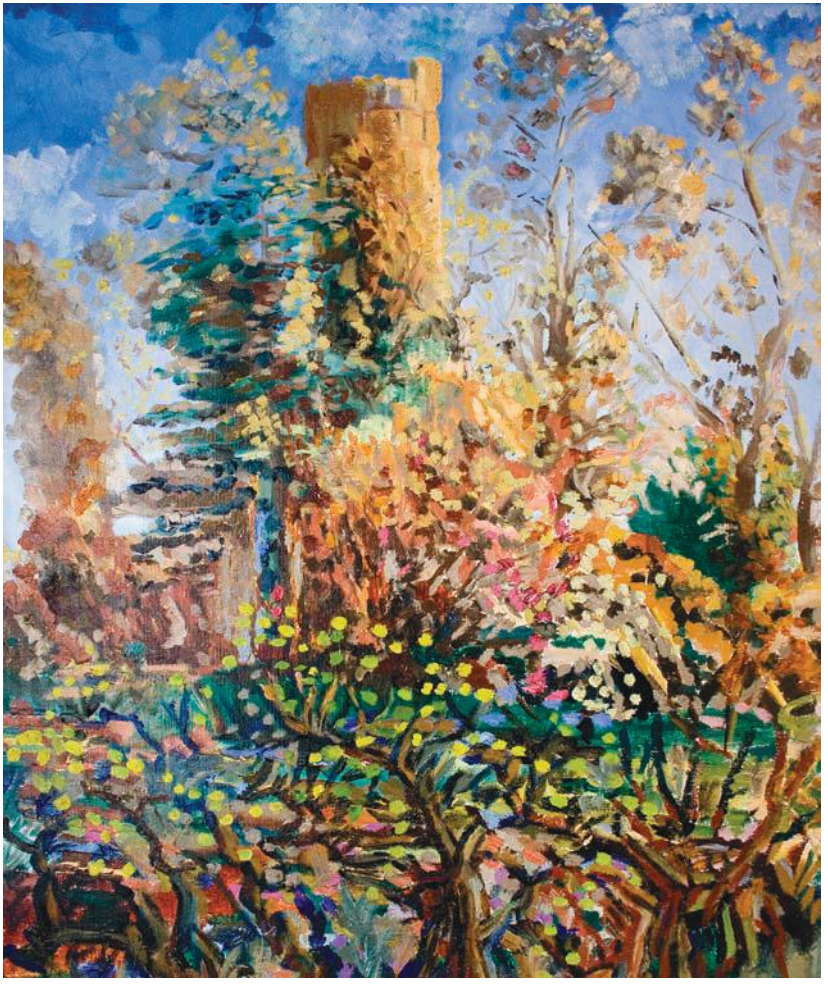
Francesca my darling,
. . . I had the best session yet with my problem child and although there were extraneous reasons for it, it is also a sign of good work here. My darling sweetheart this is all you. If it were not for the thought of your love for me I don't believe I could cure anybody or anything – certainly not in the state of mind I've been in for the last month. I've been terribly anxious and worried and I have yearned for

[1]Julian was born on July 30.

you day and night till I felt I could hardly bear it, but I think all the same I have been able to do, and even do well, the things I have had to do. And I feel extremely happy. My darling I hope you will feel blessed in your family. I hope you will feel it is as a source of deep joy and happiness that nothing can take away from you no matter what anxieties and troubles may be in store – we couldn't do without them either I am sure . . . If only I could have known you earlier! And now there's Julian, bless him! Well, I shall have to get to know him – and you, because I think you have changed you know. Anyway I shall have to look into the matter . . .

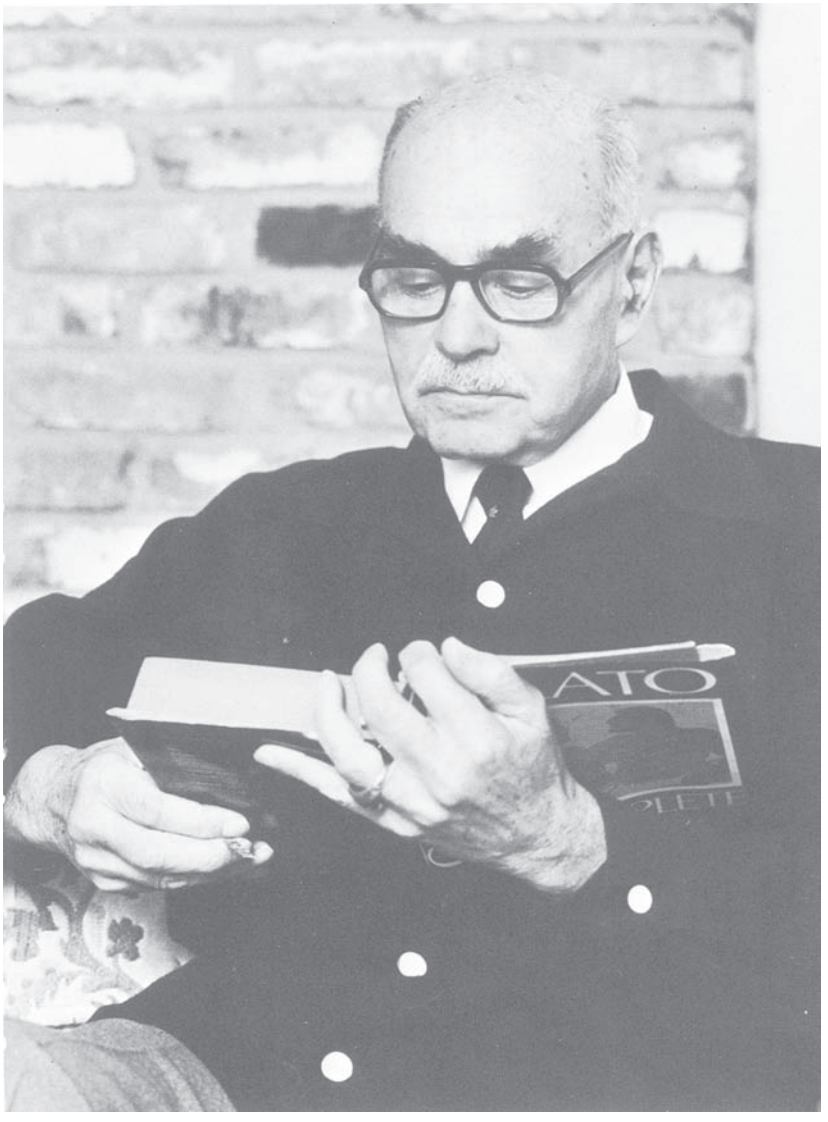
Francesca, 9 June 1951

The Little Cottage, Norfolk
Oil painting by WRB

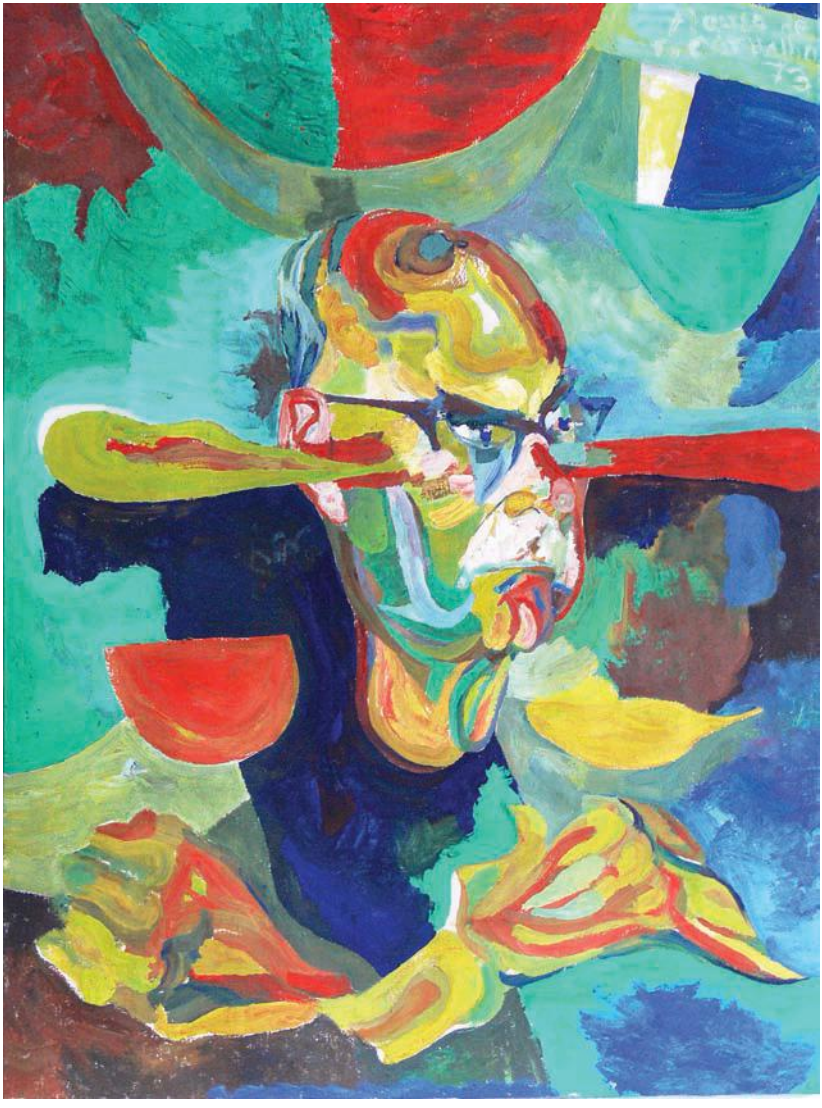


The orchard and water tower, Redcourt
Oil painting by WRB

Redcourt



Los Angeles, 1976



Oil painting of WRB by Flavio de Garvalho,
São Paulo, 1973

Cornfield from the Little Cottage
Oil painting by WRB

At the Tavistock Centre, London, 1976

1953

Redcourt

To Angmering August 4

My darling,
. . . My worry is whether the house will turn it all into a busman's holiday.[1] It would be a great help to the children if they have a chance of having you to themselves. I curse myself for this arrangement of holiday because I feel both I and my patients are going through with it but without any real drive – as if feeling it a waste of time. And a number have gone anyhow so it would have been better to quit. I shall try to use the gaps in my practice for reading or writing but to-day at least I felt I lacked resilience or interest.

. . . Well my love I think of you all the time. Please give my love and kisses and a hug to Parthenope and a, well whatever he calls it, to Julian. It seems queer to have a son and daughter. I really feel quite a family man now.

Goodnight my love: I love you. But how I hate writing letters . . .

[1]We rented a house for a month by the sea.

1955

Redcourt

To the Mayday Hospital June 12

My darling,
Just a line to let you know all goes well here. Parthenope has been playing with Julian the whole time so he has been quiet enough – if quiet is the right word. Your mother gave him an excellent answer when he asked when you would be back: she said you had got to wait till the baby was big enough. It had the blessed merit of being true, comprehensible to him, and satisfying as well . . .

You are always in my thoughts my brave sweetheart.

June 17

My darling,
. . . I have been thinking the matter over and have come to the conclusion that Nicola is the most beautiful baby in the world.[1] It's this hospital business that gets me down: I've just remembered it was the same with Julian – an agonizing and indefinable postponement.

He said to me he wanted his Mummy and then – don't go to work Daddy. So he wants us both which is very satisfactory . . .

Geneva[2]

July 24

My darling,
I had a very good and easy journey and now of course I am more than ever sorry you are not here – Nicola and all. The children would love it, and if Julian had been able to keep his eyes open he would have been thrilled to bits by the airport at London. It is a vast place and the bus ran in by a long underground tunnel that reminded me of the Mersey tunnel. The lighting in the reception halls was wonderfully effective and I think owes something to the Festival of Britain artists.

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[1]She was born on June 13.
[2][Attending an International Psychoanalytical Congress. *Ed*.]

The plane was a turbo-jet and the take-off and the whole flight was extremely smooth even if it did not live up to being 'without vibration' quite as they advertised. But it was so steady that it gave me a feeling of confidence that I have not had before in flying. We rose very fast to 17,000 feet and 300 miles an hour. In 20 minutes we were over Brighton and in another 20 minutes over France; Paris–Dijon – a snooze, and we were circling Geneva airport. I felt a bit tatty by the time I was thrown out of the bus, but all went smoothly and I soon became aware that my misgivings arose from my expecting English service. By four o'clock I had my luggage and was clear. Of course I wondered how on earth I was to get to the hotel and if there would be a room. And of course nothing could be simpler. A row of taxis – unlike Croydon – a swift ride for 1fr.50 (about 3/–) and there I was wondering if the hotel was open at such an hour. A room? Certainly m'sieur: number 309. . .

. . . at 8.15 I rang down for my 'cafe complet' which is included. I had hardly settled back on my pillows before the waiter was there. Two fresh rolls and a croissant, very good butter, apricot jam and lots of coffee and milk. And all most fresh and appetising. There is a writing desk and, as you can see, notepaper etc. It seemed to me my only chance of writing was to do it now while Melanie presumably thinks I am asleep – once I showed myself, I felt sure, she would not let me off re-writing my paper. Even now I suspect she will send someone to rout me out on the grounds I have had quite enough sleep to go on with . . .

I must say I feel deeply sorry you aren't here. Honestly I believe it would be a holiday and a rest to you if you simply stayed here and looked after Nicola while I coped with Julian and Parthenope. The cleanliness, the service and efficiency alone raise one's morale. I believe we should aim at something like this next year willy-nilly.[1] I am *sure* we could find something which would be as easy, no, far easier a holiday than Farringford[2] and an infinitely simpler and more comfortable journey. Although I haven't poked my nose out of doors yet this has brought home to me in full force that England is no place for a holiday – unless you stay at home and that is no holiday for you. How I long for you to be here . . .

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[1]We went to Lake Garda.

[2]Once Tennyson's house, at Freshwater on the Isle of Wight.

I must find a way of explaining to M.K. that I need sleep and then use it for writing! Psychoanalysis all day and psycho-politics all night, preferably in a room with all the windows shut, cigarettes alight, and a fire, is more than my constitution was built for. I shall add to the fug with a cigar and if that does not clear the room I shall say I must go to write my October paper;[1] there is some truth in this anyway. And now my dear I must deal with Herr–monsieur, cher docteur–med or whatever his title should be. I feel a brute but I am sure he will be relieved too. With all my love my darling. I think of you always. And it is nearly half Sunday gone. With many many kisses.

July 24

Francesca darling,

. . . As soon as I went down to post the letter to you, there at the barrier was Elliott Jaques, and there by his side Melanie. So we had lunch. And very good too: an artichoke, a mixed grill consisting of sweetbreads, veal, chop, pork sausage, fennel, kidney and tournedos excellently cooked. Then raspberries and a coffee ice cream. And the sun blazed and a cool breeze blew and the Rhone dashed along in front of us.

We then had a drive for some miles along Lake Geneva, beautiful in the sun with all the families out in their chic. The most amazing sight is a fountain which throws the water 270 feet into the sky – a remarkable feat of hydraulic engineering. And so back to an afternoon rest . . .

Then the reception. In a very big hall in the best hotel. There must have been about a thousand people. Masses of all sorts and my reeling brain saw Argentinians and Brazilians and one Mexican and – some talking broken English and some broken French but all, I gather, had been greatly stimulated by my articles, my 'sporadic' articles one of them said. I felt like a stuffed cod served with hot butter sauce and looked it. I *had* to drink, and the more I drank the more of course I sweated. Many friends say what a pity you aren't here. Of course. And so do I, many times.

M.K. and Elliott interest me. There is no doubt of the close collaboration: and why not? It does not do to think you can be a failure in this world and get away with it. At last we left. The reflections in

[1] 'The Development of Schizophrenic Thought'. [Volume VI]

the water, the floodlit fountain and the rushing Rhone looked very fine. Shops are likewise but *very*, *very* expensive.

I think of you always and there is much I would like to talk to you about on the spot while fresh in the mind . . .

July 25

My darling,
I have a moment so had better seize it. M.K. and Elliott are at the Congress but I have stayed on the pretext that I want to review my paper; so I do, but I want to stay away from the Congress more. The morning's session was not as bad as it might have been but whether that was because I wore my linen trousers and terylene shirt, and was more comfortable in consequence, or whether on account of the excellence of the papers I would not like to determine; more I suspect the former than the latter. I hate listening to lectures anyway. There was one fool of a woman who talked on, but knew nothing about, schizophrenia. She was allowed 30 minutes; she read a paper of 60 minutes gabbled so as to fit it into 45. And Melanie said her piece and was pleased with its reception. Augusta Bonnard (Mrs Brunner) thinks, says M.K., that I am charming. Obviously the old spells still work you see. I strolled back past shops and am convinced there is nothing I can buy here which would not be both uninteresting and expensive. The only local objects would be a watch for Parthenope and a cuckoo clock for Julian. Or, just a cuckoo clock for *us* which would amuse the children . . .

I decided to economize by having a glass of beer and a sandwich for lunch: bill Fr. 9.90, which according to my reckoning is close on £l.

Later. Well, anyhow now it is Monday night. I am just back after a trip out with Elliott and Melanie in his car, to a lake-side restaurant for supper. During the afternoon there was a thunderstorm in the neighbourhood, with a few drops of rain here, so by the time Elliott rang me up, at about 6.15 p.m., it had become nice and cool. The drive, of a few kilometres, was nothing in particular – a wide 4-lane speed road with glimpses of the lake – and the restaurant unpretentious. It was quite a nice little meal; Trout Meunière, escalope of veal, an ice sweet and coffee; a local white wine, uninteresting but not vinegar. It cost about 25/– each which I think a good Soho standard; better than my beer and sandwich at least. The conversation I now feel was a bore, but am a bit guilty at thinking so. Melanie is extremely

demanding. I suppose it is because she has had so many attacks and so little genuine happiness in her life but I always feel sucked dry; I don't know quite how it is. I think she fishes for a compliment, gets it, rejects it and then says, "But all the same I think he" (or she or it or them) "is really quite friendly to me". I am supposed to be in a state of nerves about my paper. In fact I don't give a damn about it. But she likes to reassure me. Later she will want to stop me from being conceited about it.

But enough of this. I am hoping to have a letter from you tomorrow. Indeed I kept looking for one today although I knew there couldn't have been one. I feel I have been away for at least ten days although this time two days ago I had only just left you . . .

After a little more acquaintance with Geneva I am not so sorry you are not here – it is so obvious that if one comes abroad at all Geneva is not the place, and except for income tax rebate it is a waste of time to mix it up with a congress. Congresses for London – abroad for holidays.

I suppose I had better stop if I'm going to be in a fit state to do my 20 minutes tomorrow. Melanie asked after Nicola and spoke very warmly of you saying how well you got on with everyone and how much everyone liked you. It always gives me great happiness when I hear my wife loved and admired – and it makes me feel very warm to Melanie, even if, for some reason, I'm a bit cross at the time. I have to be at the Congress all day tomorrow and a Cantonal Reception in the evening, sweating and hot in my suit, so I don't expect I shall be able to write at any length. But I shall try to write something and at least to say how the paper went off and how much I love you . . . .

July 26

My darling,
I'm starting this before breakfast partly as I may not have time later and partly to let Elliott and Melanie get off to the Congress without me. I feel a bit battered at the moment. To be a bit irreverent, it all reminds me of stories a friend of mine told me about Marlene Dietrich who, said he, was surrounded by a squad of the most beautiful – teutonically beautiful that is – young men, who leapt – that was the only movement permitted I gather – to fulfil her slightest wish, and to beat off any would-be intruder. If Melanie had her way, and she has a lot of

it, she would make the whole Klein group quite ridiculous in everyone's eyes. I have an excuse in my 'nervousness' so mean to arrive by myself on foot. I may be wrong, of course. But I don't think so.

I hope to find a letter from you this morning when I go down shortly. There was another thunderstorm last night and I see the streets are still wet. As it's a totally indoors occupation here I welcome it as a way of keeping cool. I hope the poor things who are having holidays in the mountains like it.

Evening. I have half an hour before a ghastly evening of reception and Argentinian party. There is still no letter so I shall not hear till tomorrow now. I hope you and the children have had better luck with my efforts.

The afternoon was a success but I feel a bit flat partly because it was pretty evident that no one understood a word I was talking about. M. K. says they will do later: perhaps. First B., who is a rogue, spoke for 29 minutes instead of 20 allotted; then Segal for 27 minutes instead of 20 allotted; then I, who spoke for 19 – a bit fast. In the discussion B. attacked me quite rightly for the clinical material, but it gave me the chance to explain what my paper was about and to explain a part of a part of an interpretation, and I gather from one or two people that it made an enormous difference to those who previously had been puzzled.

I feel most reluctant to go to this infernal cantonal reception . . . I don't want to grumble because in fact I would feel churlish and stupid if I didn't go, and I should also feel I was missing something.

I must go my darling. I think of you and the children all the time. I hope all is well with you. Please kiss them for me . . .

Later. Well I'm back and as it is only 11.30 I shall jot down the evening's news. The rooms for the reception were in beautiful gardens with as beautiful a view of the lake. Snacks and drinks all very pleasant. When it was over we found we could stay there and have a meal and this M.K., Elliott and I did. And an excellent meal it was. I had a very well cooked sole with mushrooms, a tournedos and vegetables, and a coupe Jaques in honour of Jaques and my Tummy. White + red wine all excellent and one franc less than the previous evening, which is surprising. Then we went to the Argentine party. It was held in the flat of an Argentine couple. Coffee: more drink: a trolley load of fruit salads most exotically decorated, and in the background through

the windows a view of the lake aflame with lights of Geneva across on the other side. Some dancing went on to Argentinian music. Then a psychoanalyst, a Spaniard, sang a series of flamenco songs. The scene was attractive and went well with the belly-aching wail and the thrum of the guitar – the lake and its lights through the windows and the very Mexican-Exhibition-looking women about the floor and looped around window seats. Melanie said, What a pity Francesca is not here. Which I echoed with all my heart. At last home, and very glad to be back. I will not pretend I am not very disappointed to have had no word whatever of you or the children since I left on Saturday night. I love you and them too dearly not to be upset, but perhaps it is only Croydon post office . . .

July 27

My darling,
I went off duly to listen to Gillespie at 9.0 a.m. and then stayed on for some discussion. I had a shock when calling for letters to find a telegram which I tore open and was relieved to find it was only from an ex-patient. I feel very sleepy as I didn't sleep much at night and this is a sleepy town. Segal, who was apparently at school here, says it is a wretched place, always steamy, hot and cloudy. At the moment it is fine, but otherwise it lives up to her description.

Some man wanted me to join them in a group therapy session at lunch to-day. I want to cut it: it is just the day for a quiet lunch entirely by myself I feel.

Later. However, I went: and I felt that I was a silly ass because it turned out to be a very crowded and uncomfortable indoor lunch with people who didn't know much about it. I was however listened to with flattering attention and I had a very good omelette and a beer, and that is something. But at the moment, which is midnight, the main thing is that I have had a letter from you. When I came back after the last paper of the Congress there it was. I gather you sent it on Monday so it seems extraordinary that I have had to wait till Wednesday evening before getting it. But it has made me feel quite different. I have really felt very worried and that damned telegram made me have a nasty shock. It is a great relief that all was going on ordinarily and I am ashamed to say I even felt a little bit glad you missed me.

To go back to the story: I went to the papers chiefly to hear Money-Kyrle and Rosenfeld. Money-Kyrle was very gentlemanly and Elliott

thought it was good for them all to see how an Old Etonian died in the last ditch so to speak. Rosenfeld's was the last in the Congress and I thought it good.

I joined Elliott and M. K. and he drove us to the Beau-Rivage where we had a beer on a terrace lined with tiny pink lorraine begonias. Then ten minutes to tidy up at the hotel where I found your letter thank God. I had walked back at midday before the group therapy lunch but had only found notice of the telegram. I hadn't even heart to buy some magnificent cherries[1] in the market place on the island in the Rhone.

Then Elliott drove M.K. and me to a chateau on the outskirts of Lausanne – about an hour's drive. This trip was to a dinner given to the Congress by Raymond de Saussure – some 800–900 guests. I was curious to see what it was all about as it seemed a somewhat generous venture and M.K. had said that I must go because if de Saussure did it, it was bound to be good. Well, after a somewhat tantalizing drive on which one only had occasional glimpses, from an arterial road, of the lake, the moon, and Mont Blanc, we reached the village which was dominated by this castle. The castle turns out to be de Saussure's brother's and has been in the family since about 1600 or earlier. We had police to control the traffic and all the parking was done with no fuss or trouble. Then we walked about 100 yards up to the main gate of the castle through which we entered a truly magnificent courtyard which was dominated by the keep and high tower – an affair of massive proportions and very awe-inspiring. We climbed the stairs and entered a big hall with ceiling painted with coats of arms. From this we walked through an ante-room to a terrace along which was set out long dining tables in the open air with the lake spread below us in the evening glow beneath the moon. The terrace went down in stages for some 60 yards or more and tables were set for the guests beneath trees festooned with small electric light bulbs. Elliott, M.K. and I sat ourselves down at the tables on the highest level outside the ante-room – the serfs, I told Melanie to her pleasure, would be at the lower tables. The meal was simple – a small cheese soufflé, a cold pie with engaging but not particularly memorable etceteras, and an iced sweet and coffee. There was plentiful agreeable white and red wine and the only marring feature was that Melanie fell from her seat and

[1]His favourite fruit.

hurt herself. She was not as much shaken as I feared and I hope not much hurt. She seemed to recover very well.

No speeches but de Saussure walked round amongst the guests and was very deservedly clapped, with some health-drinking of course. By this time there were sounds of music and we broke up and moved indoors.

The main hall was cheerful with people, informally but nicely dressed, and I soon discovered that the music came from two Swiss in very gay scarlet costumes, playing traditional Swiss airs on small but very powerful concertinas. One was on the ground floor of the large square hall, and the other at the top of the stairs that wound round the peripheral walls to an upper floor of this same hall. The whole atmosphere was feudal, natural and gay without a trace of self-consciousness. All the servants seemed to enter thoroughly into the spirit of the thing as if to show the rest of us what a fine place Switzerland is. Melanie saw I was thoughtful and said, " I know what you are thinking about. You are wishing Francesca was here and I have been thinking how she would have enjoyed this". I had no shame in admitting that was exactly what I was thinking about. Oh dear, *how* I wish you had been there! Especially when we walked out into the courtyard again and saw that the colossal tower and keep were now flood-lit. The massive stone stairs, the cobbled court, and this terrific fluted and machicolated tower looked quite magnificent.

It is now past 1.00 a.m. so I must stop. It hardly seems possible that after tomorrow's business meeting it is all over and I set off home to see my dear wife and family again. It seems years since I left you and I long to see you more than I can possibly say.

And now my dear love, goodbye for the present. I don't think I shall really believe I am going to see you till I get back to East Croydon station . . .

1959

St George's Hospital, London[1]

February 3

My darling,
It is visiting hour so I thought I would write, or start to write, a letter. I have at last, stop press, been able to pass a motion. Such a palaver: I must not go to the lavatory; as a special favour I need not use the bed pan, but can have the commode. Why? Because I am so fragile and must not be allowed the slightest exertion. If it is – says probationer but it may be a nurse – what they think it is, I shall have to be cared for in hospital for 5–6 weeks: if it is not, then as far as I could make out, it would be as bad only different. I felt like picking up the pair of them, one in each hand, and putting them both down firmly on the pot. Finally I was not to wipe my bottom but one of them did, or perhaps they both had a turn. I suspect that this thrill was the ultimate aim of a somewhat synthetic panic. There is a fat old woman visitor over the way who has been bursting into the most rich, fruity, bawdy explosions of belly-laugh I have heard for a long time. Perhaps she saw me on the pot. Supper was egg on spinach with some very pale chips: but it tasted quite good. I waved tapioca and treacle away.

The ECG chap showed up and did his stuff. He said it was much the same as this morning and showed nothing particular.[2] The hospital examination routine is very thorough but I suspect it is always a bit rigid. I, who strongly suspect more attention needs to be paid to my digestive upset and old jaundice, noticed that no one asked me about it but I had to draw attention by mentioning the absence of motion. Similarly it was sister who noticed that the graze on my cheek had not been washed as it should have been. But my analytic work convinces me that it takes a long time before people are able to bear a realistic contact with what other people are, rather than with some artefact with which they are familiar.

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[1]In spite of an attack of influenza, he continued to see patients at Harley Street. On the morning of February 2 he fainted after getting off the train at Victoria Station; an ambulance was called, and he was taken to hospital.

[2]His ECG had in fact always shown an irregularity which was never satisfactorily explained.

The HP here said he thought the casualty department had made a mess of it by sending you an alarmist message. I was so pleased to see you I forgot to ask what it was.[1] But it is anyhow so worrying when anyone is in hospital that I am sure if one alarm was not sounded another one would be. Anyway I have not got diabetes. And I am feeling very fit indeed now. I feel I ought to set up a huge wail, "Please, please doctor *don't* throw me out of hospital!" on the Brer Rabbit principle. And all the time I wonder how my darling wife is getting on and our babies. For of course they *are* only babies. And you looked so nice and cheerful and loving and beautiful even though I could see the strain and trouble break through. I know it must be so and I wouldn't have it otherwise: you would not be the brave girl I know you are if you were not worried, but I believe if we just try to deal with these things as they come it won't be so bad. Anyhow there is not much else we can do. I must try to find out as much as I possibly can about my physical state and then concentrate on living accordingly. I'm always far too careless – about over-eating particularly.

The old chap next door has just told the young girl House Physician that her examination "tickled" him. There's always a silver lining obviously!

I do hope the children will not be too upset. I wouldn't have them ignorant that hospitals and illnesses exist, but I would like to feel they learn to take them as part of life (one part, not too big I hope unless they are doctors).

I shall *not* send this to you I think. The young chap on my right handed his thick letter for posting to the nurse and the following talk burst on the air.

Nurse: Ooh! It's thick! Lots of nice things in it I expect?

Patient: Yes, *I* know; you'll steam it at the kettle and open it!

Nurse: Pooh! I can do that with my breath.

It's now 9.00 but all the lights are still on so I don't know when they shut down. I suppose we shall all be woken at 5.30 or earlier. Well my dear I must say goodnight for the present. When you come I would like the Braithwaite book on Scientific Method – I put this in in case I forget to mention it. Bless you my sweetheart.

Wednesday morning. Feb. 4th. After a rackety sort of night I feel

[1] "Your husband has had a heart attack at Victoria Station."

like unburdening some more to you. The House Physician came round last night and asked after me. He said I should stay in "a few days" even if the ECG was OK. This does not surprise me, but I would like to know how far the "few days" is going to extend. He said my weight was too much and suggested, for my height, twelve stone.

I cannot help thinking, as I read the book I have here on Scientific Method, what a terrible lot of bilge I have read in my time. There has always been a certain amount, too much I think, of gullibility about me, and it makes me swallow a lot of nonsense – not only in books I think – that I could do without. I wish I could feel more confident that I wouldn't add to the flood of rot but of course if I did I would probably lack the necessary self-criticism.

They have been cleaning the walls: that is, brushing the dust off them on to the patients. There have been letters in *The Times* about the dangers of unclean walls and what trade unions job it is to clean them. In fact of course 'the dangers' obvious to bacteriologists and others are just removed from one place to another; at any rate no one is worse off. And over the years the idea probably gets established that it is a good thing to keep clean.

An Irish ward maid has been exchanging a good deal of bawdy with my right hand neighbour who has a photo of his fourth baby which she saw. "No more", was the burden of her lay. "You must have time to sleep sometimes", she told him for the whole of this end of the ward to hear.

I so much wonder how you are getting on. And yet I know that you will be doing everything as usual bravely and cheerfully but with a horrible undercurrent of worry and anxiety which just cannot be helped. And I would so like to help it. I am doing what I can: e.g. to take the chance of cutting down my weight which I can do quite easily here because I am in bed and I am not racked by the thought of the delicious treat I am missing. The ward has now settled down to its routine after the cleaners' visitation and I shall have to wait for my ECG.

Later. No ECG. Apparently they think it is too near the old one to be worth doing another – nothing is likely to show. But, and this is bad news, the HP talked about its being a five or six weeks job. And this indeed was a shock. I pass it on as we may as well have our shocks if we have to . . .

This pain in my right side, now I come to think of it, is exactly the same as the one I had to have the X-ray for last year.[1]

February 4

My darling,
It really did seem as if the sunshine had gone out of the ward when you went out just then, but thanks to letters I can start writing straight away. It is a queer thing about love that it teaches you that certain common phrases which seem never to have much meaning are really quite true. If it weren't for you I would not have found that out about the sunshine . . .

Later. Dr Hunter, the chief, has just been in to see me. He ran over me quickly, gave my heart a clean bill and said if my Friday ECG was OK I should be out at the week-end. This has cheered me so much that I keep forgetting I have to have another ECG. And Hunter says he will see me again. I think I *shall* post this straight off to you as I shan't see you tomorrow. Hunter said I ought to take the next week off work. If I could only mobilize some thoughts before I came out I might get a paper done. Unfortunately it is a most complex subject and I don't want to rush into it prematurely. However, I can go on churning and I shan't complain. if it is two weeks and not six off work . . .

February 5

My darling,
. . . I begin to feel nervous about the outcome of tomorrow's ECG! Otherwise I feel all right but for the 'catch' in my side when I cough. This remains painful, but I dare say I am becoming too impatient. I am slimming but I am prepared to bet I have lost nothing in weight. I continue to cogitate on my paper[2] but it is a curiously elusive subject and comes and goes. At the moment I am feeling there is nothing in it, but I am used to this . . .

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[1]At that time he had cracked two ribs.

[2]'Attacks on Linking', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, *40* (5–6, 1959): 125. [Volume VI]

February 6

My darling,
I was so cheered to have your unexpected letter that I nearly wept. I think I must be feeling a lot better as I felt so depressed by my breakfast of porridge and hot milk (no sugar) and so wanted to eat the bacon and tomato – but stoically refrained. This is my contribution to the treatment and I am feeling more and more that what is the matter with me is the after effect of jaundice ten years ago. I think my liver won't turn all the food into nourishment, but leaves undigested stuff to circulate as poison – hence anything may happen, and it always looks like something else.

. . . Like you I feel only half alive though I hardly realize it till I become wholly alive through your letter. I must be pretty alive to lie here being half blown out of bed day and night apparently none the worse in spite of the fact that after all I am presumably getting rid of a cold.

I think I feel depressed mostly because I find it difficult to believe I shall get out of here until I am actually back at home. "You have to be difficult to get out of here", says the ward maid. "If you're nice they keep you." I must tell her to spread horrible tales of my 'difficulty'.

And how is my darling wife? You are so brave and look so cheerful and on top of things, and I know you do everything so well that I really wish I could do something worthwhile to match it. And indeed as I write to you I feel I want to be writing a marvellous paper. But if I start on my paper, alas! not marvellous; I feel I don't want to waste time on such rot but should be writing to you.

I could almost write a book on the extraordinary old boy in the corner opposite me. He looks like a scrawny old vulture at death's door but he skips around as merry as a cricket. Some gems of conversation:

Nurse: However many pyjama jackets have you got on?
Patient: Three.
Nurse: It's much too hot for that. (So it is.)
Patient: Don't you believe it. I'm not freezing to death for you here.
Nurse: (later) Whatever are you eating?
Patient: Chicken.

Nurse: But you aren't supposed to do that. They are testing you for diabetes. (Looking in the locker) Oh lor! Whatever have you got there?

Patient: Grub. And more chicken.

Nurse: But you didn't ought –

Patient: Never you mind about all that nurse. When I'm at Brighton I never go to the races without a nice bit of chicken and – etc. etc.

He has just been saying that 'they' say the fog is due to cold, but he can't think how they 'do' such things (make the fog perhaps?). He doesn't believe a word of it.

Well, here I lie and feel almost you will have to bring a gun. I feel quite demoralized lying here watching this sort of play go on, feeling perfectly fit, quite comfortable and extremely comfortably off when I know what your anxieties must be. But I must try to get square with my conscience by starting up on some work . . .

February 6

My darling,
As usual when you have left I feel depressed – hardly news of course because what else could I feel?. . .

I know you are having a very bad time and it hurts me that I am not there to help . . . But because you and the family have done something to me I find I spend less time on vain regrets and depressions and fears, and more on an immediate plan than I could have believed possible even a year ago.

February 7

. . . Needless to say Hunter did not turn up nor any of the others: and this means nothing can happen till Monday. The annoying thing is that there are plenty who are ready to *believe* something is seriously wrong even if it is not. And I don't want to give *that* crew any handle, especially with the intense competition for patients that still exists and will become even more intense. That is one reason why I am so anxious to get into print if I can't get into anything else. It is a pity we can't meet to talk – even if you get here there is no chance. But maybe it is easier and better to get one's thoughts into writing.

Later. My dear – it is bad news. I became tired of having no news so this afternoon I asked sister when the ECG would come through. She said it had – and the hope that it was only showing an old lesion has gone. It is a fresh one and I am to lie here and do nothing for myself. I feel more upset than I can say. Of course I knew and you knew that something like this could happen and was a risk when I proposed to you so late in life. The gain was all mine, the penalty, if the gamble didn't come off, was yours. But I hoped something good might come of it for you and now I feel I have let you down. Or rather, that I let you down when I proposed. I should have stayed right away from the Tavi when I knew what was happening. But damn it I would never have done it as I know I am too selfish and really care for no one but myself. But it is not true. And I want you to know how wealthy in happiness you have made me. I really felt as if I had lost it all, but all you have done for me has made me feel rich in happiness – even now, far beyond anything I had imagined happiness was. Bless you my darling girl. My eyes fill with tears whenever I think of the children clubbing together to buy me biscuits; not for unhappiness but happiness: just one of many I should have never known but for you.

I am going to stop now to get on with some work. It is a source of great comfort to me that I am able to do this though it seems without rhyme or reason. It cannot earn me a penny piece or help my dear darling family one jot, which is all I would do if I could, and yet it is somehow a great solace.

This is a very sad letter and I hate to write it to you my *devoted* wife. How much I knew that and yet how happy it made me to see it . . .

There is one consolation: ECG notwithstanding I feel fitter every day and when I *do* stand up – surreptitiously while being put on the commode – I feel very strong on my pins and that in spite of bed and the reducing diet. I would expect to feel pretty giddy and weak.

Now about visits. I think you should put all your priorities into looking after yourself and the children. I am all right here and get the best treatment there is, whatever its shortcomings may be – like all our poor human efforts. So I am safely packed out of harm's way for the time being. I *know* you love me: and that is all I want or need to know. I *know* you are by my side in thought and would be so in fact if it were wise to be here rather than somewhere else. I know we

must both be troubled and depressed and faint-hearted at times, or we would not be human. I am afraid I have felt like that too often in this letter. But I shall try to be sensible when common sense shows me you cannot be here . . .

I am wondering whether I ought to take the chance of looking at all that group stuff. I believe it might be very well worth while and it could be the start of a useful piece of work. Or if it is not, then a useful decision to throw the whole lot away.

The time is coming for your visit. I felt so excited I had to go to sleep for a bit and then I thought I shall be so depressed if I miss any of the excitement of your coming and my waiting for you that I couldn't sleep. I just want to say and *do* – I love you . . .

I shall now say goodbye for the present my dearest dear – and start my next letter the moment you are out of the door. The advantage of writing this is that I can think at leisure, and you can read without fear of forgetting or the distraction of no real privacy . . .

February 8

My darling,
. . . I have been re-reading your last letter so as to feel I have something of you which I can actually touch. I am sorry my last letter was so poor – I am not really depressed for long because I usually go over to plans about what can be done about it – whatever 'it' for the time being might be . . .

We had a ten-minute service: half a dozen people filed in including two women. 'Love divine all loves excelling', and then a reading and a prayer 'for the sick and all who minister to them', and 'Abide with me'. Then they filed out. I felt so sorry for them. They were brisk and cheerful and – what else could they possibly do? Yet I felt there must be something more or the whole thing is entirely pointless.

I thought how wonderful you looked this afternoon and it makes me feel so proud of you – and myself, though of course I know there is no excuse for that except the best excuse of all – which is you.

February 9th. I had a very good night after I had persuaded them to get rid of two of my three blankets. This morning I have done a bit more writing and checked the reading with it – a quite considerable amount of work though it does not look it on the paper. But I think it is clearly expressed and that is a big problem with this stuff . . .

February 11

My darling,
Here I am – sitting in a chair in a gale of wind. So I am obviously coming on, but what I shall be when the draught is finished is nobody's business . . .

I am at the moment feeling a bit depressed about my paper, wondering if it's all just working round stalking a most majestic mare's nest; a horrid feeling. The fact that there are correlations between scientific hypotheses and interpretations is at first reassuring, but then I begin to wonder if it is only an appearance caused by my saying commonplaces, that everyone knows, in a high-falutin' way. Ending up with a blinding flash of the obvious.

I have sent off a note to Parthenope and would like to send Julian and Nicola one. I must try to think of a way I could write Julian a letter he might read for himself and perhaps one he could read Nicola.

February 12. Tea and toast has just turned up but the nurse does not know what I am supposed to have – two slices? – three slices? Marmalade? Me: No, no marmalade and I forget if it's two or three. Nurse: Your egg hasn't come. Do you have an egg? Me: I had one yesterday for breakfast and one for my supper. Nurse: Oh, then it must be an egg. Q.E.D. I suppose, but it hadn't occurred to me that that was how the logic goes. I can see I am getting too well to appreciate all my luxuries here . . .

February 12

My darling,
It was lovely to have you by my side this afternoon. In a way I felt I hardly wanted to talk but was quite contented just to sit there and hold your hand and look at you and hear you talk . . .

Elliott came in this evening for a short time and I asked him about the M.K. Trust meeting. He told me of the progress of the scheme to publish M.K.'s book.[1] But though I was glad to hear negotiations were proceeding successfully I was in fact more concerned to hear about this hare-brained scheme of £70 a year for the support of high-grade candidates. He seemed to think it was unlikely to come to much and

[1]M. Klein, *Our Adult World and Other Essays* (London: Heinemann Medical, 1963), p. 130.

ended up by suggesting it might just be a matter of having an ad hoc whip round of a limited kind for some special occasion. He also favoured in any case having a standard so high that virtually no one would get a grant . . .

February 13. Another morning, my darling, after a good night's rest. I sometimes feel I ought to have been a recluse, some kind of Oxford don, only then we should not have enough money – we don't have enough apparently anyway, but that is a detail which afflicts anyone who would like to go on Hellenic tours or read good books or go to Glyndebourne. But the serious and disturbing thing is the awful sense of frustration I get because I feel I have something I must write but cannot get at it because of the pressure of the stark need to live at all. I can see from my stay here, where it is obvious that sheer force of circumstances makes it impossible to do anything but write and read the appropriate books, how absolutely uninterested I am in anything else except to see and be near you and the family. After that, but really mixed up with the reading and writing, is my work with the patients which I want to do for its own sake. I know I can't shuffle off all these damned financial worries and responsibilities but I certainly feel they are killing my capacity for work – destructive demands for some accursed Trust meeting, group meeting, attendance at a Society meeting, or *anything* almost that will destroy another evening I might have at home. *That* is where I want to be where I can get the rest and refreshment and privacy in which I can think and finally write. Here comes my bloody breakfast I think: it is lucky I am fond of boiled eggs but perhaps it won't be that this time; wet fish perhaps, though I will say that I find most meals appetizing enough. (Later) Boiled egg it was. But four bits of toast instead of three, which makes it two thin rounds. The nurse today didn't know what I was supposed to have any more than the nurse yesterday, so I feel they must have lost interest in me. If only it would take the form of getting rid of me. Sister has just told me I have a slight temperature which she not unreasonably thinks may be the hangover from my cold. Of course it puts the wind up me and makes me wonder how many extra days of hospital this may mean . . .

(Friday evening) . . . At the moment I am feeling filleted, which makes me wonder – perhaps living on food that has had its 'stuff' removed has the same effect on the person who eats it. The night duty

nurse has just come on and tells me she is "absolutely miserable". "So am I", I said, "What are you miserable about?" "Oh, I'm just *fed* up with this hospital and *everything* to do with it." It sounded like extra-sensory perception or projective identification or some such. Anyhow I am in a *bloody bad temper*. And it is a waste of time writing that. But all the time in my heart I have your sweet brave face as it always comes to my mind and as I saw you this afternoon. With your beautiful loving gentle smile. Things will be bad indeed when that cannot make me better. I *am* better, even after such a hell of a dose of medical treatment as Hunter's visit, and there is nothing can have done that but you.

February 14. St Valentine's, and I hope I can produce a better one than this next time. I have been having my lunch at the common table with two others. In fact the ten yards or so there and ten yards back do not at present seem to have done me any harm . . . (The commode has just gone by screaming and whistling on all of its four unoiled castors. It makes me want my oil can.) I wish I felt that they were really certain what is the matter – that is the real point and nothing can matter but to know what the facts are. . . .[1]

February 15

. . . I feel momentarily stuck with my paper. It is curious; when this happens I often find I have some other idea, but I am reluctant to pursue it for fear of just leaving a lot of loose ends and never coming to any point. And yet it is also true that taking up the new thread can turn out to have quite an important connection with what I have said before and may indeed be a way round the deadlock . . .

Later. In the upshot I did a lot more thinking but hardly any writing and what there is of it feels as if I had only partially got a grasp of what I wanted to say. Still, I feel if I have learnt nothing else I have begun to learn that to write something you must write – anything, anyhow, somehow, so long as you write. Only this way is any meaning likely to come of it.

My thoughts are very much with you and the family this fine afternoon. It was a lovely surprise to see you yesterday but it really made my heart go pit-a-pat in a most confusing kind of way; appropriate

[1]They remained unknown, then and later.

perhaps to a bashful young man suddenly confronted by a very beautiful girl whom he had been worshipping from afar. Much too much 'afar' for my liking . . .

February 15

My darling,
. . . Last night seemed to be damnably noisy. I don't think I can have been long getting off to sleep but I was awake enough to realize a new patient was very noisy; but this only accentuated my awareness of what a truly noisy hospital this is. Traffic is as far as I know quite incessant at this corner.[1] I don't know why they give me pheno-barb but God knows I would need it to cope with the din. And the row inside seems as bad – steam escaping and what sounds like various forms of machinery grinding away. And it is extraordinary, as another patient remarked some time back, how often someone drops a metal bottle or bed pan with a terrible crash. At the moment (post-breakfast) the whole place is a chaos of Monday morning sweep-up, plus helicopter which has just arrived – this extraordinary mechanical polisher with its wonderful charlady driver. It's no good trying to think.

Later. My darling, Hunter – [2]

[1]Hyde Park Corner.

[2]The letter breaks off here. The consultant had come to say he could go home.

1960

Redcourt

To The Little Cottage, Trimingham, Norfolk March 25

My darling,
It is very nice to have your letter and it made me feel that my hopes that you would have a refreshing and enjoyable break as well as a lot of work might be coming true. I felt as if I *had* had some holiday in Norfolk after I had read it . . .

I have fixed up with Melanie to have supper with her going on from the Gillespie's party: it will do instead of a birthday present. The idea occurred to me this evening and I think must have appealed to her as she cancelled a cinema trip to see me instead. I am of course cursing at the prospect now, but I believe it is the right thing to do and will on balance be helpful. I wish these social events did not quite so often feel like battles in which one always got the worst of it but perhaps it won't be so bad. Anyhow it may help to prevent the propagation of any idea that I am not a proper Kleinian – not a proper anything else either.

. . . I like to have a letter from you as well as telephone and it was very nice to hear you felt it was so lovely. I felt almost I was there when I read about the larks singing . . . .

March 27

My darling,
. . . Gillespie was very cordial. I was surrounded by Kleinians. Riviere came, deploring the cessation of the study group and Munro joined the lament. She bubbled away about how well the Clinic went – she got everything she wanted. Personally I can't see how it can be going any differently from usual or what she could be given. On these occasions we are all so warm-hearted and friendly, myself included, that it makes me wonder if it is a reaction from a sort of chronic psychoanalytic dislike. But it is there and quite infectious. I began to feel what a good fellow I was too and how popular. S. said how much she had liked my paper and *how* true, how *very* true, she had found it. It really quite opened up a new – alley? – vista? – avenue? – it was so

very – er, very true. She can't have understood it in fact and I don't know why she should suddenly overwhelm me. However, I told her how very – er well, very – er, kind it was of her to – and yes, wasn't it? – quite amazing: I was so glad. But what about God knows. I felt like icebergs.

M.K. apparently became so re-assured that I almost felt I was wasting the price of a meal. I took her to Prunier's which knocked us back £5 and I didn't think it much of a meal either. She pressed on me that she would be *very* glad to discuss my book with me at *any* time and I assured her that of course I would if it really wasn't – really? – well of course I should be delighted. Thirty years ago I might have been, and I think I might then have believed that I am really lovable and valuable and worthwhile, as I would be compelled to think if I believed one third of what I heard last night. And I am just as silly. I squeezed H.'s arm on parting, oh ever so affectionately, and said how much I regretted not being able to do any evening work for the Society but I was hoping to do something during the day for the Clinic. And how was I? Oh marvellous! I looked it, he said. I am, I assured him: and how well *he* looked! But maybe I am just tired. However, as I said on the phone, by and large I think it meant I have done myself no harm and probably good. But a paper would not be amiss or they will make it just a bit too like an obituary for me to swallow any of the euphoria.

I rather felt I wanted to get down to a piece of writing to-day. The worst of it is that there were a number of ideas which had clicked into position and I wish I had managed to get them down, but I didn't. As it is, beyond knowing it was to do with 'alpha', I can't remember what they were. And I don't think they always come back.

I find it a bit difficult to visualize what you are doing as of course one very cursory look at the cottage is all I have to go by and at present I cannot see it as anything to do with me. But I shall be glad to see you back and look forward to holding you in my arms: perhaps that's what is missing about the cottage from my point of view.

. . . with all my love and many grateful memories of nine years ago . . . .

1964

The Little Cottage

To Wells Rise, London December 29

My darling,
We are gathered in the lounge. Parthenope is writing, Julian and Nicola reading, and self writing while waiting for the phone to go. The room is beautifully warm because the snow has turned into rain and it is thawing, but it is blowing very hard. The roads have been awful – I fell down twice on the loop road on my way to the village shop, and on the second occasion the rescue team of Parthenope and Nicola likewise fell down. Julian rode his bike and did *not* come off but heaven know why not. Noises very life-like but not at all like Brands Hatch; quite outstandingly moderate in fact.

Our room was so cold I was jolly glad of the electric blanket. Unfortunately my ability to regulate it to maintain an equable temperature is impaired by sleep so I kept on waking up because I was either shivering with cold and stiff as I could well be while maintaining my ability to shiver, or else (having inadvertently switched on to 'high') pouring with sweat and dreaming I was fighting my way through a tropical jungle. I awoke soon after 8.0 but all the others were still fast asleep. So I proceeded to get breakfast and relied on the resulting fracas to wake them, which gradually it did.

I constantly wonder how you are getting on – at this point you rang up. I forgot to ask you if you had the house properly warmed up . . .

December 31

My darling,
. . . It has been a magnificent day and starlit night. Not a cloud in the sky and a keen fresh breeze. I can hardly keep my eyes on the paper for watching the gulls wheeling over the bird table. We put out some Swoop but the time birds take to come back is extraordinary. And even after they do come back they take as long again to wheel around and peer and circle and hover before one dares at last to settle – one toe only and off again; cats on hot bricks could teach them nothing.

The children have all been getting on well. Last night Parthenope was giving Julian a long French lesson on which he seemed to be as keen as she was. They went on at it for over an hour: not my idea of sport but it seemed to go down very well with both parties so who is to worry? Nicola patiently and methodically set about making Origami[1] and did very well with them.

If we get more weather like this we should all be very fit. I wish I could give you what we are having. I find the long sleeps we all have are doing a great deal for us but the person who really needs a rest – you – gets more work than ever. I hope it will seem worth it when you see what you have accomplished.

My work is being done. I have come to the conclusion it is not really a book yet but is more writing for the sake of being able to get the ideas out on the surface. It is painful and heart breaking because there seems nothing to show for it. But I know it's just asking for trouble to think like that – one works to get 'something to show for it' instead of just working; and that is fatal to anything decent.

There is a wonderful sunset – just pure glow of colour, not anything spectacular in the way of clouds – simply radiance. I send it to you with my love. My darling I think of you always. I know what a difficult job you are doing and how trying it must be . . .

[1]The Japanese art of folding paper into intricate designs.

1965

The Little Cottage

To Wells Rise January 1

My darling,
It was a relief to hear your voice when we rang up today in spite of the fact that you obviously have a very bad cold indeed: not surprising since it has had no treatment, or very bad treatment since you caught it. It makes me think I should have stayed with you and let the family come here alone. I might then have relieved you of some of it. But it's no good regretting it now.

I rang up last night as arranged and caught a proper packet of woe from your mother. She seemed to feel all was lost, if one may use so ludicrously cheerful an expression. I felt from her report that there was every chance of your getting pneumonia through sheer neglect of yourself. To make matters worse I knew it would be unlikely that you would tell me much about yourself, except that you were "all right".

At present we plan to come back on Wednesday . . . I hope by then to be able to look after you and to be allowed to do so: I do not want you to slave yourself into such a state that you could not possibly help hating me and all my works. I hope to hear when you ring up tonight that you will at least have no more travelling after today. I assume of course that things have been made as difficult as they could very well be by your being so wretchedly ill you could hardly think.

10 p.m. I had hoped you would ring up before this as it is worrying that you are working so appallingly late. I find it hard to settle to anything when I do not know how things are going with you. Still I should be pretty used to having to think clearly no matter what the distractions may be. I am used to it. But I don't feel more skilful at it.

Nor, I imagine, is your job made any more tolerable by the feeling that the move is also the end of our family's first home; still, what can't be cured must be endured.

You have just rung up and you can't imagine what a relief it was to hear you; I even began to imagine you sounded a bit less wretched. It is not that I feel worried about anything – I just feel worried about *everything* and that makes it tiresome and confusing. I do hope you

will be able to sleep at Wells Rise tomorrow. I shall feel you have begun to have a home again.

I feel like saying, "Bless you" to Mrs Brockwell,[1] over and over again, but she would think I must be crazy. It has been a comfort to me to think you had such a stout-hearted person to help .

. . . I think of you and wish you were here to relax in the quiet of this place. Walking in the stiff breeze feels quite marvellous; it feels so austere and pure . . .

August 1

My darling,

. . . We were lucky. It was fine till Newmarket. Then it began to spot. Then it began to rain. By Brandon the heavens opened and it became impossible to see more than 20 yards and soon it cut down to ten yards and going dead slow because it was hard to see a car in front. Goodbye, I thought, to my plans of lunch in the open. Which was very sad because Nicola began to get sick at just past Six Mile Bottom. And of course the poor dears, Parthenope and Julian, made things worse by becoming terribly anxious till I had to cut the discussion very short. With rumblings we proceeded on our nauseating way till within five miles of Swaffham when it began to clear. I shot them all into the church to look at the roof.[2] When they got back some twenty minutes later they had all recovered their equanimity and Nicola had some colour. We went on and some four miles later it was hot and sunny. As I had planned to have lunch at Castle Acre it seemed too good to be true. By Castle Acre not even the roads were wet and we drove into the Priory, took out our lunch and ate it in the precincts in the hot sun, with a cloudless sky and perfect lawns. It was glorious and a good lunch was had by all.

We got to the Cottage by 4.30. There had been a shower or so but mostly brilliant sun. The garden looks very good. I had forgotten the roses would be pretty much in their glory . . .

. . . I hope the builder realizes that it won't be enough to have sound-proof windows in front and a wall that is not.[3] It is obvious

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[1]Our invaluable help for seventeen years.

[2]A fifteenth-century church with a magnificent hammer-beam roof.

[3]The garage was being converted into a consulting room.

that the noise in front of the house is going to be drilling more or less indefinitely; they seem to like digging up Wells Rise.

There is some minimal grumble about no TV and therefore nothing to do but join the family for a walk. It makes me wonder if this means there has been too much TV so far. Certainly the air has been less hectic and a bit more peaceful without, but it probably won't last. I detest the lack of inner resource that seems associated with TV and I hope our children haven't gone far on that unpleasant road.[1]

I hope all goes well tomorrow and you find some relief and compensation in being without the family as well as the misfortune of not starting your country holiday. The lack of drills almost hits one with a loud clap of silence . . .

August 2

My darling,
. . . We took our things to the beach but and installed ourselves, but it was an icy swim I can tell you . . . back for gammon lunch with peas (free)[2] and lettuce . . . Then it began to spit and it spat – and spat – and spat till 9.00 pm. Then it rained till 10.00 p.m. Then it poured, drumming on the roof and down the gutters, till we had all gone to bed. This morning I awoke to sun at 6.00 a.m. Glorious! Till 6.15 when it became cloudy. By 7.30 it began to spit. And it spat – and spat – I will tell you the rest later, but that's as far as we have got so far . . .

August 4

My darling,
. . . I've splashed paint about, got on with reading but not any writing. A fine morning and the beach could almost be called crowded. I think the family is *much* better for no television. I am hoping this may mark a turning point. It is such a terribly easy indulgence and completely obscures the existence of other pleasures which are worth far more. Beyond a mild grumble the first day there has been a complete absence of 'gap' in their activities . . .

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[1]He need not have worried — nineteen years later, two of them have no TV.

[2]These were collected from the hedgerows where the pea lorries had brushed on their way to the freezer plant.

August 7

My darling,
Yours has just come and I am tremendously cheered to have it. It is nice to hear that things seem to be going well *so far* – how awful to have to qualify one's rapture by 'so fars' and 'up to the presents'!

They have let people in to the strawberry fields at 6d a time because they could not gather them. The field near here is free. Although the whole village had been there the previous day, Parthenope, Julian and Nicola collected 11½ lbs of beauties in an hour!

I do feel rested despite some horrid anxieties – or is it because of them? I never feel at all sure that anxiety is bad for me – I find it often seems to have a good effect. But I do miss you terribly even though I am thrilled by the thought of how much you do for me and the children and how wonderful it is to have such a loving and lovely wife. It is almost a compensation that I am always thinking of you . . .

August 8

My darling,
I have just worked it out that it was 47 years ago today that I won the Legion of Honour in the battle of Amiens. One of these useless facts but it reminds me that I wouldn't live my life again if I could help it. Luckily one isn't asked!

For once we have had a bad night due to – of all things – heavy traffic down Middle Street! There has been a continual roar of pea lorries, not only yesterday which we didn't mind, but through the night. The roar, the flash of headlights, and a loud rattling of the window panes in our bedroom – if this went on long or often I wonder if it would affect the fabric of the Cottage.

. . . I wonder how you can possibly get so much crammed into the time before you come down. I am sure you must not extend your stay after Friday or you will get no Norfolk holiday at all . . .

I have not been able to write much but I have done quite a lot of pretty stiff reading. If I could write my two reviews and get them out of the way I would feel happier.

It does make one learn something to do these jobs, but I always feel "Oh, if only I hadn't agreed! How much more time I would have!" But in fact it is only partly true: with me the worst thing is

the awful inertia which I seem hardly able to overcome. Yet Money-Kyrle said the other day he could not understand how I managed to get so much work done. So I can't appear to be so frightfully slothful as I always feel. It's queer isn't it? But even *you* talk of never getting anything done. So perhaps it's just a disease – an exaggerated sense of our, or at least my, importance that makes me think I can do so much more . . .

August 9

My darling,
It was lovely to hear your voice especially as I had decided I must not ring you up. I know how you feel about not letting yourself be distracted from the job in hand and I know you do not. It makes me feel very proud of you and rather ashamed of myself. I sometimes think that my trouble is being so pampered by you that I become debilitated by luxuriating in my advantages. But I wouldn't have it any different. And I know it's because of what you do and are that I am a bit better than I would otherwise be.

I felt very proud of our little family today. The Days came about 3 o'clock. Parthenope had made a very good lemon cake. The children just quietly disappeared when I suggested tea and produced two huge plates of assorted sandwiches. ("Take two", said Nicola as she handed them round!). They all joined in the conversation in a lively and not at all obtrusive way. It was very successful and enjoyable. We had it in the garden by the mermaid roses.

It was a superb morning again. We went and bathed at 'our' spot. It really was glorious although the wind has been sharp as it always is. Somehow it doesn't seem to spoil but rather to enhance the swim . . .

I really think the lack of television has been a great advantage. There is no obstruction to realizing the pleasure of home and an early bed when you don't want to play or read any more, and I think it's worth everything else put together for them to learn that life at home can be fun.

A house martin got into our room and couldn't get out. I caught it and showed the children. It was such a pretty creature and hardly seemed frightened. After being admired I tossed him into the air to sail off. It makes one want to know how he got on . . .

August 11

My darling,
I wonder how you are getting on. It is beginning to seem a very long time since I have seen you. And it is I suppose the longest separation from the family that you have experienced since our marriage.

To-day has been another marvellous day. Bright sun in a cloudless sky shining through heat haze carried along by a strong and bracing wind. We bathed at our usual spot. It was wonderful.

There was a chorus of "Happy Birthday to you" over the wall this morning. I must say I think it is a most dreary and repulsive song. Perhaps I dislike it because one of the facilities offered to the American public is the chance of hiring a special messenger to go and sing the damned thing to the wretch whose birthday is being celebrated. It makes me hot under the collar even to think of it (and even without a collar on, I may say).

I can't go on saying I wonder when we shall see you, so I won't. But we think it. Parthenope hoped you might be getting a little social life to compensate for the hard work. It's a nice idea anyway – and we all acclaimed it. Goodbye my dearest; we all *feel* our love to you so perhaps you feel it too as if it came in gentle waves . . .

August 12

My darling,
Your letter was a great solace to me even though it brought bad news. You cannot come I know till you feel you can come with an easy mind and I thought it would be surprising if you could get away in a fortnight . . .

I cannot get on much with my book because I keep being distracted by wanting to write the article[1] on the Eissler book[2] when I'm trying to write mine and vice versa.

I think we have all got together and know each other a bit better, not least because the children miss you and can realize more how

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[1]Published in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, *47* (2, 1952) [Volume VI].

[2]K. R. Eissler, *Medical Orthodoxy and the Future of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965).

much you do and how much you have to do if you have to be at Wells Rise because of alterations to my consulting room. I am sure they learn a lot by having to clean up, cook etc. I think you'll find them very grown up even if it is a short time. Because a week or so's detached view makes it easier to focus.

And how are you my darling? You really ought to put in a week here in October, *doing nothing* but sleep and rest. And no sooner do I write that than I realize how ridiculous it is to say so and how unlikely you would ever be to *do nothing* even if you could. There is something in it though – I think you will find you can leave it more and more to the good judgement of the children to carry not only more of the responsibility for their own affairs, but also for some of the lighter part of yours . . .

August 17

My darling,
If I don't write now I shan't have a chance of writing to you because you will be here – another disappointment, but as you say, it's all a matter of perspective!

Of course I am not disappointed at the length of time the job has taken. On the contrary I am amazed that it has been so quick or rather that you have managed apparently to keep them so close to schedule. I know I could not have done it. I just want you to be here and when you are not I feel it; but I would hate it if you felt it a restraint to have had to do so much work for me. I know I shall do better work for feeling that my consulting room is a nice room because it has been made for me by you. And my home. And my family. All made for me by you. It is a sobering thought but is curiously exalting and exciting at the same time . . .

It gives me a wonderful feeling to think I am going to see you soon. It's a sort of mixture of Easter and Christmas and Summer holidays all rolled into one.

The children will be very anxious for you to have a holiday and I think will be seriously hurt and disappointed if you do not make them feel they have been running the house so well that they may as well go on with the good work. So shall *I*.

. . . I can't make up my mind whether I shall be so disappointed if you can't come tomorrow that I won't be able to stand it, or whether

it will be so exciting having another day of expecting you that I can't bear to miss it. I wish you could hear the church bells ringing. They must be ringing in my heart I think.

Goodbye my dearest, for the *present* (it only lasts a moment this time!).

1967

The Little Cottage

To Wells Rise July 29

My darling,
The journey down was so awful for Nicola that the only thing to do is to tell her now that she and Julian will go home by train; otherwise she cannot but dread it. No sooner had I diverged to go by Ely, in the hope that all would be well, than she started again and even a short stop in Cambridge, another for breakfast outside Ely, a long one this, another in Ely to go over the Cathedral and quite a walk around as well, made no difference. She was really ill all the time: and of course she kept apologizing for the stops although I kept telling her it did not matter in the least except that she was having a rotten time. Of course the journey was very slow so we didn't get in till about 2.30. We all went and had a bathe then.

. . . I suppose it is a sign of age, but I would like our children to marry and live happily ever afterwards. I gather it just does not happen. Whether it is the private affair, or international, from Rhodesia to Vietnam, Russia to Mao Tse Tung, nothing seems to go right ever; extraordinary isn't it? And if it does go right one suspects it is only for some people and they are just beastly. What are psychoanalysts supposed to cure? I really do wonder.

I am beginning to feel restive and that it is time I had some 'thoughts', but I realize it is only the third day of the holiday. It's a bore your not being here . . .

In the course of my gloomy feelings I could not help thinking what the original Pilgrim Fathers must have felt like when *they* set out for America.[1] At first it seems a bit far-fetched, to say the least, but I am not so sure that it is. I *do* regret leaving England; I do feel anything but confident about the kind of reception one will get there. Yet I am not sure that the stories told us are quite as easily explained as people think. There *is* much pessimism in the U.S. about psychoanalysis: there *ought* to be more pessimism about it here. But I feel doubtful about what can be done, not least by myself, either here or

[1]We set out on January 25, 1968.

in the U.S. What else *can* one feel? And how is it to be put to the test except by going?. . .

August 2

My darling,
. . . I certainly think that the Cottage has done its job for the children as until to-day you could not have had more favourable conditions and yet 'boredom' has never been far away. Of course one might argue that it is because we are leaving, but I think it would be worse if we weren't.

. . . My mind has been running a lot on leaving this country. It is extraordinary how mixed my feelings are. I feel I should be very sad, and sometimes I am when I hear the thrush or the blackbird singing and expect to miss them. But though people warn one about the treachery and so on of Americans, I feel people are very much alike and that there are qualities of people here which are just as nasty (even one's own!). I hope we can get a chance to talk freely. Yet it is difficult to know what we can say that we have not already been over . . .

To Los Angeles October 3

My darling,
It already seems years since you went and this place is a bit desolate in consequence. I hope you are having a good journey. I am churning over the paper and feeling jolly glad I shan't have to give more. Wednesday. The 'paper'[1] (of course I didn't read it) went off all right. At first I thought no one was coming – only one or two there five minutes before the start. But it filled up. They all stayed (except about three) till past the end and there was no hostile demonstration.

. . . Your letter has just come in. I am so relieved and glad to have it. You must have been very tired and it is lovely of you to have written to me at once. I felt a bit as I did in the First World War – I couldn't bear to write home because I felt I couldn't *think* of home. But I was only nineteen then and there was some excuse. I too wish I was with you; it is awful to think you have to do all this load of business by

[1]'Negative Capability', published as chap. 13, 'Prelude to or Substitute for Achievement', in *Attention and Interpretation* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970) [Volume VI].

yourself,[1] and I know you must feel it a wretched responsibility to meet all the snags which are sure to crop up without a chance of talking it over. *You* have not a moment too much time – *I* feel it is an age to have to wait another fortnight.

Julian rang up – he said he had nearly scored twice in rugger but each time the full back had got him. He seemed to think this very unreasonable! I remember the feeling myself.

I thought the 'paper' went well. Of course I spoke direct; too many 'ers' I think, but I haven't spoken for a long time and I did not, as you know, relish the circumstances. I think I spoke to the point and a number of people seemed to feel that *this* time a lot more people grasped the general idea. It might have turned out anyhow – including a boycott. There is no doubt that the Klein Group has been very upset but I think they needed it. But there must have been about 130 people which is as much as anyone has a right to expect. Furthermore there was no nonsense about my going (tears of grief etc.). Just a straight forward exposition by me of my ideas about how things should go and how I at least tried to make that happen. I think the fact that it was straight forward talk, 'to be continued in our next', all helped. And as I say, they stayed to the end.

I do hope you will not feel you are landed with an impossible job. I know what a terribly difficult one you have and I am sure you realize I shall do my best to fit in with such plans as you can make. Do please try to get in some rest and relaxation. It is too heavy a job for one person to tackle without some time in which to dismiss the whole job from your mind. Even in your kind of work I think you need to dismiss 'memory and desire' so as to have as clear a mind as possible for the decisions. You can only do 'the best you can' – not 'the best'. But I know you don't need to be told this.

. . . Heaven knows where anyone is safe or reasonably secure with the U.S. so shaken by Vietnam. And this country seems unlikely to get into the Common Market with the recent EEC report that we are bankrupt. Why *should* a successful Europe want a bankrupt Britain which has also a labour force completely out of hand and strike-riven?. . .

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[1]House-hunting.

October 7

My darling,
. . . I had my first sitting with Ishbel[1], about an hour and a quarter, which was quite cramping, and as I was kept talking on psychoanalysis I was quite exhausted by the end. She seemed to prefer that I should not look, so I did not and do not know what it is like.

. . . As I have no reason for writing this except to say "I love you", and I can't just keep putting that, I have a minor problem! Julian is sitting reading *The Battlefield* – the William Mayne you wanted me to get. I have also given him a Trollope to take back, *The Way We Live Now*. He was surprised to see on our London map that Anthony Trollope was at Harrow so that persuaded him to try in spite of his feelings of distaste for the Barchester books. It is very pleasant to hear him playing the piano. He plays extremely sensitively which is so unlike most boys I am used to: it really is a pleasure and it makes me feel I am at home for the first time since last Tuesday. I could hardly believe that days could drag so much . . .

October 8

My darling,
Julian has gone off so I am starting again. It might seem rather desolate again now he has gone, but I do feel we are not so far from each other in spirit and that is curiously comforting . . .

Your darling letter arrived this morning. I am glad you do not feel disillusioned on second acquaintance but rather confirmed in your feelings about living in California. It is good that both houses turn out to have possibilities. Of course I know our friends are delighted to see you: I shall do my best to contain my jealousy within reasonable bounds; I hate jealous and envious people – they are such a bore . . .

October 10

My darling,
. . . I have just shown a very nice woman over the house and she is so taken with it that she's bringing her husband to look at it at 2.30 on Saturday. Now I shall have to say that I don't know what my dragon of a wife will want but alas, much as I would love to give it them on

[1]Ishbel McWhirter, the painter.

a plate, I can't because it is my wife's house! I don't think I fill the bill as a very exacting financial husband . . .

October 11

My darling,
I hope that your very next letter will say you have had some letters from me. I think your trip is quite anxious enough for anyone, even if things went through without a hitch; it is intolerable that you should have the feelings of loneliness too, simply because I was too stupid to send you a note right from the first. I know how your love and support sustain me in this job and make anxieties easy to bear. I think our decision to leave has stirred up quite a bit here in our colleagues. I answered queries in the (extended) Klein group tonight. It was clear that they were jolly glad to get it and I think they were again very much impressed. Indeed I do feel that what I have been saying is requiring a new orientation in all practising analysts. . . .

October 14

My darling,
What very good news and what a relief it must be for you after all your efforts and horrible anxiety! Thank God you have the courage to do things I cannot and could not manage; though to be fair to myself I think I have a kind of courage though it does not feel like it . . . I hope you felt you *really* like the house and felt it was something you wanted. I know I said I regarded the work as paramount, and of course I do, but I think it essential you should feel it could be *your* home as you get to know it. The trouble here is that this is a wonderful consulting set up but it is only a home because *you* live here, and while you live here. I hope, my sweetheart, that you feel proud and happy though I know there is much more to do – it is only a beginning. But such an important one.

I am just back from Ishbel's – I saw the portrait. I think I am in rather a tense position. She said she had made me rougher – had not put in my benign look but more the tension of when I am talking about work. Personally I think she is too polite to say, as *I* think, that it shows my bad temper. I don't think you would like it but she says she will show it to you when you return and you can judge for yourself.

. . . I am surprised to find how indifferent, except for occasional pangs, I feel about leaving England. It is sad to feel one is *not* sad. Once I would have thought it impossible to leave one's country and one's friends, but somehow things change so much that it is not so. Still I think it must be because one's whole attitude has altered . . .

October 16

My darling,
. . . Tonight there is news of terrific fires – burning near Los Angeles. Of course I get fed up: and wish you were here. This letter I shall send off but I fear it will not get to you before you leave. As long as you are here safe I don't mind. It is a howling gale and raining too – great gusts against our windows. I wish you could have the rain for your fires . . .

The impudent violence of unofficial strikers is only matched by the feebleness of our legally constituted government. One fears the conservatives would be feebler still if possible.

Today I thought the days were deliberately crawling. It's no use the time coming nearer for your return if each day lasts a week!

It's blowing harder than ever and I must stop and go to bed. With all my love my darling. How I long to see you. And what is the good of saying that? I don't know. And the wind sounds as if it is from the west so perhaps it won't delay the plane! It *sounds* as if no plane would take off in such weather . . .

It's a pity I can't tell you exciting things about what I am doing because I seem to have either no news at all, or fears that we are on the verge of a disastrous lawsuit.

October 18

My darling,
It is a *glorious* day, sunny, cold fresh wind, brilliant blue sky. I am writing this in the 'tea interval'. Appropriately the hooter has gone on the building site. They seem to have an enormous number of tea intervals – a reform which people like us have long advocated as leading to more efficiency. Rail strikes, dock strikes, etc. etc. seem to be the result, but I am not certain that in the end it will not lead to great advances and indeed may already be one. It is a pity that we are so weak though.

And I wonder how my darling is? I feel as nervous as a cat waiting for you to come. I dare not count the hours and cannot keep from doing it. So if you are reading this before I see you please remember I'm in a highly nervous state. I don't think I can have been in love before. Believe me it's *awful* and lovely at the same time. . . .

The news tonight is as bad as it could be. We shall be lucky if we get through without revolution – that is if *this* is not it *now*. Gunter[1] hauls out the old chestnuts about Communists – I suppose it's the best they can do.

[1]Ray Gunter, Minister of Labour, 1964–1968.

1968

En route to Buenos Aires

To Los Angeles July 28

Darling,
I am starting this on the plane, presumably nearing Buenos Aires. It is a marvellous sunny morning even on ground level as far as one can see from 35,000 feet. After leaving you to board the plane we took off not too late – I hope you and the family did not wait. I slept most of the time but the scenery was too wonderful to miss for the first hour and a bit. I woke up, more or less, to hear the plane would be late, but consoled myself there was plenty of time and I would as soon pass it stuffing food on the plane as hanging about the deserts of corridors. I began to be a bit nervous when I realized it was 7.0 p.m. We were reassured when the captain said all services were delayed so that those with connections need not worry. Having reached Kennedy Airport, dark and visibility nil, we circled it for an hour and half. At 8.45 we landed.

I rushed madly off. Not a soul to ask but a chaos of public. At the exit I found the first Pan Am official who told me to catch the bus – not to worry about baggage as it was booked through. At the entrance I waited, then saw a bus labelled Pan Am – the only inconspicuous label I've seen in the U.S. Driver said "Jump in". Finally I got to a desk – interminable conversation between official and elderly woman. "Go to Gate 6." Told we could embark at 9.30. "For Buenos Aires?" "Have you got a ticket?" I showed it but he had lost interest. Afterwards I could see his point. The crowds were terrific and it was very hot and noisy. "Only one small bag each allowed." People turned back right, left and centre. Luckily it was all I had. At 9.45 we were allowed on and I got my seat, having decided there was nothing to be done about luggage. At 10.0 the captain announced that he was sorry for the delay but – 10.10 just off when the weather report from Caracas came. 10.35 just off, when we had taken on extra fuel. 10.45 no report of weather from Rio but would be off at once. 11.15 the flight plan had not come through but we – yes, you've guessed it – we were off. 11.30 we began to move. 11.31 stopped. 12.0 moved

to runway. 12.10 captain announced that since eight other craft had to get off we would be delayed 20 minutes – very sorry. 12.45 started rushing down runway. Airborne! Dinner would be served. I had hors d'oeuvre and skipped the rest to a small piece of cheese – Maxim's of Paris and 'ever so gay'. It is now 10.0 a.m. and we are crossing a huge river. No one knows or cares what. Some towns are appearing. Their names must be military secrets I think. We seem to be descending so I had better stop.

Believe it or not, we *did* descend and all in one piece. Grinberg came on to the tarmac and ushered me through – VIP treatment. My case was there and was passed first by customs without examination. Grinberg fetched the car and we set off. I was feeling very hot and dirty and unshaven.

They say they have no racial problem because there is no indigenous Indian race as in the other countries – 'Stout Cortez' having been particularly firm and modern in his outlook, I imagine, and leaving no doubts about who was to be 'stout' if anyone. They assured me that the weather – brilliant hot sun – was quite atypical; it always rains! We passed the estuary of the River Plate. It looked very fine but you could not see the other side.

Tonight, 6.30, Grinberg is to take me to the Cattle Fair – *the* one in the world – and to dine before an early bed. Up here in my room I found a basket of chocolates, white with blue flowers, all made of sugar. *Not* slimming. It reminded me, if being perpetually reminded were necessary, that you should be here. I have an idea which makes me think you had better come here and talk to some of these people anyhow, but of this more later.

Two maids have been and, as far as I can tell, have sealed the place up hermetically. The people in the streets don't look at all well-to-do but perhaps this is the Sunday milling crowd of flotsam and jetsam. I am not feeling quite so jetsam myself since I had a shower.

Later. I have just finished the day's work and am on the verge of going out with Grinberg. I have managed my eight hours without undue fatigue – indeed I think I was less exhausted than quite a part of the audience. But then they had to listen to *me* and I did not.

Last night they took me to the barbecue (indoors, although the weather yesterday and today has been marvellous – they all argue it should be humid and raining) and there they stuffed me full of

barbecued meat till I thought I would burst. No ill effects so far but I don't know what they are going to do tonight.

Give everyone a kiss from me. And keep very special ones for yourself. Remember I love you always. Tell the children I will write as soon as ever I can and give Julian my special love for his birthday. I hope it will be one of 366 very special days in the year.

With all my love my darling. I miss you . . .

July 30

My darling,
. . . Last night my lecture – about 300 people smoking and jammed tight – ended at 11.15 but I was still functioning though I had worn out two translators. So perhaps it has been a success from the work point of view.

. . . C. has shown up and introduced herself as my admirer. She invited me to the home for "a really simple, quiet, restful time", for which I thanked her but sidled out oozing gratitude at every pore. After the evening lecture she announced that she had all the symptoms I had been talking about. I am sure she is right, poor thing, but she has certainly left out all the important symptoms. Unfortunately there are seven more working days to go and if she has not changed to bitter hatred at being rejected before many hours have passed I shall be extremely surprised. Quiet restful home – mon pied! as we say in France . . .

August 2

My darling,
This is 7.30 on Saturday evening and I am feeling a bit loose in the mental joints and as if it were Sunday as well. Perhaps it is a sign of mental loosening that I throw back to depressing feelings that it is Sunday at the old prep school at Bishops Stortford: how penetrating these memories are! I did *not* write to you on Thursday or Friday because I had not the time to do more than write to the children on Thursday, and yesterday evening I went to a party at Dr Mom's house – he is the President of the Society – to meet the training committee. I thought the evening was passing quite well, that is that I might get to bed by midnight, when they announced amidst great enthusiasm a cabaret show in my honour. It turned out to be five men,

all brothers, and a girl, unrelated. I did curse it that we had not, or I had not, agreed to a five week tour of Latin America for the whole family, but no doubt it is better as it is. I must say I am a bit surprised to find I do not know a damn thing about Latin American, or indeed American, geography. I had not realized that the next stop is Patagonia. Anyway, the members were all introduced to the celebrated Dr Bion. They were all people who had been to university – a qualified doctor, a dentist, a biologist and so on – but they had never practised but had gone straight into show business after fulfilling their promise to their father to qualify first. I cursed bitterly to think you were all in Los Angeles when you might have been with me.

I was shown the instruments which were to be used: a primitive drum, pre-Colombian flutes, a sort of banjo the back of which was the skin of an iguana, and a pretty conventional guitar. They were dressed, except the girl who was in blue, in very handsome gaucho costume, jet black, buttoned up jacket, black 'wellington' boots and a very striking deep red scarf–shawl affair. The dancing and singing were, to my eye and ear, pretty usual folk lore though with great verve and in a pervading spirit of good humour and kindliness. I was placed in a kind of throne – the Royal Box – which I tried to occupy with proper dignity. Alas, I thought, if only you and the family were here! (I won't say this any more.) At one point a young psychoanalyst's wife took the place of the girl and, having learned these dances at school and university, performed with great vigour with the drummer who took the floor for the dance. (They could all change instruments at will and play the other one's speciality.) Finally I was presented with a long-playing record of theirs, on the illustrated sleeve of which they had written their autographs. After shaking hands with each in, I hope, a truly 'noble', if not royal manner, we finished. Home by 2 a.m. after eight hours of work.

Today I was taken to the Grinberg's country house at Escobar, near the Parana River thirty miles away; lunch after elevenses; journey back here by 6.30, so I don't think I've done badly especially as on the journey there three analysts talked to me very loudly and very insistently about the Oedipus Complex and particularly to the effect that the father starts the trouble by trying to kill the children. I just felt O Gawd, O Gawd, what have I done? But I either woke up or things began to get better. It was a gloomy dark day – dark cloud as in London but not cold. The country was as flat as a pancake – the

pampas – but not unattractive to eyes that were not used to it. I'm having supper at the moment; an English couple, in which the man is loud voiced, are two tables away. He talks with great aplomb about "bloody waiters", thus showing the superiority of the FLAG to these bloody dagos. Funny, it only makes me feel inferior. Most of these chaps know English anyway.

. . . People have come to hear my lectures, seminars and supervisions from Brazil, Venezuela and Uruguay. As Grinberg says, they are nice people. And I must say I think he is quite right. They have also been very generous in their appreciation.

. . . This will I think be the last letter because it will be quicker to bring the next one. I love you. I am sustained by the thought of you . . .

Sunday morning. As the post does not go yet I may as well add a few lines. It is a lovely sunny morning but I have refused an invitation for lunch as I feel I could do with a bit of my own company so as to have a bit of yours – in thought at least. As time goes on one realizes that the reception as a sort of 'great man' is very seductive and makes it the ideal approach to one's weak spots – the true situation reveals itself in time and it becomes clear that they want you – if they find they cannot do without you. And I do not doubt that is the situation here just as much as in Los Angeles. Looking back on it now and assuming one could find it out by some other means, the idea would be to have found and stuck to a nice home (ideal) in a nice England (ideal too) and paid three-weekly trips to such foreign parts that wanted one. Even so the idea is a false one of skimming the cream (or cash!) off life and leaving the old rubbish to someone else. An idea as old as the hills and much more ephemeral . . .

August 6

My darling,

. . . On coming back to the hotel I found your first letter. And I know how you felt because by Sunday evening I was sure I would never last the time. However, the work has been a relief. Very 'enthusiastic' reception and although I think I now know better than to allow myself to be taken in by it, it is a comfort and a nice change after Los Angeles analytic 'enthusiasm'. However, I am quite sure that the astringent atmosphere of Los Angeles is better for *me* – if we can stand it. I hate to think of the time you are having and the anxiety you have to put up with. I am glad to hear of the family and that you think

they are having the holiday they need. In a peculiar way I feel I am having the work I need. Something was going wrong in the work in England – not only mine. I can't, as you know, pretend I like it, but there it is. I like the people here, but it is bad, as I have learnt to our cost, to allow one's self to be seduced. I have therefore been careful to accept the minimum of invitations on the excuse of 'need to keep fresh' and 'work'. In fact I have put in a terrific amount of sleep during the day and consequently have slept at night. The arrangement of ¼-hour breaks between hour sessions works very well. I even manage to have coffee and go to sleep in that time.

. . . I think the fine weather *did* come here. They all agree it has been an exceptional winter. The one or two dark and gloomy days have had the effect of recalling what I do not like about London and England. Still, I would not have our children grow up in the L.A. atmosphere. Drugs for all on tap from ten onwards and no other inner resources is just not good enough.

In another minute or two I must go to my seminar lecture and I feel I have not an idea in my head. Now for a think, or I shall stand there with my eyes popping out of my head and jaws moving but *no sounds* coming out.

Thursday – only. It sounds terribly unappreciative. The time has resumed its slow pace which it had the first days and now I feel as if I shall not get through the last three hours of today, let alone the whole of tomorrow and the whole of Saturday before I see you. And the horrible feeling that I do not know what the Yanks will get up to. I feel like an old goose who eyes the human kind with suspicion as much as to say, "Now I wonder what devilment you are planning". . . .

Later. Well, I have got through Thursday – not I think so badly as I feared. I have the confidence to believe I can do it and then begin to get anxious about the confidence. They have recorded every blessed seminar and lecture and are going to let me have a copy.

And now for the last eight hours! . . .

1969

Los Angeles

To London May 30

My darling,
It seemed very queer to come back to an empty house but nice to see the message in red on the blotter. And the table set! I find I tend a bit to wander round and give a shout to you to look at a bird or some similar irrelevance. If I have a dazed bachelor look when you come back do not be too surprised. I have been doing, and expect to continue doing, some very hard thinking about these extraordinary people and the extraordinary situation here. One glance at a daily newspaper would convince anyone that it goes far beyond any office. I do not know where or how to tackle it. Today talks of: Stravinsky going to leave L.A. because only two of his works have been performed; San Francesco and L.A. dangers of earthquake; the Dean of U.C.L.A. visiting hunger-strikers outside Royce Hall and congratulating and encouraging them on their strike to get National Guard off the campus; Federal Government subpoena-ing various authorities of various California universities to produce lists of students with grants who have taken part in disorders. Now – what do I do? Go and psychoanalyse someone? Someone in this country must respect the truth for them to be able to put spacecraft round the moon. I am sorry to write such a horrible 'letter'. It is so much in my mind – and it so much concerns us both – that I can't think of anything else, other than the constant thoughts about you and the children, and they are hardly news (the thoughts I mean). Still, here they are – I love you, and the children – in parallel so to speak . . .

May 31

My darling,
. . . I wish I could tell whether I am just paranoid or whether I am right in thinking that there is a very careful discrimination against English gentiles. But I don't think an analyst doing analysis is welcome – he shouldn't be. Anyway, *who* is welcome? I remember the

great enthusiasm for Belgian refugees in 1914–15. I remember how unpopular they became. I remember how fed up *they* became as the British were not as hospitable or appreciative as they should be. Everyone expects to be loved and wanted and especially I think by the 'new boy'. Everyone expects the new boy to be loving and lovable. The thing is to have a clear view and, for us in particular, whether we can survive in this or any other place . . .

June 3

My darling,
I have been reading an article on Britain's finances. The writer had the idea that everything is marvellous and it is hard to see what anyone is worked up about. Optimistic or pessimistic, one feels they are all pure phantasy and yet there must be a fact buried somewhere.

I have been trying to sort out my psychoanalytic ideas. It is pretty well a whole time job in itself but luckily practice is an aid not a hindrance. I have one great advantage over most: I do at least realize the importance of evidence or, to put it another way, observation, which brings me back to the present, the wretched business of really not being able to know what is going on with one's family.

It already seems as if you had been away for years but that is the fault of its being a long week-end at the start. I expect to have some patient sessions vacant in the coming fourteen days. One has all one's old familiar anxieties rejuvenated!. . .

June 4

My darling,
. . . I had better send you all my love today if it is going to get to you in time for our anniversary. It is incredible – we would never have guessed the facts if we had tried on that June day since which so much has happened. The time here seems to crawl and go too fast as the same time. I feel almost as if I have been a bachelor here all my life and can hardly remember when you were here, and as for thinking back to our marriage, it is almost as if I dreamt it. And now it's another whole week till I see you again. It will take me another week (perhaps!) to get thawed out again . . .

June 6

My darling,
I hoped I would have a letter from you today yet it was a great relief when I found it in the box. I thought I would begin to feel 'it is only one more week', since it is Thursday, but not a bit of it. Instead of that I have been feeling that I could *never* get through another week. In fact things have really gone not at all badly. I gave X. a session which was one long ultimatum on Monday, feeling sick at heart after it because I felt I did not want to lose a patient. He turned up again on Tuesday though; more ultimatopoeic (if you grasp my meaning) sessions, that and the next day, together with a phone call from Mrs X. asking what to do and whining fit to burst about her 'assuming I would tell the boy what to do'. "Suppose he says he won't come?" "Tell him you will give him a lift." "But I find I can't carry him if he won't – ." Stifling a "Good God!" I suggested she might tell him to go but leave him to get on. If she cannot see that people in a home all have to sacrifice some liberty if life is to be tolerable, one wonders how any boy could have a hope of progress or disciplined growth . . .

June 8

My darling,
Your letter was very welcome and a great consolation. I wonder how many, if any, psychoanalysts know that a wife or a husband is essential to any decent work. I do not think it appears in the literature except by implication. Melanie didn't *say* so, but I expect that she did not in fact think so unless it was latterly.

So it is the eve of our anniversary. I think it is quite extraordinary the course our lives have taken, as far as it very well could be from the conventional run . . .

J. says I ought to take out an 'Errors and Omissions' insurance. He says that otherwise anyone feeling hostile can claim damages and even if they failed to get costs the legal expenses of defence alone might be very great. Of course this has been one of my nightmares and I have no idea what one can do about it. Analyse it? That is the answer, but how this is to cope with a wealthy delinquent like Mrs X. I don't know. Even assuming one can get an insurance – a large assumption as I am not 'a doctor' – one wonders how much use this is and how much it is pure phantasy . . .

9th June. La voici l'heureuse journée. I love you; but it is a long time to go to June 12th. I am feeling homesick on behalf of the children and you who have to lose each other.

10th June . . . A. is in a bit of a spin because when talking to a fellow member at the tennis club he chanced to mention, in conventional reply to his acquaintance's report that he had injured his ankle, that he, A., uses a cold compress and that it is very successful. On Saturday he was told that the acquaintance was suing him for damages for wrongful diagnosis and negligent treatment! So it is *not* just me. On the other hand it is not just NOT–ME either! . . .

Amherst College

To Los Angeles August 21

My darling,

. . . As far as planning went the whole exercise could hardly have gone more smoothly. To start off with, all your planning had only one major defect – that you were not there and the conference was. The rest of it was a much more mixed business and even so that was really what it was there for – to be a mixed business.

. . . Ken Rice, looking white haired and older, was the same as ever. It soon became evident that R.S. was very nervous, as this was his first experience as Director of the Conference. He was scared stiff of A.K.R. and self, though I did not get wise to this or its extent quick enough or I would have tried to keep my mouth shut. I don't think I would have been successful as he was also continually trying to make me talk and express my views which he then did not like – either because I expressed different ones or because he thought, rightly, that I was trying to re-assure him.

The next morning – the members were to arrive by 4.0 p.m. for tea and Opening Meeting at 4.30 – was passed in continued Staff discussion and this took much the same form. After the plenary I was so unfortunate as to be talking when the meeting ended and the Staff walked out. I had not realized that according to the real rules of Groups – as laid down by Ken – he insisted on split second termination of each meeting, and by the time I had finished my sentence the Staff had disappeared round the corner and I couldn't find where they had gone. So I went to my room. K. turned up about 20 minutes

later and said there was 'consternation' about my disappearance. I thought he was joking, but at the final meeting of Staff I discovered to my amazement that he had understated the facts. R.S. held forth on how 'everybody' had wondered where I was. 'Everybody' likewise, according to R.S., talked of nothing but me and 'one' person had said how I stayed behind and had an adoring crowd at my feet. Luckily it did not occur to me to mention how like the Infant Jesus holding forth in the synagogue – 'and they were astonished at his teaching' – or I might have been tempted to say I hoped he had not been taking counsel with the Elders as to what to do with me (then the fat would had been in the fire). It ended up with my being very depressed and inclined to pack my traps and clear out. However, I thought of Shaw's advice, 'Never resign: get kicked out', and decided on the latter. But the continual 'Bion–Bion–Bion–' did ultimately make me a bit angry and impatient. All praise – 'of course'. Apparently R.S. had been subjected to some criticism – how much I don't know – because of his change of plan by which I was not taking the Study Group as originally arranged, and in fact, though it was to some extent to my advantage, I was practically cut off from any close contact except in large groups where there were always Margaret Rioch and himself present. Further it became clear to me that while no one was supposed to be able to know, I was to express my views to the Staff and act as – private chaplain? physician? – to R.S., and only on the last day and a hall to have a group of six, not twelve, to myself. In fact as I say, as I do not know this 'culture' I was very lucky and I think got some insight into what goes on here. And not very comforting insight it was either.

They had a ridiculous 'sit-in strike', almost obligatory I gather, as an expression of the way to behave in groups. I suspect it's a lack of interpretation, but it is not clear to me what interpretation it is supposed to be or what the unfortunate R.S. was supposed to do. I did have the consolation that I did not have to deal with it and that this kind of behaviour is not reserved merely for foreign gentiles. In fact the effect it had on me was to have greater sympathy with and respect for R.S. Details I shall have to give you by degrees and in person. Nice thought. And when you read this you will be here! All my love my dearest . . .

1972

Los Angeles

To London July 11

My darling,
. . . I was with the doctor about 40 minutes – mostly chat but some chest listening. The verdict was – 'Fine: heart OK; BP ditto; weight ditto; lose a bit more to have a margin. Exercise: walk; swim; and cycle though obviously *not* uphill' (which I would never have dreamt of doing at any time in my life even when I was playing first class rugger for Oxford).

. . . Mrs Y. turned up at the hour which she had cancelled, swearing she had not. I would not see her. I shall end up by being condemned to have a spine of my own – let's hope. It would at least be something. If so, this place will earn my gratitude for doing something for me which the whole of my life has failed to do. A bit late perhaps . . .

July 12

7.25 p.m. . . . Answered a call from B. and declined an invitation thus no doubt causing umbrage. Next week then? No, not really. Trout are marvellous! Mmm – but no. Will call on Tuesday. Out. Thursday then? Out. Friday? Perhaps; packing. My God, my God. Don't people *love* me! Naturally I am filled with admiration for myself. Aren't you jealous? And envious? Don't you wish you were loved too? But I am getting too old, tired and unappreciative. Do you think it possible that Greta Garbo spoke the truth when she said she 'wanted to be alone'?

July 14

9.45 p.m. It seems terribly late but not surprising as after I got back here I walked to the bank, went into the market, found they had cherries which I had hoped for but was surprised to see. And, carrying a sale price Jerusalem Bible walked back. I knew Julian had been interested in the Dali Jerusalem Bible and that dismissed the last vestige of my common sense and conscience. The paperback is $9 and as this was $19 you can see I hardly put up a resistance.

On the way back in the taxi, the driver regaled me with an account of his day's frustrations. One story was of how a woman had a ball thrown full in her face because she had asked the boys to play a little further away. It smashed her glasses. She rang up the boy's mother who said she could do nothing because she had no money and lived in penury as her husband had left her. So she got her lawyer son to ring up. He said she had no redress in law but he would try. Same result, but the mother said it was not *her* boy who had done it and suggested calling the mother of the friend. This, with some misgivings, he did and found he was talking to a colleague. He referred him back to the first woman. So he explained the tragic circumstances of the first woman who couldn't possibly reimburse his mother for the glasses. The lawyer laughed incredulously and explained it was typical. "In fact", said he, "she is as rich as Croesus. She lives in a $240,000 house in" (naming a very wealthy and luxurious place just near UCLA), and that her husband was also v. well-to-do, and that they lived on the best of terms. The taxi driver's woman friend, who is *really* poor, at this point felt it was time to call it a day. The driver said, "You can't cope with the rich". "That", I said, "is why they are rich". But I made a somewhat rueful note to myself that this could very well be Mrs J. – whose addiction to the truth is outstanding and whom I am supposed to be analysing but who has completely shot the analysis to bits.

One more example of serendipity? The driver may have been sent to drive me so as to tell me the cautionary tale. Angelic intervention? I think it must be so . . .

July 15

. . . I was a bit surprised to find how much I had the feeling you were still in the house – still have! – mostly when I am not quite awake, but otherwise also. I hope my 'spiritual' self has not been too greedy and obtrusive, nor interfered with your current pleasures . . .

July 16

. . . I am worried at the prospect of my interview with Mrs Y. tomorrow – I didn't see her last week because I took her at her word and *did* give her session to someone else. Naturally she pursued her course of making a damned muddle by turning up and saying she

had *not* cancelled. When I said I could not change the Monday, she said, "Let's leave it". Of course ambiguous, and could mean leave it that she *was* coming. This kind of expression of hostility by shooting the analysis to bits and then running the analyst is a very old gambit and danger – *I* could not mobilize a legal defence against *her* financial resources and well she knows it. Well, no one asked me to be a psychoanalyst!. . .

July 19

. . . I have just parted from the egregious Z. It is hard to imagine anyone who qualifies better as an embodiment of verbal diarrhoea.

I am glad you were able to get the *Ulysses on the Liffey*.[1] I want to bring your Chinese Script[2] for the vacation. It is *very* good and I found it evocative even though, or because?, not always clear.

I don't know what the programme at the Hollywood Bowl is tonight. Last Saturday was Gilbert and Sullivan. Good I gather, but it must have been very depressing as there were only about 8000 there – which in the Bowl must have felt like performing in the presence of the cleaners! Rather like what I feel I am performing here . . .

July 21

. . . It is exciting to feel I shall see you soon. I had forgotten it was such ages last time but now of course it comes back to me – now it is nearly over! I am filled with astonishment and amazement at the detail with which you have gone into everything here.

July 22

Over South Dakota. Having made such an ass of myself I can hardly bear to mention it in case you want a divorce! Janet drove me to the airport and I went along to Gate 35. All went well, perfect, till I came to the last item – identity card? Rummage – no identity! – then horror dawned. I had decided to off-load junk like charge cards etc. and of course had forgotten I need my identity card for going back. Time 3.20. Plane, yes, to time. I rushed. Left my luggage with the desk and ran. Talk about the Ride to Ghent! Taxi – Homewood and

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[1]Richard Ellmann (Faber & Faber Ltd., 1972).

[2]*Chinese Characters*, J. Weiger (New York: Dover Publications, 1927).

back! I couldn't do the Sherlock Holmes as they have no sovereigns, and while "Dollar if you do it!" doesn't sound bad, it does not sound as good as "Cabby! A golden sovereign!" Well, on the whole I did not lose my head too – would that have been worse or better? – so I thought I might as well pick up Julian's Bible now I was weighed in. Fortunately I knew exactly where I had put the cards. We were back with five minutes to spare – the last passenger after leftover seats were taken up. It is wonderful what it is to take a load off your mind, but I can't advocate putting it *on* for the pleasure of taking it off again.

It is a terribly bumpy flight. I always hope they have nailed the wings on properly. Two people on board, it has just been announced, were married an hour before boarding. Congrats – a bit half-hearted I thought.

Midnight, Pacific Time. I feel as if I have had a good night's rest – it must be because I go to sleep so suddenly, violently and completely. The film has been antique Chaplin, but I could not be bothered with it although, like all he does, he is a natural clown. He, Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd were the only real, natural clowns, although in their time there was a cult of blowing them up to a great deal more. Still, a clown *is* somebody – Grock, Herb Williams come to mind. Grock I have heard was not so good in his native language – I never saw him except in England where on the stage he was silent and very funny. Sometimes I think my real trouble is having very easily a reputation which I don't and cannot possibly deserve, even in my wildest dreams. Do Presidents of the U.S., prime ministers and such feel that? Or perhaps they feel they earn their keep because they are liable to be bumped off – 'risk pay' in other words. The L.A. Times is making a fuss of the Trades Unions' alleged threat to strike against the Law Court decisions. If it is true it ought to be made a fuss of – either the judges or the union leaders need removal. The government and its instruments must govern or they are not doing their job; and then who is to do it? It won't be long now – about another hour and a half. The sun is fully up. My goodness, it's time I saw you. It really seems to have been an age. Well – how are you?[1]

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[1]This was the last letter he wrote to me; we were not separated again during the remaining seven years of his life.

II

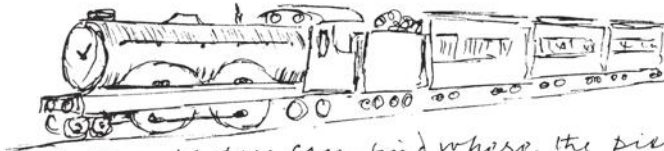
LETTERS TO PARTHENOPE, JULIAN AND NICOLA

1958

This bird flew
with us from ENGland to
France like this.
Sometimes it had a rest
like this → by standing
on the mast of the ship.
When it got to France it
tidied itself up by
standing on one leg and
tickling itself under its wing
with its beak. Then it
flew back to
England again. Bye bye
from Daddy.

1959

I thought I would send you a drawing of a rabbit who is sitting up to see if he can find his old friend Henry. Henry's real name is Mister Edward Bear but Bunny, which is what Henry calls the rabbit, always calls Henry, Henry. Here is Henry lying on his back on a lawn covered with daisies looking at the blue sky because he says it reminds him of Bunny's blue eyes. He is very fond of Bunny as you can see. He is giving Bunny a daisy he picked for her. Behind Bunny is the sea with a sailing boat which I could not draw very well because I could not see it properly. I think it must be near where Julian used to swim because I think those are the old Harry rocks where the arrow is pointing. Henry says he will take Bunny in the train.



and then if they can find where the pier is they will go to see the man to go on his boat.

Goodbye till I see you later darling with love from Daddy.

It was lovely to have the oranges from you. I like oranges very much but they are nicer because you were so kind to send them. When they dust the room here they turn a handle on the bed and this makes wheels come down so they can push the bed with me in it and I have a fine ride to the other side of the room. They call the rooms here wards. Then a very nice fat lady comes and pushes a big thing that looks like an enormous iron cake. This whirls round and polishes the floor making a lovely noise as if you were being chased by a motor bus. You can see the lady likes doing it very much indeed. And it stops sick people thinking about their illness because they are thinking what that lovely noise can be.

Goodbye my dear I hope I shall come back and see you all soon. With love from Daddy.

1962

In my room in Harley Street there is a small window. I keep it open so as to have plenty of fresh air. But now a pigeon has built its nest just above where it opens. And the pigeon has some eggs and is hatching out a brood of young ones. I don't know how the mother bird is going to find food for them when they come. I hope they will not make too much noise. My patients won't like it if they do.

We are all looking forward to the holidays except Mummy. Mummy does not look forward to them because she has no holidays to look forward to. In fact when our holidays come she works harder than ever. Queer, isn't it? I'm glad I'm not a mummy.

Linnet looks thin and eats a lot. Dimple looks fat but Linnet eats twice as much as Dimple.[1] They both seem very well, and are looking forward to barking a lot. I suppose it's their idea of a holiday.

* * *

I wonder if there are others in your form who saw the Circus, or Jimmy Edwards in *Cinderella*, or *The Mikado*? I remember how the others at school used to talk about the theatres they had been to, but when I was small I was not often taken because my Mummy and Daddy were not in England but in India. So I could not say very much.

[1]Linnet and Dimple were Miniature Dachshunds.

1963

We have a family of starlings who decided to live under the balcony outside the lounge. This week-end the first of the young ones left the nest; it was very interesting to see what happened. The young starling went on the rose bed. Then the mother bird came with some food. But instead of giving it to him she held it in her beak and made the baby chase her on to the lawn. Then she jumped into the air and fluttered her wings as if to say, "Look! This is how you do it!" He then took off after her and flew, low down, to the yew hedge. I suppose she gave him the food then as a prize, but we did not see that. And so it went on. He had to work hard for each bit. It was like little Tommy Tucker but this time he had to fly not sing, and it was for his breakfast, not his supper.

Then the mother took something more to the nest but she would not give it them for all their squawking and hullabaloo. It looked as if she were trying to make one get hold of the bit in her beak and then pull him out. But the babies would not take it like that. In the end she coaxed another one out. And then the lesson started all over again.

Last night Mummy and I went to a party in an old house in Hampstead.[1] First we met the other guests and saw some of the beautiful things in the house. There were harpsichords, guitars, an Indian stringed instrument that looked as if a vegetable marrow had been made into a boat, some virginals, one of the earliest grand pianos, and two spinets. They were all *old* musical instruments. You were allowed to touch all of them except a harpsichord that used to belong to the great composer Handel who wrote the Messiah which you will hear one day; it is a very magnificent piece of music called an Oratorio. After half an hour we went into one of the big rooms to hear a concert. There was one of the best harpsichord players in England[2] and he accompanied a soprano singer. She was very big and had a big voice and sang a lot of songs written by John Dowland and other famous song writers of Shakespeare's time. Her voice was rather like our dishwasher when it has gone wrong and you could hardly hear the harpsichord because she sang so loud, but otherwise it was very nice.

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[1]Fenton House.
[2]Ralph Kirkpatrick.

Then the man played the harpsichord alone and that was beautiful: it looked very difficult.

Then a lady who goes around to different countries to learn about their music, played a lute which is a stringed instrument with fourteen strings and looks like a huge melon, and sang songs from the Outer Hebrides. She played a drum which had been given her in Mexico and sang a song to their god of Thunder and Rain. She was very clever with the drum which looked like a big waste-paper basket, and made high notes and low notes. It sounded like a thunderstorm with big drops of rain falling. Then we had supper: chicken and salmon mousse (salmon pounded into a slush) and Russian salad and strawberries and ice cream. Then Mummy and I came home.

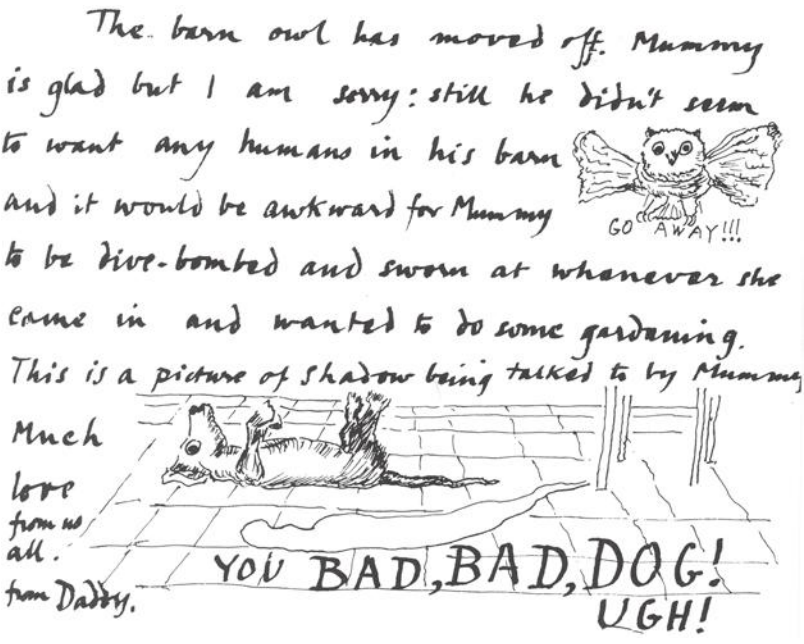
* * *

I hope you are working hard and playing hard and sleeping soft and laughing hard at other people's jokes – you aren't supposed to laugh at your own because it looks conceited. But you can laugh up your sleeve although I have never seen anyone do it. The villains or the heroes of stories do it and very soon after, or before, someone says "Ah hah!" (not ha, ha, ha, haa) but in a nasty kind of way meaning "Sucks to you!"

* * *

I hope you are enjoying your term. I always thought the summer term very nice because we used to have lots of swimming and we could go out for walks in the country when we got to the Main School. But not in the Preparatory School because, like yours, our prep school was in a town. I did not like walks then because we went with the master and if we lagged behind we had to do a lot of difficult sums as a punishment.

* * *



* * *

All my memories of homesickness are of it as the most ghastly feeling I ever knew – a sort of horrible sense of impending disaster without any idea what it was or even any words in which to express it. Not much better is what I think of as the 2 a.m. feeling when some horrible worry comes on you with such force that it makes your blood run cold. One might write an anthology but it would require skill, almost amounting to genius, to begin to recall the absolute dread that comes on these occasions. But I believe it is from one's ability to stand having such feelings and ideas that mental growth eventually comes.

Today was another fine day and we went into the park in the morning. There we saw a vast concourse, guessed it was the Eagle,[1] and joined in. He was in a tree surveying us all and no doubt thinking we would all be far better on the other side of some bars. On the ground was his mate, tethered, a dead rabbit and a contraption of nets. After he had watched the pantomime for a while he lost interest and flew off. We all crowded in and trod on the nets and gaped in a booby

[1]It had escaped from Regent's Park Zoo.

fashion when the keepers tried to persuade us to move off them and let them take the gear away. As I imagine that half the crowd at least don't want him to be caught I don't think anyone allowed themselves to be incommoded unduly by the keeper's chagrin. Anyhow you can hardly blame an eagle if it is tepid about landing in a very small trap set in the middle of a crowd of 2000 people just for the sake of some dead rabbit and the uncertain welcome of his very eagle-eyed, handsome, and well-taloned wife. Earlier he had carefully killed and eaten a muscovy duck on the lawns of the American Embassy; which, when you think the duck was almost certainly communist in view of its nationality, was a very sportingly symbolic act on the part of this emblematic fowl. Personally I think they should let the mate escape too. The pair could then build an eerie at the top of one of our crag-like blocks of flats and settle down to rear a family. They could live on pigeons for the rest of their lives. After all, the Eagle and the Dove are supposed to 'go' very well together, if you see what I mean. No offence meant to the pigeon of course, but we could do with fewer pigeons and more eagles.

* * *

It is terrible to skim over a job and get a superficial smattering that is nothing more than a facile covering up for ignorance. It is an easy but awful habit to get into because you then go on bluffing even if there is no need to do so. Don't make the mistake of thinking any worthwhile job that is done properly will ever feel easy. Unfortunately, fooling one's self and others is both easy and *not* worthwhile.

* * *

I know what you mean when you speak of feeling at home with the 'scruffy' people. Unfortunately there *are* people with scruffy *minds* and they do not obligingly declare that fact by wearing distinctive clothes. But I think you should be able to penetrate the disguises if you remember that disguises exist. It's like obscurity in literature: genuine people are obscure only because they cannot make it clearer; others want you to think they must be clever if they are incomprehensible.

* * *

I have been getting up my paper which I give to the Society on Wednesday next.[1] Although I know pretty well what I want to say, it has meant time to send out the typed and duplicated copy and more time producing the version I want to speak. I never read what I have written or print what I have said if I can possibly avoid it. They are two such very different things that I think it most important to treat them differently. If you are speaking you must be repetitive which is quite wrong for the written communication.

It is an old tradition that the British are phlegmatic. The Elizabethans were certainly a more cheerful lot though they had plenty to worry about. But they hadn't an Empire and I don't think this country has ever taken kindly to having one. but it is different, if you have never had one, from feeling you have had one and lost it. When we settle down we may concentrate quite cheerfully on minding our own business – it could certainly do with a bit of minding anyway.

I have almost finished all the writing I want to do for my book.[2] But the last chapter is important and therefore tricky. And then comes all the correction and excision which I find a bit tiresome. I never realized before I tried that you don't just write a book – you have to *make* it as well.

* * *

Mummy and I are both feeling a bit limp recovering from the jubilee dinner at the Savoy – or rather from the efforts required. Mummy had a terrific job as Chairman of the Ladies Committee responsible for the arrangements – the seating and proper precedence was a headache in itself, and that was only a part of it. We had to get there about half an hour before just to see all was in order and that we had not got the wrong night or something equally horrifying. The dining room with its flowers looked very good – a long top table and then lots of round tables holding ten each. Then we went upstairs to the reception room ready for the guests. At 8 p. m. they started arriving, with the Toastmaster resplendent in his red coat bawling their names as they came. We spent the next half hour shaking hands – three hundred of them. My smile began to become a bit sickly fairly early in the

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[1] 'The Grid'. Published in *Two Papers* (Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora, 1977) [Volume X].

[2] *Transformations* (London: Heinemann Medical, 1965) [Volume V].

proceedings. Then we trooped down to dinner, Mummy and I leading. The Toastmaster was a bit shocked as I said there would be no grace, whether because he relied on grace as a signal to start serving the meal or because of religious scruples I don't know. We had turtle soup; truite meunière; tournedos; and a sweet which was an ice-cream covered in egg-white froth baked in an oven and served with cherries in burning kirsch. Of course the ice-cream, being insulated by the egg white, was frozen stiff and the rest of it hot. It was a good dinner only spoiled for me by my having to be the Big Noise. Then the Toastmaster in thunderous tones announced, "Ladies and Gentlemen: pray silence for your President." (Come to think of it – I am a sort of Psychoanalytic Pope!) and I gave the toast of 'The Queen'. A couple of minutes later I was up again and made my speech. We then had a speech from Dr Sylvia Payne on the history of the previous fifty years of the Society, and another from James Strachey. Then a speech by the representative of the International Psychoanalytical Association, and after that telegrams from various parts of the world wishing us well. At about 11.10 we broke up to get to the car. Mummy and I finally got home to bed by about 2 a.m. Hence the lassitude.

1964

Be careful not to mistake plants having their winter rest for weeds or dead. They will soon look very much alive when the sap begins to flow and they wake from their winter sleep. One day in your Latin you may read Virgil's IVth Georgic where he tells about an old man who used to grow a few lilies and verbena and always had the best vegetables and fruit earlier than anyone else.

* * *

Nicola stayed away from school on Friday as she felt sick but felt perfectly well all day so I think she must have had a bad attack of school-sickness – you know, longing to get back to school ha! ha! and ever so keen on her hoam werk.

* * *

Last night Mummy and I went to see *Lawrence of Arabia*. With one ten minute interval it lasted from 7.15 to 10.50 so it was quite a piece. The desert photography was magnificent in every way: beautiful colour and superbly done. So I suppose was the story, if it is admitted that it has to be interpreted by photographs of actors acting. But when the drama lies in character, this is not good enough and no one has yet produced, in U.S. or Britain, film that goes below the surface. With Allenby, the greatest man of them all, Feisal, Lawrence, Auda, you need the Rodin technique as opposed to Praxiteles. Still, we both enjoyed it for the sheer magnificence of the desert, and the human beings did not spoil it. But that is not fair – the acting was good. But it is difficult for an actor to act a shy man who acts always as if he were acting a part as an extremely 'ham' hero. It's too complicated. And of course Allenby, who really was great, came out as nobody at all – the mess-waiter acting the part of a general in the Officers Mess Christmas rag. It was however very well worth seeing.

* * *

We have been watching *Dr Who*: awful tosh of course, but made so much worse by the characters all being quite uniformly

unsympathetic. Various robots appear but the machines are at least metallic whereas the flesh and blood is wooden.

Julian said the other day, "What a happy place school would be if masters did not think they had to bash the lessons into you." I thought it was a very acute observation but unhappily school masters do not make it themselves. So many people go to school longing to learn and end up hating it. But of course there is always someone bashing the masters to bash.

How difficult it is to realize that with certain books one does not 'read' them – one has to have an emotional experience of reading them. This seems so slow compared with the easy slick reading, especially if you feel you have exams to pass, that it is very difficult to give one's self the time and other conditions necessary for it – especially the time.

* * *

Most nations at least pretend to worship their illustrious dead although

> 'De tous ces defunts cockolores
> Le moral Fenelon,
> Michel Ange et Johnson (Le Docteur),
> Sont les plus awful bores.'

But I agree that the French, and the Italians even more, do seem able to live or think it worth trying. Of the Germans the French say that they know how to die, but *not* how to live.

* * *

The Pirandello which we saw on Friday is *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. It is a very good play, but what was so interesting to me was the clarity with which Pirandello brought out the author's dilemma, namely the struggle of the ideas to find expression and then the problem of making them true without their being so unaesthetically expressed that they are incomprehensible or too unacceptable on the one hand, or, on the other 'artistic' or acceptable but so distorted as to lack all honesty or integrity. The ending is too melodramatic I have always thought, but even that was well done. It could be argued that a good play will always get through but I think it indisputable that the better the play the more there is to get lost on the way.

* * *

There is only one thing that matters to us and has ever mattered to me, and that is that you should have in yourself a knowledge of yourself and others that will make you able to make the best of what life holds for you. To do this I have always realized you need to experiment and learn for yourself. I know that life can be very hard and can stifle growth; all I want is that it should not be needlessly so. Present happiness owes much to previous drudgery, and future happiness may depend on present drudgery. There is no virtue in drudgery, but if you can face it with equanimity, if you must, then it is an invaluable stand-by and no amount of ability or luck can make up for it.

Imagination is very valuable. Without it you cannot see your way, but it must not become a *substitute* for real life. One *can* be so crippled by the mere grind of finding bread and butter, and the pain of competition for the mere necessities of life, that it is impossible for one's talent to find itself. It is equally true that you can be stifled by over-ease. There is no question of my being upset by any choice you make except one – a choice that led you to retreat into imagining a good life instead of finding your own way to it. Milton says, 'Taught by the heavenly muse to venture down the dark descent, and up to re-ascend though hard and rare' when talking of his journey – and that was tough enough in all conscience, but made tougher by his knowledge of his own greatness and the burden that put on him. But this is true even of ordinariness, if one can call a knowledge so extra-ordinary as knowledge of one's ordinariness, 'ordinary'. One will always crave 'ordinary' sun and air and rain and cloud and food and happiness. If imagination helps you to find it, it is a fine thing. But it is a curse if a belief in some 'extra-ordinary' life puts a barrier between you and it. Believe me, I should hate it more than I can say if I felt that anything I said or did led you to find some 'success' that stood between you and these great and simple things. If you read very carefully the opening of Book III of *Paradise Lost*, you will realize that Milton was not talking about his blindness only, though most people (even the ones who ought to know better) think so, but about the inner light; that is *his* way of putting it. He uses the language of his time and beliefs to express himself, but *what* he expresses is knowledge that only a great man has and which transcends the accidents of his time and circumstances. As you grow older your experience will teach you more and more of the great depth of his understanding. Only one who knows could say what he says about love (in Book IV,

'Here love his golden shafts emploies – '). I do *not* wish anything for you but that you should find yourself and *your* life.

* * *

Depression and failure are a part of every life even the most happy and successful – I might say *especially* of the most happy and successful; it is the price you pay for joy and success if they come your way. But the price you pay for trying to *evade* failure and depression is ten times worse. To start off with, happiness and success are very good things – *in their own right*. It is quite another matter if you are compelled to be 'happy' and 'successful' because you fear failure and depression. It spoils the success because you feel there is something it is hiding, and failure and depression become such bogeys that you cannot believe they are what quite ordinary people take in their stride any day of their lives. I want you to form your own judgements and make your own decisions. But I do want you to learn how to make them for the *right reasons*. All this is easy for me to write but I know of no one for whom it is easy to practise.

* * *

The other day when I was going to work I crossed Green Park and a blackbird came hopping along the path to meet me. It came right up to me; I think it must have been so tame because it was starving and hoped I had some crumbs, but I hadn't any to give the poor thing. I am glad all the snow has gone for the sake of the birds. Now it is warmer they have started fighting for territory. That means that they try to get a part of the garden for themselves so they can find plenty of food near their nests. A beautiful woodpecker was on the lawn today and he looked very fine in his new feathers and bright red cap.

* * *

When I drew the curtains just now I saw Venus and the sickle moon. Venus is the very bright star – a planet really – that shows up clearly just after the sun has set. You can see the dark part of the moon tonight because it must be lit up by light from the earth just as we can see on a night when we are brightly lit up by moonlight. It seems funny to think of earthlight instead of moonlight, doesn't it?

* * *

There was a fine green and red woodpecker on the lawn this morning. He was having no end of a time with a worm (I think) – anyway he seemed to be struggling with something big. Usually of course they tap trees for the insects in the bark. And he would hardly have had all that trouble with an ant.

* * *

This morning I went to the Design Centre where they had a lot of chairs. One was a huge thing about up to my elbows like a round puff-ball. I sat on it and it sank in so that it made a lovely armchair. It was like being eaten up and swallowed by a Yorkshire pudding!

* * *

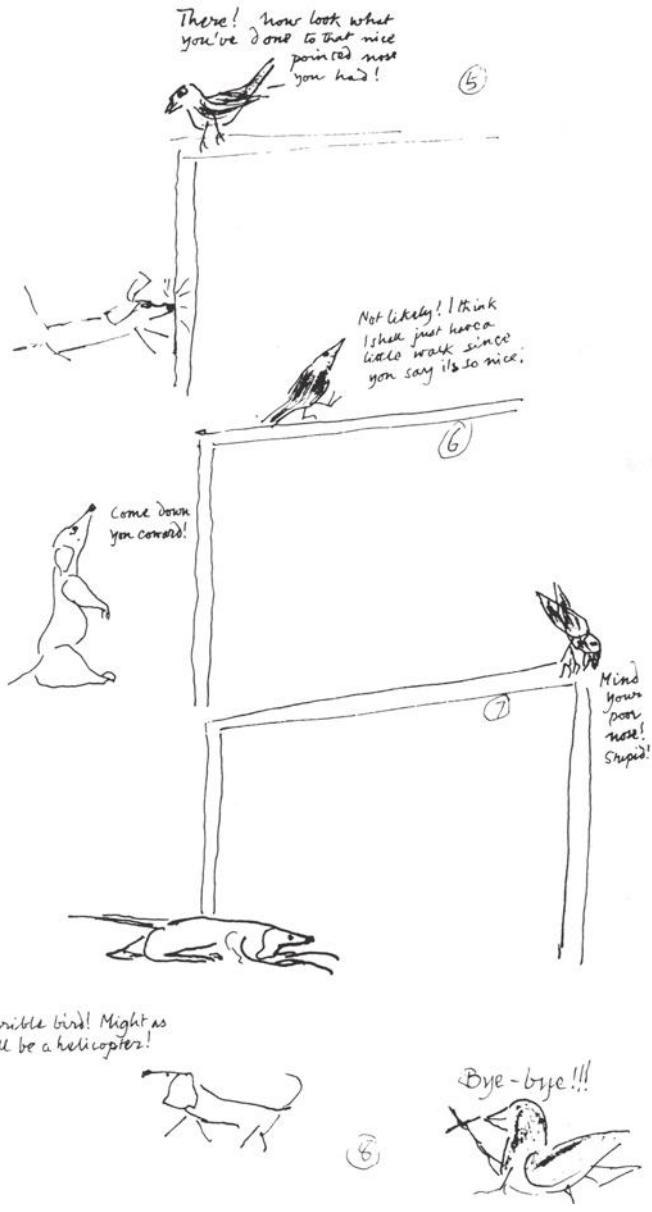
Linnet and Dimple seem to have found a big garbage supply and both are looking stout. One of them brought in a huge bone and left it on the carpet for Mummy as a present. Mummy didn't seem to want it. It would have been awkward if she had cooked it for our lunch.

Mummy is very busy indeed running the house as usual and doing all the work about the new one, measuring carpets and rooms and places where things have to go. I don't know how she manages. And just now she is correcting my next book.[1]

[1] *Transformations* [Volume V]; see also fn 2, p. 197.

1965

After we had been to see the armour and some paintings at Hertford House (the Wallace Collection where you drew some of the daggers one day) we walked back through the park. Another dog chased a crow yesterday. This time the rook made a terrible squawking and seemed most upset about it. It's a pity they don't seem to be tame at all, not even to want to feed. They are so respectable in their glossy black Sunday clothes. I love it when they sit high up in their rookeries in the evening and caw their good-nights to each other in the fading sunlight. I would like to write a poem called 'Evensong at the Rookery'.


There! Now look what you've done to that nice pointed nose you had!
5
Not likely! I think I shall just have a little walk since you say it's so nice.
6
Come down you coward!
Mind your poor nose! Stupid!
7
Horrible bird! Might as well be a helicopter!
8
Bye-bye!!!

* * *

...The white cockatoo was still there — the one that danced to you (a bit like this but not very as I can't draw him very well. He seemed lonely and glad to see mummy. So he came up to the edge of the cage, turned his head right round and looked at heaven, and asked mummy to scratch the back of his neck. (Not in words but you knew what he meant) When Mummy did it he looked as if he was in heaven!

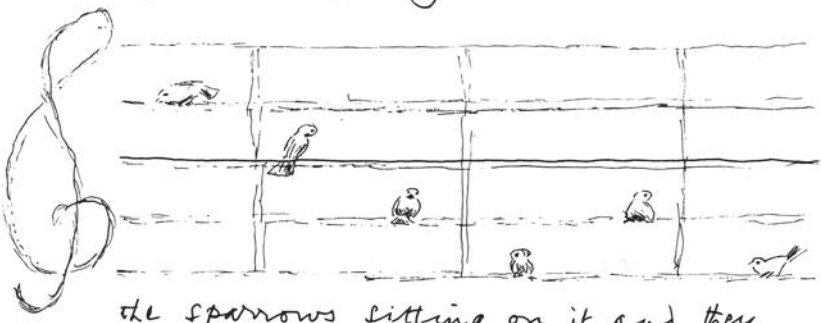
1966

As you can see I can't draw kangaroos or fawns but I wanted to because when I was going in to the Park by the path that runs along the enclosure for the red-rumped Ajouti. (only one is certainly black rumped) I saw the kangaroo and the fawn (which looks in my sketch) was standing licking its face and most loving

kneeling down like the Devil over it and ears in a and tender way. They looked very pretty and I wished you could have seen them. I have never seen such a thing before though I have heard of a big mastiff bitch bringing up some ligor-cubs as her babies till they become too rough. "Oh mummy I love you so much I could eat.... oh heavens! where's mummy gone?" you can imagine them saying "No THANK you (UGH!) I'm off!" Bye mummy bitch.

* * *

As I am sitting here in the lounge writing I can see the garden trellis with



the sparrows sitting on it and they look just like notes on a musical stave. But I don't think I have got the curley-cue right. It would be rather fun to "play" the sparrows on the trellis on the piano. Perhaps they would form themselves into a musical composition as one flew off and another came.

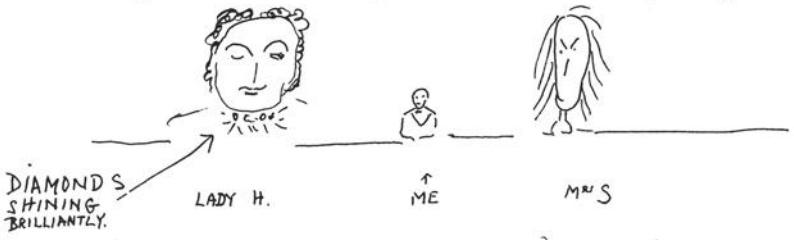
Last night Mummy and I went to a big dinner at the Connaught Rooms.[1] Mummy had been working very hard arranging where

[1] "Dinner at Connaught Rooms" to celebrate the completion of the publication of the *Standard Edition* of Freud's works, translated by James Strachey.

everyone had to sit. As there were 380 people to dinner it was quite a jot to arrange it so that the ones who hated each other did not come together and the fat ones and the thin ones came together. (Otherwise two fat ones would not have enough room and two thin ones would be leaving a space). Then the greedy ones needed to be next to the ones who could not stand the food (ugh!) so that they could have extra and nothing would be wasted. There was a Toast Master. He wore a gorgeous scarlet uniform and had an enormous voice. You might think his job would be to bawl out "LOOK OUT! the toast's BURNING!" but it isn't. He just stands at the door when you come in and goes "DR AND MRS BION!!!". Mummy and I got in first so he couldn't do it to us. Anyhow he gave up after about 20 people so I think he can't have fancied having to shout 360 more names.

Mummy sat between Sir Frank Francis who is Librarian to the British Museum which is the greatest

library in the World and Sir Frederick Hoare who was LORD MAYOR of LONDON — like Dick Whittington but he hadn't got a cat with him and he didn't bring his dinner tied up in a red bandana handkerchief carried at the end of his stick which he rested on his shoulder. That is how I always see LORDS Mayor of London. I sat between Lady Hoare and Mrs Strachey. Mrs Strachey didn't eat anything but



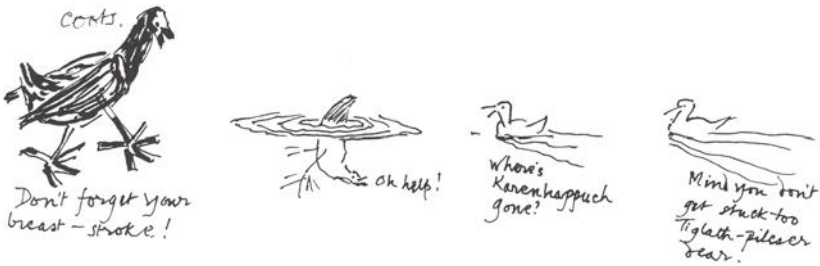
she is extremely intelligent and only has one or two good ideas for dinner. She is very nice and only looks a bit sad because she had to bring her own good ideas. Lady Hoare as you can see is very intelligent AND brilliant. After dinner we all talked and wandered around and Mummy and I left to get home by

mid night. Mummy wore a shiny blue dress with a large trailing thing at the back and long white elbow length gloves and gold and white lace shoes. She looked very smart indeed. I wore a dinner jacket. I also had to give a book to Mrs Strachey and Miss Freud which I did without dropping them, tripping up over the microphone, falling flat on my face, bursting into tears, or shouting with laughter because all their faces look so funny like plaice on a fish-mongers slab. All of which I am afraid I shall do before I actually come to the dinner or whatever it is at which I am supposed to speak.

* * *

Bad writing is as bad as mumbling instead of talking because it looks as if you expected others to read what you can't be bothered to write. Or listen to what you can't be bothered to say.

There are still baby ducks, geese and coots in the Park. I've tried to

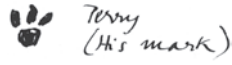


draw some coots.[1,2] Of course I am not sure but I think coots do have long names because their family name – coot – is so terribly short and it must be very disappointing to have a short name like 'coot'. Before you know anyone has spoken to you it's all over so to speak.

Last night Mummy and I went to see Perry, or Perry thought so and was glad to see us and about fifty other people who had come to see him. He received the guests from under the table and then went round and spoke to each one separately. Ticklee-tum, ticklee-tum he said as he graciously rolled over on to his back. I am sorry

I cannot show his tail wagging properly but it goes too fast. He is smiling because Mummy was the first to understand what he meant by Ticklee-tum.

P.S. I don't know why your Daddy has forgotten to send you my ticklee-tums too. You remember? – I am the dear little doggie whom everyone thinks so SWEET – which I was and still am. I allow the Sandlers to look after me. In Circus Road. And you promised to take me for a walk. I am a Jack Russell Terrier. THE Jack Russell Terrier. Hoping your Headmistress Tickles your Turn too. Just lie on your back and stick your paws in the air like I do and I'm sure she will make you top of the school.



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[1]Keren Happuch, Job's third and youngest daughter.
[2]Tiglath Pileser, an Assyrian king, eighth century B.C.

Mouse's fare refunded

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

WAKEFIELD, SEPT. 18

A 7d. fare charged for George, a four-week-old pet white mouse, for the six-mile bus journey from Wakefield to the village of Woolley, Yorkshire, was refunded yesterday. The owner of the mouse, Judith Sharp, aged 10, received a formal apology from a bus company official.

An inspector of the West Riding Automobile Company drove to the girl's home in The Crescent, Morley, near Leeds, and asked to see George.

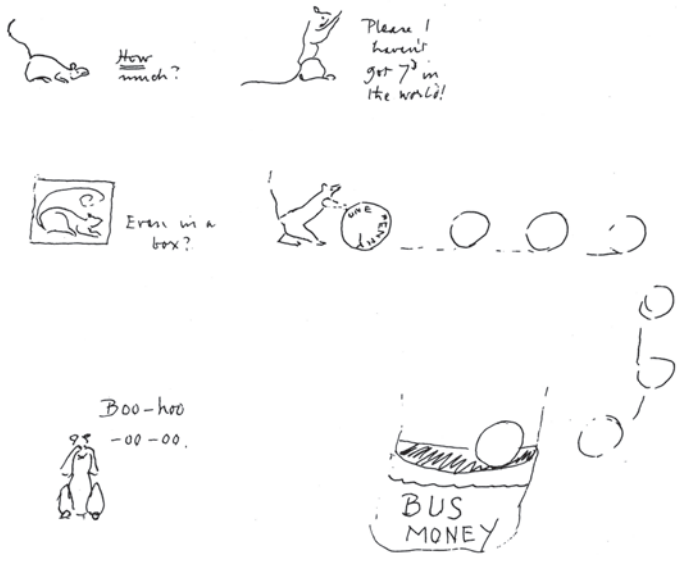
The girl said: "He told me he was very sorry about George having to pay his fare, and gave me back the 7d."

She returned to England from Canada with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Sharp only a month ago.

CONDUCTOR INSISTED

After being given the mouse by a cousin, the girl took it on a bus. George measures 3½in. from his nose to the tip of his tail, but the conductor insisted that livestock must be paid for. He told the girl's grandfather, Mr. Donald Barker, who was with her, that unless the fare was paid they would have to get off. So Mr. Barker gave him the 7d.—only 1d. less than the girl's fare.

Mr. Peter Daykin, transport manager of West Riding Automobile Company, said their regulations included a fare scale for livestock carried in baskets, such as pigeons or cats, but did not cover the transport of a mouse.

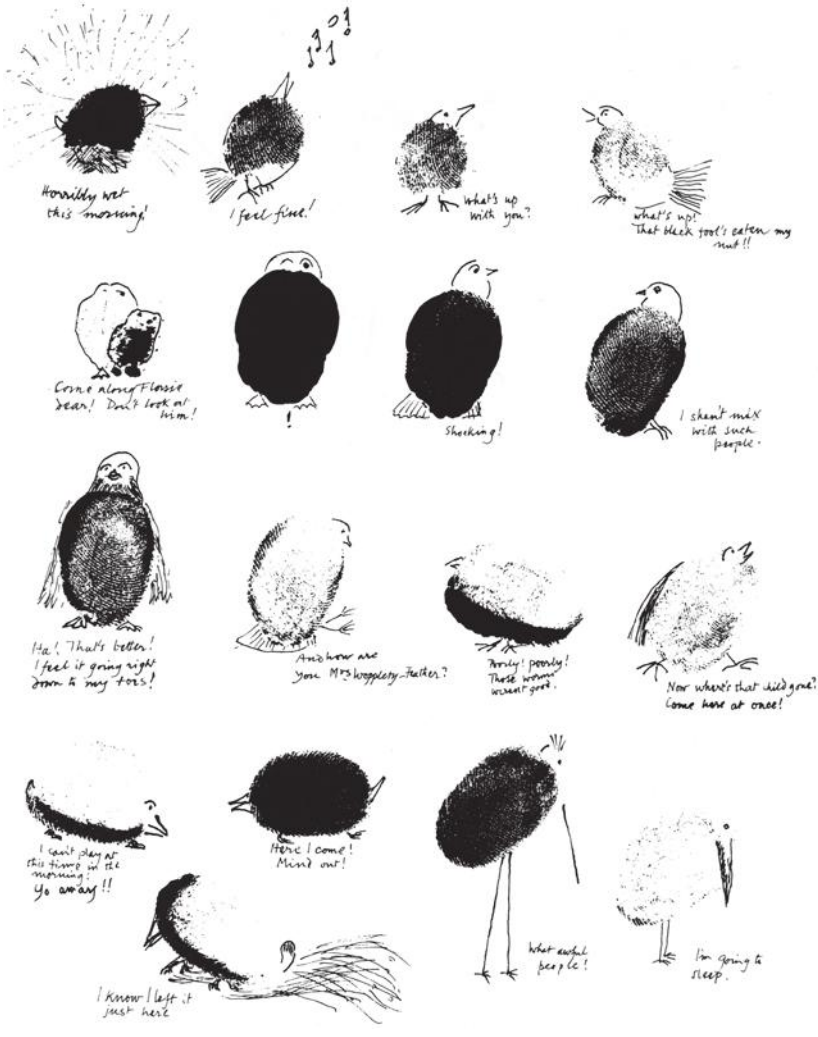


1967

I am so sorry it is such ages since I wrote to you and that I have not replied to your very good long letters. Not counting the spelling of course, but then quite famous people like Queen Elizabeth I and Shakespeare spelled very badly. But perhaps that was reasonable when most people didn't spell at all. Elizabeth *wrote* very beautifully. The great advantage of not spelling very well was that you could spell as you felt. For example, 'i thinke hee is a fatte-headed fule'. Much better than 'I think he is a fat-headed fool', don't you think?

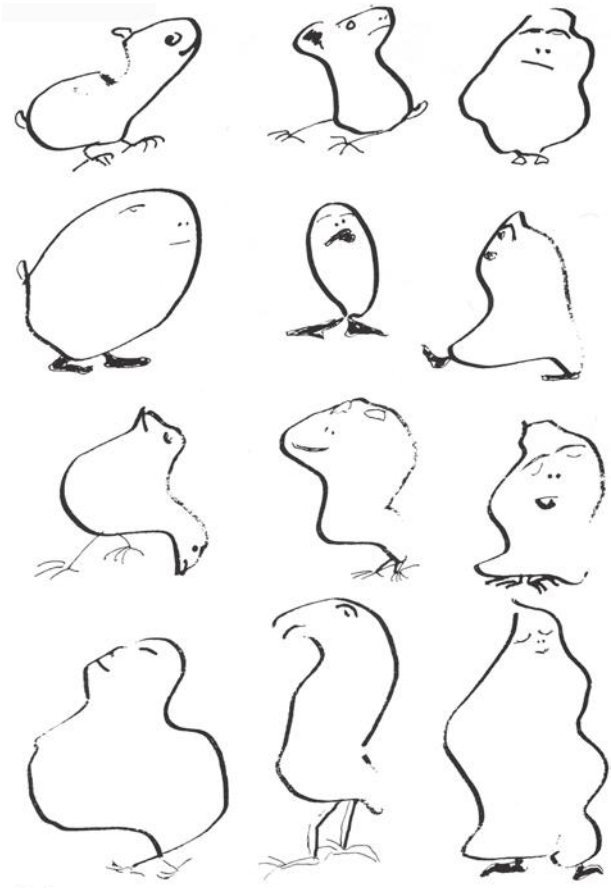
* * *

I'm sending you some of my thumb prints. It makes an awful mess of your thumb. In fact it makes an awful mess. I like the one bathing best – the wet one.


Horribly wet this morning!
I feel fine!
What's up with you?
What's up! That black fool's eaten my nut!!
Come along Flossie dear! Don't look at him!
Shocking!
I shan't mix with such people.
Ha! That's better! I feel it going right down to my toes!
And how are you Mrs Wopplety-Feather?
Poorly! poorly! Those worms weren't good.
Now where's that child gone? Come here at once!
I can't play at this time in the morning! Go away!!
Here I come! Mind out!
What awful people!
I'm going to sleep.
I know I left it just here

* * *

I am sorry your locker has been 'illeagle'. It sounds as if you had got the bird, but perhaps your locker escaped the eagle eye of the prefects. Anyhow I enclose a drawing of the nightmare I think an ill eagle might have.



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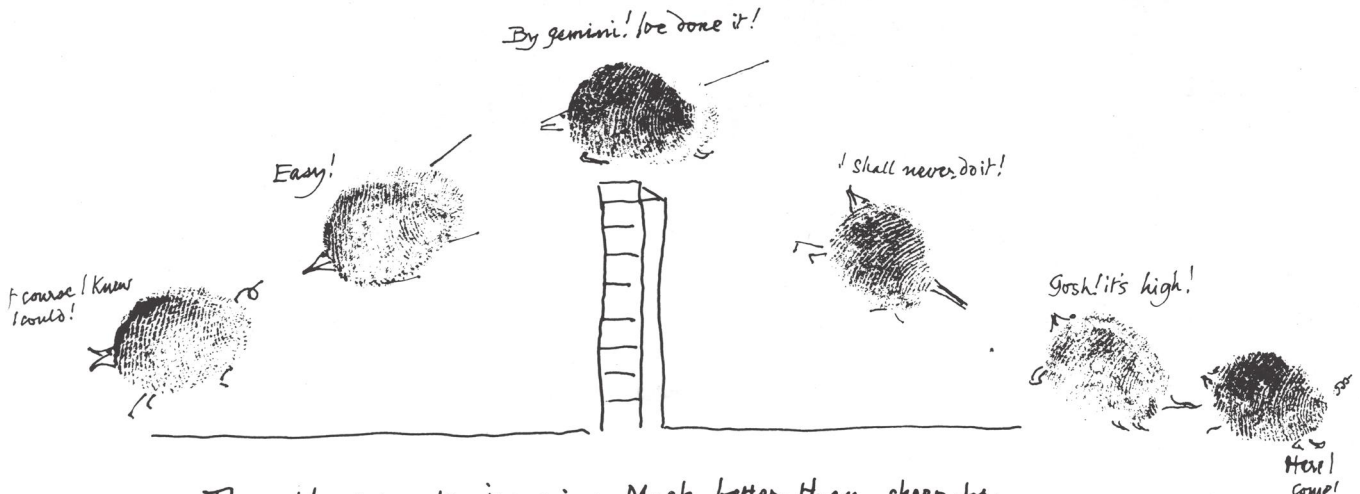


Thumble-wurzels jumping. Much better than sheep for counting with to go to sleep.

Kiki[1] is very well and has been doing a lot of mumble-twittering and sparrow-shouting. This last is rather rude really. She is on the balcony and has I believe been talking to a blue tit in the honeysuckle. The blue tit has flown off. Kiki was sitting up very straight, and if she was talking as straight as she sounded I am not surprised the blue tit flew off.

* * *

I have much to do before a meeting on Tuesday and, more distant but still too close, the trip to America. The latter beg for papers which are written out – naturally enough and especially at the price they want to pay (is *want* the word? I think not), but I hate it and cannot imagine sticking to it even when written. Worse still of course, it is terribly time-consuming. Luckily for me Mummy has taken it down in shorthand from my dictation and thinks she is going to be able to type it. How she will find time I do not know and do not ask. It is a terrible lot to have to do especially when you consider she already has two full-time jobs on hand.

I never seem to have any time. But since I never remember to count the ten hours a day with patients I naturally feel I haven't done any work.

* * *

It is hopeless being unaffected when one has reasonable cause for depression, and depressed when there is none. In any case, it is difficult when you are trying to see your way and your life is unsettled. These occasions repeat themselves during life and one tends to underestimate their unpleasantness and forget them when they have subsided. Thinking of marriage and finding and courting a mate is one of them – perhaps the biggest. It *should* (we expect) be pleasant and so it is. But not unmixed pleasure; one can hardly expect to find the kind of mate one wants, or be sure it is the one which is wanted, without a good deal of heart-searching. How futile words seem to express what I want to express.

* * *

[1]A budgerigar.

1968

Here we are in our new home. The journey was long because of head winds which made the Pan Am authorities route the plane by Mong-ray-ahl instead of the polar route. The Mong-ray-ahl-ers were very sluggish about loading petrol (gas) but perhaps this was because the temperature was 0° Fahrenheit (32 degrees of frost). I had been feeling terribly hot in my thornproof suit so walked to the rear door. All doors open but no one allowed out. Before I knew where I was I found out what 32 degrees of frost means. I thought I would not feel warm again! We had sunset for about two hours – blood-red sky. Then Los Angeles looking like a marvellous garden of flowers made out of precious stones.

On Friday it rained and on Saturday it poured – properly. No nonsense about 'rain' as in England, but the real thing as in India when I was small. Today we woke up to white frost (we never have frost in California) and brilliant sunshine and blue skies. I may say I bathed in the pool on Friday but it *was* cold! Bitter! I couldn't stay in, but just swam the length and back. Also a hummingbird obligingly showed up and today Mummy and I both saw it. Seems queer to have a real hummingbird mucking about in your garden; also a beautiful dove which is very tame and sits about, or walks, even if you are within a couple of yards. It doesn't like white bread but only cornflakes.

It is difficult to believe it's January. There are begonias in the garden. Green but already large strawberries, azaleas in bloom and camellias just coming out. The real pleasure though is in the blue sky and sun which we have had for the whole of the day.

* * *

Mummy and I have just had our first breakfast in the garden outside the living room. I am writing this in the same place. I don't want to make your mouth water but it is very nice. I had a long swim before breakfast; the pool is bright blue like the sky and the temperature during breakfast was 75° in the shade. There is a cool breeze. The blue jay came down just now to scold Grandma because he thought she was trying to pinch his strawberries. He was in fact quite right. He also came and sat in the orange tree to scold Mummy and drive her off before she stole any of his oranges.

I hope you are lucky enough to be able to enjoy your work as much as I do mine. It makes a great difference if you like your work. I liked school but not so much as I like work now.

* * *

I thought you would like a letter written by me looking down on the Amazon. (This sounds rather rude!) It is a thousand miles from its mouth. When I was small and we lived in Delhi we saw the Ganges (not from the air though, because the first aeroplane had not flown then!) and it was two miles wide 900 miles from the sea.

The Americans have any number of serious problems both international and private – starting with Vietnam and North Korea. But I am sure you realize the terrible lot that you have to learn which is not in the curriculum and cannot be taught by others though you have to learn it. You are fortunate, or rather *we* are, in that you seem able to learn about people and how you have to deal with them. This is fundamental no matter what you have to do by the way of life work. I feel that you will think I am preaching a sermon if I go on like this!

With all my love. We think of you all a great deal you may be sure.

* * *

The other day I was at a cross-roads watching the cars go by. They often have deep nasty dips at road intersections so if you go by at speed the car just about knocks you out – brains you, if you keep your brains in your bottom if you see what I mean. Well, car after car was going over this intersection and each one nearly rammed its chassis on to the road. This is a fault many of them have by having a soft suspension. Then suddenly one appeared and glided over with just a faint twinkle of its wheels as if it was giving me a wink – no prize offered for what the make was! There are two beauties – both brand new – which I see outside my office. American owned of course. I think it would take a very long time before I owned one. However, life has its compensations even if it does not include a Rolls Royce.

* * *

For heaven's sake don't turn into a bruiser! And don't get punch drunk or it will be goodbye to your A levels for ever. The boxer who owned Wells Rise before us could hardly tell if it was yesterday or

tomorrow, but then he may not have been very bright even before anyone had beaten his face, skull and brains into a sort of batter pudding. Anyway – don't come back here looking like

or please!

Or they will spend so long looking through your stuff at customs that it will be time to go back before you've arrived. And keep your collar and tie on and you hair short. They are sure to be looking for drugs as all the smuggling here is done by school boys and girls and it makes them more suspicious still if you look like

or or

* * *

The Congreso National[1] (Parliament) is shut up because a dictator is running the country and he does not like parliaments. The River Plate (Rio de Plata) is so called because originally the early buccaneers came to Argentine for silver – that is why it is called Argent(ina). Similarly the River Plate is the river they went down to get 'plate' – hence silver or 'plate'. In the last war three small British ships chased a much bigger and faster German 'pocket' battleship, and though the Von Spee was supposed to be able to keep out of range and sink each one in turn without being hit, Commodore Harewood so ran the battle that one destroyer put down a smoke screen and the other one darted in and out of it, fired at the Von Spee and disappeared before the battleship could hit it. The British cruiser Essex got hit early and had to stop to repair its engine. So the two destroyers carried on alone and damaged the Von Spee so badly that it fled up the River Plate to

[1]In Buenos Aires.

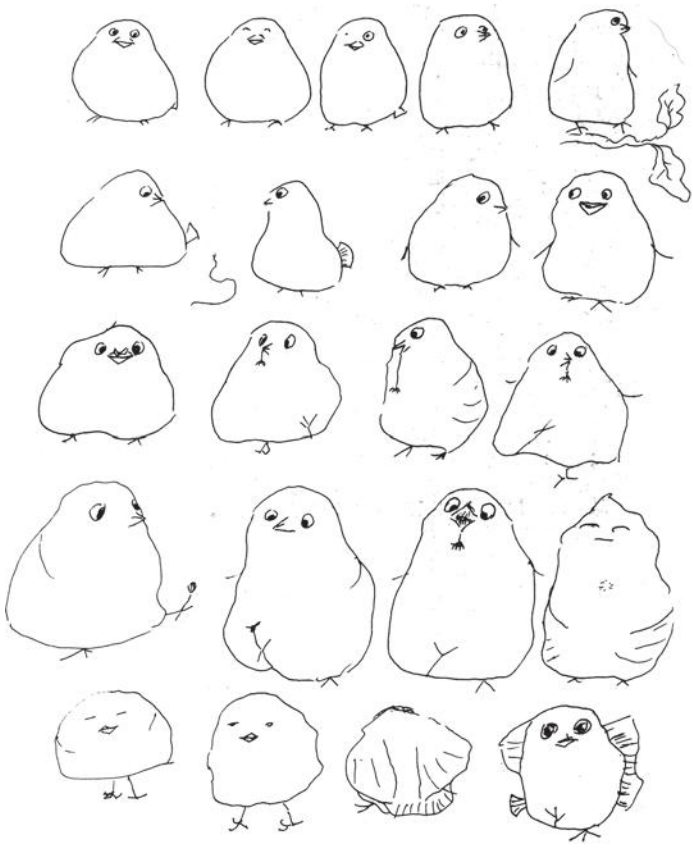
Montevideo. When it finally had to come out the British destroyers were waiting for it and pretended to be signalling messages to a British battleship which was not there – it was about 900 miles away. So the Germans came down the River Plate and the captain scuttled his ship before getting within range of the British ships.

* * *

Last week-end Mummy and I went to a convention of psychoanalysts at San Diego. We did not have time to go to the zoo, the animal one I mean, which was a pity because it is world-famous. I was giving a paper to the human one. It was not very good but I got it done and that was a great relief.

1969

I am with Mummy at the pool edge in the sunlight. I have been living for a short time at the rate of about £10,000 a year – in other words enjoying smoking one of your birthday cigars. It makes me feel moral and opulent and like shaking my head solemnly and saying to you, 'Ah my child; whatever you do don't imitate your Dad! Above all – DON'T SMOKE CIGARS!' Unless of course you first take the precaution of having £10,000 a year.



* * *

Christmas
1969

1970

It has become such a cliché that it is almost impossible to realize that in fact it is a great advantage if one gets the knack of 'making the best of things' however damn silly or worse the things are of which you are supposed to make the best. Life is a kind of Hoffnung's orchestra – if you have a bit of hosepipe and can use it as a French horn, it is useful. Though I would not go so far as to suggest that if a fly sits on your music you should, like the short-sighted German, learn how to 'play 'eem'.

1971

There does not seem to be anything to do but start a letter and add instalments until such time as the posts start again, if ever.[1] We are bothered because of the chance – or certainty – of a railway strike.[2] When I was doing my medical training we had the General Strike and I was hoping to get round to driving a railway engine. But it all came to an end before I got that far. Just as well for me and any passengers who might have been so unlucky as to have me for their loco man. I hope it does not get as bad as that although, because that is nearer a revolution than a strike[3] .

* * *

We have just seen the Apollo blast-off on TV. ('If you've seen one blast-off you've seen them all'.) Sometimes it almost seems as if the moon may not be a bad place to be going to, but that I suppose is because there is no chance of being offered the trip.

"Cure", said our neurological chief, "is a gloomy subject – the only thing is that *our* patients don't die. All the others in medicine do." Not exactly a fair comment, but I can see what he meant. That is one reason I do not admit that psychoanalysis has really anything at all to do with cure. And now the other way round as well – cure has nowt to do with medicine.

As Mummy and I were sleeping the profound sleep of innocence there was suddenly a devilish and horrible noise. "There's that bloody picture down again", I thought angrily, determined not to be fooled again as I was last time when it nearly brained us and I thought it was an earthquake. Well, this time it wasn't the picture. Mummy dived to get under the bed – she couldn't, it is too low and there is no room. I took my usual precautions – got under the bed clothes. This scheme – of which I make a present to you – has always worked and is a sovereign cure and protection against mosquitoes, 5.9 howitzer shells, tigers, phosgene, mustard gas, bad dreams and earthquakes. You cannot always tell which is which when you are

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[1]There was a postal strike in the UK.

[2]In the UK.

[3]In 1972 there was a coal strike in January, a railway strike in April, and a dock strike in August.

asleep and it's very useful to have something which is a cure for the lot. As I couldn't find the picture, and Mummy was behaving in such an unusual manner, I decided it must be a dream, but as I could not fall asleep it slowly became clear that it was no good trying to go on dreaming. We got up. By this time it was what passes for a fine sunny morning in these parts, so I was surprised to find it had apparently been raining very heavily. I pointed out this peculiar and interesting fact to Mummy. She, who seemed to be at least two days ahead of me, explained that it was the swimming pool which had slopped over. On the way down to the office she explained it was Tuesday and shortly after I more or less got the hang of the thing – rather like "*Can* curl but can't swim – swimming pool *that's* him".

The house, to my intense surprise, seems all right but I have no doubt that the roof will leak like a sieve when the heavy rains start which of course they are supposed to do any day soon. Lucky it wasn't already raining. In this district we have been extremely fortunate though some houses have some bad cracks. The worst, as you may have heard, is in the San Fernando Valley where the poor wretches in the Veterans Hospital got caught in the collapse of the building. Since then we have had a hundred or more 'temblors' as they call them – odd trembles, creaks and groans.

My attempts to reform my writing are not, as you can see, a success. I should have been taught to write when I was a child, but no one ever seemed to think that Public Schools should teach the children to write in return for the very high fees: even if they had, they would have taught copper-plate with all its curley-wigs I suppose. Anyway if one will not or cannot write properly it is no good blaming one's school or other people. You will never regret having started off on the right track because then I think you always have a fine hand even though you change it.

On Wednesday I gave my paper.[1] The majority of people who hate Kleinians did not come, but a few faithfuls came, as, to be quite fair, they would in England to show how bad and incomprehensible the paper was. I found it quite interesting but being an old hand at the job I was not surprised to find that even the eager supporters were so disappointed etc., etc., etc. So I think it must have been up to the usual standard. If the criticism is too laudatory I think one needs to

[1] 'The Grid' [Volume X].

become suspicious. You will have to get used to the idea that if you don't satisfy or, if you are fortunate, please yourself, you won't please anyone else.

* * *

We look forward to hearing about your holiday. You will have seen it before it disappears beneath masses of tourists, atom bombs and such like disasters. I alas have never been to Greece. I think Plato's Socratic Dialogues would have meant even more to me than they did if I had been able to imagine the background: and heaven knows it was a revelation as it was. Perhaps because I read them at the right time when Oxford was opening my mind to the pleasures of philosophy.

* * *

I spent most of my time as a medico feeling that another week of it and I should go nuts. Anyhow if you survive to pass Anatomy and Physiology you can reckon you can survive almost anything – though I have known contemporaries of mine who reckoned 'Midder'[1] to run Urogenital Firm very close as being rock bottom (or anyhow, 'bottom').

* * *

Here we are in Mexico City. We took plane on Monday, everyone being really worn out. It is not a satisfactory state to be in before a holiday though I suppose one can argue that it is at least better before than after. I feel like a piece of chewed string; I haven't a mind – just a hardened mass of congealed clichés which have become stuck together. As I become aware of my surroundings, it might be Europe. Here, with a population of a mere couple of million indigent poor, they have a book shop every hundred yards or so. In Beverly Hills there are two well-stocked book shops and a branch elsewhere. If you ask for a book they haven't got they seem to think, hopefully, that another one will do – just like, but really rather better; e.g. Q. Have you *The Gemstones of Southern California*? A. No–o–o. Here's one – *The Stones of Venice* – would that do?" Q. No: it's not Venice down by Culver City – Venice in Italy, you know." A. Oh – it's by Ruskin who is said to be a good author. I haven't read it myself." Resisting the temptation to say, "I can see that", one passes on.

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[1]Midwifery.

1972

As you can imagine, Mummy and I read any scraps we can get from you and friends and others – even from papers – about what is going on.[1] The only thing we can be sure of discovering is that we *don't* know, can't know and never shall know. I once – I am talking about the first war – felt sure that at the end I should know, if I was still in existence, who had won. Well, I know that I *don't* know, but I *think* I know we did *not*. Even *that* I am not sure of; you can see it depends where you write FINIS; the end of the first day of the Cambrai battle? End of first week, month, year? Century perhaps? You see how complicated a simple question like, 'Who won the Battle of Cambrai?' turns out to be. Anyhow, you and others must be damned cold – with the fear of being colder still if it is not possible to earn a living or get anyone else to do it for us.

It is now 11.0 a.m. on Sunday. Mummy and I are sitting by the pool. Temperature is 60° in the shade but we are in the sun which is very warm. I tell you this as a contrast to what you must be having – pity you can't prop this up against the wall and warm your hands at it. Even if it made you hot with envy it would be something, but I am afraid it is not even that much use. It certainly wasn't when – rarely – I was sitting about shivering in a trench consoling myself that if I got warm the lice would start biting.

* * *

All these problems are demanding solution all over the world, only in different stages of development. It is like the state in the Universe where, if you had the skill and the technical equipment – and lots of equipment you cannot even guess at – you could know a great deal about everything from man and his so-called mind, to quasars and other animals not even available to us for inspection in our present state of 'blissful' ignorance. Oh for the days (Past/Future) which (were/will be) the Ones! There's also a lot to be said for being able to live – where one has to anyway – in the present.

* * *

[1]During the coal strike in the UK.

You will have heard from Mummy of my various medical capers: so now I write you of certain physiological aspects – clinical I should rather say – which I find quite interesting.

It started on a Monday morning with my not feeling too good and not feeling so bad either. Then with my midday patient I couldn't think very clearly which I did not bother about as the patient pours it out non-stop and I didn't feel it was much out of the ordinary. Then I felt my right arm wouldn't work and began trying to find out – while listening to the patient – if I had had a stroke. But it didn't seem to be a hemiplegic. It was now the end of the session and I dared not get out of my chair, in case I could not, and I did not want it poured out to all my patients that I had had a 'stroke'. So, picking out what seemed least likely to cause the greatest trouble I stayed put and excused myself for not rising at his departure. He seemed a bit surprised but he left. I could pull myself together enough to bring the next one in and tell him I would have to cancel. He seemed a bit surprised but cleared off. Both of them then rang up within the next twenty minutes to find out if I was OK which seemed very decent. In the meantime the landlord at my request brought a Dr D. and he set me to cancel all my other patients and to fill in four sheets of forms. I would have liked samples of them to send you because they seemed to be a very good idea and one which would pretty well make it certain that the doctor had examined all systems. It struck me how very useful it would be now, and certainly later, to draw up your own private questionnaire and so make sure that you never missed anything of importance when it came to examining a patient. My greatest triumph in that way was to get a gold medal for senior clinical surgery by saying, when asked to examine and describe a swelling of the knee joint, that I would not give a definite diagnosis until I had had an X-ray of the chest! Quite right of course! You might as well work out what the anatomy of the chest has got to do with the anatomy of the knee-joint. Anyway the result was a perfectly good Gold Medal. I must have known something else too but I have no memory of it. I think that itself suggests gold medals must be very bad for surgery.

Now D. did apply his stethoscope and his knee hammer, and he did say he wanted me to go into hospital to be thoroughly tested. This fearsome prospect I resisted, like a fool, As it turned out he,

also like a fool, let me have my way. I say 'like a fool' but I am not sure that it would not have been even more foolish to have insisted and raised my anxiety to catastrophic heights. It may indeed have been wiser to let me go my own way. By putting me on immediate sodium-free diet (ghastly!! but I have now got used to it, more or less) and extra potassium, I felt miles better at the end of the week. But I 'co-operated' so much that the whole process of reduction was too violent. Result: Tuesday – suddenly lost consciousness and when I recovered I was under Dr S. in Midway Hospital. This time, I'm bound to admit, very much to my relief and too ill even to think, let alone worry, about finance. What poor Mummy had to put up with I leave you to imagine – I can't. Anyway, after a week of 'Intensive Care', on Monday morning back home again I came and tomorrow I see S. again. I am to get my weight down to 164 lbs; I have so far gone from 196 to 184 lbs.

'Intensive care' nursing – ludicrous. Sheets never smoothed out but left hideously uncomfortable and, as likely as not, not covering one. Thermometer left in ten or more minutes. Urine bottles, bed pans etc. left under patient sometimes for half an hour or more. Chat between nurses, loud, at any hour of day and night, and patients unable to get care unless insisting on it.

All mechanical tests good, expensive and efficient. The nearer they get medicine to computer medicine, and that is the way to go and the way they are going, the sooner they will leave the rest of the world out of sight. In so far as doctors, the best of them, have to be capable of compassion for human beings who are suffering, the more bleak the outlook. It was pathetic to see how nurses, and for that matter some subordinate doctors, responded to some sign of interest in their affairs. The ideal of course would be if one could respect people and respect the truth (facts).

* * *

The news of the end of the strike was a great relief to us though it is anything but a relief to understand, especially for *this* psychoanalyst, why our country should have to be ruined before a commission could be caused to do some thinking. What is a Coal Board for? What are trade unions and their leaders for? What are governments for? But of course they are the all-wisest as well as the All-Highest; such things are too deep for me, and it is, I suppose, as well that I have to do

an insignificant job and just die quietly of bad temper! Still, I don't see why you should be burdened with this tirade. I have enough sense – just – to know it's not your fault.

* * *

The whole of my letter looks remarkably ill-written compared with your written script. In my time, that any *man* would bother to have good writing manners would have been unthinkable and as a result the products of the so-called public schools were a lot of uncivil unlettered boors without even a suspicion that this might be so. You have the fortunate chance that you may always write an easy, beautiful and civilized letter.

* * *

I have been on a diet of 1 gram of sodium and 1200 calories a day. With this I have potassium three times a day and cyclospasmol 100 gm and I think I feel better than I have at any time since I came to the U.S. I am to get my weight down to 12 stone – which is quite something, but I have so far gone from 14 stone to 13 st 2 lbs. I am starving and unfortunately Mummy feels obliged to be similarly starved in sympathy. But for me it is a very good thing and therefore no hardship; not so for her.

The Times Lit. Supp., which thinks it is the World's Most Famous journal of the kind, would not publish a letter of mine. OK! But they wrote a routine would-be 'polite' letter of rejection, and showed their immense superiority to me by being 'very interested' but failing to realize I was a doctor – *printed* heading notwithstanding – and got my name wrong too! 'Incompetent, Slovenly, Snooty': our version of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', when we finally succeed in staying out of the Common Market.

* * *

Sorry about the boredom of the course. You have to learn what to do with boredom and bores – Pope had his method in writing, itself an antidote, and describing the bores in *The Dunciad*: let me lend you my copy when you are back here. Bores and boredom are never in short supply – dieters, so-self-called exponents of 'dietary' exercise and

their very close cousins who slim are a not inconsiderable part of that vast Mississippi with great megatons of boredom floating around in it. Good luck in your navigation of that 'fascinating' stream. Sorry I can't do more than wish you well.

With regard to the Pharmacology book – 'excellence' has to be paid for: never get anything less. As I have said before, 'Get it or go without' till you can get it. Don't buy rubbish: rubbish is *expensive at any price*. Get the Pharmacology and keep it – i.e. don't let anyone borrow or steal it. Never lend books – all borrowers are thieves whatever they say, no matter how rich or respectable. Our riches and respectability are of course always vulnerable to attack by anyone who feels disposed to destroy either our financial assets or our reputation for integrity and reliability.

Keep fit: 'Bored but buoyant' be the watchword so that you remain afloat, if possible.

* * *

In The Listener I see there is a long article on the great Ronnie Laing. I had him taking up one of my seminars to psychoanalytic students, teaching me all about it – he still not then being qualified. So his self-appointed importance is nothing new. The article ends with his having gone into a Cingalese monastery. Good idea! Very wise, and I would not sometimes mind a dose of the same medicine myself.

* * *

It is curious to see how little they seem even to understand the biology of the so-called hallucinogenic drugs today. It looks as if the Royal Court at Ur used the ritualistic function of – hashish? – on entry into the Death Pit. The remnants of the Aztec religion, still very much alive, is well and truly established in the Native American Church; they have, despite the efforts of the R.C. Church, been able to win their case in the U.S. Supreme Court allowing them the continued use of hallucinogenic drugs for sacramental and ritualistic purposes.

* * *

We went on the beach this morning for about an hour. People 'fishing', if that's what you call it and don't get it confused with 'catching

fish'. For that it is better to go to a fishmonger. I caught a trout once but it must have been daft.

* * *

My shoes still look brand new although they are maturing beautifully. Of course I don't walk on them, and cannot now say I even use them for the accelerator and brake. Finally I suppose feet will become vestiges (in America) and no more use than the tail. There ought to be a medical course in Vestigiology to match Embryology.

* * *

It was a most unfortunate accident.[1] Mummy called an ambulance. Arrangements were then made that Dr W. would wait for me at Cedars Sinai Hospital. I was taken to, and waited at Cedars Sinai. No one had heard of what I was doing hanging around Cedars Sinai and cluttering up the works. I said, "X-ray of hip – Dr W." Answer: Never heard of him. You must have doctor's authority. Ambulance said, "Oh sorry – wrong hospital! – about twenty miles further from home. "Too late – too bad – can't change now!. "Dr M. will see you". The X-ray could then take over, bored to death with the body they hadn't asked anyone for. Keeping my views to myself and apologizing profusely for my existence (I should DAMN WELL THINK SO!), had a spinal general anaesthetic and ultimately found myself in bed. Luckily too anaesthetized to know more than the hellish cold and stayed put till about 9.30 a.m. Mummy was told by a Dr E. that he had operated on me. "All well."

Last Wednesday morning I was booted out back home – Mummy I need hardly say has been miraculous although with merely human equipment to do it.

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[1]Carrying his painting easel in the garden, he tripped and fell, fracturing his right femur.

1973

The thing I am supposed to be writing, thanks to Mummy's efforts, is I think about done.[1] It seems pretty unreadable to me but I hope it's not as bad as it seems. I cannot say I feel any real hope about getting it published, let alone sold after that. The one book that I couldn't be bothered with, even when pressure was put on me ten years later, has been a continuous success.[2] But writing books is no way of making a living – that's clear.

If you are to get a job you will have to fight for it – nature red in tooth and claw. All the other claws and teeth will be in good working order too. In England just as much as here; here just as much as there. In fun as well as in fight. Even in love claws and teeth are out – in action, I don't mean 'ruled out'. Stalin was asked if he would support the English Communists. "Yes!" he said, and then added, "As much as a rope supports a man who is hanged". Franco said much the same about how he would show his gratitude for the help that the Nazis had given him. "When I have won", he said, "the world will be amazed at my display – of gratitude of course." Someone thought he winked but it may have been a speck of dust.

* * *

We were glad to hear that you are finding the medical course more interesting now you have got on to the clinical stuff. I often wish I had made more use of it when I had a chance. I was not in fact very bright and had my mind too much fixed on psychological stuff, to see my chance to do quite a lot of things which I might have been doing with a less one-track mind. However, regretting one's misspent youth is a very easy way of mis-spending *other* opportunities and is extremely boring as well. So I will desist.

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[1] *A Memoir of the Future, Book I: The Dream* (Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora. 1975) [Volume XII]. See also fn 3, p. 244.

[2] *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers* (Tavistock Publications, 1961) [Volume IV].

The Brazil visit went off very well and was enjoyable and rewarding.[1] They want me to go again in December or later. People here also want me to stay here – or so they think. It sounds like someone's description of a second marriage as an example of Hope triumphing over Experience.

* * *

The drug I use for my 'arteries' is called Cyclospasmol. Its action is to decoke the arteries, allowing the blood, if any, unobstructed flow. Contra indications – if it is bad for you. Good for: ingrowing toenails, unwanted hair on the face, schizophrenia of course, tsut – sugumachie fever, boredom, yaws and beriberi. Bio-chemistry – doesn't do a damn thing but is harmless; luckily its effects wear off very quickly and any obstruction that has itself been temporarily obstructed, soon re-establishes itself. As far as I am concerned I await, without anxiety or interest, the discovery that it causes various diseases. As Walsh, our neurological chief, used to say, "Medicine is not an art; it is not a science; it is a sport". To which I would add, it is also an addiction and can occasionally cause dangerous side-effects. As another of my chiefs – Bernard Hart – said on one occasion after he had listened carefully to a psychiatric social worker introducing the new patient, "Ah . . .", looking up cautiously at the end of the long tirade, "and which is the nurse and which is the patient?" I am sure I have told you this before, but there is nothing wrong with me: old age is not a disease, but people – bless their hearts – long to cure one. But one has to exercise a certain caution lest they kill you off in the process. So far I have survived.

* * *

I never argue against other people's views. They (1) don't pay any attention, (2) use it to prove you are wrong, (3) get downright nasty about it and never forgive you, (4) pinch your idea when they have found out what it is, or (3) and (4). Only read the best – e.g. Freud and Klein: and acknowledge what you take. Acknowledging a bad writer is like becoming responsible for, and advertising him. You can

[1]Two weeks of seminars and lectures in São Paulo.

see from the foregoing what a nasty character I have; alas, one does not improve with age.

* * *

I usually feel in this queer job of mine that I have hardly anything to say from the depths in other people's unconscious, and by the time I have emerged from that into the 'glare' of other people's conscious I am too blindly bat-like to have anything to say.

* * *

Gerald Brenan has been translating – I don't know how well, but he should be good – Saint John of the Cross, his mystical poems. I think you probably remember Roy Campbell's efforts. He should have been good, but without knowing any Spanish and relying only on what I know of Saint John's mysticism, it seemed to me that the translations sounded a bit as if they were off the wave length – not quite sympathetic to that type of mind.

Gilbert and Sullivan *and* concerts *and* plays – well it's a bust eight weeks even if you do try to cram in a degree during your spare time. I am sure I am very bad to speak so disrespectfully of serious things, but perhaps you will re-interpret my letter in suitably gloomy terms and take it as 'understood' even if not exactly stated that life is serious, gloomy and earnest, d_____ it!

* * *

Poor Rupert Brooke! I always liked his poetry though now I gather that if anyone reads, 'If I should die, think only this of me –', they mutter to themselves, "You did, and we don't –" Perhaps this is an exaggeration.

Congratulations on finding *Sesame and Lilies* – *and* being able to enjoy it. I have always had a soft spot for Ruskin. Complete works, beautiful paper and print in Sothern's – price? £500! Even now probably worth buying, but 500 worthless pounds take an awful lot of hard work to earn.

* * *

Here they are making much of the Lambton case[1] to show that the British are as bad [as those involved in the Watergate scandal]. I must say the British being morally horror struck about sex is a ludicrous and ultimately nauseating spectacle. But Jellicoe and Lambton must indeed be peculiar people to choose for government position – they should find grown-ups (of whatever age) for jobs of that kind.

* * *

Poor Flavio de Carvalho has died – the man who painted the portrait of me in São Paulo. Although only having met him for a few hours I liked him – we both did, very much. I think he was gifted – maybe much more – and both Mummy and I like the portrait, both as a painting and a likeness, though I think that most people would dislike it. I am no beauty and no one seeing this would suppose I was. However, I am not wanting to advertise 'beauty aids' so that's all right. When it dries off, by the end of the year I think, it can be varnished and framed.

* * *

I do not know Rio but from what we hear of it we both like the *prospect*. The reality of the far-off hills at closer inspection can turn out to be different. The situation here is one of such suspicion – and who can blame them! – that it is hardly possible either to have *any* interpretation respected because an ulterior is suspected as the real motive, or not to dread the patient's mental apparatus.

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One would be very foolish to imagine that people (all of them) are very different when one looks into it closely – which of course is precisely what one is supposed to do. Here they have had to bow, be it never so unwillingly, to the fact that, when one gets past the ridiculous hate and messianic adulation, one has *some* experience if they can bear to admit it. Then one gets into the more steady and more

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[1][Lord Lambton, a junior defence minister in Edward Heath's government, was forced to resign after he was caught in bed with two prostitutes and smoking cannabis in May 1973. Lord Jellicoe was also involved in a sex scandal at that time. The footnote in the original publication was erroneously conflated with the disappearance of Lord Lucan, which was not until November 1974. *Ed.*]

nearly permanent state of envy and robbery, or merely theft. Here, as at Buenos Aires, I am now admitted to know something but am so unable to express myself that others do it far better and are better suited to lecturing. Still, as I haven't the time, wish or drive I cannot really complain and I don't wish to sink into a grizzly and miserable old age of feeling 'ill-treated'. That is a truly ungenerous state of mind, an insult to the Almighty when I consider that I have always been one of the pampered and privileged classes. Luckily Mummy knows that even better than I do.

* * *

My memories of the Varsity were in far more rigid days and we were, as I see it now, a pretty battered crowd of psychological wrecks just out of the war. I remember thinking Queen's dons were a bit soft in the head because they did not expect much from us; 'they (us) couldn't be expected to do very well after the strain of war'. Now I realize of course they were quite right. In the last war (Great, second lap) they didn't allow youngsters to get into fighting but I was only almost twenty-one at the *end* of my fighting career and I have since only very slowly come to realize what a *very* long time it took me to recover. I hope you have none of that kind of thing to put up with and that England manages to keep out of *that* sort of trouble now we aren't supposed to be of any importance compared with the 'super-powers', U.S. and Russia. Not glorious, maybe, but let us hope a chance to rediscover our greatness as a civilization. Goodness knows the burden this small country has tried to carry as the world's leading nation – it has just about sucked us dry and bankrupt in every way. But now of course we are liable to attack by the bullies and black-guards who cannot resist the temptation of the weak and helpless.

1974

I seem to spend many hours doing 'nothing' unless you count reading books, but even so they often seem to come to 'nothing' because they turn out to be irrelevant but good, or worse still, bad but irrelevant. Then some are irrelevant but interesting. A few are irrelevant, uninteresting *and* bad, and *they* are usually compulsory reading. I hope this is not your fate though I must say that the time I spent in France as a 'student' was utterly wasted by me. But probably it was because I was not happy at that time, wondering – as I still am – how on earth to earn enough money. But I have at least the consolation of feeling there is nothing more likely to make it possible than knowing one's job. The snag is that one never seems to feel one knows one's job. Luckily, if you have the guts to dare to believe it, enjoying one's job is a very good indicator.

When I was in Tours about 1921, I went into a bookshop and Anatole France was sitting in a chair in the corner. A Frenchman came in, looked at him and tapped his own forehead in a knowing way. Indicating Anatole France, he said to the shopkeeper, "Voila un type idiot!" and walked out. France was amused – but not I think flattered!

In a fortnight we leave for Brazil. The work will be a change though I find myself wondering what on earth I shall have to tell them. One day I shall stand in front of my audience and goggle at them helplessly – lecturer's nightmare – especially since I always leave it till the occasion to say what I am going to say instead of preparing. Once I was told I sounded unprepared, to which I replied, "That's .quite true – if you leave out the preceding 70 years".

* * *

Never lose the flair for coping with

1. not enough time
2. not enough knowledge
3. not the proper conditions
4. sick and disturbed patients *and* sick and disturbed doctors, chiefs and colleagues as well.

All these four are essential ingredients if you are having *real* medicine in *real* life, and to hell with what the text books *say* it is. Incidentally

I see some bright spark is saying that Onassis hasn't got myasthenia gravis because he's got a deep form of influenza which is affecting his capacity to breathe!!! I remember warning a doctor who sent me a neurotic patient; I tried to tell him firmly but gently that he had myasthenia gravis and I was afraid that terminal weakness of the thoracic muscles would set in and lead to his death through respiratory failure if this were not immediately treated. He wrote to me a week or so later to say I was mistaken and that the patient had died through an attack of 'flu which had become pneumonia despite his care. I wonder that we survive when you consider how wrong, ignorant, and mistaken we psychoanalysts are! The trouble you are having is familiar, so you may as well get hardened to it – if you are tough enough to survive – *now*. I think I was lucky to survive two wars. Now of course I only have to cope with Peace. We have to learn to carry on our peaceable avocations amidst the warring states of the Modern Dark Ages.

* * *

I think it is high time for the good of the world that Europe was reconstituted. And Ireland rowed out to sea and sunk. It annoys me to feel that our troops have to continue to be embroiled.

* * *

I am not surprised that psychiatry has been a bit disillusioning – so is psychoanalysis or virtually any human activity, because for some reason when 'mind meets mind', or 'boy meets girl', or 'boy meets boy', or 'X meets Y', they shy off it as if shot and one begins to feel it is dangerous to like one's own kind. So it is. But – not all that dangerous. However, whether it is physical medicine, or psychological 'medicine', or not any kind of medicine, two people seem to find it very difficult to do, and psychiatrists and psychoanalysts are as bad (worse?) than the rest. Anyhow, you may learn how not to do it and that is after all quite a valuable lesson.

Brazil was stimulating to me. I often feel I could learn a lot – 'had I – . . .' etc. etc. Truman wisely says never waste time on regret.[1] In Rio a woman turned up on hearing of our presence and introduced herself to

[1] *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman*, by Merle Miller (Berkley Publishing Corp., 1974).

Mummy. She, it appears, is a Bion having a grandfather called Gabriel from Bordeaux who came from La Rochelle. Our Huguenot ancestors also came from there, via Switzerland, St Gall, and England, so it seems more than likely there are Brazilian Bions as well. Up the clan!

* * *

I hope you are able to squeeze in a bit of medicine in your spare time – without of course going so far as actually catching the complaints. Being a chef may of course turn out to be far more profitable if there is anything to cook. France can actually export food, which is far from the case with England who may therefore have to export people. So far I myself seem to have a certain sale value but one never knows – and never knew – how long that will last.

I appear to retain outrageously good health chiefly, it sometimes seems, through 'eating that which I ought not to have eaten'. I don't recommend you to follow in my teeth marks. Goodbye and 'cueillez des aujourd'hui les roses de la vie',[1] or as Voltaire has it, 'cultivez votre jardin'. By the way, get hold of Voltaire's *Candide* – it's slap up to date.

* * *

Time rushes by, so it won't be long before you are off to Vietnam. We have no idea of how much we shall be able to hear of you or to keep in touch with you, or what sort of experience you will have. Of course I remember launching out – at long last it seemed – to France and war. Now I realize that those were relatively civilized days although incredibly lethal. So you are probably in for something which will vary from the utterly banal – days, weeks, one hopes not years, of 'nothing' – to times of intense danger. Usually it changes from utter boredom to utter horror without any warning and apparently no transition from one to the other. Do not imagine that anyone *loves* you – and do not be surprised into taking it as a personal grievance when you find they *don't*!

This place thinks a recession is coming and I don't doubt it or believe it. We *think* we shall be asked to Brasilia and that we shall probably get there, but I find it hard nowadays to be particularly impressed by my own or anybody else's foresight. "Vivez, si m'en croyez –" I still have an inner impulse to do a bit more roving even at my decrepit,

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[1]Ronsard, 'Sonnets pour Helene', Bk. 2, XIII.

but not more discreet, old age. There is, I fear, no fool quite like an *old* fool. But Brasilia is rather nice don't you think? Perhaps only when separated by a waste of seas. I am also attracted by the fact of a sprig of the La Rochelle branch (of the family) being in Rio.

It is a great comfort to be able to feel that, so far, you all survive. It is incredible how little one can do for one's own family, and how much each one has to learn to do for him or her self. That is why a husband or wife is so important – the only person one can ever hope to meet who will augment such slender capacity as the 'one' alone is lucky to have.

* * *

Many thanks for your birthday card and good wishes – I'm sorry you seem to have been so disturbed by having forgotten it. I doubt people of 77 should really set much store about whether we do or do not have another to add to the store of spent or mis-spent birthdays! Here I had a fine birthday cake and found that my taste for it remains in unabated health and vigour; must have the secret of perpetual youth as do all my other reprehensible and uninteresting characteristics.

* * *

As far as exams are concerned, the important thing is to get used to them! Exam-passing has not got much to do with the subject, but has a lot to do with 'passing exams'. The examiners usually know that even the best scholars write a lot of damned nonsense anyway. They *try*, that is the examiners try, especially in Finals to get people to stop and think, if possible *after* reading the questions, *before* writing anything. If by some fluke you seem to have written sense don't let it go to your head but just plug on steadily.

P.S. It is of course useful, even in exams, but not essential, to know the *subject – if* you can keep you head and remember you are supposed to be *passing*. But don't get confused and make the mistake of thinking that exam-passing and knowing French or Chinese or Sanskrit is the same thing, or that if you (or even a don) have passed an exam you really know the subject. You *may*, but it is not necessarily true. Going to a good university is a chance of becoming *wiser* by the time you leave, but that is not included in the schedule. You can always mug up what is in the schedule; but becoming wiser is nothing to do with 'swotting' and you may be *becoming* wiser in your sleep.

Learn either Russian or Chinese or Sanskrit provided you don't let it interfere with becoming wiser by wanting to pass exams; that can be as bad as taking to drink or any other drug. Many a good man or woman has ruined themselves or their families by taking to drink; it is not so spectacular but just as ruinous to 'take to exam-passing'.

* * *

Alas, to think I wasted my time swimming at Oxford. As almost the only person in Oxford who could swim I had to captain it, collect a few of my contemporary unemployed rugger blues and teach them to tread water so they could represent Oxford against Cambridge without sinking to the bottom before the 'match'[1] was over, and then let these thugs loose against your U. on THE DAY. I used to swim around while my thugs quietly strangled your thugs in various quiet out-of-the-way spots in the Bath Club bath without the referee seeing what was going on. *But* we had a marvellous dinner afterwards and very amusing speeches. Poor old Lord Desborough used to be the chairman, a man whom I liked very much but with a family who all formed part of a real tragedy – not one of his sons was left before I had finished with Oxford. Still – not such a ghastly tragedy as we are able to witness with the Randolph Hearst family picking its way along the (American) primrose path. Who would be a multimillionaire on those terms?[2]

My idiotic book has not been published yet, so such dregs of reputation as I still retain remain intact. I fear it might not survive publication – if that ever occurred.[3]

* * *

People here are very gloomy about the prospects financial and otherwise. It sounds queer for the wealthiest nation in the world but they 'know' and I don't think they are wrong. In 1906 when I first went to school, King George was saying,[4] "Wake up, England!" but alas, they didn't.

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[1]Water polo.

[2]The daughter, Patricia, was kidnapped and subsequently took part in an armed bank robbery – whether voluntarily or by coercion remained unclear.

[3]*A Memoir of the Future, Book 1: The Dream* [Volume XII].

[4]In 1901, when he was Prince of Wales.

1975

We were relieved to hear that you were back in London – safe, as we laughably imagine, for a moment or two though I have no doubt you will be off again shortly on further explorations. Not that I personally think one would ever be so foolish to imagine that anyone was safe anywhere, and though medicine – or an aim to help in any way – would ensure a certain welcome, in fact of course people *hate* being helped. Unless of course it gives them a chance to 'help' themselves, preferably to the helper's goods – watch, stethoscope, camera, and even ideas if they can. At school we always preferred to rob the orchard of a professional apple grower than help ourselves to the windfalls of a generous farmer who allowed us to collect what we liked by invitation.

I used to be *taught*, but never learned, that what you did with money was save it. Your Auntie Edna was infinitely more sensible so she has a home of her own but has a nasty character – don't tell her. I have a beautiful nature but *no* cash. There is a moral in all this I am sure . . .

I hope you persuade someone to 'qualify' you soon as it can be quite useful. So, I find, can *not* being qualified: it is a bit anxiety-provoking but on the other hand it saves one the danger of thinking that someone loves us and is anxious for us to survive. There is a nice story of C. E. Montague's in which he tells of a beetle that was almost caught by a tortoise and had the bright idea of scuttling into the pursuer's carapace in which he remained secure waiting for better times. 'Beneath the shadow of Thy wing Thy saints have dwelt secure' is a hymn we used to sing; but I have only just thought of this possible *in-security*.

I have been mugging up the pharmacology of porphyrin – very appropriate to these times. Maybe it applies to Vietnam and wisdom to know whether to back the Vietcong or the U.S. The Great Powers, 'Slow and solid that's him' – can't curl but can swim – or 'Stickly Prickly'.[1]

However, 'good luck', provided you don't believe in it. The safest horse to bet on, believe it or not, is yourself.

* * *

[1] 'The Beginning of the Armadillos', *Just So Stories*, Rudyard Kipling.

It is hard to believe that the world has to be governed by mere human beings. Now, thanks to nuclear fission they can *really* do some damage, whereas in the old days they could only damage people they could reach with a battle axe. "Saul has killed his thousands –", but nowadays we have even put David and his tens of thousands into the shade. Well, some fool will let off an atom bomb one day soon now, so we may as well make the best of our last days of human supremacy before we follow the dinosaurs into the shade. As we used to say in the days of World War I, "Don't forget to take a clean handkerchief in your pocket, and above all don't get your feet wet." (Advice before going into the line at Ypres.) Anyhow, although *you* may be disappointed, *we* don't want you to have any of that.

* * *

We have just been listening to Nixon on the State of the Nation. The speech – which one must call able and effective – was rapturously received; 'standing ovation' seems to be the normal form. It was Pie In The Sky writ large. The glorious 'feats of arms' and so on in Vietnam and after – it almost sounds as if the facts are of no consequence when served up with lots and lots of artificial butter, and indeed *that* I think is what analysis has to be here. I sincerely hope that in your experience of medicine you have enough of the luxury of doing a job honestly to develop a taste for it before your palate is irretrievably ruined.

The news from England is depressing including the apparently impenetrable optimism which it seems can withstand any fact that might be fired at *that* form of armour plate.

* * *

When you sit staring blankly and with sinking heart, and as all your mis-spent youth flashes like a horror movie before your eyes, try to read the exam paper through the distorting mirror of your scalding tears of misery and contrition, and you may notice some dregs of what you think is medicine. If so, with due circumspection, write it down; you may get a good mark or two and scrape through. Knowing medicine is very useful and not a positive hindrance to being qualified, *but* passing a medical exam is quite another business, or passing *any* exam. Don't afterwards find out how brilliantly everyone has

done at the 'marvellous' paper. That way lies drink and a pauper's grave. I still scrape a living, but I could not for the life of me pass an exam in psychoanalysis, medicine, or any other subject. When I took 'Fevers' I could only think of tsusugemushi fever and then only because it reminded me of playing trains. The French in their queer way call it a 'teuf–teuf'. That was the first suspicion I had of the French who did not even know if *should* be 'puff–puff'.

* * *

I have been reading your Vietnam diary. I think you will find it very fortunate that you wrote so fully at the time it was fresh in your mind. I have only got half way through so far – I of course interpret what you write very much in terms of a battle front not so far away even though your job was a different kind of battle-disease. One cannot help being very moved by the sturdiness and courage of the children. I wish I could believe that they could rely on the 'grown-ups' being as wise or as sturdy. Alas, I don't.

* * *

I have finished reading Wavell's Memoirs. I never met him though I liked his son, Lord Karen, 'Archie', very much indeed. Wavell was the finest and most cultivated soldier we had, even greater than his hero, Allenby, I think.[1] And what a raw deal he had, not least from Churchill I regret to say. But Churchill himself had a raw deal and was only given his chance when the riff-raff had lost the British Empire and wanted to have the dregs salvaged. "Pass it on!" we used to say in my prep school after punching our neighbour in the guts. Very funny, as you can see.

* * *

Apropos the Common Market, a story in the Manchester Guardian of a woman living in Streatham: when asked her opinion of the Common Market she replied, "I didn't know there was a market on the Common". A very sensible reply I think. In my time I hardly noticed

[1][Field Marshal Sir Archibald Wavell, 1st Earl Wavell (1883–1950), was one of the great Allied commanders of the early phases of World War II. Bion associated Wavell in particular with the capacity, so valuable in a leader, to be able consistently to think under fire. *Ed*.]

Streatham Common when I was taking the dog for a walk. (Big enough for his purposes though!)

* * *

Yeats I met before the First War, and after it I remember his saying, with Aldous Huxley and George Moore, "What a pity they can't *all* be beaten!" Well, now it seems pretty clear that they *all* were. Perhaps we shall recover but that would not be an advantage if it were simply to be able to get back to the status quo.

* * *

The English summer seems, like us, to have come to California. It is cold and dark (or we have become so soft that we do not appreciate June in California).

> 'Thus may a captive in some fortress grim
> From casual speech betwixt his warders learn
> That June on her triumphal progress goes
> Through arched and bannered woodlands; while for him
> She is a legend emptied of concern.
> And idle is the rumour of the rose.'[1]

* * *

I gave a talk to the Research Committee – so called – though I was given the most dire warnings about the ranks of Midian (Gideon?). Yet it turned out all right. Two hundred nearer than the twenty I was given to expect, and as quiet as mice when the cat is around. For which I was truly thankful. I hate boisterous and hostile audiences and don't feel at all inclined to be helpful.

So – we are *in* the Common Market. Heaven's morning breaks and Earth's vain shadows flee (or not as the case may be).

* * *

The discovery that you have a MIND is always a shock because you never know what the strange object is going to turn out to be. Up it bursts; is it a psychosis, insanity – diagnosis please

[1] 'Estrangement' (1920), William Watson [1858–1936].

somebody! – genius, philosopher, poet, musician, composer? Then, while you try to survive *that*, whatever it is, up bursts your BODY shrieking for attention and complaining of neglect.

Your letter caused me – your fault! – to get out my paints and pour a lot of yellow and red over an unoffending piece of good white paper. This masterpiece is called 'An Impression of Sunset'. It makes me angry whenever I catch sight of it. I suppose I shall have to let it dry before I can tear it up; tearing up *wet* paper is *so* unrewarding.

* * *

The Shah of Persia seems to have let off a land mine in the shape of Khomeini. I thought that downy old bird would stick to his cosy nest in Paris but apparently even he has been blown out of Paris into Teheran by a sudden eruption of sincere Islamic belief.

I have been reading Kipling; an old friend and also a great friend to your Bion grandfather's profession – Indian Public Works (irrigation). I find depths in him I had forgotten (or never knew). These I have had brought to my notice by Birkenhead's very good biography. Mrs Bambridge[1] must have been as big a vandal as Lady Churchill was to Sutherland's portrait.[2] Disgraceful!

* * *

[1]Kipling's daughter.

[2]To these two might be added Lady Burton, wife of the explorer Richard Burton who translated *The Arabian Nights* and *The Perfumed Garden*. See *The Devil Drives*, by Fawn M. Brodie (W. W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1967).

1976

Your beano with the patient who is alleged to have been negligently treated reminds me of one of my old chiefs – Bill Williams – who said, "The first thing you do before touching a fracture is be sure your malpractice insurance is in good shape; then have it X-rayed; set it; X-ray it again and damn the expense. Unfortunately you can only do the first thing in my job and the rest is in the lap of the gods. One of the first cases I had – of course it is when you are most vulnerable at the beginning of your career, and then when you are vulnerable because you are senile – was a paranoid girl who wanted to sue me. Luckily the malpractice people in England are very unflappable and unless you are patently guilty of being a nit-wit they stand by you. However, it is nasty while it lasts and heaven knows what a welfare state does for a doctor. Anyway an early inoculation stands you in good stead, unless of course the inoculation becomes inflamed.

* * *

We went out to dinner and had a very enjoyable and peculiar evening. Where, I wonder, outside a Jewish party, would time be taken up reading Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale', two Shakespeare sonnets, two Milton sonnets; discussing the prospect of death; the preoccupation with the same; and the very noisy description of 'How I caught my husband' by the wife of an eminent cultural historian who has just completed (at age 92) the last, umpteenth volume of his history of cultural development? She was then so vulgarly and noisily offensive to Dr B. (who had been telling me about his medical care of and social friendship with Stravinsky) that he and his wife left the party in a rage.

At the end the hostess said how much she had missed the chance of speaking to me, though I was seated on her right hand through dinner! She was quite right of course – the racket was so great!

* * *

The path of true love is punctuated with divorce as well as marriage; the problem is, *when*? Before, after or during? It is a decision which is made by two people, both – oddly and painfully enough – in

isolation. You always regret it, plus or minus: if it's a success, that it wasn't earlier; if it's a failure, ditto. And anyhow that it *might* have been better to do *the other thing* at a better time. As Sir Ronald Adam said to me about war: "No victory is so wonderful and complete, no disaster so disastrous as it looks". And he had reason to know, as he was the Adjutant General of the army. Whether you look at life through a microscope or a 200-inch telescope on Mount Palomar, it's much the same. Not very consoling perhaps, but – such is life.

We had a good trip to Topeka for our Friday, Saturday and half Sunday congress.[1] We both had doubts of the wisdom of it as I supposed there would be about 100 people and I was the last speaker on the programme, by which time I supposed everyone would have disappeared to their respective hutches, homes, warrens or whatever it was from which they originally had emerged. We waited in a hotel lounge specially set apart for us at the airport at Kansas City and eventually about six of us collected and off we went on our 90-odd mile ride to Topeka. Now – this was at Kansas. Kansas City? No. Kansas. Oh I see – this is in Kansas State. M'p'raps; p'raps not. Eventually the bus passed through, in darkness now, Kansas. Kansas what? Kansas, Missouri. Oh, I suppose Kansas City of course is in Kansas State – the capital? No! No! NO! The capital of Kansas State is Topeka. Ah, yes. Of course. Stupid of me. Big town? Oh no – twenty or thirty thousand. Ah – there's the Missouri! Not *the* Missouri? Yes, *the* Missouri. Shades of Shenandoah and echoes in school days of that most enchanting of songs – 'Away, I'm bound to go 'cross the wide Missouri.' I had never believed that one day I would cross the wide Missouri. And no number of bridges and factories could ever obliterate that fascinating, to me, love song.

Next morning I discovered that the congress was international and there were 760 members. Things, I felt, were looking up although I thought that most of them would have disappeared before my last item on Sunday. They hadn't. And as I never read my papers but talk direct to the audience, I think they found it quite a relief. I talked too long – too much to say.[2] I enjoyed myself and the whole outfit stuck

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[1]International Conference on Borderline Personality Disorders. Conference papers published by International Universities Press Inc. (Hartocollis, 1977).

[2]His prepared paper was 'Emotional Turbulence'; his talk, 'On a Quotation from Freud' [Volume X].

it out till I had finished. We both started home weary, but glad to have come.

* * *

I am bound to say I loved my utterly brainless and sensuous spasm of Oxford before reality closed down on me and I found I had no brain available for exam passing. One never really recovers from saying goodbye to the University. Bittersweet it is, alas! Bittersweet, but one cannot grudge the price.

Don't have anything to do with people who misjudge your abilities. Don't *cause* them to under-rate you. But whatever anyone else thinks, don't let them fool you, plus or minus. And your secret knowledge of who you are is the most important opinion of all, and that you do not have to make public. If you meet the right person you do gradually, and secretly, get to know more who he or she is and, at the same time, do find out to your surprise something of who you are. You do not however need to verbalize it – unless of course you are a psychoanalyst, and even then you do not have to do it ALOUD. I love to hear and see murmurations of starlings in England. But murmurations of human beings, NO. Unlike starlings, they are so dull. I remember having a shot at a starling just outside my window at Queen's with a small finger catapult. I aimed – and hit – just below him. He was 'chuckling' as they do; and was so surprised he stopped at once, cocked his head on one side, and looked at where the pellet hit as much as to say, "What *was* that?" Then he went on chuckling and saying, "My – what a glorious day!" I love starlings so much they almost bring tears to my eyes.

* * *

'Soft as old Sorrow, Bright as old Renown' – that sums up England as far as I'm concerned. Or perhaps I ought to say, some tiny part of England like Tom Quad with Great Tom sounding the curfew at Oxford, or my room at Queens late at night reading Manley Hopkins:

> 'Some candle clear burns somewhere I come by.
> I muse at how its being puts . . .'[1]

But read it yourself. I read it one horrible, dark foggy evening, and although I didn't understand it, it hit me so hard I learned it by

[1] 'The Candle Indoors'.

heart and have learned it over and over again. I have never ceased to admire him.

* * *

We used to sing, with much vim and not a glimmer of a sense of humour, 'It is high time to awake, to awake out of sleep! For now is our salvation nearer than when we believ-ed.' Now I see that it was a superb anthem for the last Sunday of term. Life is funny – if only we could see the joke – which we never do. You remember G. K. Chesterton saying how right the printers were when they printed his most solemn passage about the 'cosmic' as 'comic'?

* * *

How difficult life is! Should I call you "darling" or "dear" or, or what? My mother used to call me "darling" till I became an officer with a DSO. Then she dropped it because her darling had disappeared in a sort of bog of GLORY.

* * *

Your story of the little owl reminded me of when I was staying at Burford watching a Lilford owl standing, intently gazing at a small haystack. I threw a pebble into the straw near him to see what he would do. He did not fly away, he did not leap on the pebble. He just turned his head slowly round and stared into my eyes. He looked daggers (perhaps I should say 'claws') at me as if to say, "You must be a bloody fool if you think I am such a bloody fool!" Then when – not before – he had decided "It's not funny!" he flew off. No wonder we think owls are wise.

* * *

Today the sun has come out for the first time since it started to rain three days ago. They say it's the first tropical storm they have had in L.A. since 1934. Well, we wanted rain. "Lord, Lord! We have prayed for rain but this is just fair rideecilous!" as the parson is said to have petitioned the Almighty in his church.

* * *

You must be going through that ghastly post-Varsity stage during which most people discover that they have lost all their chances – marriage, jobs, First Class Honours, and the rest. In another twenty years (30? 40? 50? 60?) you discover that you might have been unlucky and been 'successful'. Not that that is much consolation while you are licking your wounds; the wounds are too sore.

* * *

Many thanks for your Seurat[1] – I don't think I have seen it. I imagine he was trying to create the impression of brilliant sunlight though it does look rather like mist – so does bright sunlight of course; it is not helped by the fact that the artist has to use an opaque medium like oil colours. (As I find if I try to paint here.)

[1] 'Gravelines', in the Courtauld Collection, London.

1977

I keep wanting to buy some ludicrously expensive, new and improved household gadget, but I am at last beginning to be slightly sales-resistant though I still fall for books forgetting that you can't wear them or eat them and they take a long time to read.

Many people mistake the practice of psychoanalysis for an adequate substitute for real life. I don't know what 'real life' is, but I am jolly sure that psychoanalysis is no good unless it resembles it. 'A prelude to – not a substitute for –' I try to tell them. 'A substitute is a substitute is a substitute', as Gertrude Stein might have said.

* * *

I am glad your visit to France was rewarding even as a rest for your mind and a chance for an airing of your bodily capacities. I hope your muscles have recovered and that you are not now experiencing too violent a battering of your mental capacity. The great thing about having such experiences is that in the course of balancing one thing against another you *also* get a clue to *who* you are. And more still, you become YOU. 'I have six honest serving men' says Kipling in *Just So Stories*. A great and good man despite his unfortunate obsession with Stalky and Co. – the British Army which is so much more stupid than he allowed himself to realize. But all institutions are stupid and try to crush the individuals inside them. If not by blame, then praise. 'Treat both those impostors alike' – as Kipling again says.

At present I am suffering a momentary dose of 'success' which I try to do without being caught by surprise when the next bash comes; or having my pleasant interlude eroded by preoccupations with the next unknown horrors!

Mummy is overworking but don't tell her I said so. These Mothers get awfully shirty if fussed over.

1978

It's a rum life when one cannot have a leisurely and pleasing opportunity even of writing to one's daughter who in any case is carried at enormous speed into the category of 'old friend' – if one is lucky. At one moment a baby daughter and at the next, so it seems, a young woman with a life and thoughts and ideas of her own. 'Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume . . .' Horace knew a thing or two[1] . I sometimes feel that if I am lucky I can only boast of knowing one thing and not much of that. Still, psychoanalysis, in so far as I know it, is not bad – there might be worse professions. Sometimes I feel that it is only 'by accident' that I am so well off and indeed it is only thanks to the accidents that I am as well off as I am.

* * *

It is always hard to achieve a success so one is sometimes liable to snatch at the first that offers and regret it, or be choosey and turn it down (and regret that!). So, sometimes it is nice to feel that one appears to have got it *right*. Especially as one never has settled things 'once for all'. It opens up a new and greater crop of problems whenever you settle one. Still – it can be fun.

Envy and rivalry and hate are so prevalent that they seem to be the spiritual nutrition on which we have to live.

* * *

When you muse about, and mourn your multitudinous failings – take courage. You are not the only one. Luckily for me I happened on a very efficient and charming girl (your Mother) or else I too would be mouldering 'sous la terre' of Iver Heath. Or – it is frightening to realize it – in a job in the Veterans Administration which was offered me after the last war. Incidentally I can't help wondering how it doesn't seem to occur to anyone that the reason why we are so poor is that it is very expensive to fight two wars and to be the only nation that was in both of them from start to finish and did not lose either of them.

* * *

[1]Horace, Ode XIV. 'Alas, Postumus, the fleeting years are slipping by.'

I hope soon to be able to send you some material – research into cot deaths here. The findings are I think much the same as those in England – an allergy, possibly connected with the milk on which the baby is fed.

If you care to develop, or keep it under your hat for future use, I send you a hunch of my own. (Hunch= untested, unsupported day-dream of psychoanalyst which may or may not be worth investigating. Not even a theory.)

A sub-sensible (i.e. available to the senses) disturbance of food functioning, e.g. breast, *might*, if allowed to develop to point where it became diagnosible as 'diabetes', exist in a primitive, rudimentary, embryonic or embryo-carrying mother, and disturb the mother's productions, and the products, ultimately, of the infant.

1. Examples of mother's products: babies, faeces, urine, sweat, milk.
2. Necessary pathological biochemical investigations: urine, for sugar – almost certainly done anyhow; sweat, for sugar; faeces, for sugar. This would be difficult to do because necessary to find reagents of adequate degree of sensitivity. When I asked Himsworth, the then head of the Medical Research Council, if a patient he had referred to me had had her sweat tested for sugar when in coma (she was a diabetic), he – though then also the leading expert – was staggered and confessed "no". He also said he knew of no apparatus for testing. Professor Rosenheim was equally or more hostile to investigation – too superior to a 'bloody psychoanalyst' probably.
3. If the mother is excreting, in any form and by any channel – alimentary, genital or even respiratory – precursors of sugar or milk, the infant might then be 'allergic' after birth to the mother's sweat or milk.

Just a plausible (too plausible?) hunch. It may even bear on mysteries like eclampsia, psychoses of pregnancy, etc. Key problems – cromaffin tissue, para sympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems, and subthalamic regions generally.

Don't lose your compassion for the strikers or your realization that a victory for dictatorship by anybody is a disaster even if democracy seems to be little good.

* * *

I am drawing near to a lunch on Saturday next in my honour. That will I think be the last of these flattering but onerous occasions.[1] Though these intentions are well meant (tarantara![2]) they are *not* calculated to cheer yours truly, WRB.

Thank you very much for sending off the books from Blackwells. It is always exciting to have new books although one *knows* that one has no space for them or time to read them. It is an addiction; it looks respectable but is not.

I have been reading the *Mahabharata* and wondering why it is familiar. Then it dawned on me it must be because it was the sort of tale my old Ayah must have told me – on and on and on, incredible, incomprehensible, a survival of Sanskrit stories which must be about the oldest in the world. *Then* I came across a bit which is indistinguishable from a part of Kung Fu – isn't that incredible? – another ancient literature, the Chinese civilization. I am just beginning to think I ought to go to Oxford and get educated. And India; and Peking. In short – again. A bit late, as I should also include Rome and Latin. Eheu fugaces!

---

[1] His eightieth birthday.

[2] *The Pirates of Penzance*, Gilbert and Sullivan.

1979

Do not get misled by gross statements of what 'Ch'i' means – there is no simple translation of it – not even from Chinese to Chinese. Western articulate speech probably comes nearer, as far as I can see it, in Schopenhauer's 'drive' or 'energy', or Alf Arabi's 'existence'.

I, to descend from the famous to the nonentity, make a distinction between 'existence', to be or not to be (Shakespeare as usual says it better than anyone has been able to say it) and 'essence', the whatever-it-is that makes existence worth existing. That is what no one can tell you, and what every philosopher, painter, musician, artist, poet and mere person has to find out for him or her self. I'll write a book about it one day p'raps, p'raps not. That's what your patients, however ill, well, wealthy, poor, stupid, clever, have to find out. They can't be shown, but you may give them a chance to see or find out.

* * *

A wonderful, bright and sunny morning – wind and rain both stopped, just for the day perhaps but a welcome rest – 'Full many a glorious morning have I seen –'[1] as the sonnet has it. Do you read them? They are short and the meaning, as with everything W.S. says, unfolds meaning after meaning through one's life. Indeed that is the wonderful thing about medicine and I wish I had realized it when I had the luck to be studying at UCH. But, as at Oxford, one does not, always being preoccupied with some infernal anxiety about 'qualification' or 'Finals' or how to earn a living or some other worry to fuss about. Including of course, 'she loves me – she loves me not –' and 'Do I love her – do I *not*', like the child's game with plucking petals from a flower (or leaves from a pineapple – the Queen's College version of the sweepstake when I was up).

Talking of Shakespeare, I have recently decided, after a long sojourn in the gloomy realms of ghastly good taste in which Gilbert and Sullivan are really not worthy of serious consideration, that in fact they are packed with great sense as well as being witty and amusing.

---

[1]Sonnet 33.

I continue after the interruption – your phone call! – which was a very pleasant surprise. It makes a wonderful difference that one can have these artificial aids to communication; one thinks the Dark Ages (new style) have their compensations.

* * *

I wish we could all meet, but this is a peculiarity of Old Age Greed!

Envoi

Francesca Bion

One day in April 1951, soon after Wilfred and I had announced our engagement, I was going up in the lift to my office at the Tavistock Institute in the company of John Harvard-Watts, who said, 'I hear you are going to nurture genius'. This was a surprising and somewhat intimidating challenge; it conjured up images of an eccentric; a recluse; an absent-minded intellectual with a disregard for his personal appearance, a lack of interest in food, hollow-cheeked, of fragile health. But none of these seemed to fit this man with whom I wanted to spend the rest of my life. *He* was shy, modest, affectionate, witty and of marked robust health; a lover of good food, wine and the best cigars. So I felt confident in accepting John's remark as friendly flattery.

But he was right. I had not then met the iron man who existed within the benevolent one. His determination not to be moulded into a shape congenial to others, his courage in forging ahead with work he *felt* was on the right track although he could present no evidence to prove his feelings, his refusal to be or do anything untrue to himself – these, combined with a penetrating insight into the human mind and the human condition, produced an extraordinary person. And because the iron never entered his soul he remained highly sensitive and receptive to any thoughts or ideas floating around looking for a mind to lodge in.

His view of himself, however, was so different from that held by those of us who admired and loved him that it was difficult to recognize any relationship. He complained again and again, when we were talking together, of his ignorance and what he called his 'gutlessness'; he totally rejected descriptions of himself as 'outstanding' or 'famous'. He would quote, 'There are no fields of amaranth this

side of the grave. There are no voices that are not soon mute however tuneful. There is no name with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated of which the echo is not faint at last.' 'You're a pessimist' I would say, trying not to weep. 'No', he would reply, 'just a realist.'

It takes courage to be a realist and true courage goes hand in hand with fear. He was afraid – as a small boy separated from his parents, at school in a strange country; as a tank commander in the First World War, going into battle knowing that the chance of survival after the third attack was nil; as a psychoanalyst facing the terrors of the unknown; even as a lecturer addressing an audience without the life-belt of a handful of printed pages. I know that this took great courage. He would often say to me, with a look of alarm, just before 'going on stage' as it were, 'But I've nothing to say', or, 'Whatever am I going to say to them?' He did not in fact know beforehand what he was going to say. What we heard was freshly minted, even new to *him*; there would appear a phrase, a sentence I had not heard him use before – a bright flash of insight, leaving an afterglow in the mind's eye.

Poetry was of central importance to him all his life. He often spoke of the unforgettable impact that certain poets had on him during his school days – Milton, Virgil, Shakespeare, Keats, Shelley – it says much for his school that he was not forced into hating the poets before he had had time to love them.

All beautiful things moved him to tears – whether it was poetry, prose, music, painting, sculpture, or the Norfolk landscape, its sea birds and its skylarks. In a letter written to me a few days after we first met he said, 'It is a marvellous moonlit night with the wind sighing gently in the pine trees. There is a line of Flecker's which goes, "For pines are gossip pines the wide world through". It has always stuck in my mind since I first came across it when I was at Oxford. Arthur Bryant and I used to learn quite a lot of verse when I was up. But I think I learnt most during the first war. My biggest feat was in 1918 when our battalion had no tanks left, and I and a dozen of my men had to fill a gap in the line with our machine guns. Our last night before relief I was with a colonel of the Royal Scots and it became clear as we were talking that a German night attack was starting. As everything that could be done had been done he said, "Let's talk about something decent". So we talked about the Roger de Coverley essays while the Germans shelled to bits our water-logged line of shell holes and earthworks. The colonel got killed a little later and I,

still having nothing to do, learned *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* from a Golden Treasury I had with me.'

It is not surprising then, that he had hoped to compile an anthology of poetry; and since psychoanalysis was fundamental to his thinking, the collection was to be for psychoanalysts. Not, he said, for anyone who is merely *called* a psychoanalyst, not the label of certification, but the 'real thing'. The pieces were to be selected, not for the practice of psychoanalytic virtuosity in giving so-called 'psychoanalytic' interpretations, but because a psychoanalytically expanded capacity would fit the reader to have a new experience, however familiar he might think he was with previous experience of the words.

Unfortunately the anthology will have to join the long list of his projected but unwritten works, but I would like to read to you part of what he wrote as an introduction.

> It is easy in this age of the plague – not of poverty and hunger, but of plenty, surfeit and gluttony – to lose our capacity for awe. It is as well to be reminded by the poet Herman Melville that there are many ways of reading books, but very few of reading them properly – that is, with awe. How much the more is it true of reading people.
>
> Someone asked, 'Why climb mountains?' 'Because they are there' was the reply. I would add that there are some who would prefer to postpone the exercise till their rugosities, heights, depths and declivities have been worn to a uniform flatness. The Grand Canyon will be tamed; Everest, Kanchen-junga neon-lit; the pass of Glencoe deserted by its ghosts; Nanda Devi no longer the home of the Seven Rishis; the Master of Stair a phantom without bones. William Blake, in Gnomic Verses said, 'Great things are done when men and mountains meet; this is not done by jostling in the street'.
>
> I resort to the poets because they seem to me to say something in a way which is beyond my powers and yet to be in a way which I myself would choose if I had the capacity. The unconscious – for want of a better word – seems to me to show the way 'down to descend', its realms have an awe-inspiring quality.

One of Wilfred's two copies of Robert Bridges' *Spirit of Man* shows signs of many years handling and reading; some of the poems are marked with a pencil line in the margin; some of the marks are of double or treble thickness showing increasing degrees of enthusiasm.

On the blank pages he wrote some poems and quotations of his own choice, among them a poem by Flecker, 'To a Poet a Thousand Years Hence'.

At the time of Wilfred's death Julian, discovering the truth of Blake's words, 'meeting mountains', was trekking round Annapurna. He would like to add this poem to those we read at the cremation.

I who am dead a thousand years
And wrote this sweet archaic song
Send you my words for messengers
The way I shall not pass along.

I care not if you bridge the seas
Or ride secure the cruel sky
Or build consummate palaces
Of metal or of masonry.

But have you wine and music still,
And statues and a bright-eyed love,
And foolish thoughts of good or ill,
And prayers to them who sit above?

How shall we conquer? Like a wind
That falls at eve our fancies blow,
And old Maeonides the blind
Said it three thousand years ago.

O friend unseen, unborn, unknown,
Student of our sweet English tongue,
Read out my words at night alone,
I was a poet, I was young.

Since I can never see your face
And never shake you by the hand,
I send my soul through time and space
To greet you. You will understand.

He died as he had lived – with courage. He accepted the end of his life philosophically, adhering to his belief in the advice, 'Do not strive officiously to keep alive.' On 14 November we stood in Happisburgh churchyard on the cliffs high above the North Sea. Here, in his 'beloved Norfolk' of bracing winds, wide skies, bright light, dear to him since boyhood, the ashes were buried; here he was always happy.

He would often quote this poem of George Herbert's on waking to a morning of sunlight – hastening to add that many thought it poor verse, but he found it beautiful.

Virtue

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright!
The bridal of the earth and sky –
The dew shall weep thy fall tonight;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

Our grand-daughter, aged seven, put into words what so many of us felt after Wilfred's death – 'I didn't realize I knew Grandpa so well.' His love, wisdom, affectionate humour, sympathetic concern permeated our lives. I believe we shall continue to feel, sometimes with surprise, that we didn't realize we knew him so well.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME III

1916

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Edited by Chris Mawson

Editorial consultant Francesca Bion

KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume III): 978–1–78220–231–8

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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WAR MEMOIRS
1917–1919

1997

War Memoirs 1917–1919, edited by Francesca Bion, was first published in 1997 by Karnac Books, London.

(Colour reproduction of maps by DL Imaging Ltd, London.)

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Bion's war diary, which he kept with him during combat, covered his years fighting in tanks in France during the First World War. He was just twenty years old when he began writing it. *War Memoirs* constitutes the final part of Bion's autobiography. It comprised three hardbound notebooks written soon after he had been demobilized from the Army and had begun his studies at Queen's College, Oxford. He wrote it for his parents as compensation for having found it impossible to write to them during the war. It has been aptly described by Winship (1999) as a "book about the blood and guts of a youth who cut his teeth in the most devastating of circumstances".

Bion begins it, with the entry on 26 June 1917, by stating,

> In writing this, I cannot be absolutely accurate in some things, as I have lost my diary. In the main it will only be my impressions of the various actions. I do not intend to write much about life outside of action except in so far as it will give an idea of the life we led. My dates of events out of the line cannot be accurate. Actions are, however, accurate as they are very clearly stamped on one's memory!

The actions he describes in the *War Memoirs* are terrifying and detailed. They form the basis for his later understanding, as a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, of the inner torments faced by the patients he treated. In *Band of Brigands: The First Men in Tanks* (2009), Christy Campbell, referring to a segment of Bion's descriptions, wrote: "Bion (who later became a psychoanalyst) looks repeatedly in his account at how sentient human beings continue to operate when everything around them is dissolving into violent chaos" (p. 290). Such is the detail recorded by Bion that they have been found valuable by military historians of the period. Brigadier General Sir Hugh Jamieson Elles led the action of 20 November 1917 in

which Bion was nominated for the Victoria Cross and earned both the British DSO and the French *Légion d'Honneur*. Colonel Mackenzie sent a detailed report – which Bion called 'flowery' – of what he termed "the show":[1]

> Some of the tank crews had miraculous escapes. One tank was pierced in the front by a shell which knocked off the driver's head, flung it on the knees of the officer sitting beside him, killed the two gunners in the right-hand sponson, and then went clean through the back without bursting. Whilst attacking nests of machine-guns near Flesquières, tank Edward II, commanded by Lieutenant Bion, received a direct hit by a German field howitzer, which put it out of action. The tank commander gave the order to abandon ship. The sponson door, on the side away from the enemy, was jammed tight, and to evacuate by the other door meant being exposed to heavy machine-gun fire. Private Richardson, however, did not hesitate. Seizing his Lewis gun, he courageously jumped out of the door, and, flopping to the ground amid a hailstorm of bullets, got his gun into action whilst the remainder of the crew clambered speedily out and found refuge in a communication trench.
>
> Lieutenant Bion then reopened fire with his Lewis gun from this trench, where his little garrison was, not long after, strengthened by the arrival of ten men of the 5th Gordons. One enemy machine gun, in a hidden position, annoyed him so persistently that Bion crawled out of the trench, with a Lewis gun, climbed up to the top of the tank, and, sheltering behind the huge fascine, blazed away until the nuisance had abated. Seeing that there was only a handful of men in the trench, the Germans emerged from the village and attacked the position with about 200 men, but Bion's guns, firing in rapid bursts, soon nipped this attempt in the bud. Unfortunately this encounter exhausted all his ammunition, and if another attack took place his tiny garrison would be overwhelmed. But Lieutenant Bion was a man of resource. He searched round in the trench and found a German machine gun with ammunition. He switched this gun round and kept the Boche at bay until, a few hours later, welcome reinforcements arrived in the shape of a company of Seaforth Highlanders. Whilst discussing the position with Bion, the company commander was shot through the head. Once more Lieutenant Bion stepped into the breach by taking command of the company, and remained in charge until another lieutenant of the Seaforths arrived. [in Wilson, 1929]

---

[1]See also Bion's comments on p. 59, this volume. An abridged account can be found in Liddell Hart (1959), p. 143 fn.

Various authors have attempted to make meaningful connections between the young Bion's extreme experiences in tanks and his later psychoanalytic ideas – for example, those about the explosive and compressive relationships between container and contained – and some of these seem plausible. Souter (2009), for example, writes of what she felt was a hallmark of Bion's psychoanalytic capacity: "The alarming gift – an entanked capacity, as it were – of being able to continue to think while stuck within horror and suffering, or at the very least, to think about not thinking".

For the most part, however, it probably is true that attempts to analyse the text of *War Memoirs* is, as Winship (1999) has suggested, "a defence against the unthinkable horrors that Bion portrays. To give way to the narrative is to face up to the fuller force of the bleakness and deathliness of the war and the frontline" (p. 94).

Winship (1999) has also made the interesting point that in reading *War Memoirs* one has the distinct impression that, "Bion's life-impulse was fuelled by his blatant anti-authoritarianism":

> He berates many of his fellow officers and superiors for their downright abstention of duty in the face of his enemy, cowardly wriggling their way out. However, Bion later admits that he no longer wished to go out of his way to meet a hostile enemy; he comes to see the war as futile and the precious turf as meaningless. Indeed, at one point Bion recounts being chastised by a senior officer who all but accuses Bion of shirking. Bion rears up, and the commanding officer, rather sensibly, lets it pass. Shortly afterwards, Bion was allowed to go back home. One has the impression that, even at 22 years old, Bion was not a man to take on in an argument. [p. 95]

The introductions and commentary to *War Memoirs* by Francesca Bion, and the 'Aftermath' section written by Bion's eldest daughter, Parthenope Bion Talamo, are valuable parts of the editorial apparatus and are retained in this volume from the original publication. The latter inclusion is, I think, crucial. In it, Parthenope reveals a clear, penetrating insight into her father. Beginning from the question Bion poses in his *War Memoirs*, "Had everyone gone mad?" – she explores the role of mental regression:

> This vision of the mind as a palimpsest with a continual potentiality for almost instantaneous regression can be seen to tie up to the theory of beta-elements, a continuous flow of unprocessed pre-mental sensory data, which then have to be subjected to alpha-function

in order to be used for thinking at all, in the sense that these two theories deal with the rock bottom of mental and pre-mental life. I also feel that it is no mere coincidence that although the diaries were dedicated to his parents, it is his mother alone who is invoked every now and again as reader, as though Bion felt that she was a fundamental participant in an internal dialogue. It is perhaps not too fanciful to suppose that the fact that he had not 'written letters' during the war had not only been part of a desire to spare his mother pain, but was also an unconscious attempt to preserve her in his own mind as a container as undamaged as possible by hideous news, and hence as a part of the personality capable of alpha-function.

War Memoirs

1917–1919

I wish to express my gratitude to Cesare Sacerdoti for making possible the publication of this book of war memoirs to mark the centenary of Wilfred Bion's birth. It is not only especially apt at this time but is also a valuable addition to the already numerous and wide-ranging Bion writings.

Francesca Bion
1997

DIARY

France,
June 26, 1917, to January 10, 1919

This is Bion's factual record of his war service in France in the Royal Tank Regiment between June 1917 and January 1919, written soon after he went up to The Queen's College, Oxford, after demobilization. Hand-written and contained in three hardbound notebooks, it was offered to his parents as compensation for having found it impossible to write letters to them during the war (see 'Commentary', p. 199). It has none of the nightmare quality he so vividly depicted in The Long Week-End; he would have been unable to express his very recent painful experiences, especially to his parents. But it is evident that he had them in mind throughout: detailed descriptions of tanks and equipment, explanations of battle strategy, photographs and diagrams were included for their benefit – and 'bloody' became 'b___y' in deference to their disapproval of swearing, a by no means unusual attitude at that time; Shaw's 'Pygmalion' had been first performed only five years earlier, shocking audiences with Eliza's 'not bloody likely'.

He writes in the immature style of a public-school boy of that period, using 'awful', 'terrific', 'beastly', 'absolutely', 'frightfully' and a liberal peppering of 'verys'. But one must remember that it was his first piece of descriptive writing: he had entered the army at the age of eighteen soon after leaving school; he was catapulted, like millions of others, from schoolboy to combatant soldier in a few months. The horror of that war inflicted on such young men did not contribute to their maturity; it destroyed their youth and made them 'old' before their time. Bion's remarkable physical survival against heavy odds concealed the emotional injury which left scars for many years to come. (It was clear that that war continued to occupy a prominent position in his mind when, during the first occasion we dined together, he spoke movingly of it as if compelled to communicate haunting memories.) The nightmares to which he refers (p. 98) still visited him occasionally throughout his life. He grew old and remembered.[1]

Francesca Bion

[1]Laurence Binyon, 'For the Fallen'.

In place of letters I should have written!

—from Hilfred.

In writing this I cannot be absolutely accurate in some things as I have lost my diary. In the main it will only be my impressions of the various actions. I do not intend to write much about life outside of action except in so far as it will give an idea of the life we led. My dates of events out of the line cannot be accurate. Actions are however accurate as they are very clearly stamped on my memory! I don't intend to write much about the general scheme of action except in so far as it touched on our particular affair. For one thing you can get that in nearly any report. For another the general scheme touched me very little & in the action itself everything is such terrific confusion that you can only tell what is happening in your own immediate neighbourhood. I shall try to give you our feelings at the time I am writing of as, although now we see how unfounded some of our fears were, yet at the time we could not tell & it was first the uncertainty that made things difficult to judge & unpleasant to think about.

1917

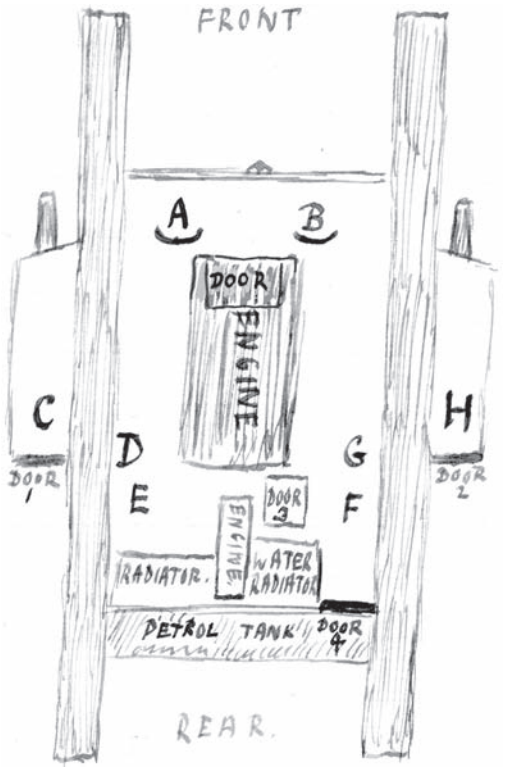
In writing this, I cannot be absolutely accurate in some things, as I have lost my diary. In the main it will only be my impressions of the various actions. I do not intend to write much about life outside of action except in so far as it will give an idea of the life we led. My dates of events out of the line cannot be accurate. Actions are, however, accurate as they are very clearly stamped on one's memory! I don't intend to write much about the general scheme of action except in so far as it touched on our particular affair. For one thing, you can get that in nearly any report. For another, the general scheme touched one very little, and in the action itself everything is such terrific confusion that you can only tell what is happening in your own immediate neighbourhood. I shall try to give you our feelings at the time I am writing of. Although now one sees how unfounded some of our fears were, yet at the time we could not tell, and it was just the uncertainty that made things difficult to judge and unpleasant to think about.

Our battalion in England was known as 'E' Battalion. As a result, all names began with 'E'. A short time after we got out, the letters were abolished, and we were known as the 5th Tank Battalion.

We had a good deal of training, and I had a very good crew indeed. The crew consisted of the tank commander, a first driver, and, since my tank was a male tank, two 6-pounder gunners, two loaders, and two gearsmen. The gearsmen were also second and third drivers. They were supposed to be able to drive in emergency. Their actual job was to help to steer the tank. The drive of the tank was connected to each track through what were called secondary gears. Thus if you wished to turn to the left, the left gearsman or third driver put his gears in neutral. The officer (who helps to drive) then puts the brake on the left track, and the right track then drives the tank round. When

you've turned enough, you signal to the left gearsman, who puts the track into gear again. That, and looking after the engine and seeing that nothing is going wrong, is the gearsman's job. You can see the positions of the crew and the tank equipment generally from the diagram (Figure 1). It is of course a very rough one.

I was in No. 8 Section of 14 Company (afterwards B Company). My first driver was L/Cpl A. E. Allen – a very good man but slightly built and not very strong. My second in command was Sergt. B. O'Toole, an Irishman who was a very good man indeed. He was left gearsman and third driver. He was an orphan and a rather lonely fellow. He was absolutely straight and conscientious and an excellent disciplinarian. He was very popular with the men when they got to know him. I could always rely absolutely that he would do his job. If he had a complaint, he always let me have it. He was an extraordinarily moody fellow in some ways and was not at all popular with the officers at first, as he was very brusque in his manner and his outspokenness was misunderstood. But it did not take people long to realize his absolute worth. He was also Section Sergeant. My second driver and right gearsman was Gunner W. Richardson. He was an old man who had been a frightful invalid before joining, but the army made all the difference to him. On parade he was very nervous and always in trouble for making mistakes. He looked rather like Bairnsfather's 'Old Bill' [Bruce Bairnsfather's trademark character, in comic drawing sent from France during the war] and was indeed called 'Bill', as his name was William! He was a very kind-hearted fellow. Later, in France, when I knew him better, he showed me photos of his 'missus' and the kids. He explained he was once a pawnbroker's assistant and went into lurid details of the trade! He said he'd never go back to the old life after the open air of the army. My left gunner was Gnr. Allen. He was a Portsmouth chap and an absolute boy. He was absolutely street-bred really and rather a grouser. He had very little self-respect, and he always seemed rather a weak spot. With him was Gnr. Hayler. He was a small farmer in civilian life and the reverse of Allen. He was very independent in spirit but always did his work conscientiously and well. At first he used to talk a lot about 'bad officers' and so on, and I was more than doubtful of him and wondered how he would turn out. My right gunner was P. M. V. Colombe. He was a very cheerful and good fellow. He had gone to quite a good school; he was a clever man at his work, and one could always rely on him. He formed



Positions of crew:
A *Officer*
B *Driver*
C *Left gunner*
D *Left Loader*
E *Left gearsman*
F *Right gearsman*
G *Right loader*
H *Right gunner*

Door 1. Left door in sponson
Door 2. Right door in sponson
Door 3. Rear door in roof
Door 4. Rear door in side

The petrol tank is OUTSIDE *the tank and heavily armoured*

Figure 1
Male tank.

a sort of common-sense element in the crew. With him was L/Cpl Forman. He was a fellow whom I disliked. He did not do his work really well and always had a terrific opinion of himself. He did an enormous amount of talking. He was, however, absolutely trustworthy.

The other officers in the section were 2nd Lieuts. Despard, Broome and Owen. Broome was a foolish and rather hearty kid. Owen was a good fellow, and so was Despard. Despard was a cheery Irishman – absolutely outspoken and very popular with officers and men. The section commander was Capt. Bagshaw, a very easy-going and hopelessly slack fellow who had been with the original tanks. He was good-hearted but weak-minded and incompetent and got in the wrong set. Cohen was in another section when we left, and Quainton

was in No. 7 Section with him. Sergt. Reid, a Scotch fellow, was the second sergeant in No. 8 Section and in Despard's crew. He was a very good fellow indeed, and although he had a bullet in his lung got passed fit for general service.

The Company Commander was Major de Freine. He was very slack and incompetent, but good-hearted. On the whole we didn't fancy our chances as a section as our Company Commander and section commander were notorious throughout the battalion as hopelessly slack.

The Battalion Commander was Lieut. Col. Burnett. He was thought a great deal of in England but became very unpopular in France and lost his command after Cambrai.

The battalion as a whole had a very good name indeed and had a fine spirit, but the officers were, I thought, patchy. There were good ones there, and more came out to the front when we got to France. The others were largely men who had seen a good deal of fighting and had gone into Tanks to avoid it. Later, when the Tanks got into action, their low morale etc. let them down, and they were gradually weeded out – particularly after Cambrai. The men were a very fine lot indeed. We got a lot of training, and a good deal was expected of us from the Staff at Bovington Camp. My crew practically held the record for efficiency in their courses and had done two battle practices in which they came out very well. The course consisted of driving over a field about three-quarters of a mile long, where there were various targets. Each gunner fired ten rounds. In the last and final test, in France, over a rather harder course, my crew got the Tank Corps record of 100% hits.

On June 25th the battalion marched out of camp in full battle order at 9 a.m. and entrained for Southampton at Wool. The whole camp – about 5,000 men – turned out and cheered us off. The band played us out. The Brigadier saw us off at the station and shook all the officers by the hand. As the train steamed out, the band played 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'Home Sweet Home'. We reached Southampton at about 2 p.m. and embarked at about 5 p.m. on the *Australind*. We steamed out an hour later, and it was getting dark as we lost sight of land. We had to lie down where we could below decks. Most people were pretty miserable, and there was not much talking. We had some bully beef and biscuits and then got to sleep as best we could.

We woke at about 2 a.m. and found we were anchored outside Le Havre. It looked a dirty, miserable place as we ourselves were not too happy! However, when the daylight came and at last we got into the dock, we felt better. We disembarked at about 3 p.m. and a little later marched up to the rest camp. Here we got quite good meals again and went off to sleep expecting to shift on up the 'line' shortly. We, however, stayed at Le Havre a week and had a very good time. We had bathing parades every morning. Here our sergeant-major of the company got into trouble and was returned. We were thoroughly glad to see him go, as he was a rotter. The next one we got was better, but he wasn't much use.

At last we got orders, and one afternoon we marched to the town and on to the station. Here our train was waiting. It consisted of red cattle trucks and very red third-class carriages for the officers. We realized later that cattle trucks were better as you can lie down and get to sleep in them, but can't do that in ordinary compartments. We moved out at dusk and passed through Harfleur just before nightfall. We didn't know where we were going except that we were going up towards the 'line'. We tried to get to sleep as well as possible, but in those days we didn't know the value of getting to sleep when and where you can, so some of us didn't bother very much. Fortunately on this occasion it didn't matter very much.

At about 2 a.m. we reached Abbeville and here had hot tea, which was made in large cisterns on the platform for passing troop trains. At about midday we reached our destination, which, we found, was a small French village called Anvin. This was quite near St. Pol, the great railway junction, and about thirty miles behind the 'line'. It was a very pretty place, and we were very comfortable in huts. There were an enormous number of wildflowers in the fields, and it was very pretty. As evening came on and it got quieter, we heard the guns for the first time. They sounded just like very heavy thunder in the distance. We often heard them afterwards even in full day. When the artillery opened up at all, it sounded just like the continuous but rather muffled roar of heavy transport over cobbles. On these occasions the windows used to shake and shudder with the concussion.

We did a good deal of drill and so on at Anvin and also went to Merlimont Plage, the Tank gunnery school, for battle practice courses. We had a very pleasant time there. We left the battalion in groups

of about four crews and stayed at Merlimont a week. The parades were very short, and it was by the sea. When we came back from Merlimont, we drew tanks. For this we went to Central Workshops at Erin. You were given a tank, which you looked over and ran a little to see it was all right. You then drew all its equipment – telescopes for the guns, periscopes, tarpaulins, tank compass and a thousand other things. You then loaded up your tank and drove off.

As soon as the whole battalion had got tanks, we prepared to go forward. We drove our tanks to Erin from our park and there entrained them. Entraining is very heavy and tiresome work and takes an enormous time until a battalion gets expert at it. You first have to push in the tank sponsons (gun turrets), and this is heavy work if your tank is a male (with 6-pdr guns). If it is a female, you have far smaller turrets (for machine-guns only), and they are hinged and just close back into the tank, but both kinds are liable to stick. At first we used to batter them in, but later we used to get another tank to shove its nose against the turret and drive it in that way. After your sponsons are in, you drive on to the train by an end-on ramp, as per the diagram (Figure 2). The train is specially constructed, and the trucks are 8′1″ broad. As the tank is 8′½″ broad, we had to steer carefully. You can, as a matter of fact, overhang quite a lot, but you must finish up with your tank flush. You will see in a later picture how they should be. Later the battalion got pretty expert, and from the time we were all ready to go on (sponsons in etc.) to the time we were all on and chocked up was a little under two minutes.

We set off at dusk and arrived at our destination – Beaumetz – at about l a.m. This was about ten miles from the line, and we arrived just as a raid was going on. The whole place shook from the heavier concussions, and the roar was terrific to our inexperienced ears. Very lights [flares] and star shells, together with the gun flashes, helped to light up the horizon. The company (we came in a separate train from the two other companies) detrained as fast as we could. Thanks to the absolute lack of arrangements by either battalion or company commander, we were very tired. No orders had been sent by the O.C. Company who had gone on ahead, and so we prepared there and then to drive five miles to our camp. This was a frightful strain on all as we had had little experience of tanks and none of night driving. Everyone was tired. However, we got to Wailly, our camp, at about six. We were absolutely tired out.

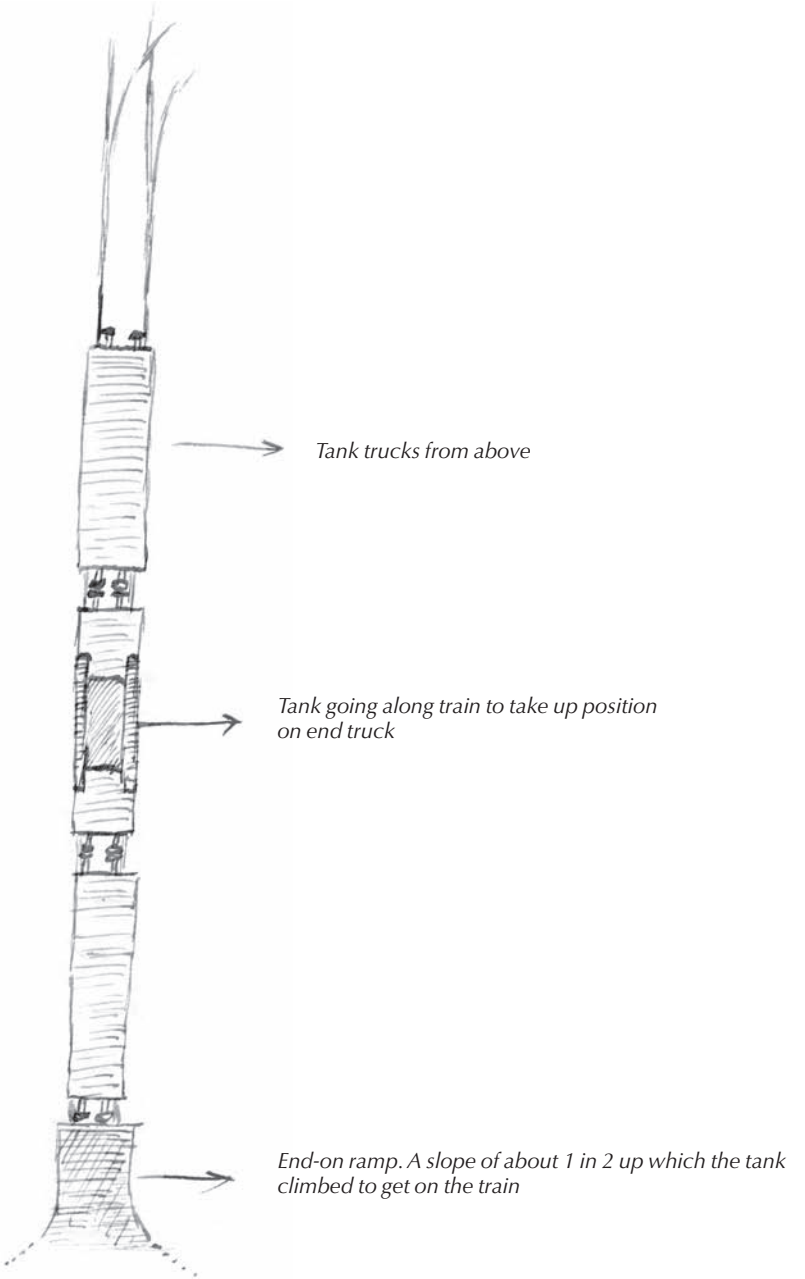


Figure 2
Entraining tanks.

Wailly was at this time a tank corps driving school. It was an old British front-line village, which the enemy had retired from in the early part of the year. We thus had actual old trenches to practise on. The only thing was that, as it had been a peaceful part of the line, there were few shell-holes.

Our section had billets in an old ruined house. We were very well off and quite appreciated it. We were about four miles south of Arras.

We stayed at Wailly, driving our tanks and so on, for about a fortnight. The whole time was spent in teaching our drivers how to drive and tinkering up the engine so as to get the best possible from it.

It would be as well here if I described the tank. At this time we had the most modern tank there was – the Mark IV. Mother saw one when she was at Wool. There were two types. The male had 6-pdr guns and four Lewis guns (machine-guns). The female had six Lewis guns only. The crew was the same number in each. The tank weighed between 55 and 40 tons when ready for action. Its fastest was about 4½ m.p.h., and at night, owing to difficulty of driving, it did about 19 yards a minute. Its slowest would be anything – a barely perceptible movement. The armour plate was 3/8″ thick. The male tank took 200 rounds of 6-pdr ammunition into action and a large quantity of .303. The female took in .303 only and, later, some armour piercer. The engine ran down the centre of the tank. It was a 105-h.p. Daimler sleeve-valve engine. There was just room to squeeze past the engine and the side of the tank in the passage. You could not stand upright. You looked through flaps in the front of the tank for driving. You can see these in the picture (Figure 3). When in action, these were shut down, and you looked through small flaps in those flaps until you came under fire. Then you shut down even these and put your forehead against a leather pad on the side of the tank and looked through three small pin-pricks to each eye. When you did that, you got a small complete vision. There was a Lewis gun mounting between the front two flaps for the officer and driver to fire from. There was also a mounting in each 6-pdr sponson, but this was not much good as you couldn't fire 6-pdr and Lewis together. Then there was one in the rear.

The female simply mounted the same but had two Lewis guns to each sponson instead of a 6-pdr. The picture (Figure 4) shows a female tank with Lewis guns mounted. The tracing paper shows important points [see diagram]. As the tank got run in, the tracks stretched and got loose. These had to be tightened up by the track screws (in the

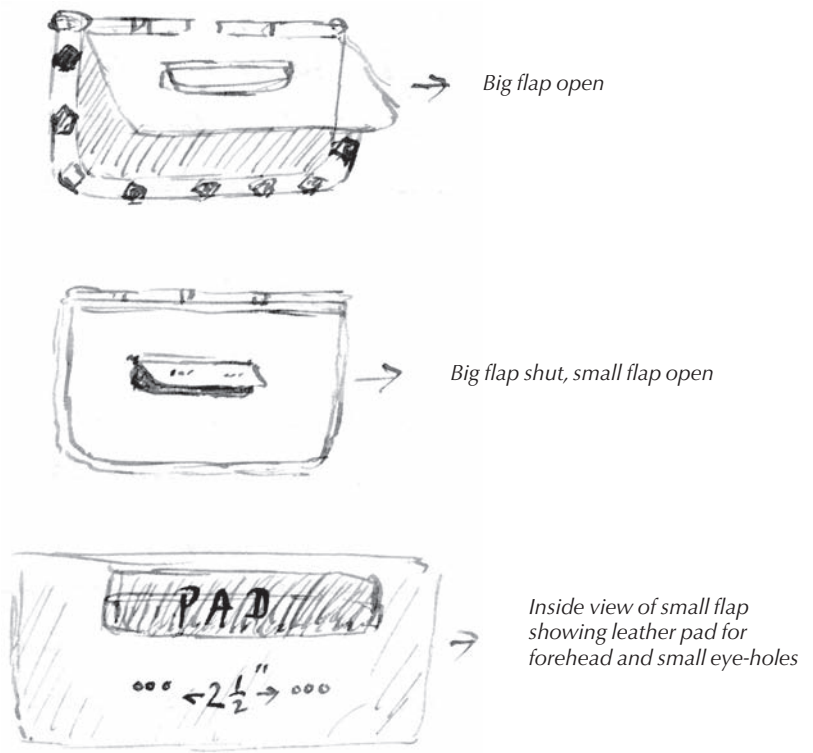


Figure 3
Tank flaps.

photograph). If the tank got stuck, you 'unditched' it by fixing the large oak unditching beam to both tracks. The tracks slipping round then carried the beam under the tank until it gripped and forced the tank forward – like a gigantic scoop. The gear all told weighed nearly one ton. You can imagine the terrific force it had dragging under the tank. You would think the tank would come out of anything.

The rear part of the inside of the tank was filled with the radiator. There was a large fan cooling this and sending the hot air out at the back. When the tank was fully closed for action, it got very hot inside, and the petrol fumes were very bad at times. In this respect, however, it was nothing like as bad as later tanks. On a still night you could hear tanks about 1,000 yards away. The later tanks were noisier by a long way.

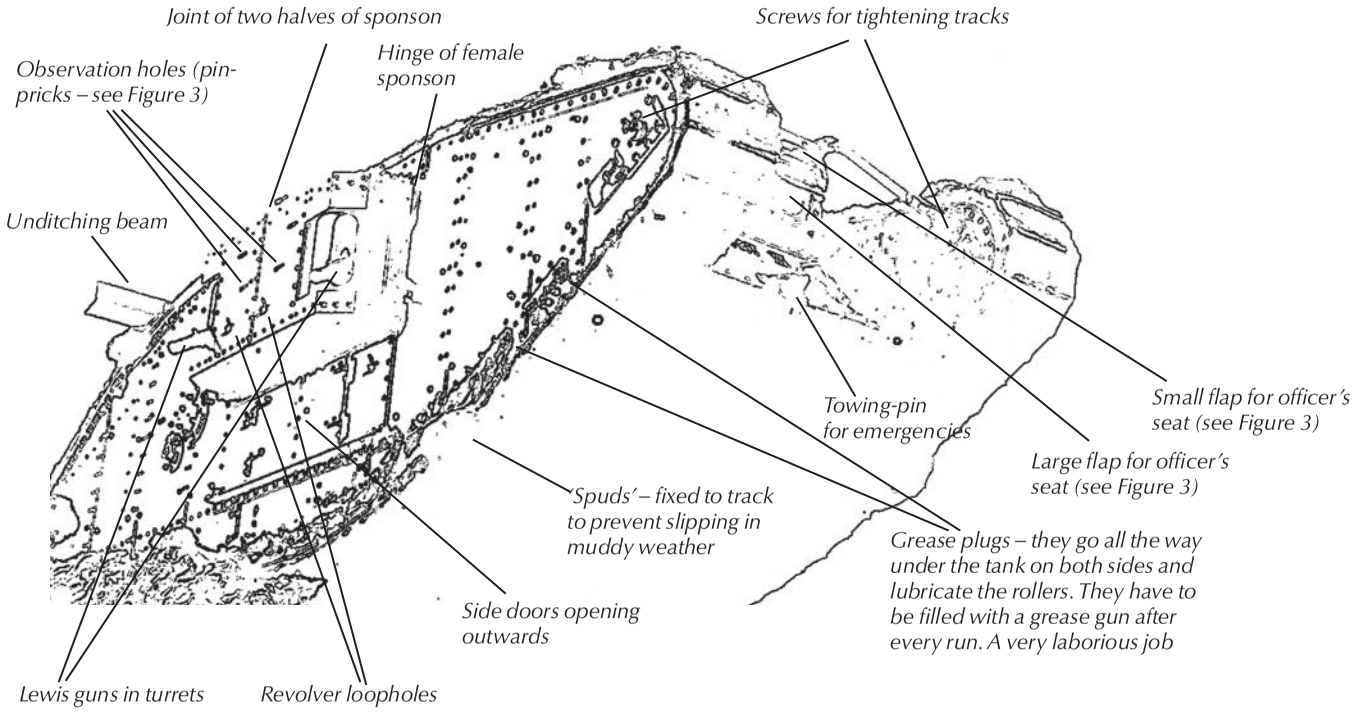


Figure 4

Female MK IV tank (crossing a trench). The tank is ready for action and is crossing a trench with Lewis guns ready for firing down it at enemy.

One very great disadvantage of this tank was that whenever you wished to turn, you had to stop the tank and then turn – I described the secondary gear system earlier. This made you a sitting target, and sometimes, when the gear took a long time to get in, it was very dangerous indeed. Well, I think that is all I need explain about the tanks at present.

At last rumours began to grow about a big battle up north, and we were told we should be going up. We had one very big advantage by our long pause before going up the 'line'. We had got to know our men far better, and they had got to know us more. Also, the grousing at small discomforts was disappearing as they saw more of what they were coming towards. The stay at Wailly had shown them artillery in the distance, and they realized they could be worse off than they were. Then again, as each crew had a tank of their own, they had learnt far more than in England, and they were working together as a crew.

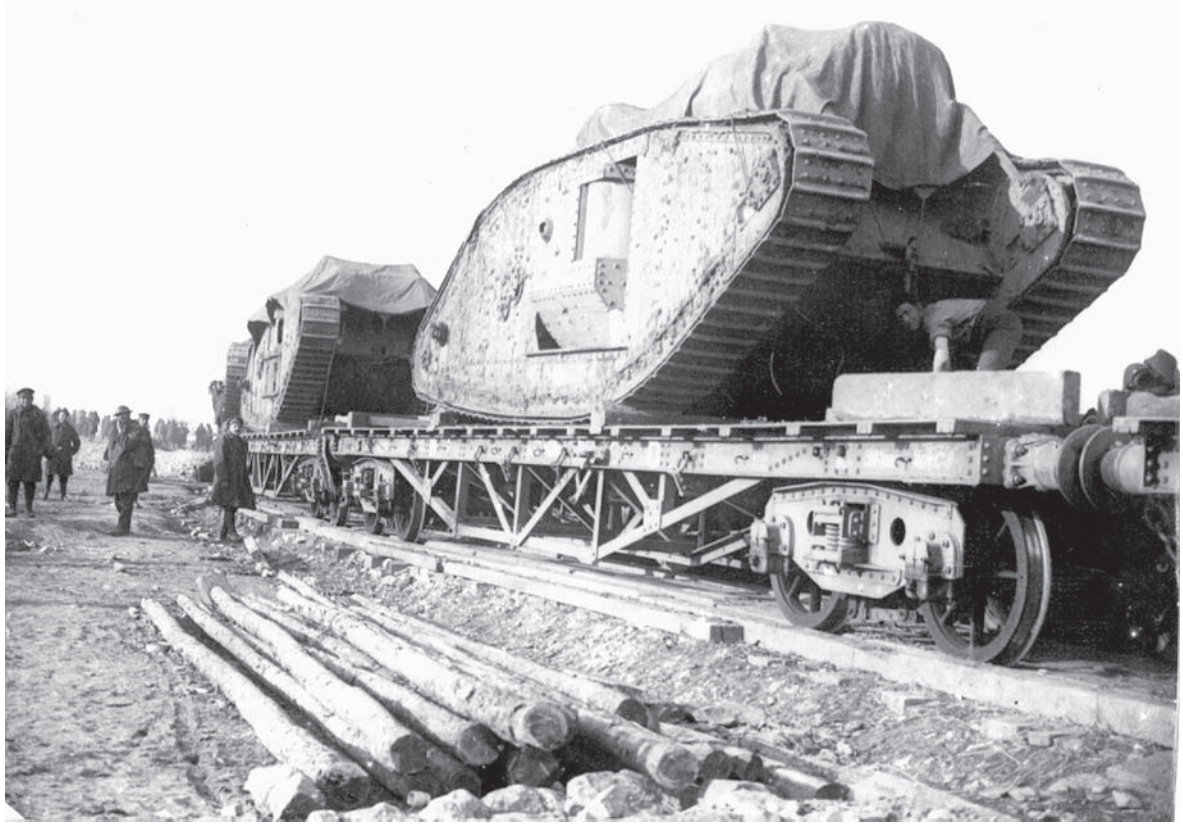
Two companies (A and C) moved off before us, and then on July 30th we entrained. We knew we were going north but did not know where. The picture (Figure 5) gives a good idea of entraining. The tanks have been put aboard and covered up. The leading tank in the picture is a male. It would be about 5 p.m. The men are wandering about in greatcoats, and some are trying to get a wash – there is one fellow under the nose of the front tank. They are all pretty tired and very quiet as they know they are going up the line and are far from cheery. They have a tin of bully and two biscuits issued them, and that does for the day's rations. Tea is made just before the train goes. They have just had theirs. Before long everyone will get up and lie under the tanks. You can make yourself fairly snug with the help of a tarpaulin. There are no trucks at all owing to shortage. Everyone simply goes with their own tank. We thought this a great hardship at first! You will see the tank does not rest on the truck itself but is 'chocked up'. You drive it first well on the front beam or 'chock' and then reverse it onto the rear 'chock', which is slipped in behind, and so suspend the tank.

We moved off at about 6 p.m. and travelled all night. The train, of course, went at a snail's pace. The next day we pulled up just outside Hazebrouck. We were told that we were going up to Ypres and that we should take no part in the first day of the battle. The battle had begun that morning (July 31st). We were to detrain that night at a railhead that was frequently shelled. So we were to get our tanks off

as soon as possible, and if shelling started while we detrained, the train would pull out again. Those tanks already off were to make off as soon as possible away from the ramp. This did not make us too cheerful. We then went on, and as we went through Hazebrouck, which was then fourteen miles behind the 'line', we had our first experience of shell-fire as the enemy were trying to hit the station with a heavy long-range naval gun. We passed through all right as he was shooting badly. Night now began to fall as we approached the 'line', and progress was slower. We kept on stopping, and we could hear the guns thundering away. It was, of course, terrific fire. By this time it had begun to rain – the rain that was to wreck the whole Third battle of Ypres and Passchendaele, although we did not know it then. The horizon was simply lit up with gun flashes and flares of all colours. As we went on, we passed a Casualty Clearing Station – a sort of advanced hospital – and we smelt quite distinctly the anaesthetic.

It was a very exciting business to one who didn't know what war was. The older hands were, however, very quiet and tried to get to sleep. At last we reached our ramp – about four miles from the front line. It was not being shelled, and we got all our tanks off as fast as possible. It was raining quite hard by this time, and thanks to that we got no bombing. We drove our tanks into a wood quite near called Oosthoek. Here we had to camouflage up. This consists of suspending a net, which has rags painted brown and green tied on it representing leaves, right over the tank. It completely hides the tank from aerial observation and in a blank field looks just like an innocent shrub in an aerial photograph. But you must be careful that no part touches the tank, as that would form a hard line and give the show away (Figure 6). The job was a very difficult one for us who were inexperienced. It was absolutely pelting rain, and the men were wet through and half asleep. Twigs and roots got in our way the whole time. At last we got the job done. It was now about 3 a.m. and pitch-dark. Of course we could show no lights.

We were then told we were to leave our tanks here with one man on each for a guard while the rest were to go to a camp about five miles by lorry. We went off at last and got into our camp. Again we were let down by the inefficiency and slackness of our senior officers. No one was there to meet us or tell us anything, although the O.C. Company had gone on two days before with an advance party. At last we found our camp. The tents were pitched in a wood – so as to be



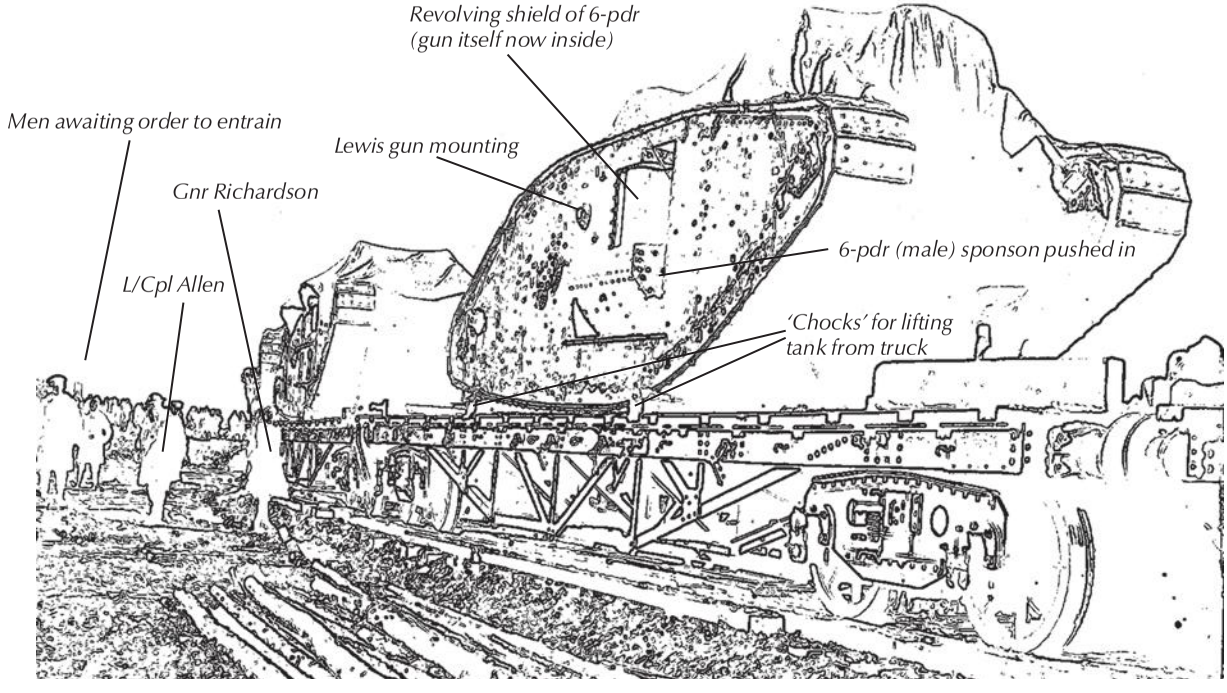


Figure 5

Battalion entraining. Note that the tank just fits on the train.

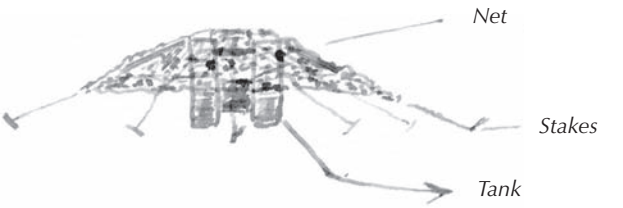


Figure 6
Camouflaged tank in a field.

safe from aerial observation. No brushwood had been cleared away, so that stumps and thickets were sticking up in the tent. The mud, even inside, was almost ankle-deep. There was no tea or anything for us. There was nothing for us to do but spread groundsheets in the mud and get to sleep. It was about 5 a.m. now. We got up about 12 midday and had a meal of some sort. It was still raining hard, but we tried to get the camp into some sort of shape. The result of the whole business was to confirm us in our ideas of the incompetence of our senior officers. The men, of course, thought that the officers cared about nothing so long as they were all right, and looked forward to action less than ever. As Tank commanders, we tried to do our best. But the selfishness of the senior officers was too appalling for words.

The rain continued practically without stopping for about three weeks. All fighting was stopped except for tentative attacks and the repelling of enemy counter-attacks.

In the meantime we continued to go down to our tanks and make them ready for action. We loaded on our ammunition and 'swung' our tanks – just as you 'swing' a ship for putting the compass right and allowing for variations. We spent our time tinkering them about. It was a bit of a nuisance marching from our camp at La Lovie to Oosthoek each day, but otherwise it was all right. The more we saw of the poor blighters coming down from the firing line for rests and so on, the gladder we felt that we were not in it, and the less we groused about our own particular little troubles.

At last we got a spell of fine weather. Rumours started that the battalion was going into action. Finally, about the 20th September, A and C Companies went into action. The ground was hopeless, and they all got stuck at once. Fortunately casualties were very few, but they lost nearly all their tanks. We were naturally keen to go in now that they had been in and wanted to show them we could do better. We

got our order on the 23rd and were told we would be in shortly in an attack on Zonnebeke. The attack was to be on a six-mile front – quite a big affair really – to capture the ridge in front as a preliminary for attacking Passchendaele. Our company was going in alone with the 3rd (regular) Division and the 8th Brigade.

The company was now at Oosthoek, as we had moved our camp there. That afternoon (23rd) we drove our tanks to Reigersburg Château and got there without mishap.

In the morning Cohen and I went up to reconnoitre our route to the front line. We had to go to Reigersburg Château (on the outskirts of Ypres) and then across the canal to English Farm and from there to Spree Farm, which was in the front line and was about 100 yards from the starting-point of our attack.

The reconnaissance was fairly interesting for me, although I was wondering how I should turn out. The country up to the canal was simply a mass of mud roads, paths, transport roads etc., and the nearer we got to the canal, the thicker got the guns. All over the place there were 12″ howitzers, 9.2″ and so on, firing more or less erratically as it was a quiet day. We got to the canal and there entered on complete desolation. The pictures (Figures 7 and 8) are typical of the whole countryside. Light railways pushed up as far as possible. They took up shells and brought back wounded. There were no trees with a leaf to be seen – although the front line was nearly four miles away now. Old houses were simply mounds of bricks. Here and there guns were firing. The stench was terrible in places, and every now and then you came across dead horses and mules. Some had been scattered with chloride of lime, and the stink of chloride of lime will always bring the whole business back again.

We reached English Farm at last. There was nothing to see but some hedge. We noted our route there carefully, as when we came next it would be pitch-dark, and a mistake would mean that the whole lot would go to the wrong place, and that would mean awful confusion.

From English Farm we pushed on again. We were now where the front line had been on July 31st – the commencement of the battle. The ground was absolutely torn up, and roads were blown to pieces. No signs of trenches remained at all. The shell-holes were filled with stinking rain water. We followed a road (so-called) known as Admiral's road, that led into Wieltje. This had been a village but could only

be told owing to the peculiar-shape entry, onto the Wieltje–St. Jean road, of the Admiral's road and No. 5 Infantry Track. The road was constantly shelled by the enemy, and men were employed the whole time repairing it. Every now and then they had to lie down as the enemy started shelling.

We pushed on down this road very fast. We were within a mile of the 'line' now. Everywhere the desolation was complete. You would see small parties of men hurrying over duckboard paths – no one loitered but tried to get out of the danger area as fast as possible. We were now going down the Wieltje–St. Jean road, which led to the Steenbeck. The road was formed out of facines [*sic*].[1] Facines were bundles of brushwood laid across the mud. This formed a foundation for traffic etc.

We reached the Steenbeck at last. This stream, which figured so largely in the battles, was simply a dirty little dribble through shell-holes. It shifted about 40 yards a day, according to the heaviness of the shelling – if the ground got very badly churned up at one part, this little stream of putrid water used to trickle down into this new channel. It was very impressive to think that this thing had done so much to hold up the attacks. Of course, it was the absolute morass formed by the original Steenbeck valley that was the great obstacle. At this point many tanks were lying about. They had been knocked out in the first attack and lay there as they were. They were a terrible sight. There would be one or more holes where shells had entered and the blackened ruin of the tank itself. No one would go near as the enemy still shelled them at the slightest provocation. In any case, they were too horrible to look at. We now reached Spree Farm. This was in the front line. It was on the enemy side of the Steenbeck and was approached by this rising road. So we were out of sight of the enemy, who were on the other side of the rise. The situation of the farm is important as it played a very serious part later, when we came to commence the battle. There was, of course, nothing left of the farm. The road was sunken, with walls of about six feet high on either side formed of slippery chalk. At the point of the farm itself there stood gaunt, shell-stricken trees pointed into the sky – a very good landmark. The ground on either side of the road was impassable for tanks. If you left it, your tank would inevitably be stuck

[1][Bion misspelled *fascine* as 'facine' consistently, including in his handwritten labels for Figures 13 and 14. *Ed.*]

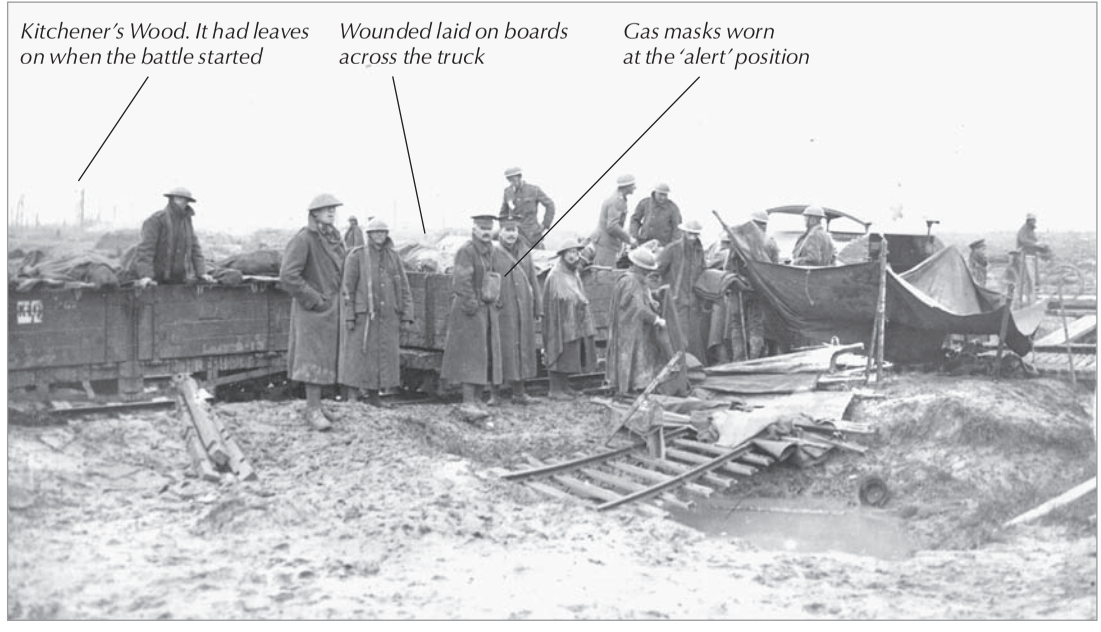


Figure 7

A light railway at Ypres. It brings up shells and takes back wounded. They are put in the hammock and then laid on the train. Note the isolation typical of whole Flanders battle. Note that although it is only about September 20th, men are all wearing heavy coats and that the shell-hole in the foreground is half full of water. All have got their helmets handy or are wearing them, as this is within a mile of the front line and light railways were frequently shelled.

in the deep mud and waterlogged shell-holes. The road itself was being specially constructed for us and was at this part only nine feet broad – just wide enough for a tank. It resembled nothing so much as a sort of springboard over a bath – the staff told you to go to the end of it and then get to your objective as best you could. The Boche, of course, watched the building of the road with great interest. Beyond occasionally shelling a too-daring working party, however, he held his hand – and to some effect as we learnt to our cost. At Spree Farm we were to turn to the right, climb the side of the road and start the attack diagonally across the front (see plan, Figure 9).

When we had examined the ground, we left for home – very relieved, as each step took us away from the dangerous area. We got back later in the afternoon, pretty exhausted. The tanks had been taken to the Reigersburg Château, and a guard had been left on them. The next day we did little. We studied our maps and plans and went over to the infantry we were to work with and discussed things with them. That night (24th–25th) we went to Reigersburg and drove our tanks to English Farm. Here we had to camouflage very carefully indeed, as there were bits of scrubby hedge. We again left a guard of men who were not going into action and returned to camp at Oosthoek again. On the 25th we slept the whole morning. In the afternoon our pigeons arrived. These were to be carried in the tank. Then, when a message was to be sent, you attached the chit to the pigeon's leg in a small container and let it go. They were the surest and best communication there was. They could take a message back from a battle very fast. It was generally reckoned that, if all went well, the bird would deliver a message at its loft, and it would get sent on to H.Q. five miles behind the line in less than two minutes from the time the bird was released.

Figure 8

Ypres battlefield; Dickebush Lake in the distance. This again is typical of the district. The wood is again shattered although far behind the line. It is a very good photo of a shell-burst. Note the debris lying around – coils of wire, etc. The ground has not been lately shelled and is covered with thistles and weed of all sorts. For a shell bursting so near you would have to lie down, as it is very dangerous. Shell splinters from an instantaneous fuze *can* kill at 800 yards. Note that there are very few people knocking about.

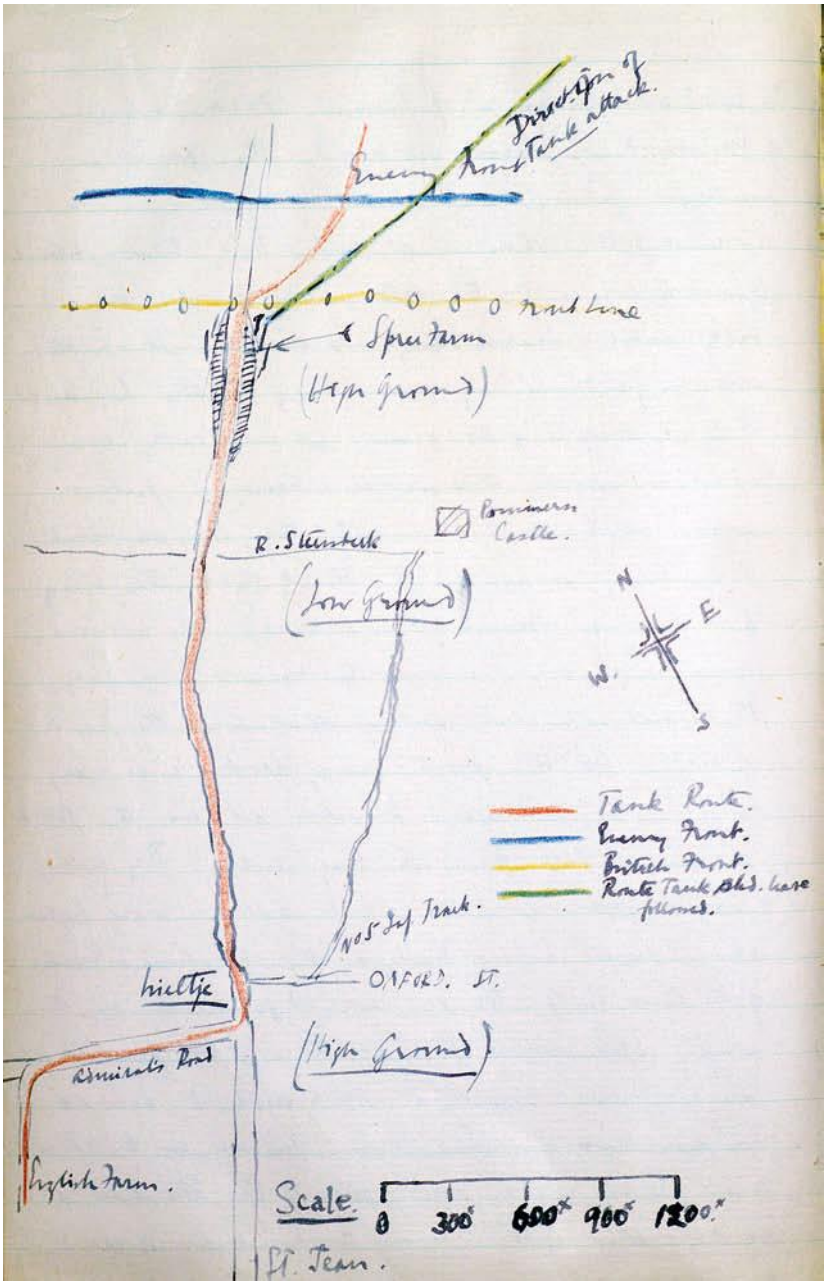

Direction of Tank attack.
Enemy Front
Front Line
Spree Farm
(High Ground)
Pommern Castle.
R. Steenbeek
(Low Ground)
N
E
W.
S
Tank Route.
Enemy Front.
British Front.
Route Tank Bhd. have followed.
No 5 Inf. Track.
Hieltje
OXFORD. ST.
(High Ground)
Admiral's Road
English Farm.
Scale.
0
300x
600x
900x
1200x
St. Jean.

Figure 9

We went over all our plans again. Everyone was very quiet and in a high state of excitement and nerves. It seemed to be an incredible time before evening came. We had a hot meal at about 6 p.m. Most of us could eat very little. Later we got so callous about these things that we used to eat like anything before action.

At 7.30 p.m. we got on board lorries and were to be taken to the canal. The tension was beginning to break, and the men were very cheery and so on, and were singing. Going through Ypres shut them up though. We were stopped and had to put on our steel helmets and wear the gas masks at the 'alert' position. The desolation began to tell on us all, and from now on very few people spoke at all. We stopped at the canal as it was no longer safe to go by lorry. It was a beautiful evening, and the sun was just setting. We marched by crews to English Farm and got there by moonlight.

We were all given our rum ration for each tank. We couldn't take this before action though, like the infantry, as it tended to put men to sleep in the heat of the tank. The mess had already dubbed rum as 'canal-crosser', because it was supposed to give you sufficient courage to cross the Ypres Canal! The name stuck to it ever afterwards.

By this time, the usual nightly bombing started. English Farm was notorious as a pet spot, and tonight the Boche lived up to his reputation. We all lay down scattered about the ground and got no casualties. They fairly shook the place up though.

When they had finished, we got aboard and set out. I was told off to lead. There were six tanks of the company following me. The senior officers weren't to be seen. Bagshaw (the section commander) stayed with the last tank. This was quite right, as then he could always turn up if one of the tanks of his section went wrong. There were four tanks of his section and two of another (No. 7) and one of another (No. 6). The moon went down fairly early. I had a white piece of paper pinned on my back so that L/Cpl Allen (the driver) could see to follow. The crews were all in their tanks. We got to Admiral's Road and then down that to Wieltje without much trouble.

When we reached the Wieltje–St. Jean road the trouble started. Although orders had been given that this road was to be left clear, the place was blocked with transport. Mules, guns and ammunition were all going up this very narrow road. There was only just room to pass, but even then the tanks would touch the transport. I leave you to imagine the position as well as you can. It was now pitch-black.

The transport *had* to get up and so had we, and it was getting late. The jam was apparently hopeless. Many of the transport were hopelessly lost and were in the usual desperate state of nerves and dejection. They knew that if they were late, the infantry to whom they had to give ammunition might be in a very dangerous state. No one knew what was going on ahead and what had occasioned the jam. All knew that at any moment the enemy might begin to shell the road, and we trembled to think of the result.

Finally we decided to push past regardless of anyone else, as it was now very late and vitally important for us to get on.

The road was very winding and very hard to steer on. The steering had to be very delicate and careful – a matter of inches, or we might stampede the mules and horses and knock transport off the road.

After five hours of this, we got to Spree Farm – a distance of about a mile – so you can see it was not fast progress. It was now 4.50 a.m., and we were to start the attack at 6.20. All watches were synchronized and the tanks were greased and oiled-up and we tried to rest.

In the meanwhile Quainton had stuck and got out with great difficulty. He turned up just in time for the attack.

All our nerves were in an awful state, and we tried not to think of what was coming. The waiting was awful and seemed to be almost a physical pain – a sort of frightfully 'heavy' feeling about one's limbs and body generally.

Our guns opened up at about 4.50 as there was to be a preliminary bombardment of the enemy's organization. This, of course, gave the show away, and the Boche began to reply. We decided to push off to our starting-points at once, before he started to shell our own road.

Everyone got in the tanks except the tank commanders, who led them outside. The section commanders Homfray and Bagshaw were in the tanks as they didn't know the way and were no use outside anyhow. Cohen came up in front with me so as to make quite sure we went the right way, but we were too late.

As we set off, the shelling began, but I got to the place where we were to leave the road without getting a shell near. As we reached it, a shell burst right in front, and the concussion knocked me over. I picked myself up and ran round to the right side of the tank after signalling to Allen to turn to his right. As Cohen and I got to the right door, another shell burst, and we both flattened out by the tank. The shell had knocked a lot of splinters off the tank, it burst so close, and

had sent off a shower of sparks inside the tank. We both got in as fast as possible, as now we could go on without being outside. Allen fortunately had the sense to drive over the crossing without further orders – it was great presence of mind, as the next shell could have got us on the crossing. We then drove to our starting point, and Cohen left us to go back to his tank – he had a supply tank, and his job was done now, for he did not have to come into action.

We shut off our engine when we got to the starting point. It was now 5.30, and we had forty minutes' wait.

In the meanwhile the rest of the tanks did not get on so well. It was very slow going, and they had to go down the road through the shelling. Two tanks got knocked out, and the crews became casualties. Quainton got a glancing hit, but it did no more than cut about some of the crew. By this time the general bombardment had developed, and in the silence of the tank we could hear the shells screaming overhead from our own guns, and bursting near from theirs. The shelling was simply one continual roar. Your own guns sounded a sharp crack behind. You could, of course, distinguish nothing. You simply had the deep roar of the guns, which was continuous, and imposed on that was the shrill whistle of the shells passing overhead – just as if it was the wind whistling in a gigantic keyhole. One very big German shell that burst near us could be distinguished above the rest. It sounded like an express train coming through a tunnel – a gradually increasing roar as it came nearer. Then a deafening crash. As the nearer shells burst, the tank used to sway a little and shudder. This was very beastly, as one had previously felt that a tank was the sort of pinnacle of solidity. It seemed as if you were all alone in a huge passage with great doors slamming all around. I can think of no way of describing it.

At 6.15 we started up our engine – we had previously shifted a little, thinking we were going to get a little away from a large shell that kept bursting very near! At 6.20 (zero hour) the real bombardment started, and the barrage came down. This simply excelled everything that had gone before.

We pushed off steering by compass. It was pitch-black still, and we could distinguish nothing outside. Unfortunately my compass was quite inaccurate. The shell that had burst in front at Spree Farm had knocked it right out. So, when I thought I was steering due east to my objective, I was going north.

At last it got lighter, and I distinguished what I thought to be a wood. As I got nearer, I found it was our infantry. We were supposed to follow till they got held up and then to go ahead and clear the way. I discovered from my map that I was now hopelessly lost (see Figure 10). I was following a ridge that I shouldn't have been on. I decided to hang on and do what I could there till I got more certain. The ground was absolutely ploughed up – like fine flour.

We now came on a German pill-box – you can see what it is like from the photo (Figure 11). The infantry were held up by cross-fire from a pill-box on my left. As I pushed forward, a big shell hit near the base of the pill-box, and the whole thing simply turned over on its side. You can get some idea of what the force of a large shell is when you realize that a pill-box is solid concrete and about six or more feet thick. This effectually cleared the place in front, but the infantry could not advance because of the cross-fire.

At about this time the sun was getting up, and I decided to steer straight into it. The tank, however, was in very serious difficulties. The ground was so bad, and so badly shelled, that one gun (the left) was below the level of the ground and was simply ploughing through the earth. The tank was on a slope and couldn't right itself, so we went on like that. At last she became permanently stuck. We fixed the unditching beam, but this only shifted the tank a few inches each time it got right underneath. We travelled literally no more than one foot to each revolution of the tracks. I left the tank at this stage and went over to a bunch of infantrymen in a shell-hole to ask my whereabouts. I didn't realize I was under machine-gun fire, I was so dazed, and they shouted at me to get down. From them I learnt, by yelling in each other's ears, that we were at Martha Louise Farm. It had been a farm but was now a German pill-box. I went back and decided to steer to the right. We simply kept the unditching beam on and so went on for about an hour, in which time we did about 200 yards. In the meantime the infantry went on as the pill-box on the left was mopped up. The German guns now got on to my tank, and shells were bursting very close indeed. Finally we had to shut our front flaps for lumps of mud and shell splinters that came in. We expected a direct hit at any moment, but our slight movement apparently baffled them – they were firing from indirect observation. At last the ground got a little better, and here I took off the unditching beam as we couldn't steer with it on. The beam is attached to both tracks, and so you cannot

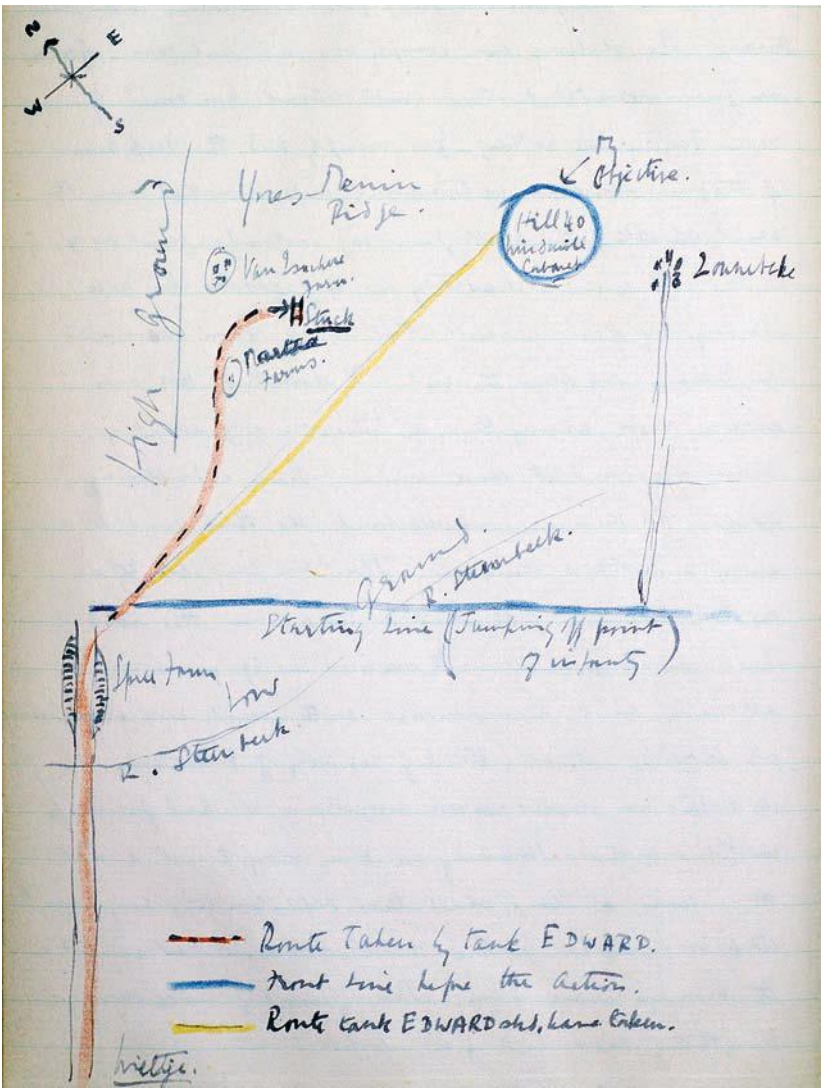
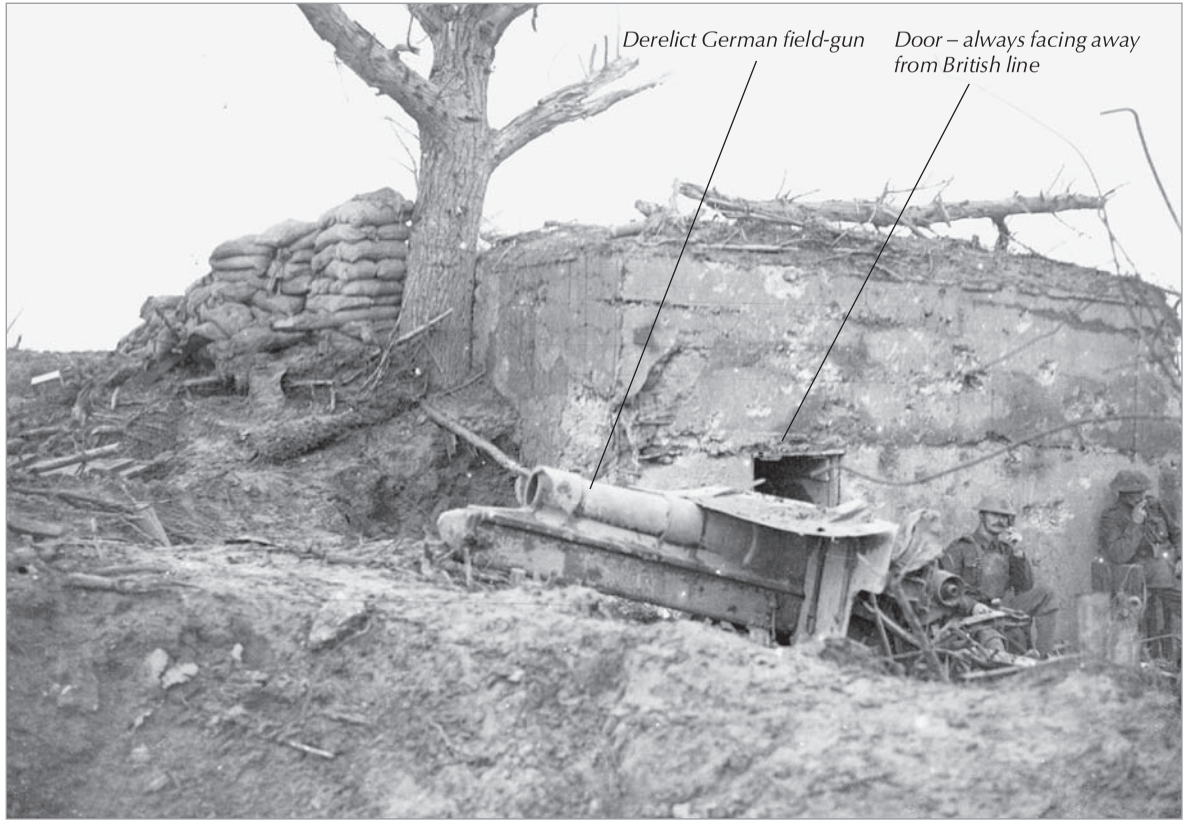


Figure 10

(See *Maps*, p. 52.)


Derelict German field-gun
Door – always facing away from British line

hold one while the other goes on. But it was hopeless, and we had to fix it again. I decided to go straight ahead and do what I could where I was, but this proved too much for the engine. The steering brakes broke and the transmission broke. As a direct hit was merely a question of seconds, we abandoned the tank and formed a strong point with the guns from our tank about 50 yards in front. A strong point is a kind of fort. Here we stopped. The enemy opened feeble rifle-fire on us as we got out, but we had no casualties, although Sergt. O'Toole had a very narrow escape – a bullet struck the tank by his head as he got out. I sent off the pigeons, reporting the situation.

It was now about 10.30 – I felt more as if it was about 4 or 5 in the evening. We simply hung on as we were. I saw a tank stuck on my right; this was Quainton's. And another on my left; this was Despard's. He came over to me, and we arranged some plan to stick to in case of an enemy counter-attack. He was frightfully cheery, and so was Sergt. Reid with him. As far as we could make out, all objectives were reached.

At about 1.30 all was pretty clear. I checked the distress signal to aeroplanes on my tank and stated the number of the tank. Several planes came over flying very low and saw it. A bit later some enemy planes came over and fired on us, but their shooting was rotten. The shelling was still very heavy, but our light guns were coming up, and the enemy were withdrawing theirs. They tried a counter-attack, but nothing happened. A little later, as all was clear, we got permissions and went back. Despard had withdrawn earlier, as his tank, like mine, was a hopeless wreck. You can get some idea of a stuck tank from the photo of one of ours at Ypres (Figure 12), only mine was right under on the left side, and finally it disappeared from view! We got back to No. 5 Infantry Track safely. This track was well wrecked by the Boche and was littered with dead mules and men and was a terrible place. We got back to Wieltje now comparatively safe – with much relief. Here, we were so dead-beat we went to sleep. We were laden

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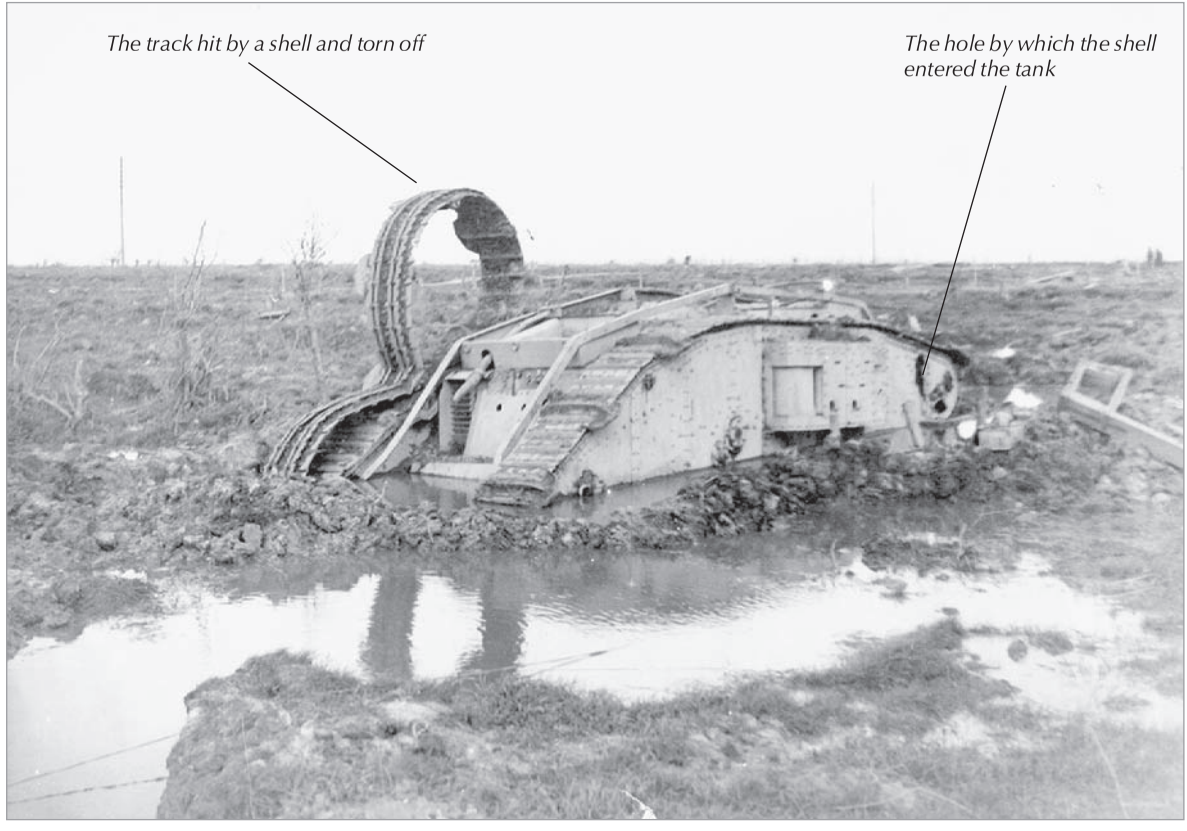
Figure 11

German pill-box, captured on Sept. 26th 1917 at Ypres. Notice the slight effect of shell-fire, although it had been the mark of many guns. This pill-box was on my left in the Sept. 26th attack.


The track hit by a shell and torn off
The hole by which the shell entered the tank

with our guns etc. as we brought them back, and had put our 6-pdr guns out of action.

When we awoke, it was about 4 or 5 p.m. We pushed back to Reigersburg Château. Here we reported to Company H.Q. and then went back to Oosthoek Wood. We had a hot meal and then turned in for the night. We were all in a fairly shaky mood. The next day we heard what had happened to the company. Two tanks had reached their objectives and done fairly well. The remainder had all had the same luck as mine. In our section Broome and Owen had both got shell-shock and were in a fearful state. Despard had been killed by a shell just after he left me in the action. He was a great loss to the section, as he was always cheerful and kindly. He had said before going into action that he was sure he would not come back. But it didn't seem to worry him at all.

In the morning we were interrogated by the intelligence officer and told our stories of the action.

At about 5 p.m. they decided we would have to fetch our tanks back from the line if we could. This does not seem a great hardship, but it was. The crews had all been very badly shaken up, and the effects were now at their height. As I was the only tank commander left in the section, the job fell on me. They decided the only tank in the company that could be fetched back was Despard's. I was given Sergt. Reid from his tank, a boy named Foster, Colombe from my crew – he volunteered – and Hayler. Foster had been very badly shaken up by the action. He was only 18 and had been in France in the infantry previously. He had been wounded and knew what it meant. Sergt. Reid told me it was better not to take him. So I decided to leave him, whereupon he insisted on being brought along. The result was that I had a very willing and good lot with me, and I felt I needed it. For

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Figure 12

Tank after direct hit. Note how it has sunk into the ground. The holes are very small as the shell has gone in and burst inside. The worst of it was that the splinters would usually kill or wound the crew and set the tank alight. The wounded often couldn't get out and simply were burned to death. The petrol would catch at once and then the oil. After that the ammunition kept on going up, as the sides are just honeycombed with it. They look like large squibs going off when they are burning as you get the continuous 'pops' of the 6-pdr shells.

the action I had felt more or less prepared, but I didn't feel at all ready for this and found myself in such a state that I didn't think I should manage it.

We set out at 9.30 p.m. The nightly air raids had just begun. As we left, two bombs fell in the camp. The whole time we went up the road, the place was lit up by bursting bombs and ammunition dumps going up. We expected to be bombed at any moment, as they always had a few shots at roads – especially Brielen at that time.

We reached the canal without mishap. The night was pitch-black, and we then began the rough part of our journey. The nauseating stench of chloride of lime, dead mules etc. was everywhere.

We went along the St. Jean–Wieltje road, which you can see marked on Figure 9, and joined the route we went into action by at Wieltje. But here we branched off and went up No. 5 Infantry Track (the one we came out of action by). By this time we were amongst the field guns again. We simply stumbled through shell-holes and over bits of barbed wire that stuck up in the ground – the remains of old entanglements that had simply been turned into the ground by bombardment. It was very tiring and demoralizing. We came upon the remains of an old strong point. I was horrified to find that we were treading amongst men and thought that something had knocked them out. I then found they were simply machine-gunners who were lying there in the mud and shell-holes asleep, resting. With them were some artillery men. I wanted to make sure of my way, so I shook one fellow. I could make no impression on him for a long time. At last the shaking had some effect, and he sat up. I asked him if it was No. 5 Infantry Track, whereupon he answered some absolutely un-intelligible gibberish, as if he was delirious. I never struck such a nightmare in my life. But it gives you some idea of the state of infantry, gunners etc. in the glorious Third Battle of Ypres. At last I got an officer. I told him what I wanted, and he said he would show me. The guns had now opened up heavy fire, and the Germans replied. As we went along, this officer said I should never get to the tank, as the Germans had counter-attacked and the position was uncertain. They were opening up then, as there was great restlessness and the situation seemed very critical. As it turned out, he was right, and we need not have bothered to go any further. We had now got onto duck-boards, and there was little chance of missing the way. So I turned to thank the officer for his kindness; as I turned, the moon shone out

behind a cloud, and he saw my face and said, 'Great Scot! Is that you, Bion?' So I said 'Yes', whereupon he said he was Bonsey, and then I saw his face and recognized him as an Old Stortfordian. There was no time to say anything except goodbye and good luck. Poor fellow! He was killed just a week afterwards. We got back to Martha Farm and then found we could get no further. The bombardment was very heavy, and it was foolishness to risk going on. We had been told not to take risks, so after a bit I decided to go back. The track was now (as usual) being shelled, and we went as fast as we could. It was a frightful business.

I don't quite know how we got back to the canal, but at last we did. The crew were very done, and it had proved too much for me at least. As we went along and began to feel safer, a gun by the road was fired and proved the last straw for Foster. He simply fell down on the road and struggled and fought, shouting, 'Keep them off! For God's sake keep them off!' We had to get his arms and legs and carry him back to a dressing station. He struggled like fun, but we tried to talk quietly and soothe him down. We left him at the first dressing station we found and then went on to camp. As I went along, I talked to Sergt. Reid. He was a Black Watch man originally, and this was the first time I really got to know him at all.

We were naturally thinking of our recent show and our losses, and so we spoke chiefly of that. We both found we were by no means keen on the war and its justice and glory and so forth – which is obvious a good distance away, but not quite so obvious close to the real thing. He said he could see no sense in it all, and when I said that the usually accepted views of right and wrong appeared rather out of place when compared with the death of a man like Despard, he startled me by saying that it was really rather hard not to believe that the conscientious objector was right, while we were all deluded fools. So you will see that some, at least, of the much-maligned Tommies were not the brainless and inhuman automatons that the staff and British press liked to paint them.

We got back to camp at last, and I reported. They were quite satisfied, and next day's battle reports confirmed me in my decision.

We had a few days' rest and were then sent down with skeleton crews – i.e. officer and drivers – to draw more tanks from Erin to replace losses. I went down with Cohen to Erin. It was a wonderful change to get away from our ghastly Ypres surroundings. We went

straight into the peace of the country. The trees had all the lovely autumn tints, and it seemed quite strange to see trees that were not shattered and leafless stumps.

I will not bother you with details of drawing tanks. We came back the next day, having drawn our tanks and tested them superficially.

After we got back to Oosthoek, we ran our tanks into condition and oiled and geared them. In about three days they were practically fit for action again.

The ground was still in a ghastly condition as rain had fallen once more, so you can imagine our surprise when we were told that we were to go into action again in a last attempt of the 5th Army to break through. Maps were issued, and we appeared to be operating under even worse conditions than previously. All ranks gave up hope of ever doing anything or of ever expecting common sense from senior officers or general staff. How tanks could be *expected* to operate seemed beyond the comprehension of anyone who had the vaguest idea of what a tank was like. However, we prepared for our show.

At the last moment they proposed to give me a rest. I made a row about it, but it was no use.

The tanks shifted up to the Pelcappelle road, and then, just the night of the action, the whole action was washed out and the next day the tanks were withdrawn to Oosthoek Wood. We were very relieved indeed.

We were then informed that the year's campaign was over and that our battalion was to go to Wailly for training and then into winter quarters.

By this time I discovered that I had a very bad tank. Engine trouble was very frequent, one of the track rollers was defective, a shaft twisted and had to be removed, and it always overheated. This was to be a source of endless trouble.

We entrained on about the 7th of November and went to Wailly. Here we tried to get our tanks into trim and exercise our drivers and crews. The defective roller was removed and the engine was tinkered up, but it still overheated.

While we were there, the 51st Highland Division came and practised with us. They were practically *the* crack division on the Western Front. They were all territorials but had a magnificent staff, wonderful discipline and tremendous *esprit de corps*. Ypres had destroyed their faith in tanks, and they were very contemptuous of us.

We carried out set-piece manoeuvres over the old trench system at Wailly. After that we were told that we were going into a new battle and that not a word must be said about it. At first we thought it was another suicidal show. But we were issued with maps (without names on), and we found the ground was to be very good and practically unshelled. It seemed too good to be true, but we began to get a little more interested. We then discovered that our battalion was to work with the 51st Division, and after going to a lecture by the brigadier of the brigade that B Company was to work with we were quite enthusiastic. It was a fine lecture and showed a grip of detail and conscientious hard work that gave us more confidence than I can say. For the first time we realized what good 'staff' work could be. Here was a general, and he absolutely knew what the details of a platoon sergeant's work was – and he gave them good advice on it too. After he had explained the plan of action, our colonel got up. His 'lecture' was a striking contrast – *he didn't even know how many guns a tank had*! Practically all our respect had gone for him by then. What little remained went a few days later, when he gave us a hectoring speech on tank work. Apparently we had not earned him enough glory at Ypres, and he now said that if any man or officer let him down, he would court-martial him, whoever he was. A worse thing to do I can't imagine. Every man had done his best and that under hopeless conditions. All fighting-men felt they had been let down by the staff, and this fellow had the audacity to talk about letting *him* down. From that time on he was the hated man of the battalion.

We met the officers of the 51st a good deal so as to get used to working together. No. 8 Section was working with B Company, of the 6th Seaforths. The company was commanded by Capt. Edwards, who came from a Scottish village called Lossiemouth. The Company Commander of their A Company came from the same village, and they had been boys together. They were terrific rivals and had great arguments as to which company would reach and take the German guns behind Flesquières village (as we afterwards found the village was called)! Edwards had won the DSO at Beaumont Hamel on the Somme, where he captured a German staff single-handed. We went into every detail with him.

At last, on the 12th, B Company had orders to shift off. I had orders to leave by midnight.

Our Company Commander, Major de Freine, had just been sent home to England for rowing with the Colonel. In his place we had a new man we didn't know, called Major Bargate. He was weak-minded, underhand, incompetent and addicted to drink. He was, however, well-intentioned and amiable. My crew had been working hard on the tank all day and were very tired. They would have to work hard all the time if they were to get off by midnight. So, as our last tank didn't leave till 3 a.m., which would have given them a chance of rest, I asked to go last. This was refused by Bargate, who seemed to think his authority was questioned if an amendment was suggested.

The men in our company were in a very bad state. They disliked and distrusted the senior officers and were consequently liable to grumble the whole time. I was lucky in my crew, and they said very little, although they had good reason to grouse.

At midnight we left and trekked to Brisleux-au-Mont, the rail-head. The tank went very badly and still overheated. We reached Brisleux at about 7 a.m. and entrained. The fact that our train was not due out till 7 p.m. simply emphasized the lack of common-sense consideration for the men. They had been kept up and tired out all night for no purpose at all.

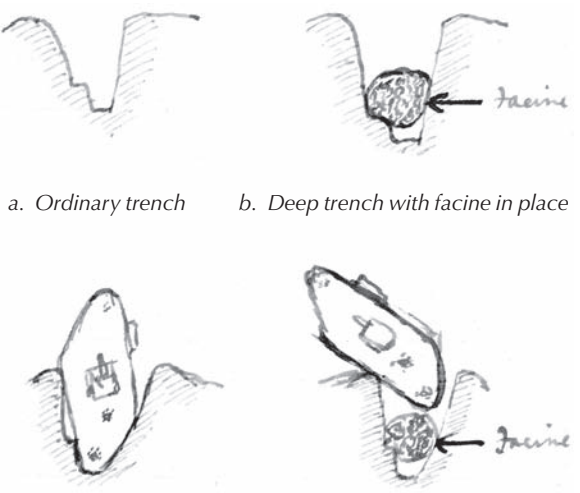
Our journey led across the devastated Somme region, and when we stopped, we found we were at Plateau. We detrained and went into the wood there. For once we had a hot meal of stew and tea on arrival. It was now 2 a.m., and instead of turning in, the crews had to go and fetch petrol. This fatigue lasted till 3.30 a.m., when all turned in. This was the first bit of sleep they had since the night of the 11th/12th. I leave you to imagine how tired they were. Next morning (14th) we had to be up at 7.30, so we only had four hours' sleep. My tank had to be tinkered up. The trouble had simply been that the engine became red-hot in about ten minutes' running. The tuning appeared to be correct, so we could only think that the trouble was due to carbonization of the cylinders and consequent pre-ignition. The tanks are so badly constructed that to take off the cylinder heads and exhaust, we had to remove the roof to get to the bottom of the trouble. This meant more very heavy work again. We found a little carbonization, but not enough to satisfy us that we had got to the root of the trouble. We had the tank fitted up again by 5 p.m. As soon as

it was dark, we drove into a neighbouring field and there drew facines – large bundles of wood bound round by chains.

They weighed over a ton. They were subsequently replaced by the skeleton facines you can see in the later photos. These facines were to be carried in front on top of the tank. When we came to a very deep trench, they were released and dropped in so that the tank could cross more easily. If you have a deep trench and do not drop in a facine, the tank falls back into it as you cross, and the tail sticks in the bottom, making it impossible to go on. A facine prevents the tail going to the bottom and sticking – you can see from the diagram (Figure 13).

It was a frightful business getting it on. We attached it to the tracks as it lay on the ground and then reversed the tank so the tracks carried it from in front of the tank up onto the top (Figure 14). We finished the job about 9.30 and got back to camp and turned in by 10.30.

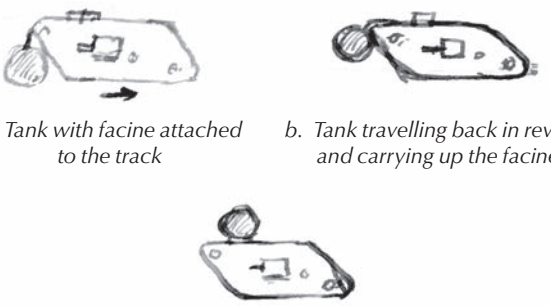
The next day (15th) the crews went on working at the tanks, but all tank commanders had to leave and go by lorry to the place our battle was to start from, so as to reconnoitre the positions thoroughly. I was



a. Ordinary trench *b. Deep trench with facine in place*

c. Tank slipped back with tail stuck in deep trench *d. Tank can't get tail stuck and ∴ crosses safely*

Figure 13
The use of facines.



a. Tank with facine attached to the track

b. Tank travelling back in reverse and carrying up the facine

c Facine in position on top of the tank

Figure 14
Attaching a facine.

very glad to be rid of my tank and hoped somehow that something would happen to the thing to make it go before I saw it again.

We arrived at our destination at 2 p.m. on the 15th after a ride through Bapaume and the devastated region. We were to live in Havrincourt Wood, which was about 1,000 yards from the front line. It was just in front of the village of Metz. Opposite us, in the enemy's lines, were the villages of Havrincourt and (partly in our lines) Trescault.

That same evening we went up to the front-line trenches. It was an extraordinary change from Ypres. We were now opposite the famous Hindenburg line, and the country was hardly touched. The trenches were in wonderful condition. The villages looked as if they had never heard of the war except for those behind us, which had, of course, been blown up by the Germans in their retreat. Havrincourt Wood was like an ordinary wood in England. The front was very peaceful. There was about 1,000 yards between the enemy trenches and our own, and hardly a gun fired. The great question was, should we catch the enemy napping? I will not bother you with the reconnaissances. We did two more on the next day (the 16th) over the same territory and one back to the railhead (about five miles from Havrincourt Wood). This place was called Ytres, and we were to meet our tanks there. The greatest precautions were taken to keep the enemy from knowing what was happening.

On the 17th we did one more reconnaissance, and then that evening we went back to Ytres to meet our tanks. They were due in at 7.30 p.m. As I saw them come in, I wondered if my old tank was all right, and my first question was, 'Is my old tank going all right at last?' The reply was, 'She behaves like a perfect swine'.

That put the finishing touch on me for the time. I saw the crew and found they were utterly fed up. The great thing was to get it the five miles to Havrincourt.

Well, it is hardly possible to describe the trip. Everything went wrong. The oiling system gave up and we had to mend it with the aid of what wits we had left. She overheated every 200 yards. The driver went to sleep (L/Cpl Allen) as he drove and rammed a house. I took on driving, but Allen seemed so thick-headed he couldn't lead properly. You can tell what it was like when I say we reached Metz village four and a half miles off at 5.30 a.m. That is to say, we took ten hours for four and a half miles. Walking pace isn't in it! When we reached Metz, the tank gave up the ghost. There was a terrific flash and an explosion, and she stopped. When we recovered, we took stock of the situation. We were in the middle of the village street. Daylight was coming, and we would be certain to be spotted if an aeroplane came over. The sight of a tank behind the British lines would have given the whole show away. Fortunately, another tank from C came along at this stage. In command was a fellow named Wilson. He had very little petrol and could never have towed me in. But although it was very late, he towed me to the side of the road. As this enabled me to hide the tank from aerial observation, I was more grateful than I can say. It took him about three-quarters of an hour to do and meant a lot of extra work. He was killed in the battle and recommended for the VC but did not get it.

When we got to the side, we built an imitation house over the tank to hide it. The crew were so tired that I sent them to sleep and did no more. At 11 a.m. (the 18th) we started work again. We did what we could, and that night started to get the tank to the wood. It overheated hopelessly again, but we got there somehow. The crew got sleep from 11 p.m. till 10 a.m. and so at last had a rest. Action would have been impossible without it.

At 11 a.m. we started a last despairing effort to get the engine right. We then discovered that the timing was wrong. The dead centre

was marked wrong on the flywheel, so all our previous timing had been wrong! This small mistake on the part of the makers had cost us hour after hour of hard work and anxiety. We timed it by the cylinder heads and felt that we had at last got to the root of the trouble. We spent the rest of the day (19th) on running out our 6-pdr guns and preparing for action. Our facine again gave us endless trouble. We were all ready but for this by 7.30 p.m., and zero was to be 6.50 the next morning (November 20th).

Before going on, I will explain our orders and tell you what we had to do. A and C Companies had to form the first wave and take the trenches marked **A** (see diagram, Figure 15). They were to drop their facines in so we could cross. We had to form the second wave and go through them on to the trenches marked **B**, and take them using our facines to cross the **B** (or second-line system) trenches. No. 8 Section was on the left, and I was the left section. I had to deal with the strong point and small wood at Flesquières. Ribécourt village was on the right. The infantry and artillery all came up that night (19th/20th) in lorries. They had to fire by the map and could do no registering. You see, the orders were all fairly simple.

Maps

I have drawn rough maps of the action so as to save looking at the original. The Marcoing 57.C. N.E. map I am sending is the identical map I used on November 27th 1917, and that accounts for its battered and stained condition. It was with me from start to finish. I therefore don't want to mark it at all as it's rather a relic! But from it you will follow the details clearly, and also get some idea of the very great accuracy of our maps. The country was practically untouched, as I have pointed out, and therefore there were trees in existence. You will notice that even the trees are marked on the Grand Ravine. As I was the tank on the extreme left of our battalion, I practically followed the line on the left, which marks the left boundary of the battalion's activities. I therefore crossed the Grand Ravine just to the left of the little bunch of four trees marked on the map. So you see, an action was arranged in very great detail, although of course you had to use your initiative at all times. The thing was to disobey orders at the right time and in the right way. You will see Villers-Plouich marked – where we went later with Capt. Clifford [see p. 65]. [These maps are now lost. *F.B.*]

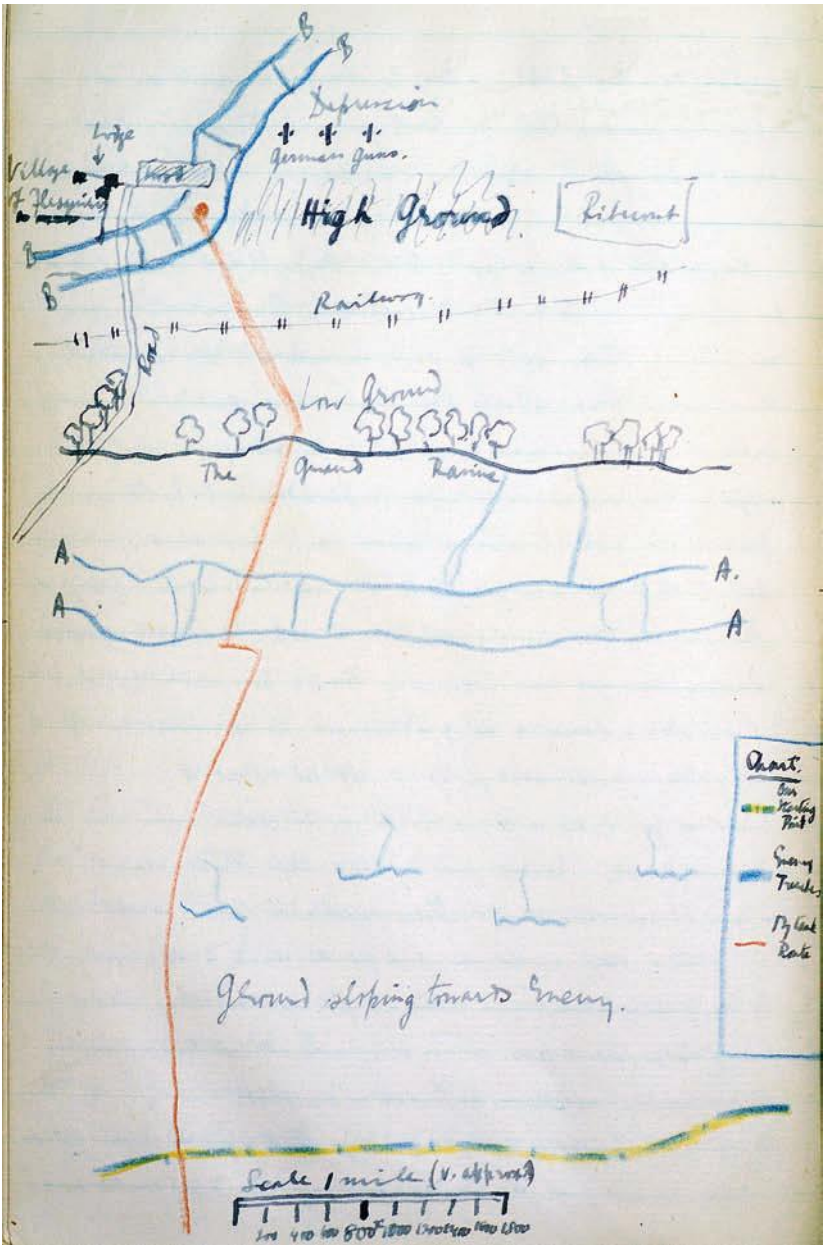

Depression
German Guns.
Lodge
Village of Flesquiers
High Ground
Railway
Road
Low Ground
The Grand Ravine
Ground sloping towards Enemy.
Scale 1 mile (v. approx)

Figure 15

At 9.30 I got the crew out, as we had to start. Hayler was now so ill as to be useless, and a new man had to be put in at the last moment. He was a young fellow called Pell – aged about 18. He was a very willing and hard worker and most enthusiastic. After very great difficulty we fixed the facine somehow, and at 12.30 we set out. We reached the starting-point by 3 a.m. The crew were very tired and almost inclined to be hysterical. The engine overheated the moment we started, and it looked as if it was all up. The infantry were warned that my tank wouldn't be able to go in after all.

We started up again, however, and to our surprise it went like a bird from that time to the end!

At the starting-point we got out and rested on the ground. It was very quiet and peaceful, and only now and then an enemy machine-gun opened fire and we heard the bullets sail over. We wondered if they suspected anything. At 6 o'clock the guns suddenly opened up, and we were afraid that they had found out, but it died down. It was quite light by 6.50, when three shots were fired and suddenly the barrage came down.

All the enemy trenches were outlined in low-bursting shrapnel. It looked like clouds of white with golden rain in the bursts. It was very beautiful – and very deadly.

We started off, and everything went like clockwork. There seemed to be no fighting at all and an absolute surprise to the enemy. When I got to **A**, I had to tackle a machine-gun, but he gave up when we came near. It was the only battle in which I saw anything clearly, and it might have been a manoeuvre. The whole place swarmed with tanks and Highlanders. After a pause at the Grand Ravine, we went on – now B Company was in the first wave as A and C stopped on the **A** line. Some of the kit on board caught fire, but we chucked it overboard. When I got within 1,000 yards of Flesquières, I opened up

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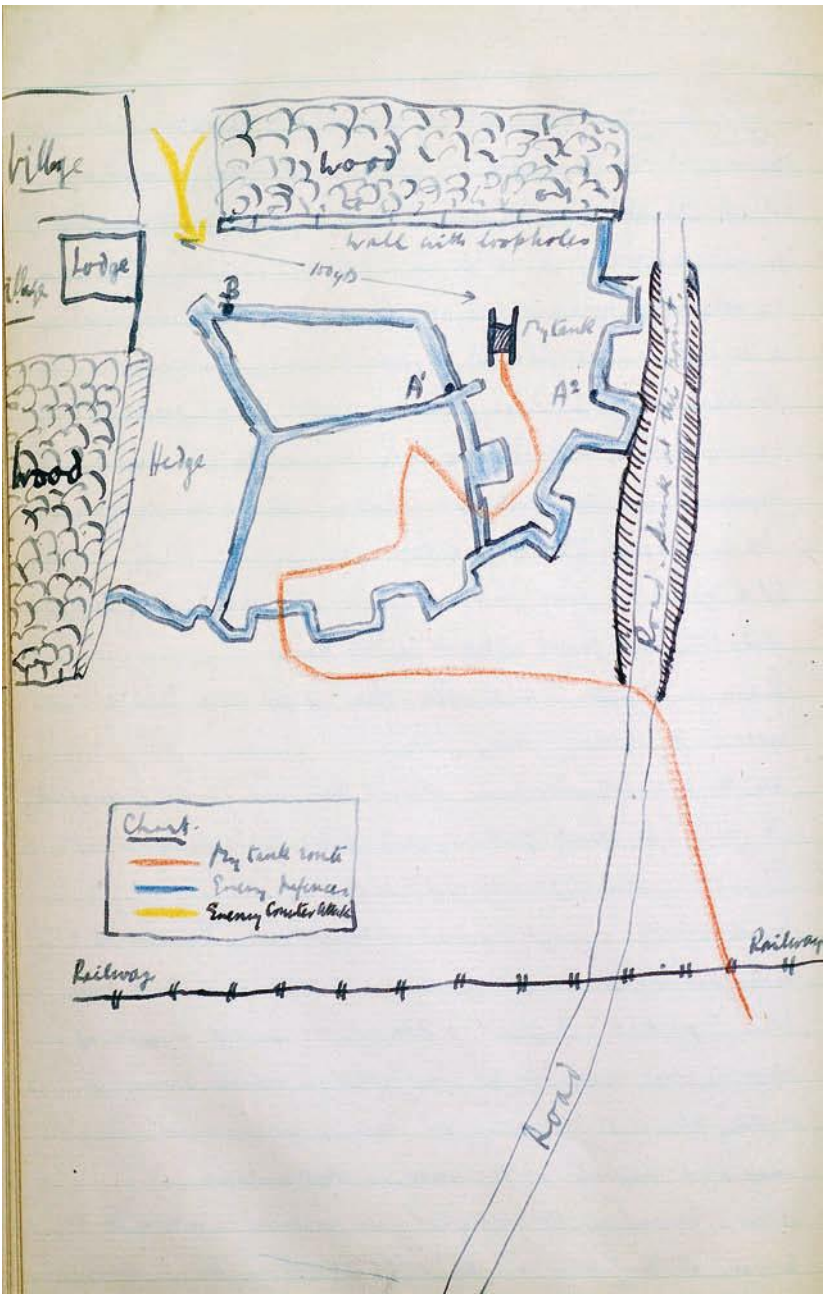
Figure 16

Our tank route to the starting-point was as follows: Q21 b, follow the sunk road in the Trescault valley from there to where it crosses the 'enemy defence' line representing the communication trench called Sherwood Avenue. Follow the 'Avenue' from there till it reaches the line representing the left battalion boundary. Follow that to the front line (Derby Trench), and there you are.


Village
Wood
Wall with loopholes
Lodge
100 yds
B
My tank
A'
A²
Wood
Hedge
Road, bank at this point
Chart.
My tank route
Enemy defences
Enemy Counter Attack
Railway
Railway
Road

slow fire on the lodge – first the left gun and then the right (Figure 16).

I reached Flesquières at about 9.10. This was rather too early. We were greeted with tremendous machine-gun fire. In the ordinary way the noise is so terrific when the engine is going that you can hear nothing outside; but bullets hitting the tank sound like sledge-hammers against your ear. Also they knock off tiny pieces of red-hot metal. These fly off and cut you about. The first thing I knew was this frightfully demoralizing row, and I had no idea what to do. The worst thing was that bullets began coming in through the gaps in the armour plate and ricocheted round the tank. Some rivets were driven in, thus leaving holes in the armour. By some mischance the left gunner Pell (the new man) got hit in the thigh by a bullet that came up the breach when the wedge was down in the gun. Allen was then left. He was demoralized and left the gun. As a result, a perfect storm of bullets came in. I shouted to them to get back, whereupon Richardson took the gun and managed to get it into action somehow, with the result that that particular machine-gun shut up. Richardson was hit in the leg doing it.

Pell then was transferred to the right side and had to lie on the floor working the gears wounded. By this time several more tanks came up, and the strong point stopped fire as we simply sat on it. But the infantry had not come up. After a while the other tanks went off and I stayed on. We simply patrolled up and down.

Suddenly there was a terrific crash, and a great chunk of stuff ricocheted round and hit me on the back. It was a piece of shell, and we had got a direct hit on the right side of the tank by the gears. This effectually put us out of action. The tank immediately showed signs of catching fire, and as it was useless to stay in – we might get another hit any moment – I decided to evacuate. Pell, who was by the gears where the shell entered, had shell-shock, and the rest of the crew were hit about. The piece of shell was afterwards found near my seat and given me. It was the one I sent home.

Unfortunately the enemy realized what had happened and opened fire on our left door. Our ammunition for the 6-pdr was finished. We tried to get out by the right door, but it was jammed. So we had to get out by the left. There seemed little chance of getting out all right, but there was less of staying alive inside. Richardson took a Lewis gun, loaded it and then flinging the door open tumbled out. He was hit through both legs doing it but opened fire and shut their gun up.

As a result we got out safe, dragging Pell after us. We got into the enemy trench near the tank and put out our Lewis guns. The enemy were up one end (marked **B** in Figure 16). Our position is at point **A1**. We opened fire at once, and the enemy shut up again. Some more of our tanks turned up, and everything quieted down again. I led one or two of them to the right corner of the wood in front, showing them where to go as all seemed all right where we were.

We had received our direct hit at 10.30 a.m., and the whole thing was over in a second or two, although it seemed years. When these tanks cleared off, a couple of Seaforth Highlanders came up with us along the trenches behind. So we knew we were going to be supported at last. But just at this time the enemy seemed to be opening fire on us again from all sides, and we didn't quite know where they were. I was very excited at this time. I had sent back Colombe and Allen with Pell to get him out of the way.

I decided the chief fire was coming from the wood in front from behind the wall. So I took my Lewis gun with two drums of ammunition (we only had four left) and got on top of the tank behind the facine. From here I could see over the wall. I ordered Forman to open fire with his gun on to the lodge to keep them from hitting me from that side. I fired into the wood over the facine and saw the enemy begin to run about and clear out. They all cleared out or stopped firing pretty quickly, and then my gun jammed and became too hot to hold.

At this moment the enemy led a counter-attack through the gap between the lodge and the wood. I only saw an officer run out in front waving a small stick and pointing at me. I decided it was time to leave, and I came off that tank in record time.

I found my crew had run out of ammunition. I shouted to them to clear out, as I decided to fall back to the trenches behind, which were easier to hold. There were only five of us now. As we ran back, I got behind a fold in the ground and tried to open fire again, but my gun wouldn't fire. So I hared back and we finally got to Point **A2** (about 80 yards behind). I found the Seaforths were already there. This was an immense relief, as you can imagine.

I met Edwards there, and he said everything was going splendidly. A moment later a sniper got him through the head, and he died a bit later. I thereupon took over the company – chiefly supported by a Seaforth sergeant named Gray. Their ammunition had practically

run out, so that we were still in a rotten position. I got hold of an enemy machine-gun, which we had taken previously, and as there was a lot of ammunition, we opened fire. The enemy had stopped at Point **B** and along that line, and we kept their heads down with this fire. I subsequently took the lock out of this gun and that I also sent back to you.

About half an hour afterwards, the enemy counter-attacked the Black Watch on our left and drove them back. I got hold of the sergeant, and he said it was all O.K., so we hung on – we had nowhere to retreat to anyhow! Fortunately the Black Watch had not gone back far, so our flank was not exposed. At last an aeroplane of ours came over, and we lit our flares to show where we had gone.

From this time on the position seemed to be stalemate. An enemy aeroplane came over flying very low, and we opened fire on it. Most of our time was occupied firing at their snipers in the trees opposite.

Some time later Colonel Mackenzie, the Seaforth commander, came round, and I was relieved by another Seaforth officer. Mackenzie told me to go back as 'you are no good without your bloody tank'. Nothing more could be done that day. We went back to our rallying point – Sergt. O'Toole, L/Cpl Allen, Richardson and L/Cpl Forman. I discovered that all had gone well except on our immediate front, and they hoped that would go soon as the village was nearly surrounded.

By the time I got back to Havrincourt, it was 7 p.m. and a gentle rain was falling. It was then that I discovered that my face was covered with blood! I got an awful shock but found it was only the result of the small pieces of tank that had stuck in my face. These little chips came out bit by bit later on. I got quite a large piece from my right ear! My right hand still has some very small pieces in it; you can just see little blue spots under the skin.[1]

Quainton again had very bad luck. His tank ran out of petrol in front of the German guns, and he lost four of his men from a direct hit. He was just in front of a sunk road, and by pouring whisky into the carburettor and throwing in his clutch the engine started, and he just toppled the tank into the road safe from direct fire! It sounds rather funny, but I wouldn't have been in his place for any amount. Cohen was knocked out and very badly wounded. I have not seen him since. Stokes was killed at the beginning of the battle by a direct hit. Greene

[1][Visible for the rest of his life. *F.B.*]

also was killed. The battalion had about twelve tanks left. The remainder attacked next day, and we were left with six undamaged tanks by the 23rd. The crews were completely exhausted by then.

The next day after the battle (21st), we had our interview with the O.C. Company (now Gatehouse, as Bargate had been wounded). We gave our reports of the action; Gatehouse said my report would be confirmed and that I should be recommended for the Military Cross. I was, of course, very surprised, as I expected a row for losing my tank. Well, they found out from the Seaforths what had happened and confirmed my report. To my surprise the Colonel called for me, and I had to give my report again. He congratulated me on it, and he said, 'I have decided to recommend you not for the Military Cross but the Victoria Cross'. I was too flabbergasted for words. I found subsequently that I had been mentioned in the infantry brigade report on the battle, and that is what had settled the matter – Colonel Mackenzie had sent in a most flowery report of the show!

It was now understood that we were to go into rest. We improved our camp and polished up our buttons and so on. We were all very dirty, and as we had had no change of clothes, we were somewhat verminous as well. Although the prospect of rest pleased us, our nerves were very much on edge, and we hardly spoke civilly to each other! We made ourselves fairly comfortable in our camp, which was very near our starting-point for the action – just inside Havrincourt Wood. The sound of the guns went further and further from us, and we could only just hear the explosion of our bigger guns.

On the 28th we were informed that the Germans were going to counter-attack. A feint attack was to be made on our right flank, and the main attack on our left. No danger was expected as we were well prepared.

Nothing more happened till the morning of the 30th. We then heard terrific gunfire in front of us. This died down after about an hour. At about 10.30 a rumour suddenly started that the enemy had broken right through on our right. We of course laughed it off. But a moment or two later on the crest on our right there appeared an A.S.C. wagon and horses bolting like mad with no driver. This looked suspicious. Then another appeared, and at the same time our wood was shelled by *field guns.* This *was* uncanny, as up to that time we were at least four miles out of range. The situation was obviously serious, and it seemed that the preposterous rumour was, after all, true. While

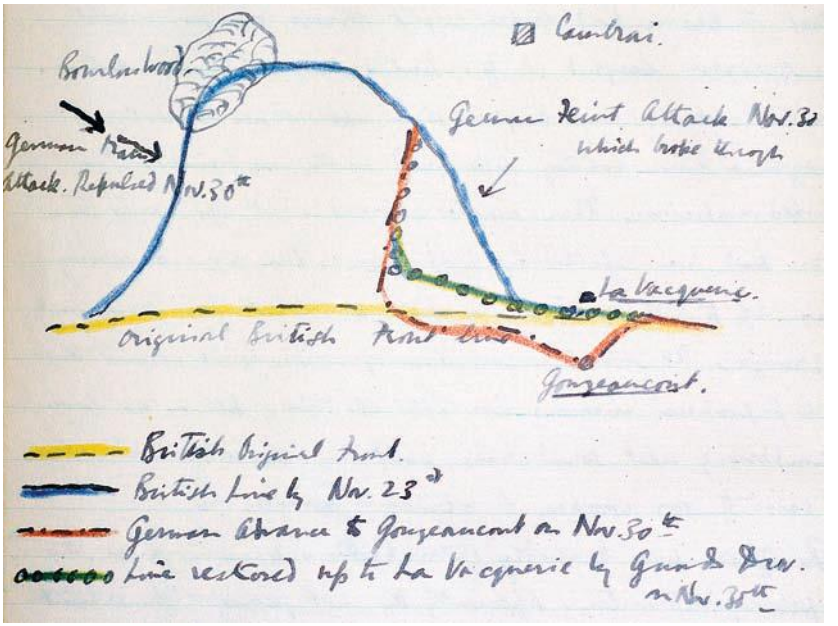


Figure 17
Rough diagram of battles November 20th–30th.

we were wondering what could have happened, the order suddenly came to our company to stand to arms.

The officers were hurriedly called together, and we were given the following information. Apparently the left flank of the salient had withstood the enemy sham attack. But the feint attack, thanks to the low morale and panic of two divisions, had given way, and the enemy were through (Figure 17). No details were known except that the Guards had gone up that morning and the enemy at that moment were advancing and were believed to be about 1,500 yards in front of us. They had taken Gouzeaucourt, which was behind the front line, as it was on November 20th. We were to prepare our tanks (the three left in our company – only six were left in the whole battalion) for action and make up crews to man them. This was done at once. The entire company was then put on to cart ammunition and so on to the tanks. All was ready in about three-quarters of an hour. This was pretty good work, as we had not a single crew complete, but just had to make them up somehow. All the tanks were unfit and had to

be put into order and stocked with ammunition. After the tanks were cleared for action, we found that we had about six officers and 60 men with nothing to do. Without tanks we were useless. It was decided, therefore, that all 'unemployed' men should march back to Ytres and entrain, as had been arranged before the break-through occurred. I was told off to march back, and Quainton was to remain as a tank commander.

We fell in and marched off. It was about 3 p.m. when we left the wood, and, as we did so, four German aeroplanes came over flying very low down the road, firing their machine-guns. None of our men was hit.

We picked up news as we went. The Germans had apparently got through so fast that they had captured our guns where they fired. That accounted for the sudden cessation of the bombardment. The Guards had marched up and just stopped the gap. By about 6 p.m. news came through that the Guards had not only stopped the Germans but had driven them back to La Vacquerie – a place about 1,000 yards in front of our original front line on the right of the salient. In spite of this, the situation was very critical indeed, and the whole 3rd British Army was in danger of being cut off. With this news in our ears and with the sight of the Very lights going up in front, we lay down in a ruined village and tried to sleep. The demoralization amongst our troops everywhere was apparent. They were tired out after long fighting.

One of the most demoralizing things, which we were to experience often in the future, was the *silence* that followed the enemy breakthrough. Hitherto we always had felt that the cessation of artillery fire meant the end of the show. Now we had learnt that it might mean a complete breakthrough – the capture of our guns and the silence consequent upon the advance of theirs. The next morning we marched to a place near Ytres and entrained. We travelled back across the Somme battlefields to a place called Méaulte about two miles from Albert and quite near Brayé. It had been a mile or two behind our lines before the 1915 Somme battle. We went into a hut camp here. There was not much room, and the huts were very bad. The country was desolate, and it was very cold. But we were very thankful and slept in peace that night.

The next day we were ordered to relieve the men we had left with our remaining tanks in the Cambrai salient. I was told off to

go in the party with my crew: Richardson, who was pretty well all right – he only had flesh wounds, Colombe, L/Cpl Allen, my driver, and Forman. Allen, the left gunner, also came, but I knew he would not be much use.

The officer over us was Capt. Clifford. He was a dreadful individual. He behaved like a stable boy, was quite unscrupulous and blustered enormously. Carter was the other fellow. He had only joined our battalion recently – just before Cambrai, in fact – and had come to my section. Bagshaw was not detailed, and I was the only officer from 8 Section.

Carter was a most astounding fellow. He had knocked about East all his life and had seen a lot of fighting. He was aged about 45 and was a 2nd Lieut. I have never seen him even look mildly perturbed in the hottest action and nor had anyone else. He was an agnostic and summed up his philosophy for the war by saying that 'if it was a question of German Empire or British Empire, he backed the British, and moral issues be blowed. Fighting wasn't Christian ever before, and certainly wasn't Christian now'. He was a first-class man and absolutely straight and honest.

A fourth member of our party was a fellow named Hauser. He was about 20 years old, fussy, an infernal nuisance to his superior officers and a plague to his men. He was never seen to look frightened or in

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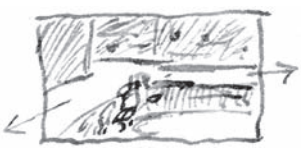
Figure 18

The village of Flesquières. This photo was taken on Nov. 20th. Just before this the 51st Division took it in their first attack in the morning. The 6th Seaforths, who were following my tank, have remained in the village, while other troops have gone forward, leaving them to rest. The divisional artillery limbers are just going through Coutaing. It was at the far end of the road that runs off the left side of the picture that the Germans massed to make the counter-attack when I was on the top of my tank (see below). Note how little the village is knocked about. This shows how little shell-fire there was and what a surprise the attack was to the enemy.



any way worried in an action and was kind-hearted and efficient. He called himself an agnostic and talked about the war like the oldest inhabitant of the most boring club in London. He was very short and wore glasses like the portholes of a battleship. I will give you a story of him that is typical: we were up at Ypres and owing to the shocking weather and conditions generally, had been told not to take our tanks out for the usual daily test. Hauser said the order was rot and took his tank out. He spent half the morning making his crew potter about the tank while he stood on the roof and swore at them. While he wasn't looking, he stepped backwards off the tank and fell about 6 feet. This didn't worry him, but it amused the men. At last he drove out. The place was a quagmire, and it was about 12 midday. His driver warned him continually they would get ditched. 'I don't care if we do. We are going out', was his comment. The driver kept up his complaints, and at last Hauser lost his temper. He got out and beckoned to the driver to follow with the tank. He then led the tank smack into a gigantic quagmire. Opening the door of the tank, he bawled out, 'Now you jolly well *are* stuck!' It took them till 2 p.m. to get out. The men got back, cursing and swearing, for their main meal two hours late.

In spite of all this, he was respected for his absolute fearlessness in action and the fact that he never gave a man a job to do that he wouldn't do himself. He was a useful fellow to have.

We had all got clean clothes and were feeling cleaner, but nevertheless very sick at having to go up. We entrained that night and arrived next day at Havrincourt Wood. We took over a line of tanks. They were stretched across the country about two-and-a-half miles behind our front line – in fact, on just about the line that our trenches took before the opening of the battle. The tanks were about 300 yards apart and so formed a kind of line of small forts – like the German pill-boxes at Ypres. If the enemy broke through, we were to allow our troops to pass through and were then to fight a rear-guard action. Such were our very vague orders.

The troops we relieved were D Battalion, who looked in pretty poor spirits and didn't cheer us much. Since all our tanks were in the open, they had camouflage nets over them. Every night these had to be taken off so the tank could get into action without confusion, and at dawn they had to be put on again.

The crews took over their tanks and saw everything was correct. It was now 6 p.m. I had a tank opposite the extreme right of our

battalion front at the start of the November 20th action. We felt a bit lonely in our little bunches of eight scattered over the wide front. We ate some bully, made a bivouac close against the tank and, after arranging sentry duties, went to sleep. It was very cold, and we had not much to keep us warm – a very thin blanket each. We were woken about 1 a.m. by a bombing raid. This is a very unpleasant thing to hear, especially when you fear a breakthrough. It sounds just like an artillery duel, but you don't get the scream of the shells. It sounds very near. It ended in about three-quarters of an hour. (See map Marcoing 57.C. N.E. The place where we stationed our tanks was Q18 b.q.o. approximately. The trenches we sheltered in to cook food and avoid shells were old British ones and therefore not marked on this bit of front. They were never put in unless of vital importance, and then only the small bit needed, e.g. at our jumping-off place for November 20th.)

We stayed like this for two or three days and began to feel confident. The days were all cold and cloudy and the country rather desolate. There is something uncanny about being camped on an old battlefield – particularly when you yourself have fought over it quite recently. We were not visited during these days. Capt. Clifford remained by one tank and wouldn't budge. The food was poor – eternal cold bully and biscuits. This, combined with the strain of a breakthrough at any moment – which always threatened us – and the cold, made us very miserable.

Then suddenly we received orders to move forward. It was about 6 p.m., and we had just started getting ready some hot tea. Unfortunately we could not do this job and have something warm, as apparently the matter was urgent. Clifford put in his first appearance, accompanied by Col. Hankey (later Brigadier – he now commanded the composite battalion of which we were a part). Apparently a breakthrough was expected. The Germans had massed even more troops, and the 61st Division, who were in front of us, felt they wanted us to support them much nearer their line. It was now growing dusk. We started up our tanks, and the four that were under Clifford started to go forward as soon as we had collected. Our task was easy, as we could nearly see the place we were aiming for – Villers-Plouich. We arrived there at about 8 p.m. and camouflaged our tanks. We were about 1,000 yards from the front line and *just* out of sight of the German lines. No fires were allowed.

Our tanks were already prepared for action, so we simply gave orders that men were to eat some bully beef and biscuits and then, after posting sentries, go to sleep. Clifford went to infantry brigade H.Q. in order to be in touch with the infantry. The moment an attack was opened, he was to come back to us (a distance of about half a mile) and warn us. With this news, he disappeared. Carter, Hauser and I then went to sleep in a small hole in the ground. The men slept under the tanks. We felt very miserable, as we had no idea what was going to happen, and really felt quite useless if the enemy did attack. We didn't know the country, we had no orders as to the direction in which we were to retire in the event of retreat, and our tanks were quite useless for defence anyhow.

It was freezing cold that night and next day. At 11 a.m. we managed to get some hot stew going over a fire we made in a disused trench. We decided this was safe from view and were careful to use nothing damp. With the aid of large doses of petrol we kept the fires smokeless. We all, officers and men, collected round this and simply swallowed it. It was our first hot meal for over 30 hours and the first meal proper since mid-day the day before. We felt absolutely changed after it! We washed it down with scalding hot tea and felt warm and comfortable for the first time that day. The sky was a grey, leaden colour and the air was bitterly cold, so we felt really grateful. In order to keep men from moping too much, we put them on to the work of digging holes to lie in. The idea was that if we were shelled, they would be safe from all but a direct hit. Also, they would be much warmer. This kept them busy and made them anticipate a good night. The feeling of comfort and security did much to improve their spirits. After dark we drove the tanks over the hole that had been dug and so made a roof. This unfortunately proved a very dangerous thing.

When we awoke next morning, we found the crews apparently dead under their tanks. We hauled them out and to our intense relief they began to show signs of life. We broke small tubes of very strong ammonia under their noses so they inhaled it. This made them violently sick, but it did what we wanted. As soon as they could swallow, we poured a diluted dose of ammonia down their throats. This finally pulled them round, and two or three hours after they were all right. What had happened was this: the tank engine had been run and had simply poured petrol fumes and carbon monoxide from its exhaust

into the hole it was over. When the men got in to sleep an hour or so later, these heavy fumes had sunk to the bottom of the holes and stupefied them. Another hour or two, and we should have lost two crews. As you can imagine, we were very thoroughly frightened by this business and took great precautions ever afterwards. The experience was certainly very valuable to me, as this particular form of poisoning was to become a common thing in the later tanks. I now knew how to cope with it and was saved from some very awkward scrapes in 1918 by applying the same remedies to men who were apparently done for.

The rest of the day passed more or less uneventfully except for the fact that the Boche smelt a rat and started to shell our little area. We took cover and lost neither men nor tanks. We simply had the misery of enduring an hour and a half's desultory strafe from 5.9's.

In the evening we were cheered by the arrival of three artillery officers who were going up to observation posts to reconnoitre. They stopped to talk, and we had the usual flow of 'news'. The artillery are notorious liars and always cheerful liars. They assured us the enemy would attack the next morning and that they would suffer hopeless defeat; King George had been assassinated and Horatio Bottomley had seized the throne; the Germans had sued for peace, which would probably be signed within three days. With this and earnest protestations of truthfulness they departed! It's a funny thing, but cheeriness was every bit as infectious as gloom, and these yarns, with the method of telling, quite set us up for the night. But we were to have a rude shock. Clifford had not been near us since he had departed to Brigade H.Q. in a state of panic. We had been left entirely to our own devices. All matters of water, rations, orders for possible defence, routine orders etc. had been settled by Carter. Carter as senior officer simply carried on as commander of the section. After our first morning we talked things over and gave Clifford up as hopeless. We first sat down and decided to draw up, to the best of our abilities, a set of operation orders. It was a matter of vital necessity that we should. If we did not, there was nothing to prevent our straggling everywhere and losing touch hopelessly. We thereupon arranged what to do if the infantry held fast and also what we should do in the event of a general retirement. We mapped out a line of retreat. We then drew up routine orders and sent orders to the rear, giving particulars of rations and so forth.

Thus, as far as we were concerned, Clifford might not have existed, and we forgot him.

That night we had just turned in when suddenly we heard a great puffing and blowing, the tarpaulin was dragged off our hole, and we saw Clifford's face peering at us out of the moonlight, 'I say, you chaps' (puff–puff!) 'the Germans' (puff–puff!) 'are going to attack!' He was nearly in tears. Carter slowly sat up and looked at him and then said 'Well, what about it?' Immediately an incoherent shower of words rushed out as we got up. Clifford said all the men were to be turned out and tanks manned at once. This we did. It was bitterly cold and a very quiet night. We all got into our tanks and sat and shivered. After a bit I went round to Carter's tank, and we then went on to Hauser. Here Clifford was. Carter turned to Clifford and said, 'Now that we've got all those poor devils out of their holes and frozen them to death, what orders have you for us?' Clifford said, 'I don't know. How on earth should I know? I only know they are going to attack. You know as much as I do.' 'But aren't you going to issue any orders? What are we to do?' 'Oh, I don't know – just keep amongst them and shoot 'em down, shoot 'em down'. We then asked if he knew when the attack was supposed to come off. 'In the morning or any time between now and then probably'. We simply couldn't get an atom of sense out of him. The whole time his teeth were chattering and he was just whining away. So we just shrugged our shoulders and proceeded to go over the plans we had previously thought out together. After a little, Clifford attempted to assert himself but was met with a stern, 'Will you kindly refrain from shoving in your oar?' from Carter, so that ended him. It's really rather funny looking at it now, but it was far from funny then. We were very cold and very miserable. Our orders were nil, and if anything went wrong we should be blamed for it, as we made up our plans without considering Clifford. The enemy had apparently at last decided to attack. We had an absolute fool in command. Added to this, the officers and men were not at all fit for scrapping. We were all more or less demoralized, and personally I was fit for nothing.

We stayed up all night waiting for dawn. Nothing happened, and finally at midday we were told the attack wasn't coming. Clifford cleared off to the H.Q. dugout again, to our intense relief.

The rest of our stay here passed in much the same way as the early part. We could do very little moving about as the Germans would shell us, so we had to lie pretty tight. L/Cpl Allen was nearly killed. A shell landed near him and knocked him over with concussion. He was fortunately not wounded but was struck dumb with shell-shock. He stayed some time in England and then came back to the base in France. As he was no good, he was sent back to England and was still stammering in January 1919. I haven't heard from him since and cannot get into touch with him. So I lost a jolly good man. At the time, he was about the best tank driver in the battalion. He was not strong physically, but he had any amount of pluck, and he really knew his job very well. He had been very slow and too careful when he first came to France, but after the Ypres action had given him experience he was very good indeed.

At last we heard we were to be relieved. We moved back one evening to Havrincourt Wood, and our tanks were taken over by a section of the 4th Battalion. With intense relief we said goodbye to Havrincourt Wood and trained back to the rest of the battalion at Méaulte.

We spent about four days here when again orders came that our battalion had to send a detachment to man some tanks at Flims in Dessart Wood. This time Quainton was to go up and so was Hauser and one or two others. I volunteered for the job as I wanted to be with Quainton and drew the line at keeping Clifford & co. company at Méaulte. We trained up to the wood at Flims (a ruined village just behind the right flank of the original front of attack on November 24th) and there took over from 4th Battalion some awful old derelict tanks. We were now some two miles to the right of Havrincourt Wood.

The whole country was very desolate and snow-covered and cold. The wood was not very much shelled. We lived in tents and were very well off. We were about three miles behind the line. Our stay was uneventful. We had to drive our tanks to Havrincourt one day for a false alarm, but we came back very shortly afterwards. Winter had set in hard, and there was little chance of a German attack. The wood was frequently bombed by aeroplane, but that was really all the war we saw. This was a great relief to us as the 4th Battalion had to make nightly expeditions to no-man's land to haul 9.2 guns that had been lost in the retreat and were now lying between the trenches,

back behind the lines. It was a bad job, as you had to drive a tank into no-man's land on a pitch-black night and then get out, possibly under machine-gun fire, and make these terrific howitzers fast to a hawser. You then cleared out under a storm of bullets etc. with the gun bumping along behind. I didn't fancy the idea at all myself.

On December 21st we heard we were to go back to rest at last – the rest promised ever since October 10th! We got our tanks ready, and at last we entrained on the afternoon of December 22nd at Flims. We detrained at Plateau – our halting-place from Wailly to Cambrai when we came down to the Nov. 20th action – and started to trek to Méaulte. Our tanks were hopelessly out of order, and it took us the whole day to get from Plateau to Méaulte – about four miles. Thus we got into camp at about 5.30 p.m. on the 24th December. When we got in, we found all preparations made for Christmas and most people feeling very considerably cheerier than they had done previously. There was no chance of the battalion having to go up to the line again till the next year's campaigning opened. We were really and truly in winter quarters at last. Our battalion had had its first taste of war.

Christmas Day dawned in a heavy snow storm, and I think it will be as well to describe it to give you some idea of our happy life behind the lines and the morale of our battalion after its adventures.

First, as to personnel: Major de Freine, our Company Commander at Ypres, had gone and so had Bargate his successor. He

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Figure 19

British defence on Nov. 30th, 1917. This picture shows the Villers-Plouich Front. The Germans have just been held up by the Guards Division's counter-attack and are opening up with their guns. The front line runs about 500 yards in front of the man taking cover here. This was the part we were knocking round under Capt. Clifford. Our position (which we took up some eight days later, when we came up) was over the crest and about 500 yards in front of the man. Thus we were just about where the front line was when this picture was taken. By then the front line had gone on about 1,000 yards. The picture gives a good idea of the deserted appearance of a show in recently 'inhabited' country. The white chalk you see everywhere added to the cold, miserable look of the place.

had been slightly shocked at Cambrai but was now back again. The Colonel had been very strongly condemned by the G.O.C. 51st Div. for his behaviour at Cambrai and was almost certain to be recalled, although he fought hard against it. A and C had had several changes in officers. Gatehouse, our second in command, had gone over to command C Company. B Company were left with Bargate in command and Cook second in command – he was formerly company reconnaissance officer and was a bit later in hospital. Clifford, Bagshaw, Homfray, and Harrison were our section commanders. They were all, except Harrison, regarded with contempt and deserved it all. Homfray was Quainton's section commander and was as wildly incompetent as any man I ever met. He was so bad that, in order to get rid of him, our company were determined to promote him to second in command to a company – such promotion meant he would have to go to another company. In the end C Company got him. By August 1918 they had had enough of him, and he was promoted to O.C. Company in order to get rid of him again. He was thus transferred to the 1st Battalion!

All these section commanders were very little better than animals in talk, in action or in manners.

The men were in a fairly bad way also. They had had bad fighting and poor rations. The camp was on top of a bleak and desolate

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Figure 20

Tank breaking through German wire. This photo gives you some idea of German wire. It is typical of the defensive wire at Cambrai. At Ypres the wire had all been blown up by weeks of ceaseless bombardment. At Cambrai they relied on tanks to crush paths through it for the infantry. This is how we did it. You can also get some idea of the country at Ypres when you realize that all this kind of stuff – sometimes belts 50 yards thick – was all churned into the ground. You seemed to have barbed wire sprouting out of the ground like weeds. In 1918, when we held parts of the old Ypres battlefields, we simply stumbled through old shell-holes overgrown with thistles and with the remains of this kind of wire protruding to trip you up. Of that I'll write later, though. You get some idea of the power of a tank when you realize that this wire, with its iron knife-rests and so on, was simply squashed out flat without affecting the tank in the very slightest!

hill. The whole district was on the edge of the devastated Somme area. There was nothing to do. It was very cold and blowing hard the whole time we were there. Snow used to come in through the cracks in the huts and cover the floor about an inch deep.

The combination of all these things proved too much. The men were given unlimited food and beer. No attempt was made to organize anything or do anything decently. By 10 a.m. Cook (the second in command of the company) was carried to bed dead drunk. Homfray was hopelessly maudlin and collapsed a little later. By about 11 a.m. Quainton and I felt as if we were in solitary state. Men were just shouting about and lying drunk round the camp. No one interfered.

The 4th Battalion, encamped near us, were even worse. It took them about a week to get sober.

The whole day was just spent in an orgy of eating and drinking and beastliness generally. Quainton and I were about tired of it by 6 p.m. and left camp to walk out in the dark and snow, as that seemed considerably more cheerful than staying in camp. On the distant horizon we could see the never-tiring Very lights rise up, flicker, and die away again. We came to a Y.M.C.A. hut and found a service going on. We went in. The place was bare and feebly lit.

Figure 21

Ribécourt on Nov. 20th. This was taken during the Nov. 20th attack. It was on the right flank of our battalion and so did not affect me personally. I have put it in as it was one of our landmarks and, more particularly, because it gives you a very good idea of village fighting. Note again that the village is hardly touched. When this photo was taken, machine-gun bullets were coming down the street and one grazed the camera. So you see that an advance was no fun. You can see no enemy, and yet death may not be far off if you aren't careful. You just creep round corners hoping for the best. As a matter of fact, in this you can just see two Germans far up the street scuttling across the road. Neither side shells the village as they don't know who's in it. The place is very quiet except for the crack of machine-gun and rifle, and an occasional tile that clatters down. I have put this in very largely as you can get some idea from this of our 1918 fighting, which I will describe later. All the points I have mentioned are typical of what we got then, so when you read of our village shows of 1918, look at this.

About twenty men were present, and all crowded up at one end of the hut. The service dragged on. No attempt was made to sing carols or Christmas hymns – that would have been more than we could stand. The sermon came – the text, 'Peace on earth, goodwill to men'. It was proved, apparently to the satisfaction of the preacher, that this was idealism – our real task was to hate evil and so, presumably, to hate Germans. We sang a closing hymn and cleared out.

We got back to camp, after trudging through snow and slush, at about 10 p.m., and thus ended our first Christmas in France. Had everyone gone mad?

Such was our battalion at the end of 1917 – dazed and brutish without hope or care. Another year was coming, and we all knew it would be the most desperate fighting yet. But 1918 was still far on the horizon. Few thought of it, and few cared. But for those who did, it was not a pleasant outlook. A hopeless set of officers in France and a country at home that realized nothing – that seemed our support. As for religion – well, that was nothing to do with war.

Figure 22

The devastated area. The old Somme battle resulted in the capture of this country – after it was thoroughly destroyed by the enemy. It now formed the 'rest' area for British troops.

1918

After the battalion had recovered from Christmas and New Year, we settled down to ordinary camp routine. Each company had a few tanks, all in very bad condition. These were at a tank park about a mile from our camp. Our chief work in the very cold weather we were having was to keep tanks in condition. They had to be run constantly to prevent freezing in the cooling system. Also they had to be moved, as otherwise even the tracks froze! You see, mud always got in between the actual chain track and the rollers which the track ran on. This mud would freeze and become like cement. This was so powerful that if you started your engine and tried to run the tank with the tracks frozen, all that happened was the complete destruction of the transmission. We had enormous trouble with this in all our tank shows in cold weather. All the time we had been standing-to behind Cambrai it had been a constant source of anxiety, as you can imagine, for we were always supposed to be ready for action, and any mistake with this would have meant possible disaster if an attack started.

The work was dull and usually carelessly and badly done. A section from each company would go down each morning and simply clean up the tanks and break up frost by using improvised petrol flares. The remainder of each company was employed in squad drill and so on. This was the official side of our life. But off parade was another thing. Amiens was quite within reach of a car, and an occasional trip to Amiens used to lighten the burden of existence for the officers. Quainton and I went in once or twice and had quite good meals at the Restaurant du Cathedral. The whole time we were at Méaulte we also walked to the officers' club at Albert – about two kilometres off.

The whole battalion was in rather an unsettled state. The personnel was changing and promotions were in the air. Jealousy and whispering became prominent as we unthawed and began to realize we were safe from the enemy for a bit. Clifford, who had been dubbed hero and awarded an imaginary medal (the V.P. – for distinguished bravery at Villers-Plouich) began to fear he would not be made a captain, and was afraid Quainton and I would, as I at any rate had been promised a section. At last Quainton and I were sent on courses. He was to go to a tank driving school at Wailly, the place we were at before we moved down for the Cambrai action. I was sorry for him, as it was a desolate spot and he would be little better off there than at Méaulte. I was sent on an instructor course to Merlimont, the place where we had done our battle practice before we went into the Ypres battle. An officer named Johnson, a tank commander in 7 Section (under Clifford and with Hauser) came with me. He was a very good fellow, I found as I got to know him better. He had been in the battalion a bit longer than I had and was a bit senior to me. He was very slightly built but had endless courage and could stick it like the best. He was made section commander later. We went to Merlimont, which is on the coast about five miles north of Étaples, by tender (a fast motor lorry for carrying small spares etc.). We found ourselves part of a number of officers sent from each battalion. Curiously enough, all the people seemed to be jolly good fellows and not a rotter there. We had a house to ourselves and very short hours of work. The whole time we were there we had blue skies and golden sands, and not a breath of war. It was simply magnificent. We never worked in the afternoon, but just sat in the shade on the veranda, smoked our pipes and watched the sea.

As the result of the exam, I was made gunnery instructor to the 4th Tank Brigade. General Hankey, the brigadier, came down once or twice to see how brigade training was going on. Every week a

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Figure 23

Cambrai front under snow. Preparing wire for the defences against the March attack. The scene was very much like this when we were 'standing to' at the end of 1917 after Nov. 30th.

company from the 4th Brigade came and went through a course, which I mapped out and supervised. So he came down to supervise *me*! He spoke to me two or three times and at last suggested that I had had enough fighting and would do better to take on a job as permanent brigade instructor at Merlimont. This I refused. I explained that I thought it was a job for a fit man and not for me, and he saw my point and agreed. The first week a company from D Battalion came down. It was commanded by a Captain Nixon, who was afterwards to be transferred to our company as second in command. I got on quite well with them. The next week, A Company from our battalion came, and all went smoothly. Then suddenly I was ordered back to the battalion. We were going up to the 'line'. The rest was over. This was about the end of February.

When I got back, I had the D.S.O. ribbon pinned on me by Ellis, G.O.C. Tank Corps in France. I had been told previously that I had been awarded it.

The battalion then drew tanks and prepared. Quainton had gone on leave and was due back. But he didn't come, and I heard from him to say he was down with shell-shock. This was a big knock for me, as I felt now that I was almost alone in the battalion. I knew very few officers, and of those I did know, the majority were rotten and very unpleasant.

We entrained and went up – the same old business. Again, as we approached we saw the Very lights rise up, flicker and disappear. As we drew nearer and our train went slower, acute depression and nerves settled on us all. Whenever we stopped we could hear the guns. Once, when we stopped, we found it was because of bombing. We waited and saw bombs being dropped by the line in front. They came nearer, and suddenly we found them dropping round us. By this time we were all lying on the permanent way. Fortunately, all fell at the bottom of the bank, and we had no casualties. The train went on at last. We arrived at Tincourt, our destination, and drew our tanks up to a wood about two miles off.

Our stay here was uneventful. We were in the 5th Army and in the devastated regions again. We were five miles from the front line. The weather was awful – snow and slush everywhere – and there was no escape from the devastation. We lived in huts in the wood.

At last I got leave. I need not say much about it, as you probably remember it, Mother. When at last we came up to town, we heard the

news of the start of the March battle. We had been warned it would start on the 11th at first, so I knew it would not be long. The first news we got was when Mother and I were walking in Hyde Park. I bought an evening paper and saw '16,000 prisoners taken by the enemy', and above everything else my eyes were attracted by one passage. 'The enemy have taken Tincourt and we are holding him in our battle positions.' Now Tincourt was our camp. I also knew that there weren't any battle positions there. When I left – and I found they were never touched again – the trenches were just marked out by flags, but they had not been dug. There simply were no defences whatever at Tincourt, and I knew the thing was a lie. Also, Tincourt was five miles behind the 'line'. That is to say, the enemy had advanced five miles on our bit of front alone and had passed all our defences. I never had such a shock in my life, and I knew we were very near disaster. I think I told you, Mother, that it was all right and so on. But it was almost incredible to me. We saw 'Chou-Chin-Chow', but of course it meant nothing to me, and I've no doubt it was the same for you, as I was to go back to France next morning. I had had two days' leave extension to get my medal as it was, but even then I never felt sure I should go straight into action, and I knew the battalion must already have had its show.

I need hardly say that I didn't sleep that night. I simply walked about the room and didn't dare to think what was happening. At last I saw the sky grow grey and knew my leave was over. I shaved and went down to the dingy early breakfast. I don't think any of us were very lively! The cab came, and the driver made a forced attempt at being cheery by saying, 'Back again soon, sir!' and off I went. Victoria was the usual scene – men lying asleep on the platform, women rushing about, and khaki everywhere. But everyone was frightfully cheery. All were convinced it was the end, and all were cracking jokes about going back to camps and trenches now miles behind the German lines.

When we reached Boulogne, we found all were stopped from going up the line, owing to congestion. The rail services were completely disorganized by the enemy advance, and there was no knowledge of the whereabouts of the units of most officers and men. We were sent up to the camps on the hill outside Boulogne, and there we did odd parades and things while waiting. Many officers flouted all orders and left Boulogne by various stratagems, determined to rejoin

their units by hook or crook – working their way up on transport lorries and so on. At last orders came through for Tank Corps. We had to report at depot. This was at Le Treport, and there we went. It was a very fine camp, and very finely organized. We had very little to do there and spent most of the time harassing the orderly room for news of our units and permission to rejoin them.

On the 7th April I heard that our battalion – now called the 5th – was to be relieved. They were in the 'line' as infantry near Amiens. On the 8th they came out, and on the 9th I rejoined them at rest in a village near Blangy (where they had gone after Méaulte and while I was at Merlimont). I found them all very cheery. Nearly all the old stagers were there, but nearly all the reinforcements had been lost again. The tank commanders had nearly all gone, but most of the people who came out with me had been acting section commanders and so on in the battle and had missed the worst part of the show – trying to save a tank with engine trouble from a rapidly advancing enemy. They told many amusing stories of the retreat – most things are funny when you are safe. Promotions had come through in some cases, and we all knew how we stood. I was not yet a captain but was a section commander, and it was just a question of time before I got gazetted. A certain Fairbanks, who had led a very chequered and shady career as a civilian, was commander of No. 7. Bagshaw had been sent off on some safer and more congenial job; and I had 8 Section in his place. Clifford was in command of No. 5 Section, and an American named Robinson had No. 6. He spent most of his time talking. He was really harmless but was subsequently put under arrest for something or other and lost his job. The men were much as before. Carter had gone from 8 Section to be company reconnaissance officer, Cook was still second in command and Bargate O.C. Company. Our colonel was new – O'Kelly from King Edward's Horse. He was a kind but voluble and excitable old liar, who was determined to get the D.S.O. at all costs. His reputation, outside the battalion, was terrific. The battalion complained bitterly that all through the March battle he had dashed about in absolute safety in a car, offering to hold the 'line' everywhere and anyhow with his battalion – the troops of which he was too frightened to go near. But these things were only subjects for amusement, for we could only see prolonged rest ahead of us, and Amiens seemed to be safe. In order to minimize the effect of the enormous casualties we were having, the battalion was arranged on a new plan.

A certain number of officers and men were to be earmarked before each action and kept behind as a nucleus on which to build up the battalion from reinforcements. This gave scope for resting men who had had heavy fighting, but in practice you wanted good men too much to leave them out. So as usual the brunt fell on the best.

We lived this happy and contented kind of life without a care. News came of the German breakthrough up North on April 9th, but we remained calm and serene. But suddenly on April 12th at 5 a.m. I was awoken by Parkins, my batman. The battalion was to parade at once.

This did not look like amusement, and it wasn't. By 6 a.m. we were all out. The troops had to be inspected for action at once. We went through all the weary paraphernalia mechanically – gas masks, tin hats, iron rations, identity discs (the most suggestive of all) and the rest. At 8 a.m., as we stood on parade overhauling everything and doing the hundred and one jobs that had to be done, a large staff car rolled up, and General Ellis got out. He made no inspection but a short speech. The situation in the north was, he said, very serious and critical. The enemy had broken through and had not been stopped. The Tank Corps had been called on again and this time as infantry – there were not enough tanks ready and no scope for them if they were. Our record as a battalion made him confident we would do our best. Our job was to hold out in small isolated posts and stay there even if the enemy got through. Then we were to open fire and cut them off.

Such were the words of encouragement for us, and I suppose they were the best that could be given. But none of us was in the mood to cheer or feel we had been done a great honour – that time was past.

By 1 p.m. we had sorted out the 'nucleus', and the battalion was ready. But we had no rifles. We were simply armed as for tank fighting (with Lewis guns), but we had no tanks. We had a midday meal, and at 2 p.m. there drove up a large convoy of lorries, bearing, as a sign, the red sun on a yellow circle. It was the mark of the G.H.Q. Reserve.

The sun had gone in, and it was now becoming cold and miserable. We climbed onto the lorries, waved goodbye to the lucky blighters who were to stay behind, and off the lorries went. The journey was very dusty and beastly. We lay down in the bottom of the lorries and bumped about and tried to keep comfortable. And on we went.

As it was getting dark we arrived near Hazebrouck. But it was not the same bustling town we knew in 1917. Streams of miserable people trailed off along the roads, carrying bundles. The roads presented a weird sight of misery and poverty.

At last we came in sight of the town. The flare of bursting shells could be plainly seen. The Germans must have made a tremendous advance, and this brought it home to us. We were now looking down onto Hazebrouck. Somewhere amongst the trees beyond were the enemy, and only the Guards Division between them and the town. But we had not reached our destination. Hazebrouck marked the nearest point of the enemy – we were travelling across his front.

We skirted Hazebrouck to avoid the German shelling and went on. One had a curiously deserted feeling. You felt you were being pushed into the unknown – into the terror all the inhabitants had been flying. But we had passed even them now. To complete our loneliness, we saw, along the railway, all the signals down and no signs of life, but a very heavy train drawn by two immense goods engines going away from what was now the front line. I suppose it was about the last train, saving army stores, to get away.

Night had now come on, and still we followed roads parallel to the front line. The stars were out, and it was freezing cold. At last we stopped. We had reached a rifle dump. We all got out and filed past three piles. At one we were given a rifle each, at the next an oil bottle and pull-through, and the last a bayonet and scabbard. After a short pause we climbed in and went on. Almost half an hour later we reached our destination and tumbled out of the lorries.

Our company, very sleepy and tired, fell in by the roadside. After a pause we were marched to a farm and allotted a barn. We posted sentries and went to sleep. It was about 2 a.m. At 4 a.m. orders came through to the company, and we were awakened. Our men were to stand to arms at once.

It was pitch-black, so we tried to relieve the darkness by candles. The huge barn just showed up in the dim light as we pulled through rifles, rolled up puttees, tightened up our equipment and swore. It was probably a picturesque scene, but with two hours' sleep in twenty-four and the immediate prospect of action, we let the artistic side look after itself. As soon as the officers had pulled themselves together, we were assembled outside in the courtyard and given

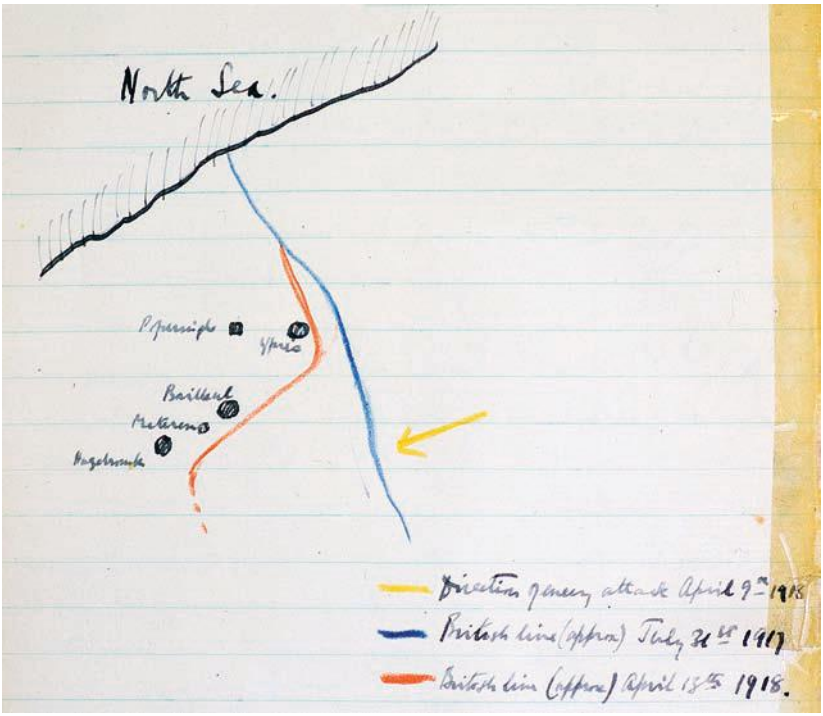

Figure 24

General position after March '18 and April 9th–13th attack. This rough diagram will show you what had happened. The enemy had broken right through and made Ypres the point of a terrific salient. We were now fighting or about to fight in places which were miles behind the line when we were up at Ypres in 1917.

maps. We discovered then that we were near Bailleul and in what had been perfectly peaceful country until the enemy advance. So, for the first time, we were to have fighting amongst houses, gardens and green fields. Briefly, the position was this (Figure 24): the enemy, when last heard of, were being held by miscellaneous British troops some two miles in front of us. There was no shelling and no signs of war, simply because we had very few guns and the enemy had not yet got theirs up – the advance had been too quick for them. They were gathering themselves for the next spring. The position of the front

line was unknown. But we were to reinforce at once as the urgent need was for troops – as troops came, so they were being flung into the gaps.

With this, the Colonel gave us his blessing (by messenger and not in the flesh), and we went off. We didn't march, for the following reasons. We had had no sleep. We all carried (i.e. everyone below the rank of captain) a rifle, the full infantry kit, eight drums of Lewis gun ammunition per man and one Lewis gun per six men. Full marching order was bad enough, but this was hopeless.

We trailed on and on and stumbled and cursed as dawn slowly broke on us. What we were going into we didn't know and didn't care – we hadn't 'any b – – – tanks anyway, thank Heaven'.

We went on through peaceful and quite pretty country, and at last stopped at a perfectly good barn. We made tea and ate bully and tried to sleep. The sun, which had come out earlier, was now overclouded, and the air grew chilly.

The second in command of the company, Cook, and the company reconnaissance officer, B. Carter, went to get into touch with the infantry. They found Brigade H.Q. and went from there to Battalion H.Q. In the meantime we persuaded ourselves we should not be wanted in action at all and lay on the straw and stared at the barn roof.

At last Cook and Carter came back, and we watched them talking to Bargate and rustling maps. This did not look hopeful – and it wasn't.

Carter came to me and said I was wanted. I joined the conference and was informed that the infantry wanted a section of Lewis guns *at once* – the rest of the company would follow at night. I was the lucky section commander for the job. So my luckless section fell in, and we went through the old wearisome examination of kit all over again, had tea and pushed off. We were only 800 yards from the front line, so we kept off the road and went over ploughed fields etc. for safety. I halted the section after a time and left them behind a hedge while I went to Battalion H.Q. for orders. I discovered the C.O. was Colonel McNeil – known in England as 'Sapper', the writer of the short war stories. He was commanding the remnants of a Middlesex pioneer battalion – they act as Engineers to their brigade or division as wanted usually, but now had to hold the 'line'. Briefly, the position was as follows: his men held **B** (see diagram, Figure 25). Other

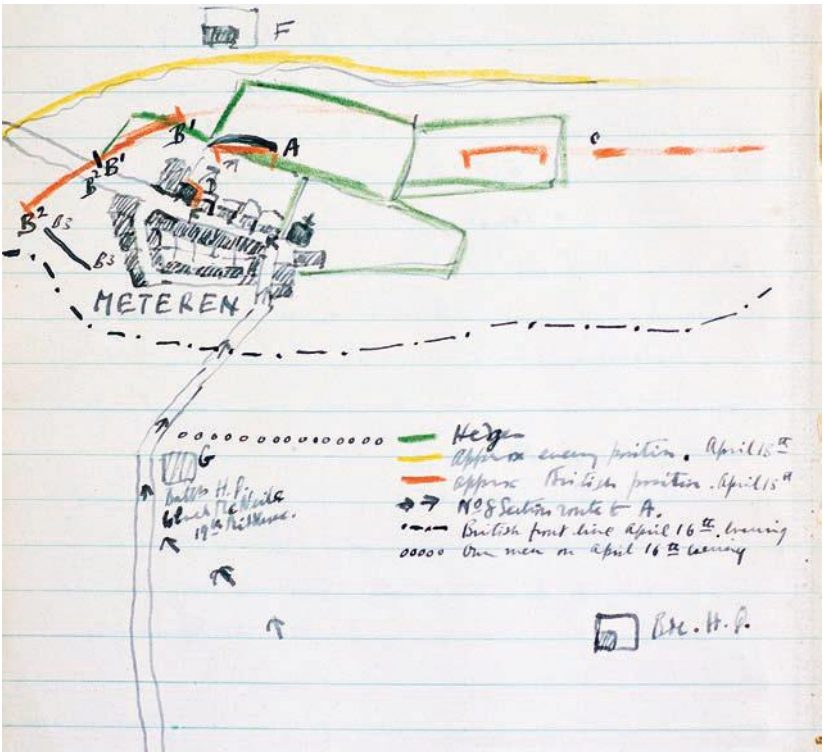

Figure 25

Meteren position. Meteren was on a hill and overlooked the enemy position. It was about 20 feet higher than the surrounding country and very important as it commanded many enemy positions and safeguarded Bailleul. At A my guns could sweep right and left from the left of B to the right of C. It was a very fine position. D was Section H.Q. where I went, and about 20 yards from A. Infantry Battalion H.Q. (G) was about 800 yards from A. No scale given as it is not all to scale.

British troops were along **C**. He wanted us to go to **A** and do it *at once*. An attack was expected at 3 p.m., as the enemy had got a good many guns up now and was in a hurry to break through. It was 2 p.m. now and vitally important that we should get there at once and *stay* there at all costs. The only way was to go there down the main road – quickest and easiest for heavily laden men.

I left at once, and as I was going back, the enemy shells began falling in Meteren. So he *had* got his guns up – that part of the instructions was sound enough at any rate!

We went down the road for all we were worth. When we got into the village, I broke the section into four parties – making one Lewis gun each. We then set off – a gun team at a time to double through the village. I went with the first lot, and Bridges – the other officer in the section – came with the last. It was hard work with all our kit. We stumbled forward as tiles and glass tinkled down all round. Coils of telegraph lines which had been shot down helped to trip us up. After an age (so it seemed), we reached **D**, dashed through the house and lay down panting at the far end of the back garden. In time the remaining lots arrived. Behind cover of the garden hedge, **E**, we opened into extended order. We were just ready to dash forward to **A** when the enemy barrage opened onto Meteren properly and the village began to go up in smoke. We were only just in time. I gave the signal, and we got through the hedge unseen and then dashed forward. As we ran, the enemy opened up heavy machine-gun fire, but they were very wide of the mark, till suddenly they began to hit up the ground in front. But we had practically reached **A**. Once behind the hedge, we fetched out entrenching tools and dug small shallows to sit in. So each man had a kind of hollow to lie in. After about an hour we had each of us made a place about one foot deep, and we began to feel safe. But at the same time we had to do some firing. We had our Lewis guns posted in the hedge, and with these we opened up on some of the enemy we could see moving about by **F**. The shelling grew heavier and heavier, but none of it came our way. At last it died down, and everything grew quiet again. So the enemy attack was not to come after all.

The sun was out again now and just setting. Behind our hedge we proceeded to make ourselves comfortable. It was a beautiful evening, and our business kept us from thought or worry. We dug down about two feet, and up came water. So we started to put up a kind of breastwork. It was like a pleasant little job in somebody's back garden. The sunset on the green fields and the red tiled roofs in the distance looked too pretty to be a battlefield scene.

For reasons best known to themselves, Company H.Q. insisted the actual section was to be left at **A** under Bridges, my second in command, while I went back and saw to arrangements generally.

Actually the idea was not bad – two officers to 16 men was absurd. But it annoyed me at the time, for I still hadn't learnt to appreciate good luck when I got it. As a result I was withdrawn to Company H.Q. – the barn the section had started from. I got back at about 8 p.m.

When I reached H.Q., I had two petrol cans of hot tea made. These were then put into infantry packs stuffed with straw. A stew was also made, and this was similarly put into a petrol box, which was packed with straw.

I then went up with four men, taking this to the section. When we arrived, it was bright moonlight and bitterly cold. The tea was absolutely boiling – too hot to drink at first – and the stew was the same. I felt very proud of myself, as this was about the only part of the line where men were not eating cold bully and biscuits. I really think it set the men up properly, for it was bitterly cold that night. When I got back to H.Q., I made application for Very lights, S.O.S. signal lights and barbed wire. We could have none of them.

In this way the section really was left in a bad position. But they were not the only ones, for the rest of B Company (minus the superfluous officers) went into the 'line' that night. They were in the position **B1 – B1**. Bargate nominally was in command. But he had soon reduced himself to a state of happy insensibility by frequent applications to the bottle. Carter therefore did most of the commanding there was to be done, and if we had only had enough whisky to keep Bargate dead drunk, the British army would not have lost Meteren. But of that later.

I went up to the section next morning (15th) and stayed there all day till 5 p.m., when I came back for orders. I also obtained permission to stay at **D** (about 50 yards behind the section), so I could be in touch with my section and with the rest of B Company. I took up my abode there at 8 p.m., when I received a message from Bargate. He said the enemy had broken through near Bailleul, but that no retirement was to take place on our front. But his part of the company was shifting to **B2 – B2**, and his position was being taken over by some Middlesex. So actually the position of British troops on this front was as before, and we had no real cause for anxiety. I was again ordered back. I decided to return in the morning.

At about 4 a.m. Bridges came, saying that an Argyle and Sutherland patrol had been out and found the British positions at **B1 – B1** *unoccupied*. This news was almost incredible, as it meant about 800

yards' gap in the British line. The enemy could walk into Meteren when they liked. I decided I had better report the situation at once, so I went back. I left Bridges the runners so he could send back messages if anything happened. I went back to Brigade H.Q. (Infantry) as fast as I could and reported. The General at once said the situation was most serious and told me to take up troops at once if I could find any. I collected a few men at our former Company H.Q. and started off. It was about 5 a.m., and so far I had acted over the heads of my immediate superiors. I was rather frightened of them, but as I now had the General's orders, all was well.

I started up the same road that the section had first taken. But no sooner did I get on the road itself than an enemy machine-gun opened on us – from Meteren itself!

I immediately extended the few men I had so as to avoid casualties, and we pushed on with our left resting on the edge of the road. We were just in front of **G**. At this stage I could see in front of me some British troops. They were our front line retiring. They stopped on the dotted line (see diagram, Figure 26) and held the enemy there. In the meantime we took up a position where we were, in partially dug trenches, and waited to go on at once if we saw the enemy attack. But as it grew darker the enemy fire died down – they had taken the first step towards Bailleul.

I now had time to take stock of the position. I had about 15 men, with about four of Bargate's men and one of my runners – Buchanan. The latter had been sent back by Bridges to say the enemy were attacking and had bumped into us as we went up. He knew nothing more than that. It was clear that Bargate must have left **B1 – B1** before he had handed over the position – a thing that was expressly against all principles of war at all. As it happened, the troops who should have taken over hadn't arrived, and so his mistake did not pass unnoticed but meant the loss of Meteren. As I found out afterwards, this is exactly what had happened. The full story, as told me by Carter, was as follows:

Bargate had left the trench and gone to the left before he was relieved. That morning they suddenly found the enemy advancing, and at the same time fire was opened on them from behind by the enemy who had gone through the gap. Hopeless confusion followed, and they just cleared out anyhow, being shot down as they went.

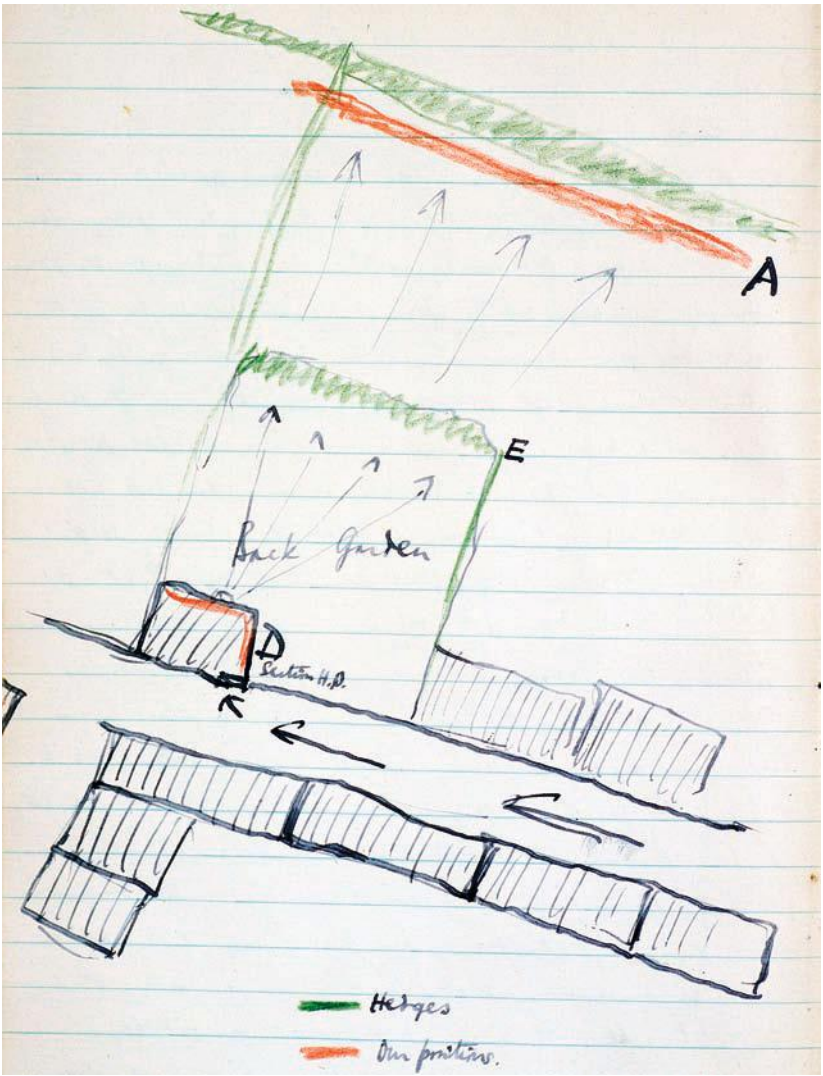

Figure 26

Meteren position. This is a large scale of Figure 25. The lettering is the same as on Figure 25.

Carter rallied some, and they formed a defensive flank **B3 – B3** and so held up the enemy advance. For this he was given an M.C. In the meantime the rescue of the 33rd Division (the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders) had centred the line on *our* side of Meteren. This finally held the enemy advance. Bargate was last seen wounded. He had several shots that went through the shrapnel helmet but missed his head. In the end he got back to England, and they kept him, I think – anyhow, he never came back to us any more.

I spent the day in the trench by fortifying our bit as best we could. It was very harassing, as the enemy were keeping up a fairly heavy and accurate 5.9 bombardment on our trench. We had no casualties. By midnight we were in a pretty strong position and had fetched up more ammunition. At 4.30 a.m. we were relieved and trailed back to Company H.Q. (the old one). The relief was absolutely unexpected, but we were of little use, and they prepared to put in a proper unit rather than have isolated detachments all over the place. They could afford it now, as apparently French troops had relieved the British on the right and thus strengthened for the 33rd Division reserve. On reaching Company H.Q., we halted for a short space.

We then left and marched back still further. We were to be billeted at the Convent des Trappistes on Mont des Cats. As we marched, it grew lighter, and we could now see the 'line' as it was on our right where the French were. For the first time we saw some guns. The French had their front supported by what seemed an enormous number of 75's. Our journey up Mont des Cats was quite pleasant. The fact that we were resting, the clear, fine morning and the cheery sound of the 75's all helped to make us cheerful.

We reached the convent, after some delays, at about 10.30 a.m. It was a big building and imposing in appearance. We had often seen it away on our right rear from La Lovie and Oosthoek. But it was a jerry-built construction and offered small cover, as we found to our cost later.

The whole battalion was withdrawn, and we were assembled together at the convent. In the afternoon we were spread about the building in the cellars for safety. But we had not done this long when the enemy commenced shelling. We watched his shells come nearer, when at last there was a terrific roar, and a 5.9 crashed through the chapel roof, through the cloister floor, and burst in the cellar. No very great damage was done. Cracks appeared in the cellar roof, and one

man had his leg very neatly amputated. He was taken off calmly smoking a cigarette. He was laughing and joking and seemed to feel no pain at all. This accident did not leave us as confident and cheerful as we had been. But there was nothing to be done. We wanted shelter, and we were determined to stay where we were, as it was quite possible they would not shell the convent for long.

After rifles had been cleaned and we were all ready for action again we turned in. The men slept on the floor, but the officers discovered great luxury in some mortuary boards, which we used for beds.

The next day was spent in kit inspection and so on. Sometime during that day Hauser, who was now under me in my section, and I had a talk. I mention this conversation as it will give some idea of the state of affairs in our battalion. Our battalion had, as a whole, done very well at Meteren and earned the praise of the Divisional General. But that fact was due to C Company and not to ourselves. *Our* show had been disastrous. I had lost the whole of my section but one man, and although it was hardly my fault, I was not doing my duty at all as a section commander by being so far from my men. I never let that mistake occur again and subsequently fought the question out with the O.C. Company when he wanted me far behind the men. The example set by Bargate was appalling, and the rot he had caused spread rapidly and was increased by the ill-behaviour of Clifford, who had again distinguished himself. In short, the general effect of the action was a lowering of the morale of our company. This was extremely serious as at this time morale was all-important. Hauser and I talked over all these matters and resolved to counteract these tendencies as best we could by pretending, in future, to enjoy action and to discourage in mess and elsewhere all talk of 'wind up' and that kind of thing. We had seen already where casual joking in that way led to, and from this time on, whether as tank commanders or as section commanders, we never gave up this policy. By degrees we got new officers who came to do the same, and, looking back on it all now, I can see how the standard rose as a result. It was no longer funny to talk of 'wind up' and 'beating it' and so on. In course of time people discovered that such talk was not expected of an officer. But this all took time. There was little chance for improvement till bad senior officers like Clifford & co. were cleared out. Later, as we gained in position, things became easier. I really believe this was the start of a better fighting spirit in the battalion. I don't mean to suggest that *we*

were responsible for courage or anything in others. But I do think that we gave good officers who came to our company a chance to show their mettle. They did not immediately have their spirit undermined by foolish and beastly talk. We also spoke to officers of our age in A and B Companies, and we all worked more or less together in the matter. Before this there was much discontent, but we were all too isolated to do anything. Now we felt that there were many people backing us up. As I have said, this took time. At this date things were very bad. It is very difficult to stop in a line for days and expect an enemy attack at any moment. The strain on the nerves is very great, especially when you know there is nothing between the enemy and the sea but your line of troops. Idiotic jokes in mess and open talk of fear all contributed to lower one's spirits, and, as you will hear, I was already in a very low state.

The night's rest and the good food made us feel very much better. We were hardly disturbed by the enemy's shelling of the convent as his fire was erratic, and although there were casualties, they occurred in a different part of the building.

At midday we had orders to move, and the battalion marched out by companies travelling northwards. As we went, we saw the enemy shelling Mont Noir and Mont Rouge on our right. As we went along, orders were explained. The battalion was going in to support the 9th Division at Wytschaete. The remains of B Company were going into the 'line' that night, while A and C took up positions in a new camp. B Company remnants were to be combined in one section, as there were only 36 men left. This meant we could man six guns. These six guns were to be under my command. I was to take this section into the line and occupy three 'farms' to the left of the great crater at Wytschaete (see Figure 27). We would thus form three 'strong points' with two Lewis guns in each and so strengthen the left of the 9th (Lowland Scottish) Division. The distance between the left farm and the right farm was about 1,000 yards. I was to make Section H.Q. about a quarter of a mile behind the centre farm. At this I objected and finally had the distance reduced to 200 yards. This was better, but still useless, as it was too far to allow effective control in action. Such control is always difficult. A distance of 200 yards made it almost impossible. The ridge (the plan, Figure 27, will show you the position) lay between us. The enemy's position was not certain.

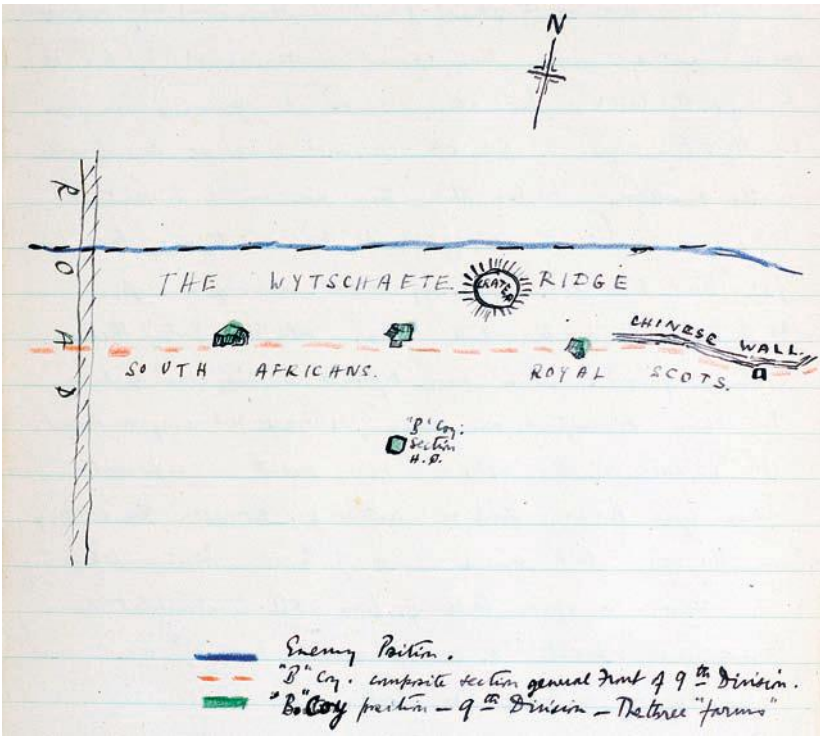

Figure 27
Wytschaete Ridge position.

Sometimes he was on our side of the crest and at others on his side of it. Generally speaking the ridge was in no-man's land. When we reached A and C Company camp, they halted, and we boarded lorries and were taken up to a point some 1,000 yards behind our 'line'. Here we disembarked.

We slowly stumbled up to the line, and after about half an hour our guides brought us to the left 'farm'. Here I left two guns and went on to the second 'farm', and from there to the third.

This operation seems simple enough. In point of fact it is about as simple an operation as one is likely to get in war. But there is more in it than there seems. Imagine very tired men and two very tired officers all carrying heavy loads. The country was simply a wilderness. In

front, where the enemy was, we could see a ridge with a few stunted trees standing stark against the sky. The ground was torn up by the shell-fire of the old battles of Messines. The craters were still there but were now overgrown with rank thistles and weed. The remains of old buried entanglements sprouted through the earth and now and then hurled someone headlong as they caught his foot. The deeper shell craters were filled with blackish water, which stank.

The physical difficulty of going on through this was not our only trouble. We had just had a nasty knock. Officers and men were mystified by a kind of fighting they could not understand. We knew very little of our work, and here we were, stumbling on to heaven knows what, led by a guide who probably didn't know his way and would only admit it when he had got us thoroughly lost. These worries harassed one the whole time. So you may judge of our relief when we were finally installed where we hoped to be.

The farms were practically non-existent: only one had anything to show for itself and that had the remains of an old cellar.

There is nothing much to say about our stay here. We had no fighting, and it is only important as it was one more step towards misery and defeat. At night I used to stumble across wire and shell-holes from farm to farm – this was not possible in daylight. (Imagine this occupation. The photo – Figure 28 – will help you to do so; see also Figure 27.) There were no trenches, and except on our left and right, there were no troops other than our six gun crews. I simply have a vague memory of painfully trudging my 800 yards and wondering whether I was going in the right direction for one farm or another, or whether I was just going straight into the enemy lines. Now and then a Very light would flare up fitfully and die away. At such times I stood still – not so much to avoid being shot as because it seemed to be the right thing to do.

I used to do most of my work at night and usually stayed up at one farm or another then. But in daytime I used to go back to Section H.Q. according to orders in case anyone came round. The days were fairly awful. There was a blazing sun most of the time, and this used to beat down on the piece of elephant iron that made my H.Q. and make the inside intolerably stuffy and hot. Here I used to lie, tired out after the night, in a kind of stupor, which served instead of sleep. It was a weird business – the heat, and the nightmares out of which

one started up suddenly in a kind of horror to find the sweat pouring down one's face. It was almost impossible to distinguish dream from reality. The tat–tat–tat of the German machine-guns would chime in with your dream with uncanny effect, so that when you awoke you wondered whether you were dreaming. The machine-gun made you think everything was genuine, and only by degrees you recovered yourself to fall into uneasy sleep again.

It did not take long for interest in life to die out. Soon I found myself almost hopeless. I used to lie on my back and stare at the low roof. Sometimes I stared for hours at a small piece of mud that hung from the roof by a grass and quivered to the explosion of the shells. Then suddenly one day I heard that the South Africans on our left were playing the fool. They used to crawl out onto the road on their left at night and try to get hit by the German machine-gun that fired down the road. This news had a curiously bracing effect. I don't know now whether the tale was true – certainly it had been common enough in the earlier part of the war – but I felt things now could get no worse and that actually a gleam of hope had appeared – it was always possible to get badly wounded or perhaps even killed.

This may seem hardly possible to you. But the fact remains that life had now reached such a pitch that horrible mutilations or death could not conceivably be worse. I found myself looking forward to getting killed, as then, at least, one would be rid of this intolerable misery. These thoughts were uppermost with me then and excluded all others – and I think many were in the same state. After all, if you get a man and hunt him like an animal, in time he will become one. I am at a loss now to tell you of our life. Such worlds separate the ordinary human's point of view from mine at that time, that anything I can write will either be incomprehensible or will give a quite wrong impression. Briefly, I felt like this: I didn't care tuppence whether we held the 'line' or not. Germany's victory or defeat was nothing. Nevertheless, I would do my job by my men as well as I could, as there was nothing else to do. I wasn't interested in religion or world politics or any rot like that. I was merely an insignificant scrap of humanity that was being intolerably persecuted by unknown powers, and I was going to score off those powers by dying. After all, a mouse must feel that it is one up on the playful cat when it dies without making any sport for its captor.

With this new idea before me, I felt better. I didn't feel afraid any more, and I walked about doing my job feeling as if I had scored off Providence.

Our section was moved further to the right a few days later (I had lost all sense of time now). We evacuated the farms and manned Chinese Wall as one strong point (see Figure 29). This was far more satisfactory than before, from a defensive point of view; our isolated posts could have done nothing. While we were at Chinese Wall, we were much cursed by enemy aeroplanes. There was none of ours to be seen. This had a very bad effect on our morale, so one morning I determined on a demonstration. We loaded our six guns, and I gave instructions that, when I gave the signal, they were all to open fire on the next Boche that came over. Very soon a low-flying aeroplane appeared. As he drew nearer, I drew my whistle and blew. At once all our guns opened together. The aeroplane immediately swerved off, and it looked as if several pieces were knocked out of it. I feel sure it was damaged, as we had no more visits that day. The great thing was, the whole show cheered the men wonderfully. They felt they had at last got their own back a bit. The Colonel of the Royal Scots was very

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Figure 28

The Wytschaete position. A photo of the road in Figure 27. The left 'farm' of our position was about 100 yards up, on the right-hand side of the road, as you see it here. We had to march up this and then turn to our right and go down a path. The path, of course, was simply a track running round the lip of the craters. The photo does not give a good idea of the ridge. But the road dips into a valley a little further on, and from this valley the ridge stood up quite clearly. As you can see the ridge wasn't much of a thing – but it had held up the British Army.

This photo will give you some idea of our life in this sector. Imagine this 'road' peppered with M.G. fire. Then imagine the shell-fire. And in this district every gun and every shell echoed and re-echoed, until at last the noise died away in weird booms and groans utterly unlike the original sound. The sound was quite different from anything I know. If anything was needed to complete the horror of that place, those echoes did it; for it needed no great imagination to think of those shuddering reverberations as the wails of spirits still tortured by the memories of their misery, still lamenting the incredible folly that doomed their successors to the same fate.

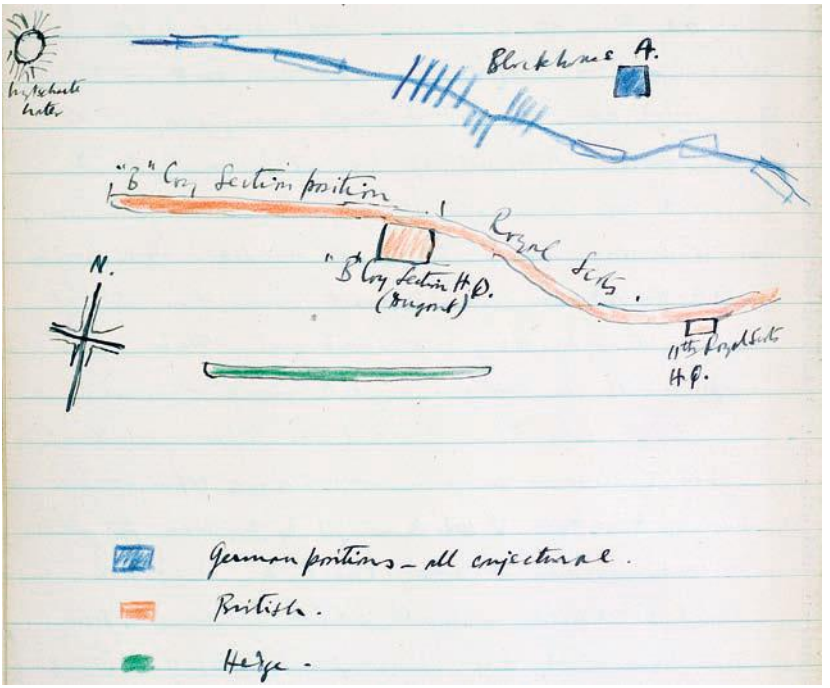

Figure 29
Chinese Wall position.

pleased, as he said it had cheered his men too. This colonel was a very good chap. He was about 42. I used to go and see him occasionally, and, to keep ourselves going, we used to talk about Addison's essays. In the evenings when the enemy would open up with his 5.9's, we used to hold our literary meetings. He would say he couldn't stand that infernal row – the enemy would be practically hitting our breastwork (Chinese Wall) by this time – and so he would hail me, and we used to stand by Section H.Q. dugout and watch developments while we talked hard about Sir Roger de Coverley. Poor fellow! He was killed a few days later. He seemed a very sound fellow and stuck it out, although you could see his nerves were nearly gone.

Although we now felt better than when we were scattered over our three farms, the position was not really satisfactory. Our position

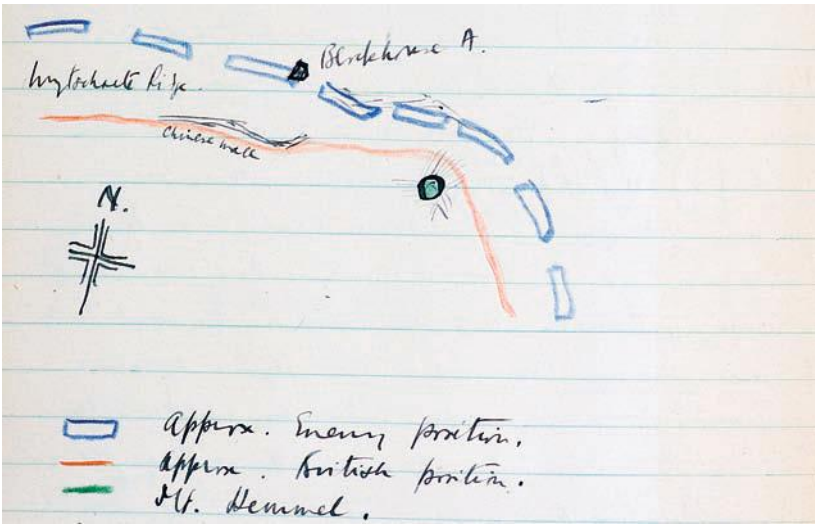

Figure 30

April–May '18, general position, Wytschaete–Mt. Kemmel. Letters are the same as on Figure 29.

at Chinese Wall was useless if the enemy attacked from the Kemmel side (see diagram, Figure 30). This was *the* real fault of the position, and it was not a merely local defect. When in the end these positions were taken, that is how they fell – the enemy took Kemmel and came down from the flank. But our own troubles were many. The enemy swept our positions very thoroughly with machine-guns – especially from blockhouse **A**. No movement from Chinese Wall was possible – as soon as one left the shelter of the breastwork, one was sniped. As the Royal Scots Colonel said, it was a good thing that sniper couldn't shoot. He always potted, and he never hit anyone while we were there. Added to these little difficulties, the enemy shelled us with gas. We slept at night with our gas mask tubes in our teeth. The food was quite good, but water was scarce. What little we had came in badly cleaned petrol tins and tasted filthy. One fellow complained that he felt like a petrol lighter after a dose of water from the supply.

On the whole we spent our days in greater comfort than we might have done. We were pleased to note the arrival of a French mortar,

which soon made a mess of blockhouse **A**. This did not end harassing fire at night though; it earned, on the contrary, a very heavy 5.9 bombardment for us that night.

At last news came that we were to be relieved. We made all preparations for departure, but with no real hope, for we had already been fooled by that story. The section pessimist prophesied an enemy attack before we could leave.

At about 6.30 p.m., the enemy suddenly commenced shelling far on our right. We watched the bright white light of our guns flickering across the sky as our barrage answered theirs. The red glow of their shrapnel bursting and coloured lights of our S.O.S. signals made a weird and terrible sight. But the unpleasant part was the fact that the barrage zone seemed to be extending towards us. Before many minutes, the enemy barrage had opened up on our immediate right, and I gave the order to stand to arms.

The sentries had to stay up and watch carefully all that happened. The rest of the men kept at the bottom of the trench, ready to spring up as soon as the barrage lifted and the enemy advanced.

By this time the barrage was on to us as well. The Royal Scots Colonel at once sent up the S.O.S. – a red light over a green over a yellow. These lights are fired out of a pistol and float across the fields tied together, looking somewhat like a ship's riding lights. When the infantry send them up, it is a signal to the artillery to drop their barrage. It is very weird on a quiet night to see the S.O.S. suddenly soar into the sky. Almost at once the whole place rocks and sways to the roar of our guns – for the speed with which the barrage falls is most important in defence. A peaceful night is at once transformed into a scene of indescribable chaos. I have no time here to go into the question of S.O.S. signals. The colours were frequently changed so that the enemy did not know them. Each part of the line had its own colours.

In reply to our S.O.S., our barrage came down. While the opposing artilleries amused themselves firing at the opposing infantries, the opposing infantries took as much cover as they could and swore gently to relieve their feelings.

We waited an hour or two like this while the S.O.S. went up more and more on our right. There seemed to be no movement on our immediate front. At about 9.30 the enemy fire slackened on our front, and we began to feel that it was all over. But the fire on our right seemed, if anything, to have increased in intensity.

At 10.30 our relieving troops arrived, and we went out feeling very thankful. Even so, it was no night for relief. We had to go over roads that were being shelled and through fields across which the enemy was dropping a shrapnel screen. It was noticeable at this time that his shrapnel fire was a great deal more accurate than it used to be.

As we trailed back, we heard the roar of the guns grow greater and greater while the enemy's harassing fire on our communications seemed to have redoubled. It was now quite clear that a very big attack was coming off.

After about two miles of very toilsome marching, we reached lorries that drove us back to camp. The place where we embarked was in the enemy's hands an hour and forty minutes later, for he had taken Mt. Kemmel and swept down the flank of the Wytschaete position.

So we had missed the loss of Kemmel by the skin of our teeth. You can tell how fortunate we were when I explain that the survivors from the Royal Scots numbered one officer and two men, and, of the 84 men that relieved our 56, there escaped only one man.

These things were not, however, known for some days. At first the loss of Kemmel was by no means certain. The French had been on its right and the British on the left. The French claimed still to hold the summit, and it was known that the Cheshires had retaken Kemmel village, which lay on the enemy's side of Mt. Kemmel. What we did not know was that the French had been cut off and the Cheshires cut to bits in a disastrous attempt to retire from a position that was too far in advance to admit of adequate support.

On the whole, then, we felt fairly pleased as we turned into camp that morning. The big attack we saw seemed to be held – according to all the news we could get.

That evening was rather a pleasant one. The men were pleased with life and had all had a change of clothes, decent food and a good sleep, My gramophone, which I bought at Cheltenham, had arrived, and I lent it to them. In the officers' mess we had an especially elaborate disguise for our bully beef and also fresh meat stew and a sweet. There was also some beer from the E.F.C. [Expeditionary Force Canteen]. So we had a palatial meal and sat down round the fire of the farm house that was our billet to enjoy a really good smoke. One officer fetched out a violin and played accompaniment to songs and, occasionally, a solo. It was, I remember, while he was playing 'Träumerei' that a messenger entered and handed Cook (now Company

Commander) a chit from the battalion. We paid little attention, for the music and the unaccustomed luxury of good food and a cheerful fire had thrown us all deep into memories and dreams of our own. When the music ended, Cook spoke. 'Sorry, you fellows, bad news, I'm afraid; B Company is to stand to arms at once and proceed up to the line. Lorries will be at the camp in half an hour to take you up. I have sent out to warn the men already. Apparently the Boche have got Kemmel after all.'

We got up and looked at the pleasant room and the cheery fire and wondered why we had ever been such fools as to believe they were real.

It was a bright starlight night and cold. We inspected the men as they stood there with chattering teeth, and then we got on the lorries. This time Hauser and I were to command a company composed of two crews from B Company and two from C. It was a composite section really. Cook was to be in command of the whole. Actually, this meant that he was about 800 yards behind the line and looked after supplies and so on while Hauser and I looked after the combatant side of the business.

Hauser and I sat in front of the first lorry while Cook went up with Carter in the bike and side-car. As we went up, the enemy were shelling the roads. It was very unpleasant as you could not hear the shells coming. First you would see a mass of hot little sparks fly up on the left, and as you drove past a second or two later you would smell that peculiar warm earthy smell with a touch of acetylene gas. Then the same would happen on the right. You waited to feel the splinters hurtle through the side of the lorry and kill you.

At last we reached Ouderdom. Here we disembarked and enviously watched the lorry drivers turn round and go home as fast as they could.

We picked up our kit and trudged wearily up the shell-pocked road. We seemed to be marching straight to destruction, for immediately in front the Very lights were flaring up at intervals and we could see each other's faces in the pale glare.

At last we reached a cross-roads called Millekruisse, and here we met Carter with orders from Cook. Company H.Q. were about 100 yards to the left of the cross-roads. Carter led us to a point about 100 yards in front of the cross-roads. Here we struck a trench. This was the left of our allotted section. A point 800 yards to the right was the

right of our sector. I put one gun on the left point, one on our right, and the other two at good points for cross-fire between these two. Hauser was to look after the left and I the right. But I was also in command of him and his two guns. We took over from Windle, a young C officer who was so dazed and idiotic he could tell us nothing and do nothing – and that when there was no fire.

The sketch map (Figure 31) will show you our positions, and Figure 32 will show you where we were in relation to our Chinese Wall position. I think you will get the idea of our position fairly well from the map, but I will point out one or two important features. Between the enemy and ourselves there was a ridge of high ground

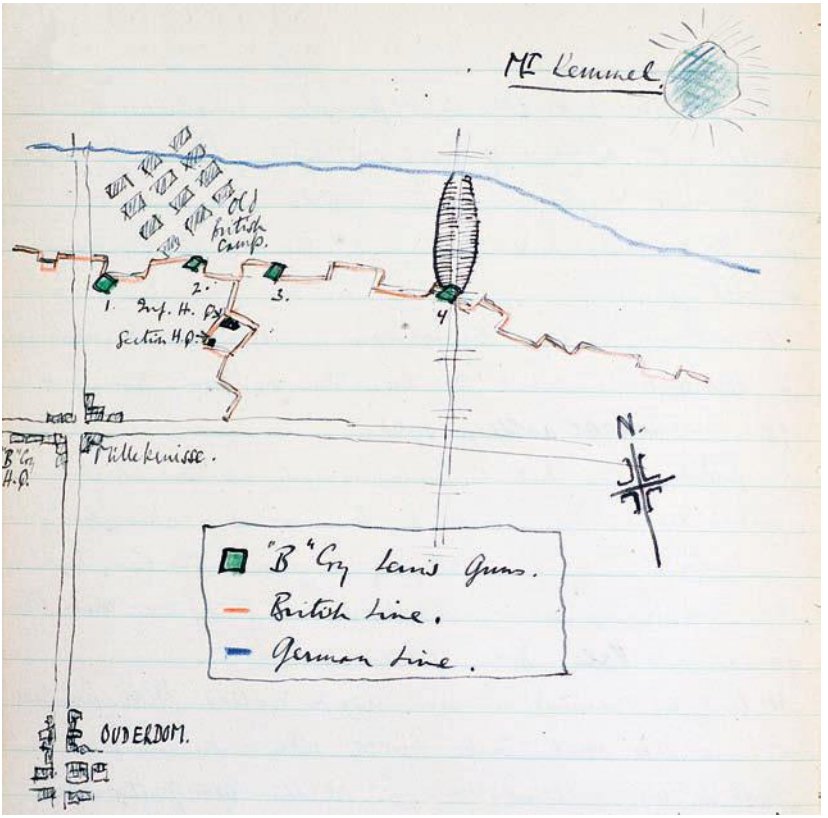

Figure 31
May '18, Mt. Kemmel.

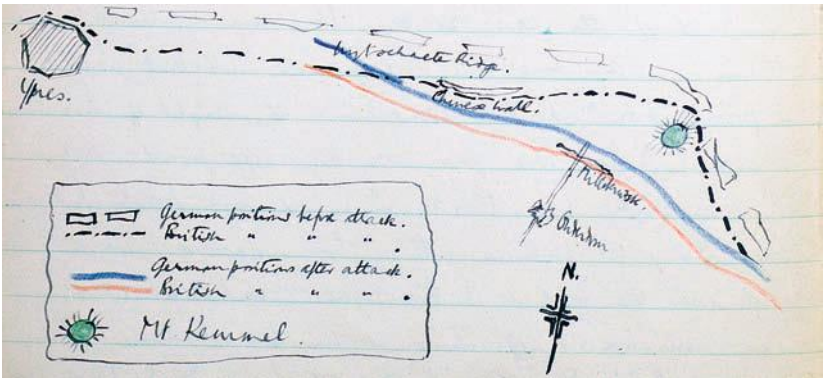

Figure 32
Enemy advance in capture of Mt. Kemmel.

(see diagram). So we were invisible to each other's front-line troops. *But* in our case we were at a great disadvantage for artillery fire, as the enemy had direct observation onto us from Mt. Kemmel. The British camp I have marked was an artillery camp that had been taken by surprise by the enemy advance. As a result a lot of horses had been left in it, and these were killed by artillery fire. The stench was awful for the weather was hot.

The camp was a great nuisance, as the enemy used to creep out of their trenches and snipe us from behind the huts. The K.O.L.I.s [King's Own Light Infantry] on our left returned the compliment, but it was no real consolation to us.

Our trenches were very poor. They were not more than 4 feet deep and did not allow one man to pass another with any ease. There was a certain amount of water in them. There were no barbed-wire entanglements, and no wire could be obtained.

No. 1 Lewis gun was in a good position, and so was No. 2. No. 3 was very bad. There was little or no protection, and water was coming up in the trench. The only thing to do was to build a breastwork, and for this sandbags were necessary. I indented for 500 but could get no more than 50 and these only when it was very late – almost too late to be any good. The 4th Lewis gun position was good. It was on the railway and so commanded the cutting and the ground to right and left.

Section H.Q. was in the corner of a square of trenches about 20 yards behind the actual line. There was one dug-out in this square and that was occupied by some infantry officers who commanded the few troops in the line with us. This whole square of trenches was very clearly defined. Although it was a spot of no great importance, it looked important, and as a result the enemy had it marked out for destruction under the impression it was a strong point.

The troops in the line with us were the 21st Division. This division used to be a good one, but it had been far too knocked about to be much good by this time. On our left we had the K.O.Y.L.I.s [King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry], and actually with us there was the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry Band, i.e., a small collection of young boys and unfit men with no knowledge of arms or anything else. Their officers were hopeless. On our right – by the railway cutting – were a few of the 10th Cheshires.

Our life here was dull. The weather was hot, and the place stank. We were usually shelled by 5.9's at fairly regular hours, and then we took cover. For the rest of the day we sat about and listened to the desultory fire of our guns and the sudden crash as part of the tin roof came down in the old camp. These falling bits of tin would set us wondering if the enemy were crawling about, and occasionally we would give a more than usually suspicious spot a burst of fire.

The enemy aeroplanes held undisputed sway and droned away above us. The only relief we had came one day when our aeroplanes did a demonstration. Complaints had grown so violent about the enemy aeroplanes that the authorities sent over 36 aeroplanes one evening. These simply cleared out every enemy for miles and went about bombing and doing just whatever they pleased. The effect on our morale was really wonderful. For the first time we felt as if we were top dogs. There's an extraordinary feeling of security that comes over you when you see a sky apparently covered with aeroplanes and reflect that they are all yours. It is as if a child had flaunted a toy in your face, and for a long time you could do nothing – till one day you suddenly flaunt a far more magnificent toy in *his* face. You feel you have scored and that all past humiliations were worth it.

The effect of this demonstration was most pronounced, not only on us but on the enemy. They felt sure it was a great reconnaissance preliminary to a big attack. Let us hope they felt suitably depressed.

Hauser and I did what we could to build up defences. But we could get no Very lights, no S.O.S. signals, no barbed wire and no sandbags. The situation really was appalling.

After about four days we obtained 50 sandbags, and these we used for No. 3. gun position, making it very much better even with these few.

By this time the French had taken over the territory on our right, so we were now to see something of the work of our allies. The most noticeable thing was their terrifying use of coloured lights. These they would send up all day and all night. I am inclined to think they did it for no reason at all except to hoodwink the enemy – at any rate, they did this most successfully. The day after they arrived, they treated the enemy to a fireworks display that, I should think, was unrivalled on the British Front. Immediately after breakfast they put up showers of 'golden rain' all along the line and for about ten miles behind it. Having completely mystified the enemy by this, they opened up a desultory and extremely exasperating artillery fire – it all sounded like the nerve-racking performance of one of those irritating toy spaniels. Their fire increased in volume, and then suddenly, without any warning, all fire stopped. This sudden silence worried our orthodox friends over the way very considerably. They promptly opened up heavy harassing fire on lines of communication. The French maintained a dogged silence.

Much the same happened later. It was becoming dusk when the French began to put up streams and streams of coloured lights. This was all the more mysterious as there was hardly any firing going on on either side. All was peace and quiet, and yet the French persisted in sending up a series of signals which, if they meant anything at all, must have been quite sufficient to report an entire battle. As soon as the enemy recovered from this they dropped a really good barrage – and the French discovered what they wanted to know – i.e. exactly where the enemy fire was directed. Thus, with a happy feeling that they had done their duty, our allies packed up for the night and, let us hope, slept the sleep of the just.

The next day we heard the glad news that we were to be relieved. I was thankful, as I was very tired of Millekruisse and standing to generally. For some time we had been unable to sleep except in full equipment. Unfortunately lying in your full kit with revolvers etc. stuck all over you is by no means comfortable. The first time I did it I

woke with an awful taste of blood in my mouth, and you can imagine the effect of that on a very sleepy man who has been dreaming action.

The afternoon again was very hot and beastly and made us feel all the more pleased at the idea of relief. There was one very disquieting feature about this day, however, and I had grave doubts that we should leave Millekruisse unmolested. The whole of that day the enemy had hardly fired a shot – either artillery or rifle.

It is an extraordinary thing, but this 'sulk' is typical, and you may be sure that there is mischief afoot when the enemy withholds his fire. I have not struck anybody yet who did not find this silence a sign of coming trouble.

My fears were fully justified. At 6 that evening his 5.9's opened on our position. They were firing in triplets – you only hear the first one coming, and the other two burst when you don't expect it. Within about two minutes of the start his bombardment had reached its full intensity. This was an attack for a certainty, and up went our S.O.S. – red over red over red.

The peaceful dusk had changed in a moment. The whole ground rocked and swayed, and the sky was hidden by a cloud of dust and smoke. It seemed as if night had suddenly come upon us. It was almost impossible to distinguish anything in the darkness. The weirdness of it all was increased by the sight of our three reds as they floated calmly through the dust and smoke. There was something very menacing and ghostly in their smooth progress through that inferno of flying earth and fumes. When the bombardment opened, Hauser and I were standing together. As soon as the S.O.S. went up, I drew my revolver and loaded it. (Hauser said afterwards that there was something very amusing about the calm way I did this – as if I was going to shoot the fellow who had disturbed my afternoon!) We then both waited, crouching down to see what would happen. It was quite clear that our attack was coming – and incidentally quite clear that the enemy had some guns concentrated onto our little square. What was not clear was the amount of support we were to have from our artillery.

A few moments after our S.O.S. went up we received our answer. The British artillery opened up very promptly, and down came our barrage. What its effect was we didn't know, but there seemed to be more guns than we had hoped for. All at once we noticed a new sound in the crack! crack! of our guns. There seemed to be a

very short, sharp, tinny kind of bark in it. We both knew what that meant – we were supported by the French artillery, and the short cracks were simply the famous French 75's in action.

The defensive barrage was a fine one, and, as we heard afterwards, it was responsible for very heavy casualties to the enemy. Hauser and I stood in our trench and peered out into the dark-ness. We were giving up hope of distinguishing anything when suddenly, quite close to us, we saw men running. They were British troops apparently clearing out.

Hauser and I drew our revolvers and bawled at them. They didn't hear us, of course, but they saw us and our revolvers and stopped. Poor fellows – they were out in front and had received no orders, and the whole thing had become too much. I suppose they got a bit panicked. Anyhow, they settled down very cheerfully when we made them stop, and the moment they had orders they seemed quite prepared to stick where they were and fight it out.

The whole of this time we saw none of the infantry officers. Hauser and I now began to wonder what to do. It seemed imperative that we should get to our men. For my part, as I said before, I cared too little about the whole business to mind the idea of getting killed. This, and, I think, a curious kind of excitement that used to come over us in action, combined to influence me. I told Hauser that I thought the only thing we could do if we were to be any use at all was to get out of our place and get with our men. He agreed. I may as well say now that from the point of view of sheer unadulterated lunacy what followed was the maddest and most dangerous thing I ever did. I must have been very nearly mad to do it. But I never *thought* more clearly in my life.

Hauser cleared off towards the left, and I went to the right. The trench communicating with the firing line was obliterated, so I crawled out on my stomach. It seemed very unlikely that I should get to the front line, as, literally, the whole earth seemed to be going into the sky. Finally I decided it would be just as safe and rather quicker to walk. So I got up and was promptly knocked down by concussion. In this way I stumbled on and had nearly reached the line when I got chucked into a piece of trench. I didn't feel hurt much and picked myself up feeling rather dazed, to find I was in the remains of the front line. I remember feeling very trapped and stuffy in the trench.

I had a longing to walk along the top so I could see what was happening. So I got out and walked along the top till I saw our men. They seemed very bewildered but were sticking to their post and had everything ready to open fire. I can tell you I felt very proud of them when I saw this. One reason that decided Hauser and myself was the fear that our men might lose their heads as the few infantry we saw coming back had done.

I decided that the best thing to do was to stand on the top of the trench and talk to them. It was a wildly foolish thing to do, but I felt quite clearly that at this time a little foolhardiness would look well and would pay out of all proportion. They seemed very cheery, and I pretended we could knock the stuffing out of the enemy, and so on, and I then went on; I was knocked over once or twice as I went, but fortunately the enemy shooting was nothing like so concentrated here as it was on our little square of trenches at Section H.Q. I felt as if I was in absolute safety compared with the old place. As I walked on, I watched to see all I could, and I saw that from the enemy line they were sending up red over red all down the line except just to our right, and there they were sending up two greens. Now, the idea we were given was that two reds meant 'held up' and two greens meant 'all's well'. So it seemed that the enemy had come to grief on our barrage nearly everywhere. But I did *not* like that place with two greens.

I went on down to the right, and now I became very worried, for from my right and behind me a machine-gun was firing. This gun's bullets were hitting up the ground near the trench. This mystified me completely. It seemed to mean that the enemy had got round behind us after breaking through our right.

At about this same time I smelt a sweet nauseating scent in the shell gases. The enemy were using their blue-cross gas shells. I put the mouthpiece of my gas-mask between my teeth and breathed through that. I didn't bother to put the mask right on as the gas was not very strong and I wanted to see as clearly as I could.

At last I reached the 3rd gun. They were very well off as the sandbags protected them very well and their defences were really sound. I talked to them as I had to the others and went on to the right. I found this crew also very cheery but somewhat anxious about the machine-gun behind. I assured them it was one of our own doing 'overhead' fire and explained that it was quite capable of aiming as badly as that.

Although I wasn't quite so confident about it, I felt this was probably right as the gun sounded too fast for a German. Afterwards I discovered it *was* one of ours. To make sure that all was well, I crossed the railway and spoke to the Cheshires. Their sergeant was very worried at my standing on top of the trench. I talked some time to them and assured them my guns were good to stop dead any enemy attack, and in the end they assured me they had licked the enemy before and would do it again now – so I went back to the 3rd Lewis gun crew!

To my intense relief I now saw the two reds going up all along the enemy line. Although it was by no means certain that we knew the real meaning of these signals, yet I clung to the belief that two reds meant failure. It is curious how one hoped for the best when one had the chance.

Unfortunately their failure meant the increase of their artillery on our line, and up went the earth more than ever. I went back to the 2nd gun and talked to them some time. I then went on to see how Hauser was getting on on the left. The shells were now breaking up lots of trenches. I found him with the 1st gun. He had stopped there as they were rather shaken up; they had had their emplacement knocked to bits and their crew commander Cpl. Smith killed right at the start. I exchanged notes with Hauser, and he came to the conclusion everything was going well. I then went back to the 3rd crew. I looked at my watch and found it was 10.30 p.m. So we had had 4½ hours of it!

From now on the enemy fire died down, but far on our right the artillery kept at it hammer and tongs. We gave up all hope of being relieved that night as it seemed that it would be unlikely that the French would come up under such fire.

But they came after all. They took over our line in very great strength – at least 20 men to every one of ours. They manned a front line and support and seemed to do everything in the most haphazard way imaginable. All the same, they had those trenches manned with the least fuss and bade us goodnight with cheery assurances that they would hold the line for ever. We left them with our blessing and departed weary but very pleased to be going!

During all this time A and C Companies had had their share of fighting and had both done very well. Gatehouse, our old company second in command, who now had C Company, did not allow that fact to pass unnoticed. From this time on the war became purely a fight for decoration as far as he was concerned. Not a shell burst but

one of C Company officers had done something worth a V.C., and of course a company with such a gallant personnel was bound to reflect great credit on the O.C. Company. Thus by degrees our commanders learnt to write the convincing recommendation and hoped that their little essays would be duly rewarded.

When we came out of the line, we found the remains of A and C in camp already. Our gallant colonel also reappeared and, like the albatross, was welcomed as a sign of fair weather as far as fighting was concerned. In fact it was now clear that the battalion was going for a long rest and was to draw tanks before it reappeared to fight.

The usual wrangling broke out, and some of it touched our company very seriously. Since Bargate had disappeared, Cook, our second in command, had taken over the company and had been confirmed as Major by Hankey our Brigadier. But Cook was very junior and was hated for this. People began to pull strings, and at last Cook found that the higher powers refused to promote him on account of his junior standing. Instead, they promoted one of the malcontents from A Company – one named Aitches.

Now, whatever faults Cook had – and being human he had many – he was at least competent, and he did do his job fairly well, even in action when he was assuredly a funk. Also, he could be trusted. He did not treat you as a bad lot without first telling you he thought you were one. Aitches, on the other hand, was just an ordinary blackguard with rather more than an ordinary blackguard's share of cowardice. In England I had thought him rather a charming and pleasant fellow. But in France his reputation had grown steadily worse. He tried to curry favour with everyone and failed to gain favour anywhere. His behaviour at Le Havre, where he had worn a Sam Browne [officer's heavy leather belt with shoulder strap] loaded with the brightly polished cartridges of an automatic revolver, must have impressed the ladies as that of the true soldier. But in the battalion, where rather more was demanded than the mere outward show, he failed to impress. It was discovered that he wore body armour under his tunic when he was still forty miles from the line. What he did when he reached the line was never quite clear. But by 1918 his name was a legend in the battalion for everything contemptible.

It was to this creature, who had put up an importunate wail over Cook's promotion, that the Higher powers entrusted the lives of a company of officers and men. They disregarded the opinion of the

Brigadier and all other ranks who had met him and were best qualified to know his virtues, and thrust the crown upon him. The best comment on the promotion that I heard was made by one of the men who parodied the hymn and was heard going off muttering, 'Oh God, our help' – and then with tremendous emphasis – 'in Aitches past!'[1] Poor fellow! I suppose really there were many redeeming features in his character. He was always willing to talk about the Lanchester motor company if he felt you were bored and wanted cheering up.

The day after we were relieved, we heard definitely that we were to go back and draw tanks. This we did after the delay of a couple of days. During this time we were very comfortably off. The enemy were held, and many more troops had come up. We had a little bombing and a little shelling. One shell decapitated the best Company Commander we had and killed two other officers. This fellow, the O.C. A Company, had only just arrived with the battalion. From all accounts he was a really good chap.

I do not intend now to give you any details of our life until August (see Figure 33). From May 14th, when we left Belgium, until August 4th very little happened that you can't fill in for yourself. We drew new tanks and went up to Berle au Bois – a place south of Arras and three miles behind the front line. Here we were in the 6th Corps area and in support of the Guards Division. There were continual alarms of enemy attacks and a fair amount of shelling. This very much disturbed poor Aitches, who shifted his tent nearly every other day under the firm conviction that the enemy were trying to hit him. He did no harm, and it kept the troops amused.

I had quite a good time as I was sent off for long journeys by car to lecture to various army schools. I went once to the 6th Corps school, which was commanded by a colonel of the Irish Guards. He told me Campbell – the great bayonet fighting man – had been there lecturing the previous week. I was very worried to have to lecture after so famous a lecturer and felt that the whole thing would fall rather flat. But at the end the C.O. told me it was just the kind of thing that was wanted. Some time later I met an officer from that school, and he told me the colonel said it was the best lecture he ever heard, which remark I felt to be extremely flattering!

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[1] 'Oh God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come . . .': Isaac Watts [1764–1748].

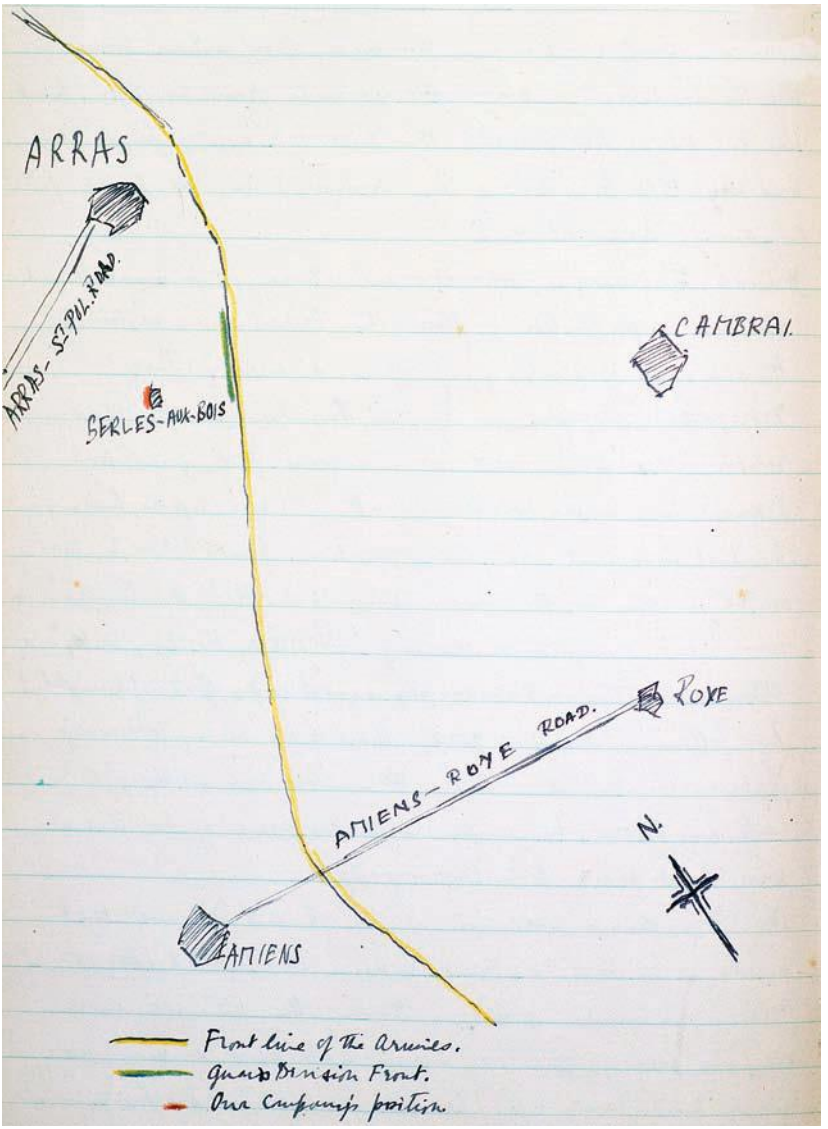

Figure 33
Our position in relation to the rest of the British Front, June–July '18.

We were now using a new pattern tank – the Mark V Ricardo. It was a wonderful machine and a great improvement on the ones we had hitherto used. The engine was far more powerful, and the steering was simplicity itself: you merely pulled up a lever on the right of the driver's seat if you wished to go right, and to the left if you wished to go left. This was done by means of the epi-cyclic gearing, which lay between the gears proper and the track.

The tank, however, had its disadvantages: sometimes the gears for steering would slip and so no power would be transmitted to the track. (I will not enter into a technical description, which would take far too much explanation). The tanks were far hotter than the old ones and gave off a poisonous gas – possibly carbon monoxide. But these defects will, I think, become clear as we go on.

The battalion as a whole was in good state. The prolonged rest at Berle au Bois bucked us up. Our nearness to the line prevented the oncoming of that weakness which always grows in great safety. We felt sure of good infantry support in case of action – the Guards Division had a name you could conjure with. Finally we had had enough testing time for our tanks to show us their good qualities. Their great superiority to the old type made us feel very much more confident. The company was well satisfied as Cook ran Company H.Q. very well indeed. He was virtually Company Commander, and he did his job well. My section was good. I had Sergt. O'Toole as section sergeant, and Cpl. Hayler as section corporal. As you can imagine, I backed these two for anything. L/Cpl Harrison, Quainton's old driver, was also in the section.

For officers I was also well off. My second in command was a well-meaning but hopeless ass called Cartwright. I am afraid I was very down on him, but one was far too harassed to tolerate a bad second in command in those times. I tried him a long time and finally gave him up as hopeless, and Asser was made second in command in his place. Asser was a young fellow of 19½. He had not been in action before and was very keen and enthusiastic. He was very useful to me indeed and practically anticipated one's orders. He could be relied on to the last and was always cheerful, however hard the circumstances. He was the most loyal fellow I ever had under me.

The third officer was Robinson. He was slightly built and not very strong. He had been in the infantry, where he was wounded, and won the Military Medal. His nerves were too far gone for him to be any

real use, and his physique was not strong enough to let him stand the strain of any real tank work. But he was a good fellow and did all he could to do his job properly.

I was now a captain with seniority from March 21st – one of the most senior captains in the battalion. The section commanders in the company were Hauser, Johnson and Robinson. Robinson – an American, as I said before – had so far this year been ear-marked as a nucleus man. No sooner had he rejoined us after the Northern show than he started talking. Unfortunately he overdid it. He was over-candid to Aitches, and the worm turned. Robinson transferred his activities elsewhere after a court of inquiry which almost let him in for a court martial.

His section was given to an awfully good chap named Whyte. He had been in C Company and won the M.C. in the March retreat. He was very efficient, quiet and reserved. I think he was aged about 20.

The hopes of continued rest were becoming faint. It seemed incredible that the enemy would be passive much longer. At last on July 15th he broke through in Champagne. I need not describe the subsequent French counter-attack, as you know as much of it as I do. Only it happened that I knew of the movement of the 51st Division to that sector and was prepared for *some* of what happened. The effect of the French victory was very great on us and, I expect, on the whole British army. We felt that all was well at last.

All the time we were at Berle au Bois, our battalion had been ready for action at a moment's notice. At midday on August 4th a meeting of officers was called at Company H.Q.

At that meeting we were informed that our tanks must be ready to leave for an unknown destination at 6 p.m. If asked where we were going, we were to answer that we were off for a practice run. This excuse would satisfy most troops very well, as we had often been for them. The surprise would come when they found we had not returned, and I felt particularly sorry for poor old Sargent,[1] who was painting a picture of our tanks and had said he was coming once more! As you know, he finished it, and I have since seen it.

At 6 p.m. I paraded the section. We packed our camp and moved off at 6.30 p.m. – the time appointed for my section. With Asser's help I had all arrangements working absolutely smoothly.

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[1]John Singer Sargent, painter [1856–1925].

We drove to a wood some five miles back and reached it without mishap by 10 p.m. – a very great change from the old business! We then covered our tank tracks in the mud by brushing them over the whole distance (to hide our movements from enemy aeroplane photography) and turned in in our improvised quarters by midnight.

The next day was spent in cleaning up and fitting out our tanks so that everything was as near perfection as possible. For there was no doubt at all that we were in for action. Near our camp was the 6th Corps Officers Club and E.F.C. This was a very fine club and very good meals. Our company decided to go and have a jolly good dinner there that night, as it was our last chance for some time probably. We collected kindred spirits in A and C, and, after all our work was done and the men were settled for the night, we set out. We only had to go across a couple of fields.

We had a very pleasant evening. The food was very good and there was a band playing. We had very good wine and ended up with good cigars and a liqueur. It was rather solemn to think of what was coming, as we sat and listened to the band. I think we all felt relieved rather than anxious, for now at last our time to attack had come and the months of waiting were over.

We sat and smoked and talked till late, for we were determined to make the best of our luxury while it lasted. At last we went out into the cold starlight night and returned to camp to sleep.

The next day we pushed in our tank sponsons and prepared for our trek. We were to move off to Santy to entrain at 4 p.m., as we were far enough behind the front line to move in daylight without giving the enemy much indication of our movements. We might simply be entraining for an ordinary relief. The train journey was, of course, made at night. I propose only to touch now on the main facts. You must fill in the detail from what I have said before. What I want you to note carefully are these two points – the extraordinarily short hours of rest we had (with consequent exhaustion of personnel) and the absolutely vital need for secrecy. If you will keep these two points in mind and realize how they acted on one another, you will get some idea of the tremendous strain that was put on us all, and more particularly on those of us in authority.

Here are the facts. We entrained and had everything done by 6 p.m. At 8 p.m. the train moved out with officers and men lying on the open trucks under their tanks (for protection from the night air). At

midnight we arrived at our detraining point. We detrained and drove our tanks to a wood two miles off. The R.T.O. [Railway Transport Officer] at the station told me we were the second tank battalion to detrain that night. It was more than ever clear that something very big was coming. We covered our tank tracks and made snug at about 5 a m. At 9 a.m. we had our meal and tuned up our engines. We pushed out our sponsons and cleaned all guns.

It was now about 8 p.m. on August 6th. At dusk we moved off again and trekked about six miles. This was a very big business: no lights could be used, and the only thing we knew was that we were near Amiens; it was pouring rain; a large number of men fainted off through fumes, and here my Cambrai experience came in useful and I put straight a good many men from other corps as well as our own. We used all our men very hard as we made them cover our tracks as we went. One or two tanks broke down just before dawn and caused fearful anxiety as the whole show would be given away if a tank was seen by an enemy aeroplane. Fortunately the pouring rain stopped the enemy coming. But in case of accidents we had a powerful squadron in the air the whole time. Their orders were that no enemy aeroplane was ever to get back to its lines. In the end all the tanks of our company were in by 5 a.m., and the stray tanks of other companies got in without observation.

It was now the morning of August 7th. Orders were issued that the men were not to turn in. They were at once set to cleaning up and greasing. The safety clips from the shells were removed, and all the S.A.A. [small arms ammunition] was 'sized' for the Lewis guns. (This is done by dropping each round into the gun barrel and flicking it out again.) My tanks had done this anyhow, so all was well. By the time the job was done, breakfast was ready, and the camp turned in to sleep at 10 a.m.

This unfortunately did not apply to section commanders. I was first summoned to Battalion H.Q. and told briefly that my section was to operate on the extreme right of the British Army for the start of the battle and was then to shift a little further to the right and operate with the French. I then returned to C.H.Q., and here I was given detailed orders. The general plan was as follows. The allies were about to begin their great offensive battles. As a preliminary the 4th British Army and the 1st French Army, under the personal command of Sir Douglas Haig, were to clear Amiens (see diagram, Figure 34).

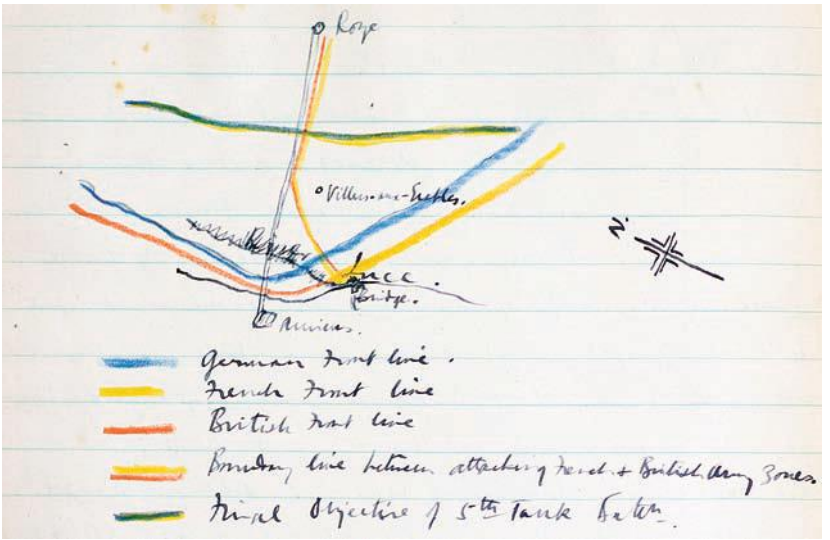
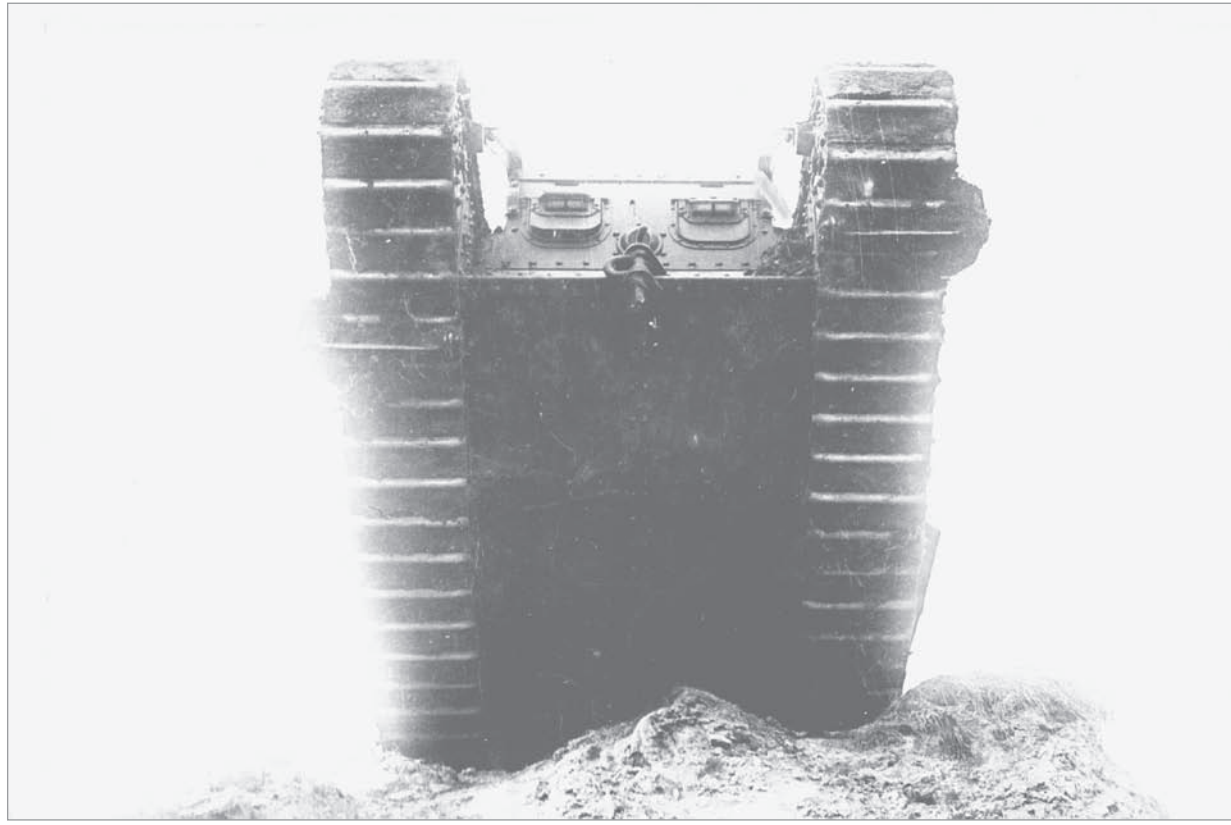


Figure 34

B Company were to be on the extreme right of the 4th Army. No. 8 Section were to keep in the British zone until the armies reached the Amiens–Roye road, and then 8 Section were to keep on the right of the road and help the French to take Villers-aux-Erables. A Company would remain on the final objective line, and the attack would then be carried on by the 1st Tank Battalion. Opposition would be stiff as the enemy were concentrated there ready to attack. We were then issued with barrage maps and ordinary maps and told details of the terrain. The obstacle of the River Luce was greatly feared. The section commanders were given good air reconnaissance photographs and dismissed with Aitches' blessing. We had one new thing to think over, and that was the [German] Anti-Tank rifle (Figure 35). This weapon fired bullets that could pierce our armour, and we had apparently no answer. But in the end, it turned out, we were saved by the enemy morale. They could not see that they were doing any damage, for if one man was hit, the next one carried on. But the biggest argument was the fact that no one likes to see a tank suddenly loom out of the mist, and you can see from the photo (Figure 36) that it is not an encouraging sight from the front – which is the enemy's view.

Figure 35

German anti-tank rifle compared with the British Infantry Rifle. It was really, as you see, simply a huge rifle firing very big armour-piercing bullets. It was fired on a tripod.



My job was not yet over, however. I was to meet Major Hotblack from the Tank Corps staff, and he would take me to the French Divisional H.Q. to finish off arrangements for Villers-aux-Erables and to look over the country. Hotblack is a man with a reputation. He is known throughout the British Army for coolness and pluck. He has the D.S.O. and bar and about five other decorations. He had spent a lot of his time behind the enemy lines as a spy and was dropped there occasionally by British aeroplanes.

We set out at 11 a.m. and went over very heavy country for about four miles. We then reached French H.Q. at about 12.30 and spent twenty minutes shrugging our shoulders, spreading out our hands and smiling like a party of deaf-and-dumb lunatics. I was too tired to care much or know much.

Hotblack and I then went over the Luce by a very rickety and smashed bridge and crawled about on our stomachs in the long grass in front of the French position. At the end I had a very clear idea of our route from behind the French lines to the British lines.

The weather had now turned hot and fine. One thing resulted at once from our reconnaissance. It was clear that the bridge **A** (Figure 37) would have to be seen to and built up before any tank could cross it. It was decided that I had better do it. So I was finally ordered to let Asser bring on my section in the evening while I went ahead and saw to the job.

When I got back to camp, I gave my tank commanders all the information I knew and a good deal of advice that I had learned by practical experience. Especially I warned them that if a machine-gun opened fire on the tank and sparks started flying off so as to make observation impossible, the only thing to do was to shut all observation holes and steer the tank so that the sparks flew off in front of the officer's and driver's seats. By this means you ensured putting the machine-gun out, for you knew you must be driving straight on to it. The tanks were to set out at 9 p.m.

Figure 36

Front view of a tank crossing a trench. This gives a good idea of your observation from the tank and the enemy's observation from the ground. Under M.G. fire the right-hand flap of the tank would be closed – thus giving less observation still.

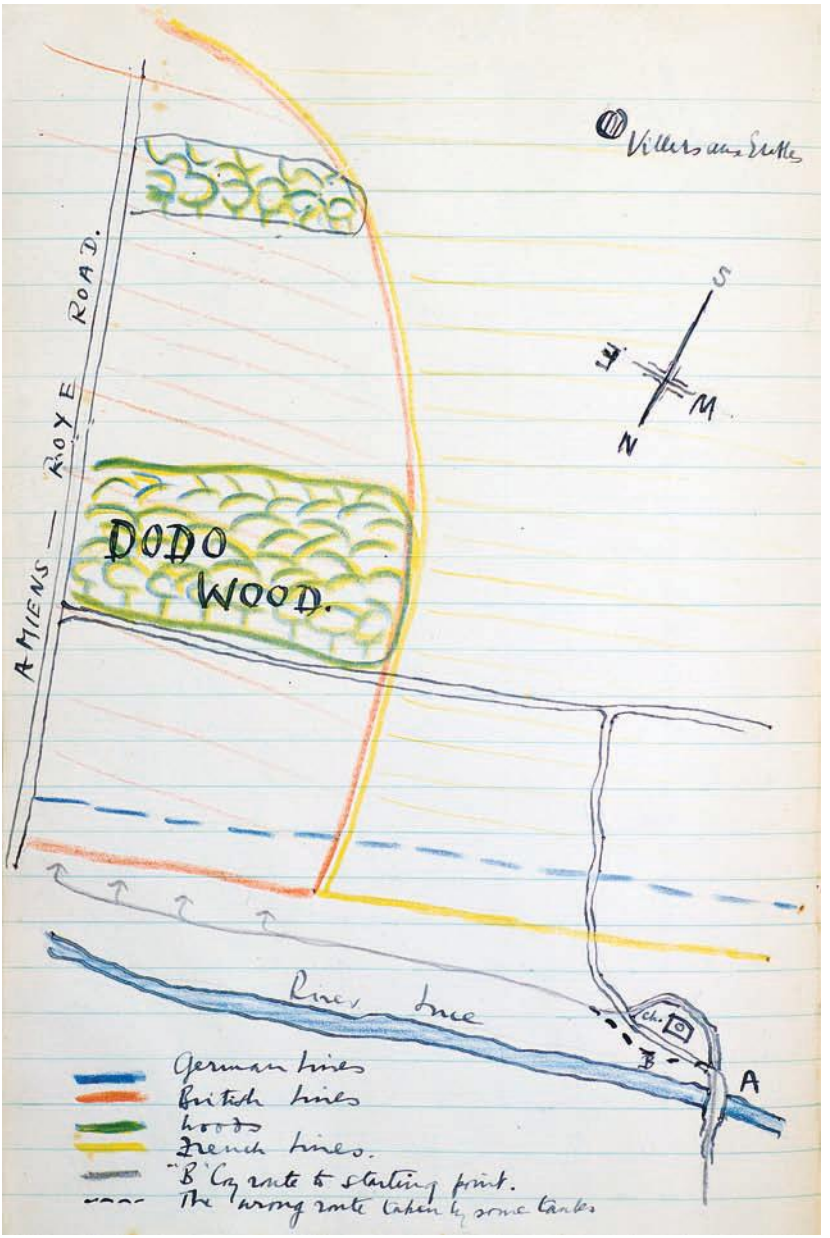


Figure 37
August 8th, Battle of Amiens.

At 3.30 I had some Maconochie stew and tea and turned in. I didn't sleep, of course. I simply watched the sky grow darker and wished in a dull kind of way that I could be spending that night between clean sheets and under a decent roof.

At 6 p.m. I got up and put on my Sam Browne. I picked up my heavy walking-stick (I had given up carrying a revolver in action now) and walked out. I saw Asser before I left.

I reached the bridge at **A** (Figure 37) and found a party of men from a pioneer battalion already there. I told them what to do and sat on the parapet of the bridge, puffing my pipe. I did not like the job for these reasons. The French had told me the Boche shelled the bridge with absolute regularity every evening. At 9 p.m. our tanks would set out, and the sound of their engines could be very clearly heard. Therefore, even supposing the enemy did not do his ordinary evening strafe, it was more than likely that he would open harassing fire on the bridge and roads as soon as he heard unusual movements behind our line. Our only protection lay in the fact that an attempt was being made to screen the noise of our engines by flying Handley Page aeroplanes. These make a noise very like tanks, so we hoped the enemy would see them and think they were responsible for the noise.

These considerations and the anxiety of my job rather crushed me. I sat still and felt numbed with an almost physical pain, which seemed to make movement difficult. At last 9 p.m. came, and I heard our tanks, five miles away, starting up. I didn't realize that my ear was well trained to their noise and that I was alert and expecting to hear it. It merely seemed incredible to me that the enemy could not hear it.

But the miraculous happened. The enemy did not shell that bridge till every tank had crossed it.

When the job was finished, I went back to meet our tanks, which were now drawing near. They were now so near the line that it was impossible to run the engines at high power without making discovery a certainty. All were put into low gear, and the rate of progression was 19 yards to the minute.

It is impossible to convey any idea of the strain this put on us all. We walked slowly in front of the tanks and waited for shells. The strain had a very curious effect; I felt that all anxiety had become too much; I felt just like a small child that has had rather a tearful day and wants to be put to bed by its mother; I felt curiously eased by

lying down on the bank by the side of the road, just as if I was lying peacefully in someone's arms.

I went to the back of the column and talked to Asser. As we went past French H.Q., I went in and collected a couple of extremely tired-looking pigeons with which to send back information to the French. Whether they ever took a message back or not I don't know. When I *did* release them, they looked more like making a separate peace with the enemy than anything else.

The whole company crossed the bridge all right, and that was one load off my mind. No sooner was this done, however, than another stunt was put on me. Frantic appeals for help came from Aitches up in front. He had done no reconnaissance, and Carter had been far too busy drafting and issuing maps to get up to the line to do it. They had gone to the village and were not sure of the way as a very thick fog had arisen from the River Luce and hidden everything. I therefore pointed out to Aitches the way round by the road. Unfortunately some tanks took the wrong route and went into a swamp against which I had warned Aitches. They got out very late and after great hard work.

After this mishap I went in front with Aitches and Carter, and we worked our way forward through the mist by what I knew of the land in daylight. There was always the chance of getting too near the river and thus ditching all our tanks, and there was every likelihood that we should not end up opposite our appointed position. It was a very great responsibility, and I hated shouldering it. Aitches should have done it, and he was made a major precisely in order to take on these responsibilities. When we had gone far enough, as I thought, we stopped and turned our tanks facing the front (the section positions are marked by arrowheads in Figure 37). As it turned out subsequently, these positions were correct.

We switched off our engines and waited for zero. At five minutes to zero hour I ordered the crews of my section into their tanks and told them to start up. There was only one comment: the section wag called out, 'Those gentlemen wanting to go home to England on leave fall in here with me.'

At this moment we saw dimly the figure of a British officer flying past. 'Good luck you fellows! Good luck!', it yelled, and disappeared into the mist. It was Aitches going off back into safety. He was taking no risks of being caught in the barrage!

At a minute to zero I ordered our tanks forward. As Hauser and I stood together, we could hear the heavy drone of the tanks for miles through the still night. The tanks all along the front had commenced to move forward and our time had come.

Hauser and I walked forward as nonchalantly as possible. By the time we reached and crossed our front-line trenches, our barrage would have opened. At the moment the air was heavy with the deep drone of hundreds of tanks, but there was no other noise.

Then suddenly our barrage opened. Our guns were firing from high ground behind us, and as we looked back the mist was pierced with gun flashes and looked like a wall of fire. The earth shook as we walked. Behind us we heard the fierce crackling of our guns like a great bonfire, and overhead the shells wailed and screamed – the same fearful tornado as ever. We had been promised terrific gunfire, and this was it. Our artillery was in absolutely overwhelming strength, and it seemed incredible that the enemy could live through our bombardment.

As we walked on, the air grew darker, for the British artillery were firing smoke shells to screen the tank advance and the smoke was blowing on to us.

We wondered where the enemy barrage would fall and whether we should get caught in it. But his guns still remained silent. The noise of our guns became worrying and exasperating. Why on earth didn't the enemy fire and end our anxiety?

Suddenly I saw that one of our tanks in front had stopped. We went forward and found it was Asser's tank. His petrol feed (Autovac) had given out. It was impossible to imagine anything worse. There he was, stuck – just where the enemy guns might drop their barrage. As we stood and waited for him to go on, suddenly there was a roar and a flash and great clods of earth fell all over us. The enemy barrage had opened.

It was now only two minutes since our barrage opened, and it seemed like years. At this moment Asser bawled out, 'All right!', and his tank moved forward. It was just possible he had saved himself. We saw his tank move on and get swallowed up in the smoke.

It was now too dark to see as the smoke swirled round us and hid everything. Hauser and I walked on by compass. The first part of the attack proceeded well, apparently, for Dodo Wood was reached, and great opposition was expected there. We reached Point **C** (Figure 38)

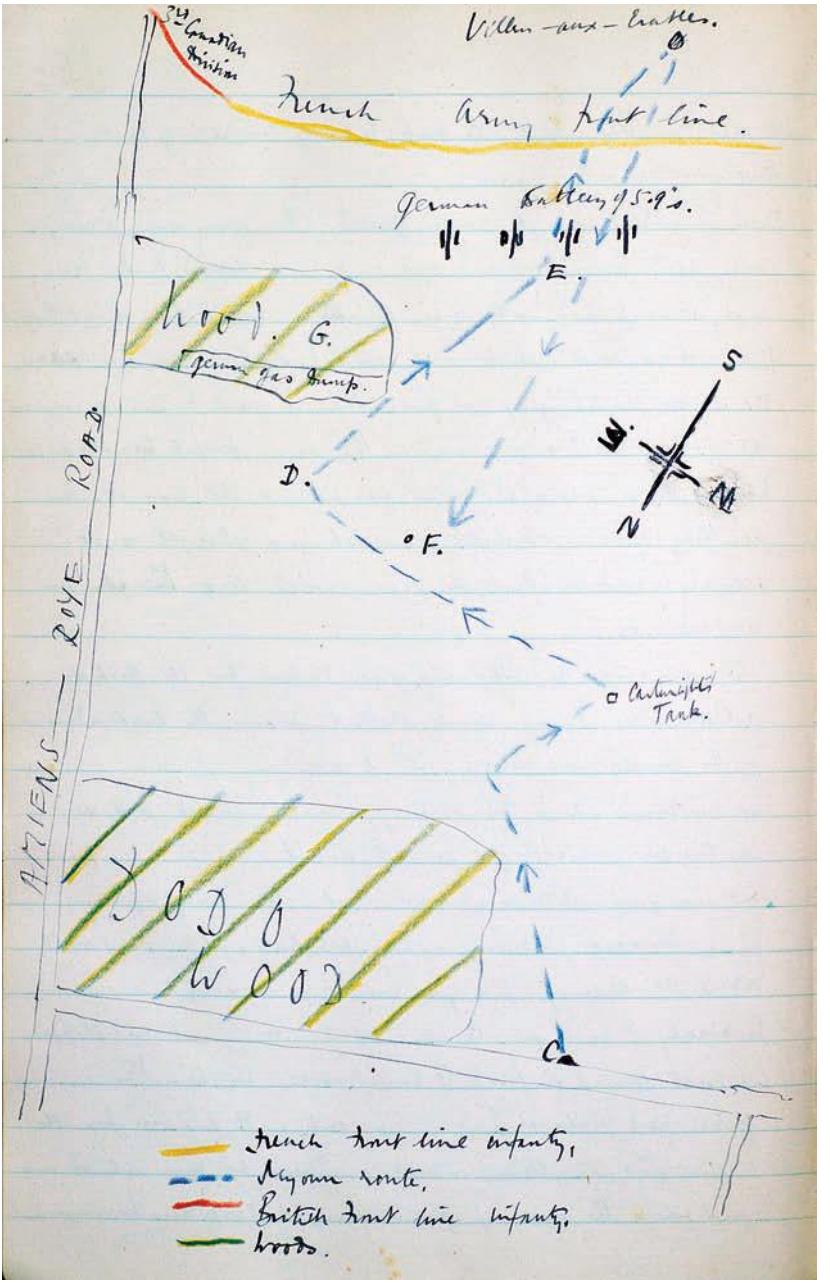


Figure 38
August 8th battle.

and now discovered that the enemy had shifted his barrage onto the road there. Their fire was so terrific that it seemed impossible to go on. We could see absolutely nothing. You will understand how thick it was when I tell you that as Hauser and I sheltered under the road bank at **C**, we thought the tall grasses on the other side of the road were the trees that lined the Amiens–Roye road! They looked just like tall trees in the distance, so you can tell how puzzled and lost we were.

While we were there, Johnson came up. He lay down with us. So now there were three section commanders together and two section runners.

At last we worked things out together and decided we had better shift forward somehow. But the shells were bursting all round us and it seemed impossible to stand up and yet live.

Johnson and I looked up for a moment, and the next thing we knew was that a piece of shell had pierced his arm. We bound it with tourniquet to prevent the blood spouting from his artery, but he was too bad to go on.

The next moment, as I and a runner named Sweeting crouched together in one spot, a shell seemed to burst on top of us, and I heard a groan from Sweeting. The left side of his tunic seemed covered with blood, and as I looked, I discovered that the whole of his left side had been torn away so that the inside of the trunk lay exposed. But he was not dead.

He was quite a young boy and was terrified, as he did not quite realize what had happened. He tried to see what had happened, but I would not let him. I pretended to bandage him, but of course the field dressing was far too small and simply didn't come near to covering the cavity. He kept on saying, 'I'm done for, sir! I'm done for!', hoping against hope I would contradict him. This I did, telling him it was nothing – but his eyes were already glazing over, and it was clear that death was even then upon him. He kept trying to cough, but of course the wind only came out of his side. He kept asking me why he couldn't cough.

He gave me his mother's address, and I promised to write. The bombardment was now dying down, so I sent the other runner to take him to the dressing station. He actually walked there with their support and reached the dressing station before dying. This incident upset Hauser and me very badly, and we were very sick.

I mention it in such detail, horrible as it is, because it had a great effect on me. The look in his eyes was the same as that in the eyes of a bird that has been shot – mingled fear and surprise. I didn't see then, and I don't see now, why that fellow and many like him should have been taken from their English homes (and their German homes) to die for a squabble they didn't understand and couldn't realize. It was simply the distrust, so frivolously sown by grown-up children who wanted to satisfy their childish ambitions, that led to Hell for us and misery for so many homes. The sooner people realize the criminal folly of their leaders the better.

The bombardment had now practically died down, and we determined to push on. Hauser went off to the left to find his section. Johnson had gone to the dressing station, and I went on straight forward alone.

The first thing I came to was one of my tanks broken down. This belonged to Richards, who was quite a young boy and had only just joined our battalion before action. At the last moment he was sent into the show instead of Robinson. I left him to get on as best he could while I pushed on.

The next thing I came to was Cartwright's tank. He had strayed off the right track and was a bit in the French lines. I told his tank by one number that showed. There was nothing else to tell it by because it had received a direct hit and was going up in flames. There were no survivors from it. Cartwright, Sergt. O'Toole and all the rest of the crew had been burnt to death.

Again I went on and reached Point **D** (Figure 38). Here there was another B Company tank, but not in my section. This was manoeuvring round just going forward when it got a direct hit and went up in flames. One man half struggled out but died before he was quite out. The rest were burnt before I could get there.

I went on as I could not get near the tank. All the ammunition was going off, and every now and then a piece of the tank would fly out as a shell went up. It looked rather like a squib in a fireworks display.

Figure 39

The effects of a British shell-burst on a German Outpost party. The photo was taken on a track leading off the Amiens–Roye road.

As I went on – I was about 60 yards behind the infantry by now – I walked into gas. There had been a German gas dump in the wood, and the British artillery had blown it up. As a result the whole wood and the valley in which it stood was one mass of gas.

I pushed on to find Asser, as I presumed he had gone on to help the French take Villers-aux-Erables. I passed the remains of a German battery at **E** (Figure 38). It was completely wrecked, and dead were lying everywhere. The German signal for hurricane fire was still stuck up by the guns, and one wondered what it must have been like when that signal was put up when our barrage fell that morning. I armed myself with a German automatic and pushed on.

I soon reached the front line of French infantry and found they were stationary. This was in accordance with the plan. The pause was of ten minutes and was designed to give breathing space to our troops. By now the enemy fire had gone completely. Only his infantry and machine-guns were fighting. Asser, so the French told me, had gone on to Villers-aux-Erables to clear up any remaining opposition.

So I stopped with them and waited. The day was now bright and clear. Our artillery was coming forward, so there was little or no gunfire. At last the French pushed on and simply walked through Villers-aux-Erables without opposition. I discovered Asser at our end of the village. He had done his job and run out of petrol.

All our work was done now, so all that was left was to get back to our 'Rallying Point' (**F**, Figure 38). After petrol had been fetched, Asser drove back, and at **F** we found Richards.

Although only one of my tanks had done anything, yet it had been quite enough to do the job allotted to the section. There were hardly any infantry casualties, all objectives had been reached, and the second line of infantry and tanks were already going through to carry on the offensive. We saw the 1st Battalion going forward away on our left – they were to take on the work we had started.

We were absolutely tired out, so we decided to sleep at **F** (Figure 38) while we awaited orders. One man was made sentry to guard against gas and so on, and in about two minutes the rest of us were fast asleep. I awoke to find Colonel O'Kelly had turned up. He looked on me with a watery eye and asked for information. This I gave him.

I asked for orders, and he told us the battalion was rallying at the wood (**G**, Figure 38) and that we should make a camp there and await orders.

This wood was now clear of gas. We fixed up shelters with our tarpaulins, and before long the cooking department and reserves, generally of our company, had arrived and started operations. A few men were told off to go and bring the remains of various crews that were knocked out.

The advance had gone so well that we were now two or three miles behind the line.

Hauser turned up at about 6 p.m. I was very pleased to see him again as he was a good man. But I had a good deal to say to him. He was very peevish at the time – chiefly nerves – but I wouldn't spare him. We discussed the day's actions, and I told him I felt I had been an awful fool and that neither of us had been very bright on the road (**C**, Figure 38). After a little talk we made vows not to do anything so feeble again, and we then separated for our duties. That evening we fed and made all arrangements by sections (i.e. not as a united company). Aitches and Cook came and exchanged a few remarks. Cook, who had been superintending all supplies etc. as a second in command has to do, was very fed up and complained bitterly that he had not realized how many fools there were in the British Army till that day. Aitches was fretful and looked very nervy, and so were we all.

We were all very tired but had to work till about 10 p.m., getting our tanks ready for action. When that was over, we turned in to sleep. Our wood was soundly bombed that night, but our company had no casualties.

The weather at this time was curious; it was very hot during the day and bitterly cold at night. There was not much water to be had to drink, so the heat was a nuisance; at night we only had one blanket so the cold got at us.

The morning of the 9th burst on us with a large and varied assortment of rumours. We knew all about the victory, of course. That, however, did not much worry us. The real question was a more intimate one. How long were we going to be left in peace?

At 10 a.m. it was solved. I had to take forward two tanks, Richards and Asser to act as a reserve in case of accidents. We were all assured it was the merest precaution – no chance of being used at all.

Hauser also was to come forward with two tanks, and at 10.30 we left and pushed up by the side of the Amiens–Roye road. We reached a village about two miles ahead (called Beaumont). Here we stopped and awaited orders. We had our dinner and hoped everyone had

forgotten where we were. We had some indication of our advance at this time, for, as we waited, a lorry turned up towing an observation balloon through the air. This was the usual method of advance for the 'sausages' in swift open warfare, but this was the first time I had seen it done. Instead of drawing the balloon to earth and laboriously packing up, you simply started the 'anchor' lorry and casually trundled up the road.

The arrival of our friend meant that the enemy were at least three miles ahead.

At about 2 p.m. the colonel arrived in his car. He poured out a flood of instructions and sped back to his lair. We cursed bitterly. Again we were to advance – always in reserve, of course – still no fear of action. We pushed off at about 3 p.m. but soon had to stop as an enemy 'sausage' had appeared and was watching. We went on at 6 p.m. I was in command of the party.

We were all very tired indeed – so tired that when the tanks stopped for some reason and we leant against them for rest, we found ourselves asleep in about two minutes. It was bitterly cold and very dark long before we reached our destination. In the distance we saw the red glare of burning houses and dumps which the retreating enemy had fired.

We reached our wood very late owing to many stoppages – our tanks were not running so well now as they had been. When we had parked up under an avenue of trees, we oiled and greased our tanks so they were quite ready to go on. The men were all so tired that the work went very slowly. At 11.45 p.m. we turned in.

This turning in wasn't a very comfortable business. We had no blankets, and it was bitterly cold. The most important men were the drivers. We put them in the tanks so that they could sleep well by the warmth of the engines. There was no room for more than two, so the tank commanders of each tank slept inside as well. These two people were the most important of us all now, as once in action everything depended on them. The rest of us got under the tanks and lay on the ground. At 2 a.m. I awoke to find myself being pulled from under the tank. I tried to resist this extraordinary business, but found myself so stiff with cold I couldn't do anything. I was remorselessly dragged out and found my 'foe' was an officer. He was bawling something in my ear, but for a long time I couldn't make out what he said. At last I 'came to' and discovered he was delivering orders.

There was a hitch in the advance. C Company had gone ahead and needed reserves. They were being reinforced by some of A and some of B Company tanks. My two tanks were to go forward, and I was to hand them over to a Capt. Llewellyn of A Company, as they were to fight under him. I objected, saying I wanted to command my men and that I was less tired than they were. It would look ridiculous if I stayed out of action while they went in. It was no good. It was a very urgent business, and there was no time for argument. We had to reach the starting-point by 4 a.m., and there I was to 'hand over'. Hauser was to go into action with his two tanks and two of A Company's.

We had an awful time getting the crews awake. We hit the men about and propped them up against the tank, but as soon as we had awoken one and gone off to awake another the first would be asleep.

In the end we started the tanks somehow. Only the driver was allowed in the tank. We made the men walk to awaken them thoroughly. Asser and I walked in front. I condoled with him and tried to cheer him and so on, but he really didn't need it. I remember he said he supposed it was all in the game, and one couldn't grumble about having to fight. Nevertheless it *was* very bad luck. We had all been worked off our feet, and the crews really were not fit for action.

We drove up by the side of the road, and gradually the grey dawn appeared. As we advanced, our guns kept up an intermittent fire around us. We hurried forward as fast as our tanks could go, for it was very late.

At last we drew near our starting-point. When we were within 200 yards of our place, the attack started. On our right we saw the bluish figures of the French advancing. German gas shells were bursting amongst them, and we saw men totter forward and fall; here and there a whole platoon would melt away.

The enemy had got some guns up at last, and his shells were falling fairly fast and especially on the road. Our tanks deployed into line and sheared off the road a little. Richards, Asser, and I ran forward and met Llewellyn. He hurriedly shouted orders to them – all, of course, of the very vaguest description. I said goodbye and got down into a shell-hole and watched them get lost in smoke.

My orders were to report to Company H.Q. as soon as I had handed over. So after five minutes I cleared out for camp.

On my way back I saw one thing that is worth mention. I saw the British artillery do an open-warfare movement – probably the first

since 1914. I was going down the road when a battery of field artillery dashed up at the gallop and swerved suddenly off the road. I heard the commander shout 'Action Front', and within about one minute the battery had opened fire. It was an extraordinarily thrilling sight.

I reached camp at about 11.30 a.m. after a very weary march back. The Company H.Q. were still at the wood (**G**, Figure 38). I reported and went to sleep. This was midday on the 10th of August. At 8 p.m. news of the action came through. There had been no advance. Something had gone wrong. Five out of six tanks had been knocked out. The sixth tank was Asser's, and this had not been seen or heard of since the start of the battle. Richards had been badly wounded and was evacuated. There were not many survivors.

I was very distressed at the news of Asser. I still hoped he was all right, since there was no actual bad news of him.

The next day Cook and I went forward to find out what we could. When we reached the line, we found that the Division with which our tanks should have fought (the 32nd) had been relieved by the 3rd Canadian. These troops had completed the attack that the 32nd had failed in. So the line was about two miles further on. The scene of the 'advance' was curious.

In front of the line, as it was on the morning of the 10th, there were five tanks. All were facing the enemy in a neat line except one. This apparently had been following another when the one in front was knocked out. Immediately afterwards it had received a direct

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Figure 40

Canadian infantry advancing through Dodo Wood on Aug. 8th. The first line of infantry has already passed – these are the 'moppers-up' who make sure none of the enemy are still holding out. Our tanks skirted this wood as it is very dangerous for tanks to drive through woods. It is very easy for a tank to get 'bellied' on a stump. The wood had not been shelled before the battle. Nevertheless you will see it shows distinct signs of bombardment. Actually an enormous number of shells are needed to make any real impression on a wood. To one who knows how little shelling affects a wood, this picture gives a good idea of the intensity of the British bombardment. Note the men are wearing 'battle order', i.e. no packs but just the bare necessities for fighting. At a time like this the wood is saturated with the fumes of bursting shells – a smell very like acetylene gas.

hit, which killed the crew but did not, for a little while at any rate, stop the engine. The tank had gone on and crawled a little way up the one in front.

All the tanks had carried gun cotton. This was to be used to blow up the tank if the only alternative was surrender. This gun cotton had been exploded by the direct hits, and the tanks were thus left there looking like burst toads – the roofs lifted off, the sides bulging out. Asser's tank I could not see.

Cook had gone off further to the right – on the French side of the road. After about an hour he returned and said, 'I've found Asser'. I jumped up at once very pleased and asked 'Where?' and was he all right? Cook replied that he had found him outside his tank, lying on the ground with a bullet through his heart.

We went back very miserable and tired.

On the 12th, Company H.Q. shifted up to the wood where Asser and I spent our last night together. The company was made into one section of four tanks, and I was put in command. We received orders to be prepared for action against two villages – Damery and Parvillers. The details were hopelessly vague, and arrangements were very slipshod. In the meantime we got more detailed news of the action of August 10th. It was all quite simple. Our six tanks left the line more or less together at zero. Asser was on the British right, steered on to the French Front by accident and was accordingly lost to sight. The remaining tanks went forward slowly, expecting the infantry to follow according to plan.

Figure 41

A direct hit. This photo ought really to be the Zonnebeke action of Sept. 26th 1917. This tank was knocked out there by a rather larger shell than usual. To me it is a familiar scene – and still not without horror. Of course, from a direct hit of this kind, it is quite inconceivable that any man of the crew would escape. Even with an 18-pdr the chances of escape were small – especially from a hit in the driver's or officer's seat. But this shell must have been something like 9.2". It was this kind of sight that met the eyes of the Canadian Infantry during the Aug. 8th battle. It was fear of this that made tank work unpleasant. I felt, whenever I was going into action in a tank, that at any moment one of these would come in. And the officer's seat felt more lonely and conspicuous every moment!

Actually, the infantry never left the front line. Hauser, who told me about it, said it was a most extraordinary business. There was no danger, and he himself had followed the tank. (I learned afterwards from one of the men that he did better – he went in sitting on the back of one!) When he had gone a little way, he found the infantry were not following so went back to see what was up. He found the colonel of the battalion, supposed to be supporting him, in tears, and a lot of the men also. Apparently a kind of panic had seized them. Anyway, the C.O. couldn't get the men to budge, and the 52nd Division didn't advance a foot along the whole front. In the meantime the tanks had come on a German field gun, which was behind a ridge. This gun simply put the tanks out of action, one after the other.

The whole action had been very badly managed. The tanks should have been screened by smoke, but the Infantry General, under the impression that he knew more about tanks than we did, refused to give us a smoke barrage. The account of this action was printed and handed round by order of Marshal Foch to all generals. A short note advised that in future all general officers should take the advice offered by officers in command of technical units.

The day we arrived at our new H.Q., we received fresh orders for a new attack. This attack was to be on the villages Damery and Parvillers. At the last moment the attack was called off. I shall send you the maps we were given for the action, as they are a good example of the vague orders we received from now on for the new type of surprise warfare. Rapidly changing conditions and the need for speed and secrecy put an end to such elaborate maps and detailed instructions as we received at Ypres and Cambrai. It is worthwhile to compare this map with the one I was given as a tank commander at Cambrai (1917).

The same orders that called off the action ordered the entire battalion to move. The direction of our move was away from the front, and we congratulated ourselves that this show, at any rate, was all over. The battalion had started with 40 tanks, all brand new and in fine condition. We were now left with six. But this was not all. When we first went in, we could man our tanks with crews of six men (instead of eight, as it should have been). We also had a few rescue men to fill gaps. Now we could only muster crews of five men for female tanks and six for male tanks. As you see, our numbers of men and tanks had fallen.

These six tanks were now in bad running order. They had gone very far without any real overhauling. They were supposed to be capable of 112 miles (the 'life' of a tank). Our estimated distance was already 100 miles per tank. We were guaranteed any amount of engine trouble. Since we were going home, this did not very much worry us.

On the whole we were rather pleased with ourselves. We had been highly complimented by all the generals with whom we worked, and Sir Douglas Haig specially commended us – a very, very rare distinction for a battalion. But the praise that really counted most was that of the ordinary infantry private, and the Canadians couldn't say too much of us. One private actually said he thought every man who went into action in a tank deserved a V.C.!

All this had its bad side too. The Tank Corps badly wanted recruits. But our losses in this action created a bad impression amongst the troops. The Canadians particularly were not anxious to join a new Canadian Tank Battalion that was being formed at this time. There were two actions that chiefly contributed to this besides the battle of August 8th. One was our disaster on the 10th, and the other was a fearful show the 1st Battalion were engaged in. I mentioned that the 1st Battalion took on the action on our front after we stopped on the 8th. The action was conducted by one company of the 1st Battalion, and the company proceeded in a line on the left (British side) of the Amiens–Roye road. Their ten tanks, which were carrying four infantry men each to minimize casualties, were all knocked out. There was not a single survivor below the rank of Major.

Unfortunately all these tanks were knocked out within easy sight of the road. The shortage of men made it quite impossible to bury the dead, and for days these tanks remained where they were knocked out – a fearful sight for every soldier who marched up this main road into action. As a result everyone was convinced that the tanks were simply death traps.

The six tanks were formed into a composite company, and we started back. But we did not go back via the Amiens–Roye road. We suddenly turned northward. I asked where we were going, and Cook replied laconically, 'Another action, old son.' I cursed hard, for I had had enough, and so had everybody else. It was not long before everybody spotted what we were up to (see Figure 42).

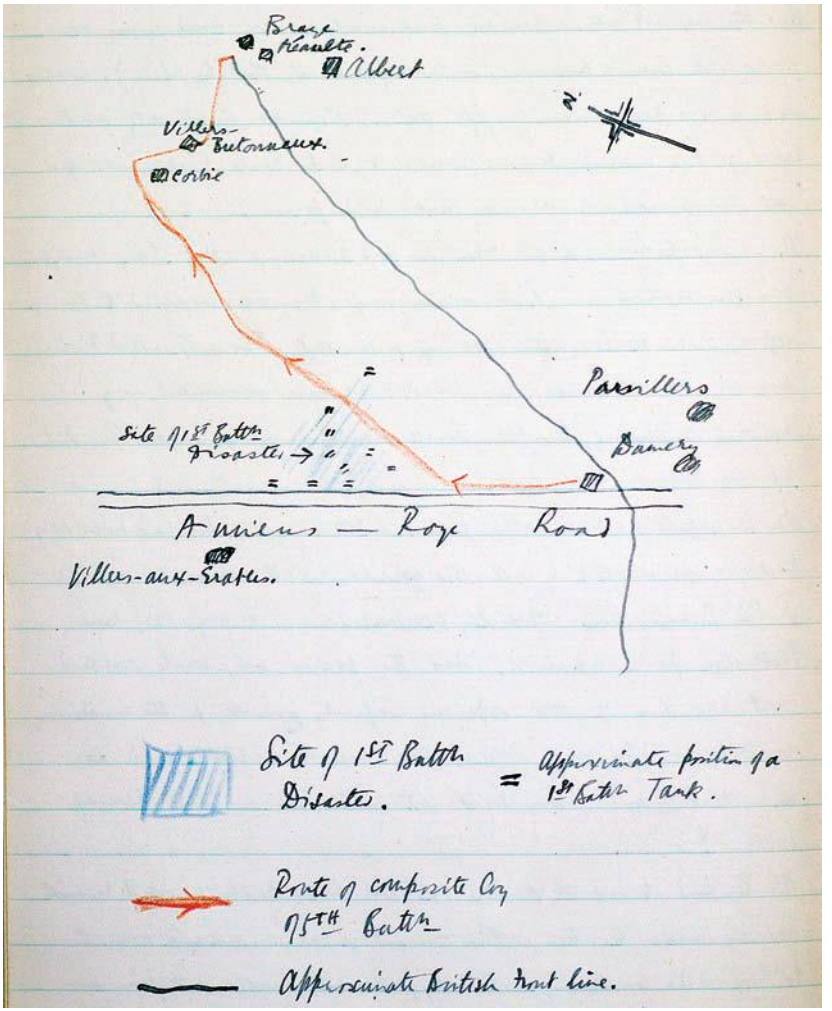

Figure 42
Movements after Aug. 10th battle.

Briefly, our job was this. We were leaving the point of the salient we had created and were moving northward to attack at the flank of the salient. Our actual place of attack was not yet known, but it was not very far from Villers-Bretonneux. We stopped for the night at a small wood. The next day we pushed on as fast as we could to

a place called Corbie. Here we came across the Australians who had been the attacking troops in this sector. We reached our destination, just outside the village, at about 2 p.m. It was a pleasant and peaceful spot near a lake. The rest of the day was spent in cleaning up our very dud tanks and doing all we could to put them into fighting trim.

The composite 'company' was put under Aitches' command. But it was decided that the six tanks should be employed as a section. That is to say, they should operate simply as if they were an isolated section of one company and should be commanded in action by one section commander. This was obviously the right thing to do, as it was useless to have two or three captains commanding such a small force.

Finally they decided that I was to command this section in the coming action. I wasn't keen on the job, but I couldn't complain, as I hadn't done very much up to date. They made one more alteration before the action. They took two tanks out of my command – a supply tank and a wireless tank. These two were put under Hauser's command. Neither of them went in the first line but knocked about some 800 yards behind, where they were quite as useless as they would have been further up. The wireless tank was more or less in the nature of a sop to the Higher Command. No one regarded it seriously, and I haven't heard of an occasion when one succeeded in sending a message. The supply tank simply carted petrol and stuff about, and sometimes they were quite useful. Hauser was rather indignant as being saddled with these two but treated it as a joke.

The next day I awoke with a fever. I had caught the 'flu. I lay on the ground the whole day and let someone else superintend the various jobs that had to be done. But the rest was not very long. At 6 p.m. that evening our six tanks moved off – the four fighting tanks in front. We trailed through Villers-Bretonneux very slowly as there was a lot of traffic and, of course, lots of engine trouble. Fortunately Reynolds, the battalion workshops officer, was with us. He was an extraordinarily good engineer, and he usually put things right in less than no time. For my part, I was feeling very ill and neither knew nor cared very much what was happening. I was violently sick every half-mile or so.

They shoved operation orders into me as we went. We were to do an attack at the flank of the salient simply to prevent the enemy from retiring peacefully. It was now the 20th; on the 21st there was to be a big attack on our old front, where we were with the Guards Division.

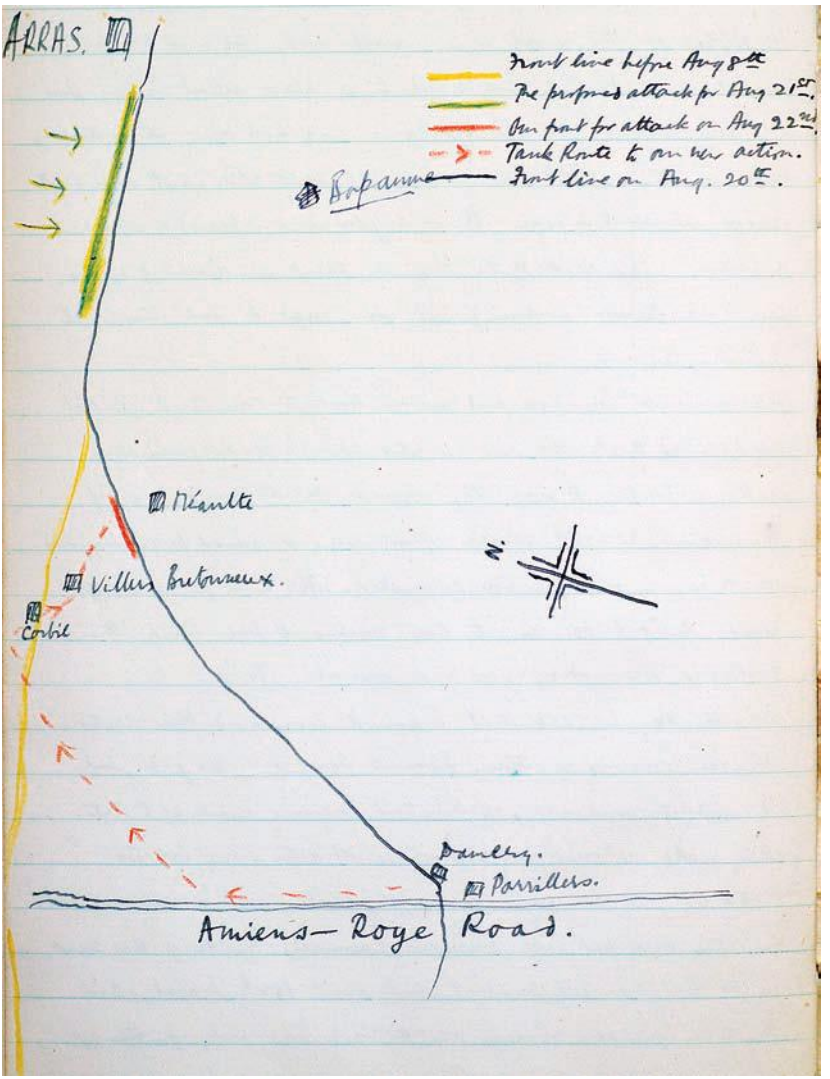

Figure 43
Movements before Aug. 22 battle.

Our own attack was to be on the 22nd, and our objective was our old Christmas Camp at Méaulte (see Figure 43).

The country looked quite good, as, of course, it was little shelled – all the fighting had been of a swift, surprise character, and so the shelling had not been great. While it lasted, it was as intense here as elsewhere, but owing to rapid advances you no longer had the awful devastation of a place like Ypres or the Somme.

Before long the moon came up. It was a cold and beautiful night. Buchanan, my runner, walked with me and helped me along. I will not trouble to describe this trip, as it resembled most of the others except for the fact that I was so violently sick that I really didn't mind much what happened. I remember leaning up against one of my tanks and staring at the moon while the crew sweated away inside trying to make it go. Such little things hardly worried now – one either helped or did not help, and it did not seem to matter very much which. After a time the thing would be sure to go on. Or it would not, and that would mean another crew safe and happy.

At about 1.30 my section of tanks got into trouble. One of my tanks tried to help another that was stuck in some mud and had a defective gear so it could not get out. We swore and cursed and sweated for about an hour and finally got the brute out.

At 3.30 we were within a mile of camp and on top of a ridge overlooking the enemy lines. We travelled along this ridge – parallel to the enemy lines and about five miles from them. At last we reached our destination, and after our usual preparations turned in to sleep. It was about 6.30, and the great Bapaume attack up north of us would have been just beginning.

We had about four hours' sleep, and then the crews prepared tanks for action, and I messed about reading maps and so on. I must have been a queer sight sitting on the ground taking occasional nips of champagne and reading large maps, which lay spread round me. At midday it was decided that I had better go forward with Carter and reconnoitre our route. As there would not be time for us to do a full reconnaissance and get back, it was decided that we should see the place and then wait, at an appointed place near the road, till the tanks were brought up by Hauser.

So Carter and Buchanan and I set out. Buchanan carted some champagne for me to keep me going as I still was in the throes of 'flu.

It was a blazing hot day and I felt absolutely beaten. I was limping

with a sore foot and I was hot, feverish and sick. Carter could only keep me going by swearing at me and cursing me up hill and down. I kept on wanting to sit down and rest. He must have been sick of me by the time he'd done!

Well, I remember very little of all this. My impressions are mixed and are something like this: a tank route, which I wasn't to forget, whatever happened; terrific heat and a grey desolate landscape with white chalk diggings and old trenches shining in the sun; a few shells bursting very near; a lot of dead horses and a few men, all very decayed and reeking; some shell-shattered woods; a burning tongue and a very sore heel; finally, lying in the long grass waiting for the tanks to come.

The attack was due to start at dawn – about 6 a.m., I think it was. Aitches was supposed to lead the tanks to where Carter and I were, and then we would lead them to the starting-point. Aitches would then give the order for us to go into action, and after that I should take over the command of the section – it was the ordinary procedure for action.

At about 10.30 the tanks arrived. All seemed to be going on all right. Aitches, however, was not there. Carter and I made enquiries but could not find him.

We went to the front of the column of tanks and led them slowly on through the long grass behind the wood till we reached **B** (Figure 44). Here we stopped our engines and waited till Aitches or someone should come along. The crews all got out of the tanks and lay on the ground beside them. It was now about midnight, as, of course, we had been forced to travel very slowly for fear of making a noise. Carter and I had a discussion together on the question of Aitches' absence, as the matter was becoming serious. If he did not turn up, it meant that we should have to take the responsibility of commencing the tank action on ourselves. If anything went wrong, our position would be far from enviable. After some discussion we both found it useless to hide what was at the back of our minds, and Carter said bluntly that he thought Aitches was shirking the action through funk – it was quite easy to find an excuse for losing the way or remaining in a dugout. We decided that if he didn't turn up, we would put him under arrest – a very dangerous step for junior officers.

At this stage our deliberations were interrupted. First a salvo of shells came over and burst within about 100 yards. This was quickly

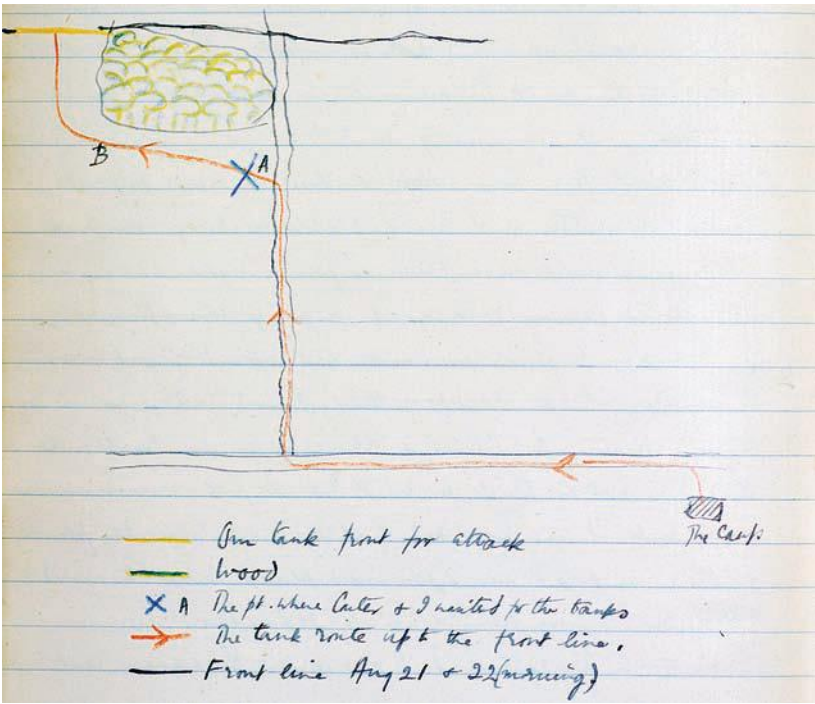

Figure 44

followed by more shells, and in less than no time a regular barrage had fallen all along our line. Had the enemy discovered we were to attack? It certainly looked as if this was a harassing barrage intended to destroy any preparation for an attack on our part.

There was nothing for us to do. We ordered the crews into the tanks and lay on the ground ourselves. The enemy were using their 'contact' shrapnel shells (Figure 45), and the pieces were moaning through the air and striking sparks off the sides of the tanks while we lay by them. We didn't altogether fancy standing up in those circumstances!

We spoke very little but just clenched our teeth and fretted beneath this roar of shell bursts and the whining of the splinters. At about half an hour before zero, the bombardment suddenly increased. It was quite clear now that they had got wind of our plans. His artillery were no longer doing harassing fire – this was the real bombardment.

Figure 45

This shell was a rather poor imitation of the British '106 fuse. It was designed to burst immediately it touched the surface of the ground. As a result the splinters would fly out sideways at a height of about three feet from the ground. The crater made would be small, but the effect of such a shell, bursting amongst infantry, would be very great.

There was still no sign whatever of Aitches. At last I shouted to Carter that I thought we had better start without orders. He agreed, and we both ordered the crews to start their engines. I ordered all tanks to follow the first one and ordered the first one to follow me. Carter's job was now over, and I took it for granted that he would go back. I envied him thoroughly. Here I had to walk in front of these brutes for about 400 yards in shell-fire that was much too heavy for my liking, whereas he could either go back or stay where he was till things improved and then clear out. But I found him walking into action with me. 'What are you doing?' I shouted at him. He calmly replied that he thought he 'might as well come along'! I know that if I am really fit I can usually go into an action somehow if I *have* to – but I could certainly never have taken his choice on that occasion. Under circumstances like those the chance of safety would be overpowering, to me at any rate.

The whole place seemed to rock and sway beneath us. I looked at my watch and saw it was a minute to zero. We were practically on the front line so that the 'timing' had been all right.

Here let me give our orders as they finally stood: it was expected that after the attack on the Guards front on the 21st had taken place, the enemy would retire on our front. Our attack was intended to harass their retreat. A few tanks from D Battalion (4th Battalion) were to attack the old Christmas camp at Méaulte – we were to attack further to the right. Our objective was the line beyond a row of trees (see diagram, Figure 46). Danger spots were the road that passed Méaulte camp and the valley known as Happy Valley – a singularly ironical

title. At Ypres, in 1917, it had been the enemy policy to shell the tops of hills and high ground generally. But now they concentrated fire on the valleys. So that if we took the valley as intended, it was extremely unlikely that the troops in it would describe it as 'happy'.

The British artillery were to use a little smoke – especially over Happy Valley. The rest of the barrage was to be 'one-third thermite'. This meant that one third of the barrage were to be incendiary shells. The 'thermite' shell burst on contact and burnt anything near it, so it was quite effective against troops lying on the ground. I never really discovered if it actually did any great damage – it certainly must have done if it fell among troops in mass.

After the 'green' line (Figure 46) had been consolidated, we were to find out if the infantry wanted us any longer. If they did not, we were to rally our tanks and go back to camp. We all hoped the enemy *had* retired. But it was quite clear now that his guns, at any rate, had not retired. Their shells were falling fast, and all hopes of a walk-over were dispelled. I signalled to the leading tank that they were not on the line of attack, and Carter and I lay down in a shell-hole and watched the four go past and disappear into the smoke.

Carter then left me, and I went on in the hopes of seeing something of what the tanks did. I was very sick and groggy and didn't mind much what happened to me or my tanks.

I am really rather at a loss to describe the rest of the action. I only remember incidents and cannot remember how I got from one place to another. I think the best thing I can do is simply to give you a series of incidents in the order in which they came (as far as I know). The dotted line on the sketch map (Figure 46) gives you *some* idea of my wanderings, but I am afraid it is very inaccurate. It merely represents the best-connected idea I can give of an action that was blurred and indistinct to me even while it was on.

My first impression was coming up with the infantry, who were holding a line of very broken trenches. As far as I remember, I stayed some time watching and waiting for something to happen. The sun was bright, and it was already getting hot. Most of the gun-smoke had blown away, and you could see the landscape quite clearly, as I had seen it the previous day on reconnaissance. The men were lying up against the remains of the forward slope of the trench and watching for an enemy counter-attack. The flies were very troublesome and especially worrying a young boy in front of me. He was, however,

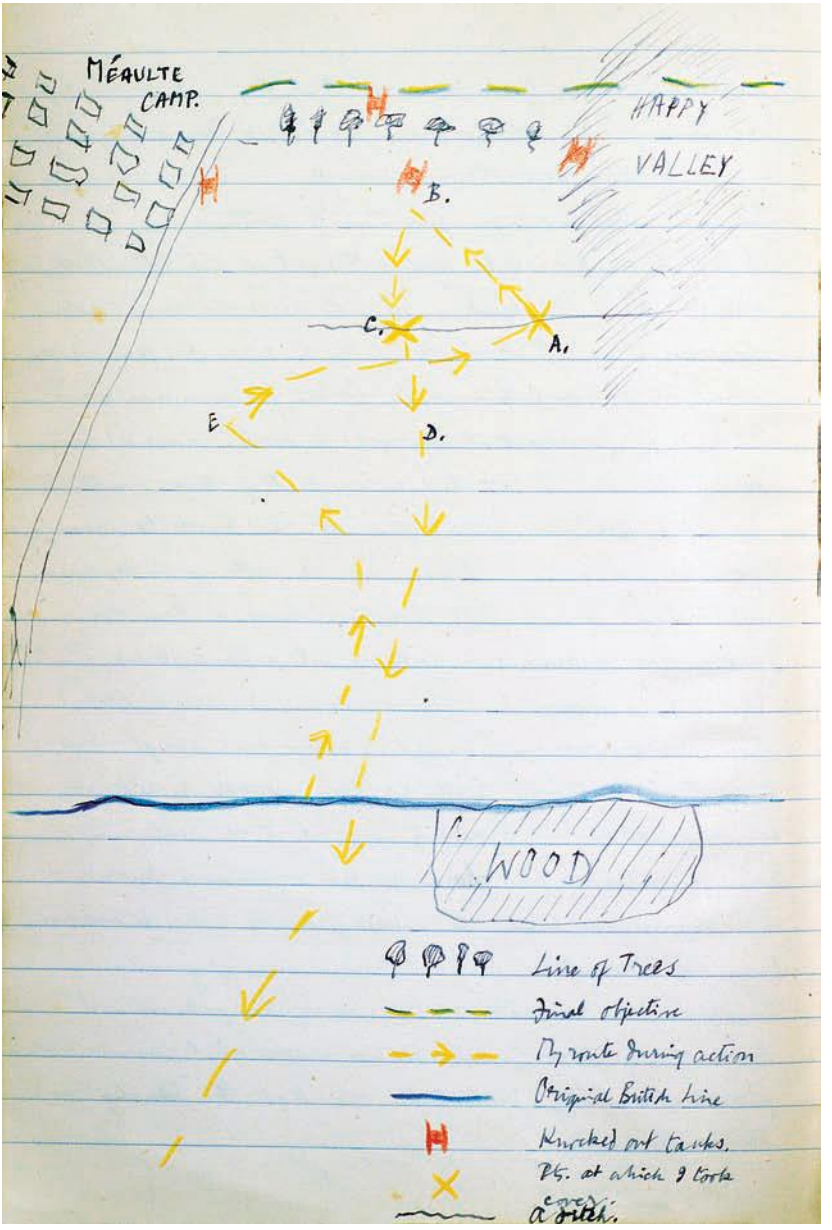
MÉAULTE
CAMP.
HAPPY
VALLEY
B.
C.
A.
E
D.
WOOD
Line of Trees
Final objective
My route during action
Original British line
Knocked out tanks.
Pts. at which 9 tanks
a pitch.

Figure 46

almost past caring, as he had a bad wound in his stomach. There was nothing to be done for him, as he was beyond hope. I remember feeling half fascinated by it all: the heat, the flies, the ominous lull in the battle and the poor boy with his face deathly white and half-shut eyes. I could see nothing of my tanks. Later, when the infantry had advanced again, I went rather to the left of our front – towards **E** (Figure 46).

The ground here was low-lying and rose gradually towards the enemy. The trees were on the high part of the ridge, and the 'green' line was on the downward slope again.

As I approached, I saw that the enemy were concentrating fire on a spot of ground in front of me (**E**, Figure 46). The lull was still on, but one gun seemed to have a particular dislike for this place. Every 20 seconds or so you would see a great red cloud burst up from the ground and roll out sideways, like some huge flower unfolding. It must have been an old house once, for you only get red like that when brick dust is going into the air. I approached the place to see if a tank was there, but found nothing. I lay on the ground for some time and watched the performance It was curiously monotonous – the same roar, the explosion and hissing of the splinters, and then the 'flower'.

The next thing I remember was tottering off towards the right. The ground was very scrubby – short furze bushes, thistles and dried-up grass or baked mud. The artillery fire was growing fiercer again.

It was now that the extent of our losses became apparent. Every here and there men were lying about wounded. The wounds were practically all shell wounds. Time and again I heard someone shouting and went over to find a man lying crumpled up. They all wanted help and wanted to be taken back. I, of course, lied and said I would send help soon and that they were all right. But I could always see they knew it was nonsense.

I found myself lying in a kind of small ditch grown over with thistles and scrub. There were three or four infantrymen with a Lewis gun by me. We had to keep our heads down as odd bullets kept coming over and sometimes you heard the unpleasant 'flick' of a near one.

It seemed fairly clear at this stage that the battle was over. Most objectives seemed to be reached, artillery fire was not very heavy, and everyone seemed to be waiting for something to happen.

Our wait was enlivened by some enemy aeroplanes. We heard droning and saw four or five aeroplanes come towards us flying very

low. Amongst the others there was one painted bright red – the colour usually believed to be affected by Richthofen [celebrated German pilot, nicknamed the Red Baron]. They saw us and blazed off some rounds of machine-gun at us, dropped a couple of bombs and cleared off. None of their efforts met with any success.

After some time I walked forward to **B**. This was a tank I saw when I was at the ditch. It had made no movement, so I presumed it had been knocked out. When I reached it, I found a hole in the side and the name ANCRE written on it. It was an old tank that had been used in the Somme battle of 1916. I had hardly time to see it when a shell came over. The enemy was determined to keep people away from it.

From here I just saw one tank on my right and in front of me. It was going up in flames and was in front of the British front line.

I got into touch with the infantry battalion H.Q. and found out that our objectives had been reached but with heavy casualties. The enemy infantry seemed to have been withdrawn, but their guns had done great damage. They had practically withdrawn all Howitzers, and short-range weapons generally, and pounded us with guns.

I decided to go back further left to see if I could find anything out about my other two tanks. I had reached the ditch again (**C**, Figure 46) when I saw a tank coming back. I went towards it and found it was a 4th Battalion tank. He told me he had seen four tanks going up in flames on his right and that he thought they were all 5th Battalion tanks. I assumed he had seen my three going up. I asked him if he had had any orders or knew anything. He told me all objectives were reached and that all 4th Battalion tanks had been told to go home.

I then decided I ought to go back to the front line. There seemed nothing to do when I got there but – if anything went wrong and questions were asked, it would be safer to be discovered looking for lost tanks in the front line than three miles behind it.

Figure 47

The attack, Aug. 22nd. Tanks are out of sight in a hollow on the left front. The enemy are counter-attacking, and British reinforcements are going up. The shell-bursts don't appear distinctly, but with care you can pick them out. Of course at this stage of the battle the fire was distinctly slacker than it had been earlier.

Just at this moment one of my runners arrived to say that all my tanks had been knocked out but we had lost *no* men. He said the crews had been given permission to leave (by the respective infantry battalion commanders), and, as they were useless without tanks, they had done so and rallied at the pre-arranged point. Carter had sent the runner off to tell me.

I thanked my stars and told the 4th Battalion officer, 'Home John', and off we went. As we trundled along, we were hailed by numbers of wounded who called to be carried back. The position was a difficult one. Tanks were expressly forbidden to take back wounded if limbs were broken. In a previous action they had been ordered, on coming out of action, to carry back all they could. The result was a tragedy. At the end of half an hour's ride, after an otherwise perfect performance, every wounded man that had been picked up with broken bones was found to be dead. Now all the wounded here were men with broken bones. The shelling had simply smashed legs or arms in nearly every case. A bullet usually made a clean wound, but a shell almost invariably makes a mess. The result was we were forced to refuse these people our help. It was an incredible business. They of course saw a tank as their great chance of safety. They saw us happily going home and clutched desperately at this sudden vision of hope, only to hear us refuse help. I repeated the stale formula, 'Full up, but will send a stretcher bearer', and we went on – probably cursed by men who had never before known one soldier refuse another soldier his help.

At **D** (Figure 46) we passed a whole group of badly hit men. We bound them up as best we could but no more. They were in a helpless and dreadful state and looked at us queerly when we went on without them.

When we reached the original British line, I told some very weary and overworked stretcher-bearers the positions of these men. They looked helplessly at me and said they would fetch them – when they could.

That was the end of the action as far as I was concerned. As soon as I got to camp, a leave warrant was handed to me, and I was told to meet a box-body Ford at a cross-roads just about 400 yards behind the front line from which the morning battle had started. I was very surprised and pleased, as I had not expected leave till very much later – for two or three months, at least.

I dashed off down to the rendezvous and was surprised to find myself going down a road that was being quite heavily shelled. Imagine it if you can – a man with harassed nerves, a touch of flu, a leave warrant in his pocket and a beastly strife on a road he has to take. The leave warrant was the most demoralizing part of it. It makes you so careful when you feel you are so near safety as that.

I reached the rendezvous – a broken church – and waited. The car was late, of course. It was due at 6 p.m., and at 6.05 the enemy started to shell the village. What were they up to? Was it a counter-attack? And what was that fool of a driver doing? Of course they would shell the church. I'd put that fool of a man under arrest as soon as he appeared. At 6.10 I decided it would save unnecessary ceremony if I shot him off-hand. At 6.15 the church started going up, and I edged into the street and bit my nails and cursed the A.S.C. [Army Service Corps] and their works. Why couldn't they be punctual? A minute later there was a whirl of dust, a terrific screech of brakes – and there stood a dear little Ford box-body with a most impertinent look on its face. I shot into it like a rocket and bawled out, 'Boulogne – and drive like hell.' He did.

We raced down the roads like demons, and slowly desolation changed to green fields and daylight to dusk. By midnight we were still careering madly on; but now the moon was up, and it was a peaceful and glorious night. At 4 a.m. we raced into Boulogne, and I got a stuffy little bed in a stuffy little room and was only prevented from thinking I was dreaming it all by the only too obvious fact that I wasn't asleep. Only those who know what central heating in a French hotel in August means can appreciate the fug I endured for those few hours.

At 8.30 I was on board ship, and at 4.30 p.m. I was lying in the Hamman Baths in Jermyn Street, reading about a battle there had been on the West Front. British troops had attacked near Méaulte and had taken a place called Happy Valley, it appeared. At 5 p.m. the enemy had counter-attacked and driven back our advance troops in some places. The enemy's losses were heavy. A man leant across to me – 'Nice little show that, eh, what?' he said. 'Oh, very!' I replied.

That evening I went to see 'The Boy'. I had found out there was no train to Lustleigh where Mother was until 10 a.m. next morning, and I thought this would be a good way of clearing the war out of my mind. W. H. Berry was the chief man, and very inane and silly

the whole show was. There were lots of lights, brilliant scenes, nice banging music, loud-voiced and shrieking actors and, in short, everything to make for an unintelligent and expensive evening without any undue effort on my part. I sat back and watched the show and wondered at it all. Ridiculous old men sat about and laughed at silly jokes. Electric light and noise – that was all there was, as far as London was concerned. But I was too fresh from France, and the whole time I saw, in place of the scenes and silly fools, Happy Valley, and men asking to be carried back. It was not a successful show for me. The contrast of wartime London with 'out there' was too great. That London show was a nightmare, and France was a nightmare – but the latter was positively healthy in comparison. The next morning London was behind me, and at about 3.30 p.m. I was at Lustleigh.

The remains of 'flu and a touch of poison gas kept me rather seedy. A doctor gave me some stuff that seemed to do me good and visited me frequently. He refused all payment for he was an ex-army doctor and wouldn't hear of being paid by a soldier. It was just a little ordinary friendly help, he explained. I have since found out that it was a point of honour with all doctors who had been in the army to give medical help freely to service men.

I will not say anything of leave. On September 6th I went back to France. I was in a very cheerful frame of mind. The *last* time I had gone on leave I seemed to be going back to an army faced with overwhelming disaster. This time we seemed to be winning. The Drocourt–Quéant battle was a success, and the 'impenetrable wall of the West Front' seemed to be crumbling at last. One didn't quite like to think about peace; but, at any rate, a Great British Victory generally seemed to be followed by a slight German retreat – a feature that had been absent in most of our victories since 1914. Also, there seemed to be a fair chance that the Allies really would definitely win the war someday.

I got back to the battalion to find things in a queer state. They were all peacefully ensconced at Blangy, and people were up to their usual tricks – some wondering why they hadn't got D.S.O.s, others wondering why they hadn't got majorities. It was fairly amusing so long as you felt there was no chance of being put under command of an absolute fool. B Company remained calm, as any change in a commander could only be for the better.

There was one disquieting feature – a persistent rumour that the battalion was going into action again.

I arrived in the Company Mess at about 2.30 p.m. to find a disconsolate-looking individual endeavouring to deaden the bitterness of army lime juice with copious additions of ration sugar. He gave me the news.

Colonel O'Kelly was going or had gone. His place was taken by an old R.H.G. [Royal Horse Guards] officer who had been O.C. A Company. A Company were commanded by Major Huntlatch, a decent, easy-going old soul who had no intention of taking the war too seriously. C Company were still commanded by Gatehouse, who had got rid of Capt. Homfray (or rather hoped to do so – by pushing him for promotion to Company Commander, major). Our company was in a queer position. It was still commanded by Aitches, but he was moving heaven and earth to get to England to join the cadre of a new battalion that was to be formed. Cook hoped soon to get to England as a Company Commander in this same battalion. Capt. Nixon, who had been a major in the 4th Battalion, was now second in command to our company. He had been reduced to his temporary rank (he had been 'acting' major) as a result of an injudicious quarrel in the 4th Battalion. He was somewhat sore and disgruntled as a result. I had met him at Merlimont when I was there as instructor at the beginning of the year. He had then seemed very efficient but somewhat overbearing.

Carter and Hauser gave me much the same news and also told me about the last action. As a result of that show, the battalion had finished off all its remaining tanks. Nearly all were worn out before the show and so had developed engine trouble before getting out. The crews had formed 'strong points' round them, and in any case the tanks had been destroyed a little later by direct hits. Once they were stationary, they had presented too easy a target to be missed. As a result we only had one casualty, although all six remaining tanks had been destroyed by direct hits. Carter had reported Aitches for his performance and had added that I could substantiate his evidence. The brigadier had advised him to say no more and not carry the thing through, as he saw means for getting Aitches out of the way without any fuss – presumably by sending him home to England. The 5th Battalion was now a very famous battalion – it had been praised openly to the rest of the Corps by Sir Douglas Haig, and they

thought it better for the reputation and morale of the battalion to get rid of duds quietly. I agreed with Carter that this seemed the wisest plan. The main thing was to clear out Aitches, and this seemed to be assured in the near future.

On about September 20th the battalion drew fresh tanks, and up the line we went. C Company, under Major Gatehouse, had been to Paris after August 8th to give demonstrations to various staff officers of the French and British armies. They had had a very good time and were in anticipation of good things still to come. Gatehouse, who would have given his soul for a D.S.O., had put practically his entire company in for something or other. Colonel O'Kelly had as good as told him he was in for a D.S.O. for his handling of the company on August 8th, and all looked merry and bright. Indeed, the whole battalion consoled themselves somewhat by the hope of pretty ribbons in the near future. In the meantime, however, this action business was certainly a bit of a bore.

We detrained at Roisel (which had been in enemy hands about ten days before), some ten miles behind the line, with the calmness and dignity of true soldiers. In actual point of fact that railhead was not quite the innocent spot it looked; while we peacefully trundled off our tanks, an ingenious little arrangement of wires, acid, etc. did its work equally peacefully some 20 feet underground. For the moment *we* were the important personages at Roisel; but our little friend had his turn later, and on October 28th or thereabouts, 30 soldiers, an ammunition train, two tank trains and Roisel railway station, all disappeared into the blue. That was a long-suffering and patient mine – but it had its reward.

We put up in a wood near the station. We spent the next day in tinkering about once more – the old routine – and in the evening we pushed forward again. We were now within five miles of the front line, and it was the night 26/27th September. As dawn broke, the earth suddenly began to tremble, and the air was filled with the thunder of our guns; on a front of thirty miles the British artillery had opened up hurricane fire. The last great battle for the Hindenburg Line had commenced.

As the grey morning light filtered through the trees, I stood and wondered wearily how long the accursed business would last. I could almost see the poor devils in the 'line' – earth and filth flying everywhere and chaos unutterable. The future could give no consolation.

The Germans were in the last ditch, and there could be nothing but the bitterest opposition. It was true that the war-correspondents had noticed a slackening in the German spirit – their morale, they said, was gone. But most of the fighting men I have spoken to had not remarked this. Perhaps the unfortunate Boche found it easier to face a British Tommy than a British war-correspondent.

I regretted heartily my refusal to go back to England and join a new battalion. There was one thing that was becoming very clear – I had lost my nerve. Everything I did was difficult; in action I had to force myself to do my mere job. I became more or less paralysed at the thought of action, and my brain would *not* work. There always had been the traces of this trouble – after the breakthrough of November 30th 1917, at Meteren in April '18, and on August 8th '18 – on all these occasions I seemed unable to shake off a kind of sluggishness and terror that threatened to crush all life out of me. I had reached the stage that many had reached before me – the B.E.F. [British Expeditionary Force] man who was 'not as good as he had been'.

My rather unpleasant thoughts were interrupted by Nixon's approach. I asked him if the troops were attacking that morning. He told me they were not. The British hurricane bombardment – 1/3 thermite and chlorine – was to continue for 48 hours. 'We've joined the right army *this* time' he said, and I heartily agreed.

An hour later a message came through to say that our battalion was reserved to follow through and not for the first assault. That, at any rate, gave us *one* more day, even if it meant that when we did go in our orders would be scrappy, incomplete and chaotic.

The day was spent in preparation for action. The usual nervous dejection and misery was enlightened by two events – one, the departure of some officers and men to form new battalions in England. Among others, Harrison and Cook went, and Buchanan, my runner, a jolly good fellow I was sorry to lose. The other event caused flutterings in the dovecote even at this juncture – decorations and promotions had come through! I had been awarded the Legion d'Honneur!

This decoration needs explaining. It was given, ostensibly, for gallantry in action on August 8th. In actual point of fact it was practically arranged before that action that I should get something out of the lucky bag. The Brigadier had said that a D.S.O. alone looked lonely and miserable – a touch of colour by its side would improve things no end, he declared. The Colonel said that I needed an extra to make up

for missing a V.C. One or two company officers said that I deserved it for having served under Aitches so long. The men were past being surprised at anything.

This decoration was put into the shade by many others. The O.C. A Company got an M.C. for gallantry in leading his company into action over a heavily shelled bridge on August 8th. The company swore bitterly he had been nowhere near the place and that a Capt. Llewellyn had done the job. To do him justice, the O.C. A Company agreed with them!

Major Gatehouse had won an M.C.! – for magnificent handling of his company on August 8th and subsequently. The comments on this were many and diverse. A Company were inclined to be ironic and wondered why he hadn't made it a V.C. while he was at it. C Company kept their thoughts to themselves, and B Company said he thoroughly deserved it – for handling his company so well that he got them into Paris. Gatehouse confided his opinion to me. With amazement I heard him say, 'Infernal scandal, these decorations!' Had I misjudged him? Was he really modest and retiring after all? – and then he continued – 'The old devil swore he'd put me in for a D.S.O.! I and here I am with this dirty little M.C.! You can't trust these – – – Irishmen an inch! I'll get even with the old swine yet!' But, alas, O'Kelly was out of reach. He had suffered much from Gatehouse (and confided as much to Cook). He had promised a D.S.O., but as he would be safe in England with a new battalion by the time honours came out – one can only guess the rest! Poor old Gatehouse! There he stood, with a crowd of eager young faces round him – all his beloved officers – pressing near to congratulate their O.C., and not one of the blockheads seemed to realize how miserably unappreciated his services had been!

The O.C. B Company – Major Aitches, to wit – had not passed unnoticed. He was awarded the M.C. for magnificent reconnaissance work before August 8th, and for his gallantry in leading the company tanks over a perilous bridge and so into action beneath a storm of shells.

This we could not swallow. All officers decided *not* to congratulate him or, indeed, to notice the thing. Aitches was a born fool. He was as pleased as punch and raked up from goodness knows where a piece of M.C. ribbon. He turned up at our simple evening repast with a half-inch-broad ribbon sewn to his tunic and with a ready smile

prepared to receive homage. Poor chap! He was genuinely proud of the rotten thing, and I don't believe he ever understood why none of his officers said a word.

There is one other decoration and promotion that I will mention now, as it happened to concern me later. A young boy named Windle, who had a certain charm of manner and was popular with Gatehouse, was awarded an M.C. and made a captain to command a section. His M.C. was for an alleged brilliant piece of work (on August 8th), which I knew had not taken place (as I happened to be there). Gatehouse had him promoted for this same thing and *then* proposed that he should go to B Company as a section commander. As soon as I heard this, I dashed off to Nixon and Aitches and advised them on no account to take him. I argued that Windle was a bad officer. I had seen him at Millekruisse at the beginning of the year and had taken over trenches from him. He was then useless and ridiculous as an officer. I had been on the spot on August 8th when Windle had been alleged to do his great show. He had not done it. I declared that he had merely been promoted and petted by Gatehouse, and that if Gatehouse promoted him, he ought to keep him. *He* thought him good enough for a section; *we* did not – therefore Gatehouse should have him. I said a bad section commander in our company meant more work for the other section commanders and a bad section to boot.

For the present my arguments prevailed, and Nixon assured me he would keep Aitches up to scratch. You will see later how true my words were.

The 27th and 28th passed without further interest, and we simply smoked, talked and did odd jobs while the guns thundered in the distance.

On the morning of September 29th the entire battalion moved forward. The final assault on the Hindenburg line had commenced that same morning. We trekked slowly on. Only the Colonel and a few officers knew where we were going. No one knew yet what we should be called upon to do. The morning mist was cold and wrapped us round until the leading tanks looked quite ghostly in the distance. The air was filled with the drone of our engines and the thunder of the battle which was raging away in front of us.

We ate our bully beef and biscuits for lunch as we went. I ordered my section to tie petrol cans filled with water onto the exhaust pipes on the roof – so that we should later have boiling water for tea.

The drive seemed almost interminable. At 6.30 a halt was called, and I ordered tea at once for my section. We just sat round our tanks and swilled hot tea and ate more biscuit. Nixon came along, and I asked him for news. He could tell me little. He didn't know whether we should be needed next morning or where we were going; he only knew that the opening stages of the attack had been fairly successful.

At 7.30, just as we were beginning to despair of orders, we were suddenly told to go on, and the weary trek began again. It was now getting dark, and I remember we seemed to be passing rather weird country. We were travelling along the bed of a valley, and the noise of our engines and the occasional back-fires set up a kind of muttering echo that sounded like a ghostly battle.

At last night fell, and still we went on. But our journey became less smooth. Every now and then the tanks in front would come to a standstill, and we would wait patiently while the weary minutes slipped by. At last we would start forward again, but only to stop in the same way a little later. Messages kept passing up and down the line for certain officers to go to the head of the column, or for information about the tail company. If we had been sufficiently interested, we might have wondered where we were going.

At 10 p.m. we found ourselves on a road. Not far in front we could see Very lights and the red glow of bursting shells. There was a lull in the battle.

At 10.30 p.m. we reached a fork road and a crucifix. I asked Nixon where we were, and he told me we were now on the Bellenglise road. He told me the enemy had been driven out of Bellenglise that morning and that his position was uncertain. Instead of going on down the Bellenglise road, we turned up the fork road and after travelling

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Figure 48

Moving forward for action. A photo of the 5th Battalion tanks moving forward in the mist of the morning of Sept. 29th. Note the officer and man following the tank. Whenever it was just a case of follow my leader this was the inevitable procedure. You only put enough men to work the tank inside, and the rest would follow with hands thrust deep into pockets and slouching tread. It was curious to watch the little ribs of the tank track-plates continually climbing up and up the back of the tank.

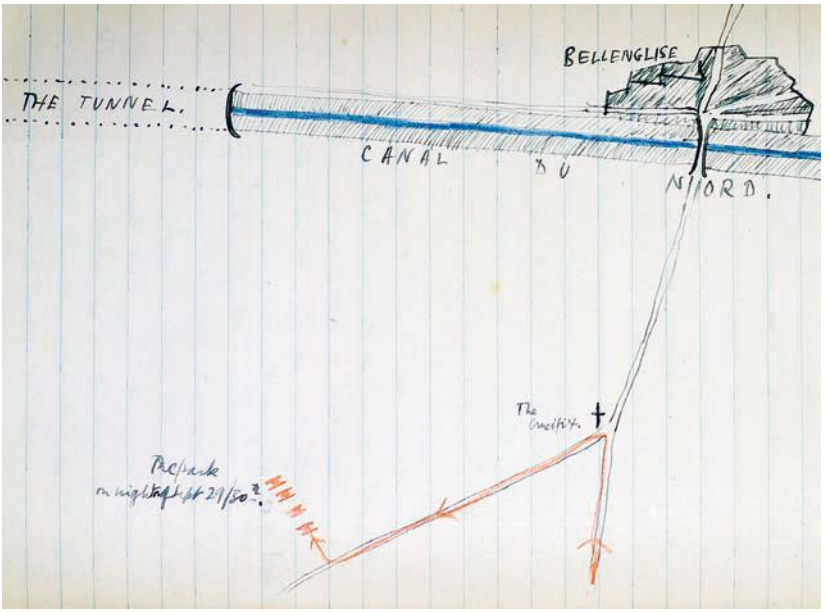

Figure 49
The park on night of Sept. 29th/30th.

about a mile we parked up just off the road under the shelter of some trees (see Figure 49). The men were very tired indeed, and most of us were nervy. The trek had been very long and just a repetition of the old story – halts, engine trouble, uncertainty – until we were all thoroughly worn out with it all.

I told my people to hurry up and get camouflaged and turn in as fast as possible, and it certainly did not take them very long. I looked at my watch and found it was midnight. Whatever the next day held in store for us, it at least looked as if we were to get some sleep that night. I was just congratulating myself on this when I heard someone calling for 'Captain Bion'. 'Yes', I shouted at him. A runner promptly appeared. 'You're wanted by the Colonel at once, please, sir', he said.

I left the tanks and went up the side track onto the road. Here I saw the Colonel's car standing by the ditch. I went up to it and found the Colonel waiting for me by the door. 'I want you to take a section of tanks into action, Bion', he said. I asked him when. To my surprise he said zero hour was at 5.45 that morning – it was now about 12.30. I

asked him where, and he pointed out a spot about three miles away. I told him it was quite impossible. It would take quite three hours, with our men as tired as they were, to get our tanks there – quite apart from arranging the action. But at this he had a novel suggestion. At first he seemed somewhat embarrassed, and then after some hesitation he told me he did not want me to take my tanks into action. No – there was already a section of tanks ready to do the job, and they were only about two miles – rather less – from the starting-point.

This seemed suspicious. I was very tired, didn't want the show, and, for the first time, I said so. I asked if there wasn't some other man who could do it if the proper section commander was unfit. 'Oh no; the *real* section commander *isn't* unfit. You see, we'd willingly get another – but this show is very unexpected, and we want a really experienced man to do it. There's nothing in it, but as it's so hurried you must have a man who can be relied on. If the plans were all cut-and-dried, of course anyone could do it, but as it is . . . well, it's far too difficult. It needs a *really good* man.'

The compliment was no doubt very gratifying; but it was lost on me. 'Who is the section commander?' I asked; and as I did so I half expected the answer I got. 'Oh' replied the Colonel, 'It's Captain Windle – C Company. '

I was furious about it. I won't detail my feelings about this now – but I did then. It was the best possible example that could have been given to bear out the argument I brought forward before Aitches and Nixon previously. I asked the Colonel why he had been promoted, and I told him I thought the whole thing disgraceful. The Colonel was a weak man, or he would never have allowed me to talk like that. Instead of putting me under arrest, he apologized and flattered profusely.

I asked him for orders. I was to go to infantry brigade H.Q. The brigade was, I think, in the 3rd Regular Division – I was to find out from the brigadier what the infantry operations were and then simply to use my tanks on my own initiative. There was no time for detailed co-operation.

I was then presented with a guide who had come from this brigade H.Q. It was his job to lead me to the General.

We set out at once, and after going down the road towards the crucifix we suddenly turned sharp to our right. We were now on high ground, and, as far as I could judge in the dark, we were on a

kind of plateau. It was a pitch-black night, and there were no signs of life anywhere.

Now, it doesn't matter how intelligent a man may be, but if ever you make him into a 'guide', he loses all sense, initiative and resource and falls into the groove common to all 'guides' that have been since the world began. Every 'guide' who prides himself on being a member of the fraternity behaves in the same way. He sets out with tremendous confidence and sets a pace that makes it impossible for any troops who may be following to keep touch. After a mile he begins to falter but assures you, with the confidence of a born actor, that he knows the place like the 'palm of me 'and, sir'. After about half an hour of this he is still full of confidence, but his conversation is based on the assumption that he has previously admitted himself lost – e.g. 'Shan't be long now, sir; this looks like our path. Know where I *am* now', etc. etc. If you are wise you'll shoot him on the spot, before he can do more harm, and try to disentangle the mess yourself. If not, another half-hour will bring the admission, 'Please, sir, I'm lost' – this last uttered in the tone of a man who has been the unwitting victim of sorcery.

My guide was no exception to the rule; we were lost – and it was already very late when we started.

Fortunately, after a little casting about, we picked up some telephone wires and followed them up till we came to an R.E. [Royal Engineers] dugout, which was the 'exchange'. We asked them for our brigade H.Q., and they put us onto the wire leading to it. We groped along the ground feeling for this wire, and at last we saw a chink of light coming up from a trap-door affair at our feet. We opened it and went down some steps to a dugout about 60 feet below the surface.

Headquarters presented the usual sight at such a time. The air was stale, and smoke from a fire hung about the roof. Men were lying about the floor rolled up in their blankets. In the middle of the dugout stood a table around which there were seated various officers who were poring over a map and trying to make out details by the dingy light of a smoky oil lamp that hung above them. I reported to the General, and he gave me a seat by his side. He then explained the action.

The Germans were holding out on our side of the canal on a hill called Tara Hill (see Figure 50). As far as could be seen, there were not many of them. It was intended to make a one-brigade attack (three battalions) *encircling* the hill. The tanks were to render any assistance

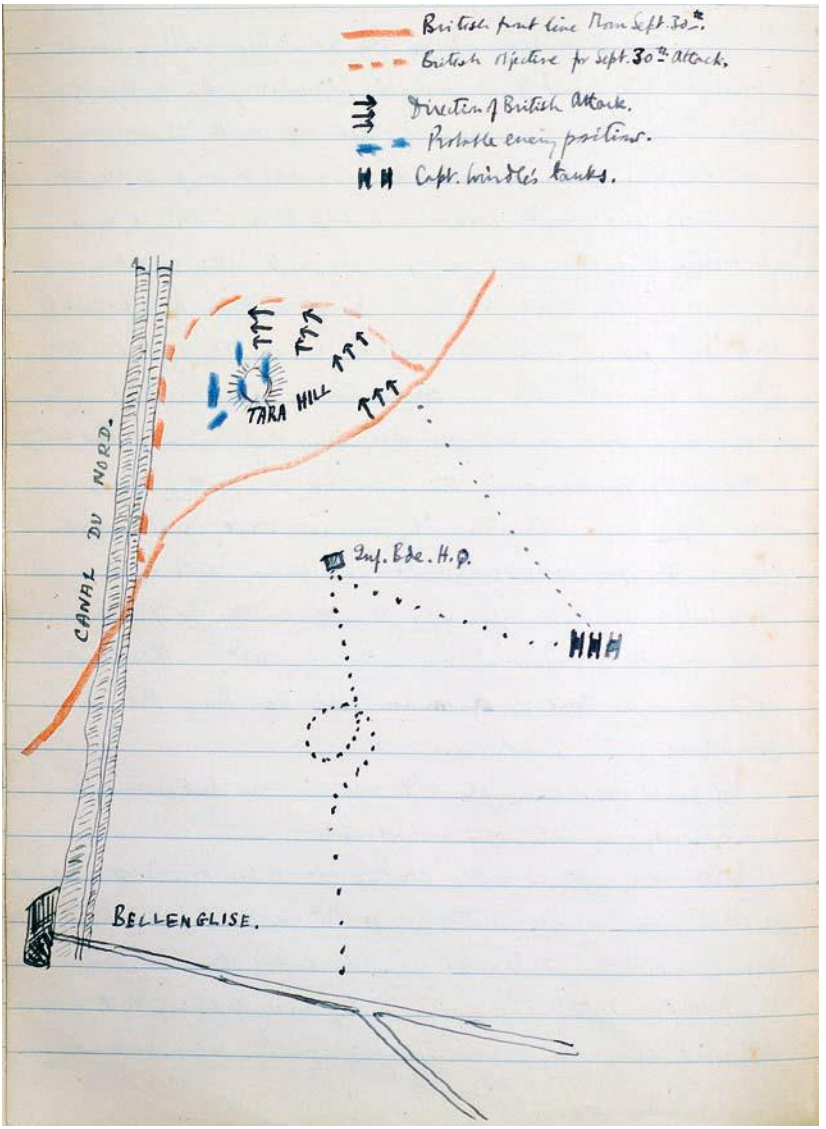
British front line from Sept. 30th.
British objective for Sept. 30th Attack.
Direction of British Attack.
Probable enemy positions.
H H Capt. Windle's tanks.
TARA HILL
CANAL DU NORD.
Inf. Bde. H.Q.
HHH
BELLENGLISE.

Figure 50

that might be necessary. The brigadier then yawned, stroked his two days' growth of beard, and asked if I had any suggestions to make. I looked at my watch and saw the time was 3 a.m. I had not realized how late it was. I told the Brigadier there was not time to carry out any suggestions and that I was afraid that, as it was, we should be late. 'Oh, that's all right', he said, 'I don't expect there will be any opposition – only just to encourage the troops, you know', and with that I went. At the top of the dugout I met Peter Barr – the company reconnaissance officer. He had been sent to meet me there and take me to Windle's tanks. He had been given maps for us both and had studied out a route for the tanks very carefully in the time he had. The cold night air struck us sharply after the thick atmosphere of the dugout, and we stepped out smartly. At 3.30 we reached the tanks. They were not quite ready for action, and we seemed to delay an age.

At last we set out. The tanks ran very badly, and we had endless trouble. Finally one gave out altogether, and we left the crew to shift for themselves. We had no time to spare, and if we couldn't have three tanks, we had to do with two. As we went, I studied the map. The route the infantry were due to follow was along a spur that ran out from the high ground forming the present British position. The spur ended in a blob known as Tara Hill – the place we expected most resistance. After studying the map, I decided that the best plan would be to go for the right-hand slope of the spur. I did this as it seemed to me the tanks would then be protected from German gunfire. The spur would shelter them from the Canal du Nord side. I anticipated no trouble from the right, as no guns could be so near the British front line as to attack us on that flank. Our main danger seemed to me to be from the left and front.

We pressed on as fast as we could, climbing steadily towards the British front line. Engine trouble held us up the whole time; the tanks seemed to be in fearful condition. At last it began to grow light; it was certain now that we should be late for the action. Barr and I were about thirty yards ahead and were steering straight across country by compass. I looked at my watch and saw it was 5.45 a.m. At the same moment a few guns opened up a desultory kind of fire. 'The action', said Barr, 'appears to have commenced'.

About twenty minutes later we arrived on the front line and found ourselves approximately where we wanted to be. The trenches of our front line were deep and crumbling. Owing to this and to thoroughly

bad driving, both tanks at once became hopelessly ditched. This was too much. I fetched those crews out and made them dig as they had never dug before. In twenty minutes we practically levelled those trenches out, but I was taking no chances. I made them fix the unditching gear and . . . out came both tanks. The unditching gear was replaced, and we went on. Forty minutes late.

In the meantime there seemed to be no signs of the action. The guns had ceased fire, and the infantry appeared to be very well concealed. It looked as if the British Army had reached the Rhine while we had been fooling about.

We pressed on as fast as we could, and at last we got to Tara Hill. Here we found the infantry. They were sitting on various tree stumps, smoking their pipes, and cleaning their rifles. I found an officer and asked for news. 'Was there to be a battle here this morning?' I asked, 'or was it only a rumour?' 'Yes', he told me, 'there *was* to be an action; only our staff made a mess of it. They forgot to warn Hindenburg, and as a result there weren't any Germans left here to fight us. The dear old Boche had gone off to the Vaterland years before we arrived.'

I ordered the tank commander to drive home. No sooner had they started than one fool got stuck. I pulled out my pipe, sat on a stump and smoked peacefully while the crew wandered aimlessly round. They were thoroughly incompetent, and I discovered they were only a scratch lot got together anyhow. Windle was *not* responsible for *their* idiocy anyway.

Suddenly the engine back-fired. There was a moment's silence, and a sheet of flame shot out of the conning tower. The driver was the only man inside when it happened, and he came out of the tank in less than no time. He was slightly scorched. We squirted pyrene at the tank, but it was no use. It burnt like a torch, and the ammunition was soon blowing out all over the place. We all sat round and watched. One less tank to take back, thank Heaven!

I won't trouble you with details of the rest of this show. I got back and reported the action. Windle was left to collect his scattered section. This was not difficult. The burnt tank was so completely wrecked as to be useless and was handed over to the Salvage Department. The tank that had survived the 'action' reached the park without mishap, and the third tank, the one we left behind before going in, was put straight and rejoined the same day! For myself, I had lost a night's rest, cost the Government £10,000 by loss of a tank and

accomplished precisely nothing. I was ordered to report to battalion 'details' for 'rest'. I got there at about 5 p.m. and went to sleep till goodness knows when next day. I then cleared out and rejoined the company, who were still where I left them originally.

Our time was now spent in cleaning up tanks and going through the usual tests. It didn't matter how much we had done this previously – we had since then travelled many miles, and the whole work was to be done again. No man in his right senses ever took any risks with his tank. All did their best to have the thing in first-rate running order.

I spent one day in wandering about with Barr. There seemed to be no immediate prospect of action, but we decided to get our bearings and look about the place. We wandered down to Bellenglise, and here we saw the Royal Engineers feverishly building a bridge over the Canal du Nord. The Germans had, of course, blown up the original bridge.

We wandered past Bellenglise and still kept to the canal bank. At last we reached the territory we had 'captured' in the last show. We went on some way and at last came to what seemed a regular battle. A screen of gas and H.E. [high explosive] shells were falling about 100 yards in front of us, and it looked as if we had gone far enough. We were not going to have a private battle if we could help it, and we turned back.

It had really been very careless of us to come so far, and we were reminded of our foolishness as we walked back along the high bank of the canal. A H.E. shell fell some 60 yards away, and we did not, of course, dodge for it. But it must have hit something very hard and burst on the surface, for the next moment there was a scream, a mass of sparks up from the metalled path and a very big piece of shell flashed into the undergrowth. I turned to Barr and found his hand bleeding from a slight wound and that was all. But it was quite enough.

We reached camp without mishap and found there was still no news. A and C Companies had gone up to the line, and there was a chance that B Company would follow the next morning.

The next morning found the rumour confirmed. B Company had to move forward. The orders came through at 9 a.m., and by 10 we had broken up camp (except for a kind of H.Q. which was left

to deal with documents, rations etc.) and were moving forward. A fairly heavy mist hung over the ground, and it was difficult to see very far ahead. The usual drone of our engines filled the air as the line of tanks moved along. We were travelling towards the Canal du Nord, and, of course, the country was littered with signs of the battle that had passed over it. Everywhere there were abandoned German guns. These had become so common now that regiments did not bother to claim them as captured by themselves. Instead, we saw facetious inscriptions averring that they were taken by the A.S.C. or the R.A.M.C. or the W.A.A.C.s.

At last we reached the Canal du Nord at the point where it went underground. This had been the scene of hard fighting, and that for many seasons. First and foremost, the whole canal had been feared as a most formidable obstacle. This tunnel was the only crossing that the enemy really couldn't blow up. But he had done his best. The British had poured over this gap (about a mile wide) and swept round to the right in an encircling movement that was to take the canal in the rear and thus assist the troops who were making a frontal attack (24th Division). This gap had been mined and put in as fine a defensive state as possible. The landscape was littered with knocked-out tanks. But the greatest number of casualties seem to have been German. If you look at the photos (Figure 54), you will gain some idea of the obstacle the canal formed. These photos were taken at one of the steeper places on the banks of the canal and show the troops that took it. As a matter of fact, the capture was not as difficult as they expected, for reasons I will come to later.

When you consider the depth and steepness of the canal banks and then look at the photo (Figure 55) and see the way the banks were honeycombed with dugouts and galleries, you will get an idea of how much anxiety was aroused by the contemplation of an attack on it.

There was yet another difficulty. The tunnel itself was known to be occupied by German troops. There was consequently great fear of being taken in the rear. Actually all went well on the day of the attack. The photo (Figure 56) shows you the entrance to the tunnel. Troops were sent down it, and they bombed and hacked their way through. It cannot have been very pleasant. The electric lights were switched out (or went out) quite early in the battle, and this unearthly fighting had to go on in pitch darkness.

Figure 52

The Canal du Nord. This is a photo of the part along which Barr and I walked. There is, as you see, water in this piece, and the banks are not very steep.

Figure 51

The bridge at Bellenglise. The photo shows R.E.s beginning work on the bridge and artillery limbers crossing the canal by driving through it – an ordinary artillery limber would go up or across anything if only you had something to pull it. This sort of thing was a common sight along the Canal banks until the Engineers had built fresh bridges.

I said the capture had been made more easily than was expected. That was the result of the artillery bombardment. For 48 hours the German positions had been shelled, and many prisoners said no food had reached them in that time. The effects of the bombardment were still visible when we arrived, and they were ghastly enough then. The chlorine had turned the leaves of the shrubs on the canal banks quite yellow. The tangled undergrowth held some grim surprises. The Germans had placed many machine-gun posts amongst the shrubs. It would have been a difficult thing to find these men and a difficult thing to advance in face of a withering fire that came from no one knew where. But that fire was never opened, and the pale leaves hid many a ghastly sight from our eyes until at last health demanded a systematic search over those terrible banks.

I felt glad we had missed the first day's fighting at any rate. Our trek was uneventful. There was little engine trouble, and our only obstacles were the trenches of the Hindenburg line. These were all crossed without much difficulty. At about 5 p.m. the tanks were stopped in a sunk road by a wood. Here they were camouflaged and parked up. We had no idea when we should be wanted or where.

It was while we were here that I was sent back to the camp we had just left. I was told I should not be needed in the next action, that Nixon had to go forward in case Aitches was knocked out and he had to take his place, and that I was to act as second in command to the

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Figure 53

Tanks moving forward for attack. This photo shows the 8th Tank Battalion moving forward for attack. They were on our left, and the photo gives you a good idea of our situation the same morning – the infantry watching rather interestedly, the leading tanks enveloped in mist, and the new kind of steel and beam 'facine' which we now carried instead of the clumsy affair we had in the Nov. 20th, '17, battle at Cambrai. The tanks on the left are supply tanks. The troops in the photo are Australians (9th Army Corps). Note the field telephone wires on the ground. The R. Engineers used to curse tanks bitterly, as we almost invariably destroyed their lines (and that of course just before battle – which was very serious). So long as we drove straight across all was well, but if we turned while we were actually on the wires, of course we snapped them.

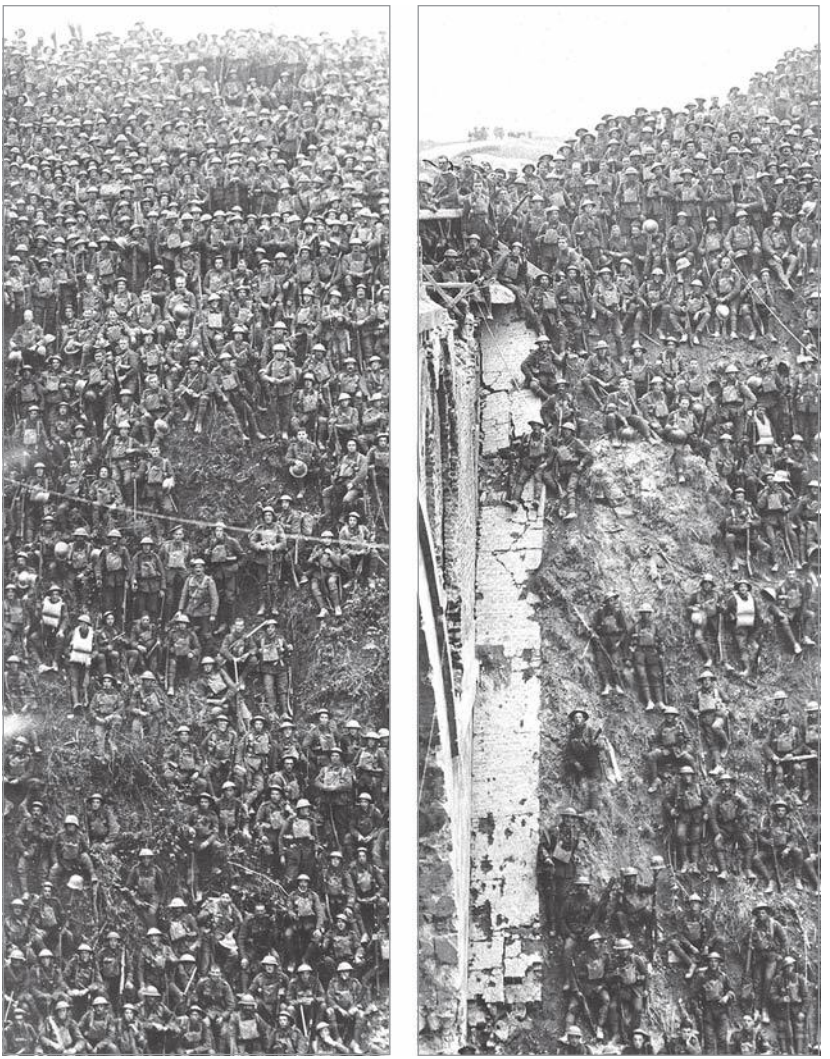

Figure 54

The banks of the Canal du Nord. These two photos will give you some idea of the depth and steepness of the canal banks. The left gives some idea of depth and the right of its steepness. Yet tanks went down these and up the other side: The troops are the 73rd Infantry Brigade (who took this piece).

company while he was absent. I had got past the stage of inquiring too deeply into the mercies of the day. There had been a time when I felt the world had gone wrong when I was left out of an action. On this occasion I collected my batman and left the company before anyone had time to change his mind.

Life at Company H.Q. was placid. Rations arrived, were examined and sent forward. I was a kind of glorified grocer and eyed potatoes with suspicion and bully beef tins with the air of an expert. At night, bombing aeroplanes came over, but as we were near an anti-aircraft battery we considered ourselves safe. Not because the anti-aircraft would fetch them down – oh dear, no! – but simply because it was considered good luck to have an A.A. battery near. This, of course, was a delicate way of saying that you thought the A.A. the safest job in the war. You never *told* people you thought they'd hit on a good thing. That was bad form. You simply hinted it – as unmistakably as possible.

We slept and lived (much the same thing at that time) in a bell tent. One night my rest was broken by some fool who appeared to be trying to trip over as many ropes as possible. I listened with interest as his hands groped over the surface of the tent. At last he found the opening, the flap was thrown back and . . . 'Is Captain Bion here?' said a hoarse voice. I felt my heart sinking. What did the man want at this time of night? I pretended I was asleep.

It was no good. The voice grew louder and hoarser, and I gave in. 'What do you want?' I asked him wearily. 'You're wanted up the "line" at once, sir' came the answer.

I hadn't the heart to swear. There was no chance of snatching another delicious two minutes in bed – another two minutes of the luxury I had been taking so lightly – for all the joy had gone out of life, and even bed could have no enchantment under such circumstances. I pulled myself out of my flea-bag and reached for my clothes. How *stale* they felt! There seemed to be something very dirty about putting on these clothes I had just taken off. And then I wasn't going to wash. Everything was in a mess. The two spare officers who were in the tent with me were lying there without showing any sympathy. How well I knew what they felt! To them bed had suddenly become more precious as they realized what might have happened to *them*.

As I dressed by the light of a guttering candle, I could hear the runner's teeth chattering as he stood outside the tent and waited for me. I was soon ready and found myself standing outside the tent gazing up at a bright starlight night. I yawned and looked at my watch. It was 1.30 a.m.

We went up to the 'line' by a different route from the one taken by the company tanks. We crossed over the canal by Bellenglise and then struck across country at right angles to the canal. I asked the runner what it was all about and why I had been so urgently sent for. He said he didn't know but thought it was for an action. We trudged on in silence. We were both bored and tired. We reached Company H.Q. and the tanks at 3 a.m. or thereabouts. Nobody seemed to be very interested in our arrival, so I got down and went to sleep on a bench.

At 10. a.m. orders were explained. B Company were wanted for an attack on the last remains of the Hindenburg line. C Company were going into action on our left, and together we were to attack the Fonsomme line, as it was called. This system of defences was only half completed. It consisted of half-dug trenches and a little wire – they were in practically the same condition as our trenches were, five miles behind the line, on March 21st. If we could clear them from this line, all the defences of the famous Hindenburg Line would have been passed. As far as was known, there were no more trenches between this and the Rhine.

The immediate objective of B Company was the village of Sequehart (see Figure 58). This village had been taken by the British two or three times just previously. But the Fonsomme line (of which Sequehart was a part) was of such importance that the fighting was bitter and the Germans had won the place back each time. It was for this reason that they had decided to use tanks. It was most important

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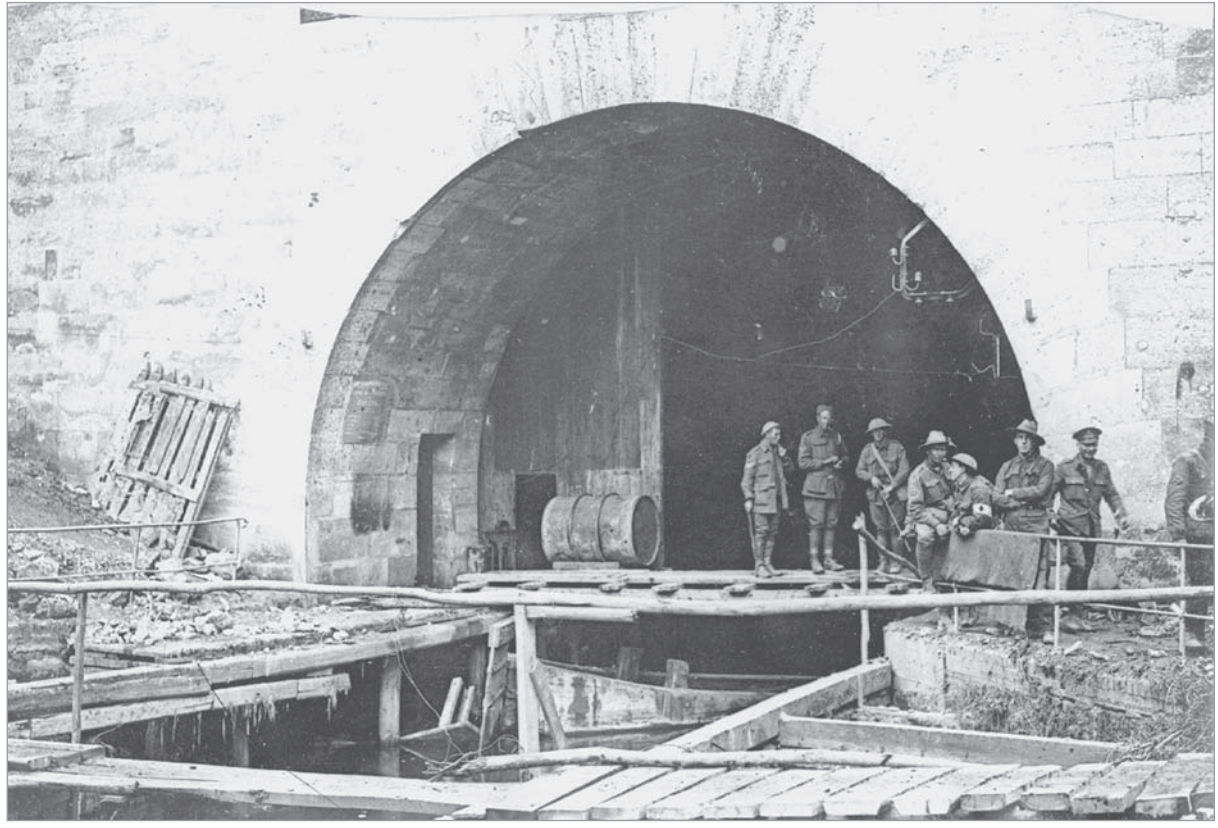
Figure 55

The Canal banks near the tunnel entrance. Note how they are honeycombed with dug-outs and underground galleries. 'Mopping up' meant clearing these nests of enemy troops who might come out and cut off the front-line troops when they had passed. This is not the steepest part but will give a good idea of the average depth and appearance of the shrub-covered sides.



that the army should get through before the enemy had time to dig more defences.

B Company were to be used as two sections – one under Hauser and the other under myself. Carter had reconnoitred the B Company position and said it was easy to see everything. Of course I knew Carter well or I shouldn't have believed a word of it. But he assured me that, from the point of view of direction and so on, there was no difficulty – Sequehart stood on a hill and could not be mistaken. Peter Barr, as company reconnaissance officer, had the job of leading us to the place where we were to start from – the usual 'starting-point'. The company only consisted of six tanks, so Hauser and I each had three under us.

The tanks moved off at about 7.30 p.m. We left the road and drove across undulating grass country. The tanks were running very well, and we seemed to have nothing to do but bowl along merrily into action. Actually the light was too good, and we had to make several stops.

At about 11 p.m. we reached a wood and were ordered to park up our tanks by its side. As soon as this was done, the men lay down by their tanks and tried to seize a few hours' sleep. The officers collected together to hear a few final instructions and then rejoined their crews. It was a fine evening, but the stars were hidden by thin cloud. For my part I spent the time before action in my usual way. It was impossible to shake off the feverish anxiety to have the battle over and done with. The quietness of the whole front only added to one's uneasiness. At about 2 a.m. the silence was broken by desultory shell-fire from the enemy. He commenced shelling our wood with light 'contact' shrapnel, and the rest of our stay was made even more miserable by the irregular shell bursts and their accompaniment of moaning shell splinters that often ended their flight by a vicious 'flick' against the side of the tanks.

The attack was timed to start at 6.30, and at 4.45 our tanks moved forward. Before we left, Hauser and I were told there was no need to

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Figure 56

The entrance to the tunnel. Fighting went on down this tunnel.

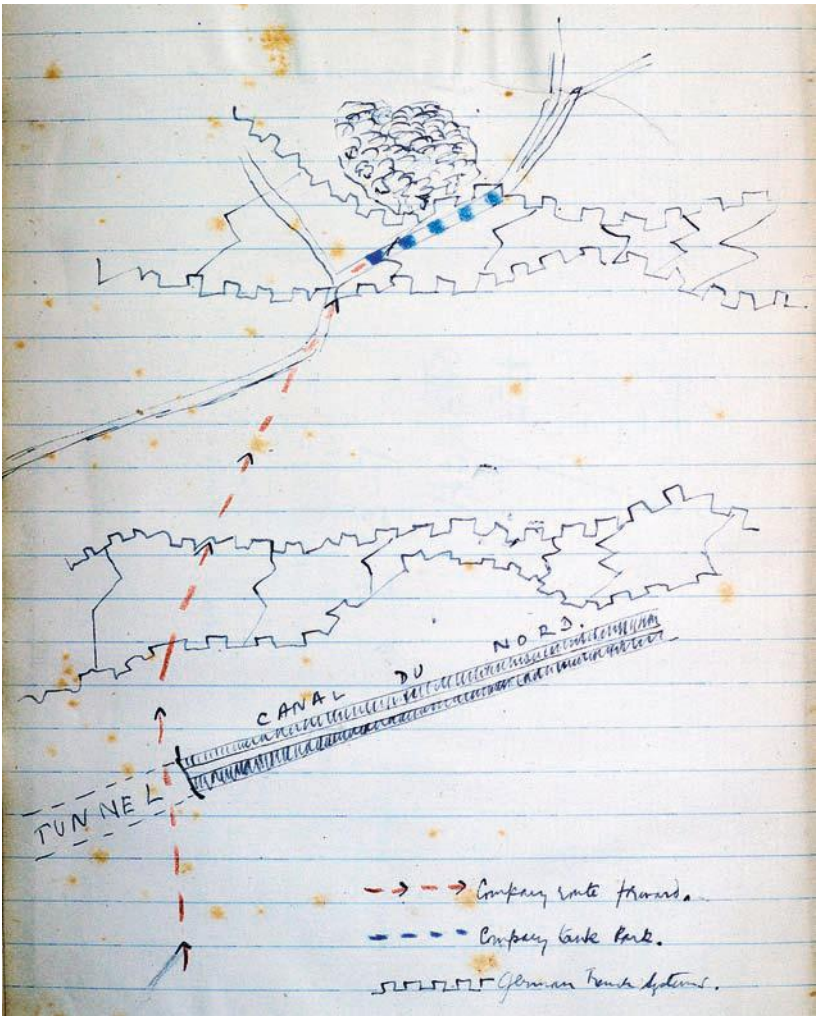
CANAL DU NORD.
TUNNEL
Company route forward.
Company tank park.
German tank systems.

Figure 57

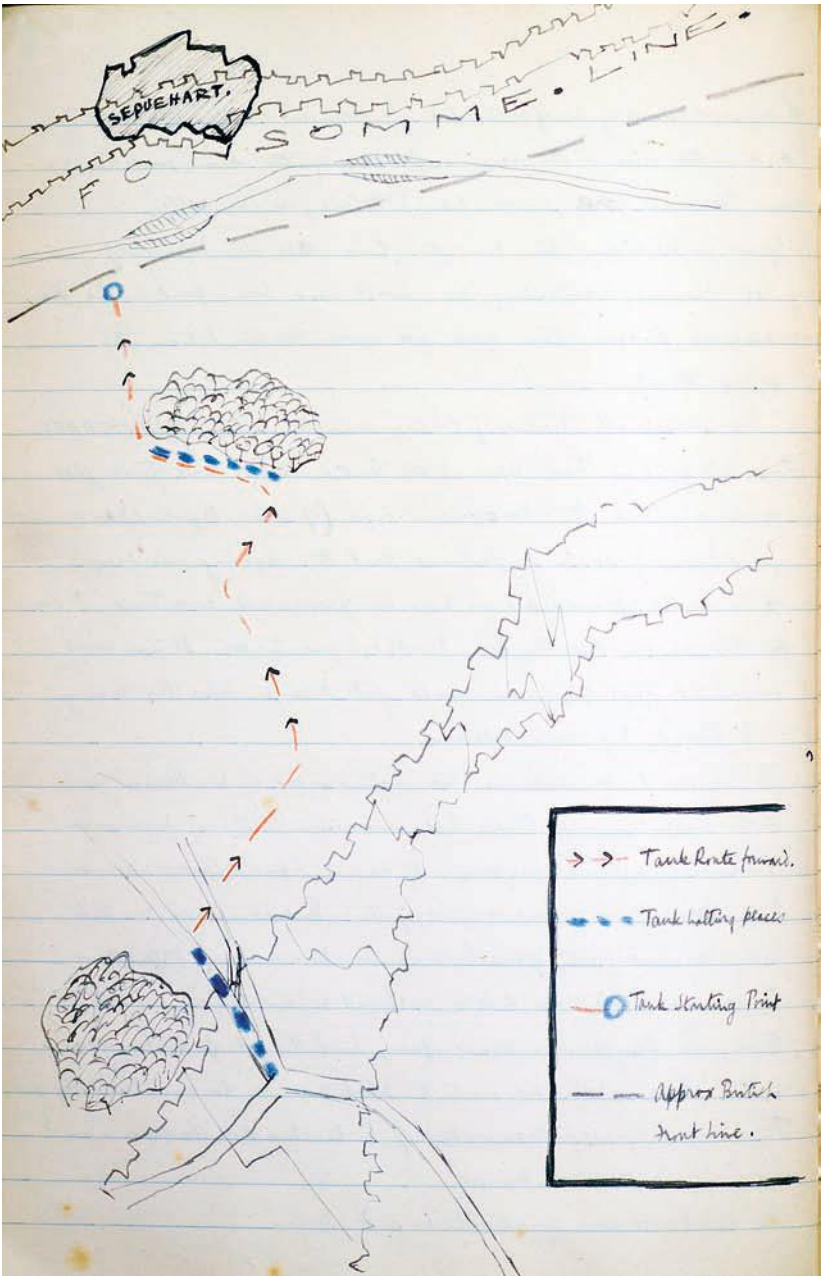
SEPUEHART.
SOMME
Tank Route forward.
Tank halting places
Tank Starting Point
Approx British front line.

Figure 58

do any more after we left our tanks at the starting-point; we were only to keep a look-out and send back information of the battle. This, of course, had a very unnerving effect. What *were* we to do? Of course, we didn't want to get killed, and if we could stay at the starting-point we should be safer. On the other hand, these orders were clearly contrary to the spirit of our job. Hauser and I decided to carry on as if they had not been given.

The starting-point was about a mile in front of us; the ground was level and sloped down gently towards the valley in front of Sequehart. The front line lay in this valley.

At 6 a.m. we reached our starting-point. It was just growing grey in the east, and before long we could distinguish each others' faces in the pale light. We ordered our crews into the tanks – now drawn up in line – and waited.

As the light grew, we could make out various features of the landscape. The ridge on which Sequehart stood had already been visible some time; we could now distinguish the outlines of the village itself. Hauser and I stood and picked out as much of the place as we could. The whole field of operation was easily taken in from where we were, and this in spite of the fact that our only light was a grey uncertain dawn. In the distance a machine-gun opened up a slow tat–tat–tat and a moment later we heard the shrill flight of bullets high overhead. Almost as if in answer, the British barrage came down and the darkness of the village was suddenly stabbed by the red bursts of our shells. Our tanks started forward to the attack.

With the dawn there came a breeze, which blew softly into our faces and set the long grasses waving about our feet. For a moment the relief that came with the start of the battle and the end of our anxious waiting seemed to fill one with a curious feeling of peace. But it was not long before this was shattered; the pleasant morning haze, which had been so refreshing but a moment before, now brought with it the acrid smell of bursting shells.

For a moment Hauser and I hesitated; the information that we 'need not' go forward had a peculiar force just then. I managed to screw up a grin and pointed towards the village. Hauser grinned back, and we pushed off after our tanks. As he pointed out, we should probably be safer further forward, as the enemy's practice at this time was to shell valleys very heavily. As we walked forward, the sun came up behind Sequehart. It was a magnificent sight and

one I shall not forget. The miserable greys of dawn were suddenly shot with gold. The sun's beams were an angry blood-red, and its rising behind the village gave the whole scene an unrealistic appearance. The village, with its tall-spired church in the centre, stood out clear-cut and black, like a cardboard model. Every now and then the outline would be broken as some part of the village was whirled into a cloud of sun-shot dust. The church spire remained untouched as if by a miracle, and not only now, but throughout the action, it stood immovable and stark, pointing resolutely to the skies as if it wished to distract attention from the agony of bursting shells and crumbling masonry that surrounded it.

As we went forward, the enemy barrage opened. It seemed to be half H.E. and half blue-cross gas shell. We had to suck air through our gas masks at times, but for the most part we were not troubled by it. As usual, the heaviest bombardment was in the valley, and we made haste to climb the slope of Sequehart.

In the valley, at the foot of the slope, there was a road that was partly sunken in places. Our front line was put out of action here. The tank was commanded by a 2nd Lieut. Reid of my section, and just as it reached the road and was climbing out, a shell struck it and ricocheted off to bury itself in the slope down which we had travelled earlier that morning. It was a dud; but it had done its work. We saw the tank had stopped, and when we approached we found the left side had been torn in two at the 'nose' of the tank and flung back. So we had one useless tank right at the start. Fortunately none of the crew was hurt. They were placed in front of the tank about 40 yards in advance of the road, and there they had to stop with their guns to form a strong point.

Hauser and I wandered aimlessly about the bottom slope of the ridge. The battle was not going well. We were not faced by any crack German troops – in fact, there were hardly any infantry there. But we *were* faced by the German machine-gunners, and their demoralization was not quite so apparent to us during the action as it was to the newspaper gentlemen after it. The fighting in Sequehart was very bitter. One of my tanks I saw disappear, well ahead of the infantry, over the top of the ridge. It did good work and ran out of ammunition finally. But I saw little or nothing of it, and so I will dismiss it now with a few words. It crossed the ridge to the south of Sequehart and there spent a very hot time well in front of our infantry, doing

much the same thing as I had done before my tank was knocked out at Cambrai. He had no infantry support, for although they could see him, they could not reach him. He did a lot, but the place was honeycombed with machine-guns, and it was really too much for one tank. In the end, however, the infantry got up to him, but his ammunition was finished and he had to withdraw – the crew were thoroughly exhausted and probably could not have done much more, even if they had had the ammunition.

While this was going on, the third tank in my section met with disaster. As it was climbing the slope with the infantry, it was hit by a gas shell that exploded inside. Now a gas shell has only enough explosive in it, as a rule, to crack the shell and allow the gas to escape. This was of that kind. Consequently none of the crew was wounded, but, as they had very little time before the tank was completely filled with gas, they were most of them slightly gassed before they had their helmets [gas masks] on. Hauser had left me by this time to go further north to see if he could get any news of one of his tanks. As soon as I had seen this tank of mine stop, I approached alone. As I drew near, I saw smoke oozing from the joints and guessed what had happened. I put on my gas helmet ready to get in when the door opened and out tumbled one of the crew. I got in and helped out the remainder. We opened up the tank well to get the gas cleared out. The officer and driver had escaped most of the ill effects, but the rest of the crew were bad. I had hoped that it would be possible to start the tank again and run it into action with a depleted crew. But a few minutes showed me that this was impossible. There were only three of us fit for anything, and it was doubtful if the other two could stand an action. We tried to turn over the starting crank to restart the engine. This usually took three or four pretty strong men. But as it was, the gas had got into the cylinder and made the oil sticky like glue. We could no more turn the crank than if the engine had been completely seized up. I gave it up as hopeless and ordered the officer and driver to join Reid's crew. Here I thought they might be some use, for it was obvious that they could not by themselves do any good where they were.

I got out of the tank and rather dreamily watched the crew rolling about outside – some coughing, some groaning and one man lying almost still enough to be dead. I felt rather numbed and couldn't think properly. The infantry were now on the crest on which Sequehart stood, and we were not under fire where we were. One of my

tanks was useless on the sunk road, the other had gone goodness knew where, and now the third had lost its crew. I wished I could leave the rotten thing there and go back – either that or else that the infantry would gain ground so fast as to leave us safe behind. Should I put the most conscious men in charge and go off in search of the other tank? That really seemed the best thing to do. But first I decided to do what I could to make the crew happier. I smashed the small ammonia capsules and held them under the noses of the worse cases. Those who could swallow I dosed with dilute doses of ammonia. In the meantime our artillery bombardment died down somewhat. But the enemy barrage was still concentrated fiercely in the valley and along its road not far behind us. It was that awkward stage in the battle where a temporary pause allowed one's nerves to relax. I remember, for the first time that action, feeling acutely conscious of personal danger. The sky was overcast, and the landscape wore that desolate grey colour that had preceded the dawn. I was hungry and chewed some bully and biscuits as I went round dosing one after the other of the men. After a time even the enemy barrage began to die down. It was now possible to hear the crack of rifle and machine-gun on the top of the crest. The lull in the battle was as complete as any I experienced; the front might have been in its normal peacetime state. I looked at my watch and saw it was only 9.20 a.m. What an age it seemed!

The worst case in the crew was a Corporal Short. He was quite a young boy and normally inclined to be lazy. But he had great pluck and endurance and was a serious loss. I spent most of my time kneeling over him and dosing him.

Suddenly a change came over the battle. The enemy barrage opened with a new and violent intensity onto the valley road. The chatter of machine-guns and rifles was drowned in the thunder that echoed and re-echoed down the valley. I looked back to see the cause, as I imagined the enemy had possibly put the barrage down to stop the advance of reinforcements. But I could see nothing.

My nervousness increased as I could get no information. The British guns did not seem to be firing. Sequehart was left in peace, and this seemed to indicate that both sides were in the village. I watched the crest in front anxiously for any signs of life. I had not to watch long. After a few seconds I saw three or four figures silhouetted against the sky and then lie down on our side of the crest. A moment

later another batch of men – quite a large one this time – came helter-skelter over the ridge and lay down. They were British troops retiring.

I collected the crew under the lee of the tank and continued to dose them with ammonia. As I was bending over Short, I heard a shout. Two Tommies were lying behind a fold of ground and shouting, 'Tanks! Tanks! Tanks!' I yelled back. They shouted again, 'We want you! We want you! Counter-attack! Counter-attack!'

This was hopeless. I got up and started to go over and explain. As I stepped from behind the tank, the drums of my ears seemed to be shattered by crack! after crack! of a machine-gun. I was down on my stomach quicker than can be imagined. Even so the hst! hst! of very close bullets seemed to have missed me by inches. I knew that loud crack! very well. When a gun or rifle is pointing more or less at you, the crack of its shot sounds incredibly close. You may locate its direction but never its distance. It was quite clear that these shots were coming from the direction of Sequehart (at this time rather on our left front). So the enemy were back there once more.

I crawled to the men and yelled at them, 'Crew out of action! Can't do anything!' and they went back. I then wormed my way back and once more had the pleasure of hearing the bullets flick round. It seemed a particularly dirty trick. After all, I wasn't trying to hurt him.

I stood up under the lee of the tank and pulled at my pipe trying to think what to do. I felt very bored with the whole business but not really frightened. Whatever I decided on would probably be not much use. Of course, one thing was clear. If I was really the fire-eating, war-loving animal I should have been, my job was to get a few Tommies to help me start the engine and then run the tank into action myself and do something to stop the rot. In actual point of fact this *might* have been done – but not by a man who had seen any fighting. The idea occurred to me, but by this time the two infantrymen had rejoined their unit in front.

I waited what seemed an age to see how things would go in front. An increase of rifle and machine-gun fire on the tank made up my mind. It was useless staying here with the men, and I decided to get them out of harm's way. But first I took precautions in case the tank fell into enemy hands. I climbed into the tank and removed the plug of the magneto and the contact breaker. I then went to the Hotchkiss guns and took out all the firing pieces. This just disabled the tank

from a fighting point of view, and I had time for no more if I was to get the crew away alive. The machine-gun fire had increased in intensity and was spattering the side of the tank.

I got out and went over to the three men who were fittest. I shouted to them (for the noise had now grown terrific) to get back as best they could. I then stowed away all the parts I had removed from the tank in various pockets and took charge of the two remaining men. One could nearly walk, so I got him to put his arm round my neck and I clasped him round the waist. Corporal Short I practically had to carry. And so we left the shelter of our tank.

We staggered back to our road; my impression is that we were not much fired at – at any rate, the three of us all escaped without being hit. We got back some 100 yards, and here I stopped to rest and take stock of things. The machine-gun had ceased fire, and the desultory sniping was so inaccurate as to be hardly noticeable. The worst passage lay before us.

I have already mentioned the enemy barrage along the bottom of the valley; as we looked towards it, we could no longer see the opposite slope clearly. Clouds of swirling dust and smoke arose from the barrage area. I almost gave up hope of getting through when there was a perceptible decrease in fire. Having regained breath, we pushed on.

Although the barrage seemed less intense, it was regular. I decided to risk it, for it seemed absurd to leave the men so near the front line in their condition. In a moment or two the shells were falling round us. As we approached the road, they fell more thickly. It was clear that the barrage line lay on the road itself. All appeared to be going well when the earth seemed to open up almost at our feet. I found myself lying on the ground still clutching Corporal Short, but the other fellow I could not see for a moment. 'Are you hurt?' I yelled to Short. To my surprise he gasped out a 'no'. Almost at the same time I saw the other fellow lying by my side. He too was unhurt. How we all three escaped I don't know.

It was quite clear that the quicker we got away from the road the better. For a while I crawled along the ground more or less dragging the other two with me. We were crossing rough ground, and I think that helped to protect us. It was only afterwards that I discovered we were also crawling through nettles!

We crossed the road safely and then had to stop. The exertion had been rather too much for the two men, so I got them into a shell-hole, and we spent some time there while I dosed them well with ammonia.

As soon as they had recovered enough we pushed on – the shell-hole was not exactly healthy. A few more minutes, and the fire decreased. We were nearly out of the barrage area. We could see the slope in front quite clearly and it was not long before we were well the other side of the barrage.

The exertion had had a bad effect again, and I made the two men lie down quietly. Occasionally I gave them another sniff of ammonia.

When they had sufficiently recovered to look after themselves, I went off to see how Reid was getting on. The barrage had now died down, and the shelling was merely desultory. I found him and his crew all right but very bored. They wanted to know when they could go. I decided there was nothing they could do, and as far as I could see they might as well go home. So I went off to get some information from the infantry. All was quiet at Sequehart, and I soon discovered that the troops had retaken Sequehart and gained all objectives. It was now 1 p.m., and the last of the Hindenburg defences had fallen.

I told Reid he could go back but that he must leave a guard of one man and an N.C.O. till others could be sent from the camp to relieve them.

We returned together and picked up the gassed men on the way. Corporal Short had to be carried back.

When we got back, I went to sleep under a tarpaulin. I was tired and nervy and also very dissatisfied. It had been an unsatisfactory show from my point of view – a section commander seemed more useless than ever in an action. If one was supposed to *fight* – then the task was almost impossible. If one was merely to control – then the work simply became one of shouldering the inglorious responsibility for ordering retreat from action. Perhaps I should have felt happier if I had known that my last action was over. My share of the Great War was finished.

The next day a party was sent off to see what could be done for the disabled tanks. Reid's was handed over to salvage, and, after some haggling, the same was done for the tank that was hit by a gas shell. The enemy were by then some miles away from Sequehart, and the British were pushing on slowly.

I had some trouble over the gassed tank: A C Company officer – Dawson – had seen it on the way back from his show (on our left). He could see nothing wrong with it and accordingly reported that he found a B Company tank, apparently in good order, deserted. Consequently Aitches wanted to see me and told me the situation was very serious as, of course, I had deserted a tank in the face of the enemy. I told him not to be a fool and explained the situation. He tried to look serious as he obviously wanted to impress me with the importance of the occasion. I told him he had better order a court of inquiry if he wasn't satisfied, and the affair fizzled out.

We stayed in the battle area for some time to give help if needed. While we waited, Aitches, Hauser and other officers left for England to take up new posts. So Aitches at last had achieved his heart's desire and prided himself, let's hope, on the success of his efforts. But England was not very safe after all. Three days after his arrival he was dead.

Poor Aitches! He got 'flu on arrival; he fast grew worse, and it was all over before anyone realized his illness. It seems queer now, but at the time I think there were few of us who weren't amused openly at his death. We made allowances for no one, and I don't think anyone could now appreciate the 'funny' side of what we then regarded as a really amusing joke. In the same way, any impartial man reading this would say I had been grossly unfair to Aitches, and, of course, I have, for my judgements and the judgements of others were ill-informed and harsh. But I put them down to show our attitude of mind. And if you think my criticisms of him are unjust, now I agree – but will add that if I had seen these criticisms during the war, when much might depend on the quality of the company commander, I should have said they were not harsh enough. It is one thing to talk academically of not judging one's fellows – another to put the principles into practice when your life and the lives of others depend on a weak and cowardly man. After all, his nerve had been shattered by the war, and he suffered as many before him had suffered. The fault may not have been his, but we could not trouble about 'trifles' like that then.

After a day or two's wait we went forward so as to be within distance of action if wanted. The entry of our troops into Bohain was a curious business. Peter Barr and I went forward to make arrangements for our company's movement forward and saw the place soon after its capture. The village lay beyond the Fonsomme line, and we

skirted Sequehart in our reconnaissance. The village was badly battered and full of dead. The road to Bohain was good as it had been little shelled – the advance had been far too rapid for that.

As we drew near the village, we saw many dead horses that looked just skin and bone. Here and there they had been cut up as meat for the French inhabitants. One such horse had been completely stripped of all flesh except at the head. This one lay in the entry to Bohain and had apparently been the food for the village.

When we entered Bohain, the village had just been taken by our troops, and we could hear odd crashes of rifle fire from the other side. A few minutes after our arrival a British band arrived and played the Marseillaise. A few people, who had till then been hidden in cellars, appeared and looked on in a dazed way. But no signs of joy seemed to light up their faces. I don't think they quite believed they heard aright. Later I was told that whenever the band played, the enthusiasm was terrific.

Barr and I stood and watched for some time. The people looked careworn and miserable and very old. They had, it appeared, suffered many restrictions which people in larger towns escaped. I think they imagined the enemy would retake the place; they could not believe they were free.

As Barr and I watched, our attention was suddenly attracted by a young girl who came out of a house and crept across the street. We were both horrified; for although she was clearly about 16, terror seemed stamped on her face. I had never seen, and never want to see again, such misery and horror disfigure any face. She walked halfway across the street, looked fearfully at us, and then dragged herself into a doorway opposite. We stared after her and then walked away quickly. We had both seen terrible things before, but there had always been some relieving feature – fearful mutilations at least meant escape from war, and death was no hardship. But from *her* misery there seemed to be no release. Some days after this she gave birth to a German baby, but what happened to her I don't know. I can't see that the suffering written on her face can be accounted for by any system of ethics. I only hope she died, for I can't imagine the possibility of her regaining life or happiness.

The tanks were brought up to a place just outside Bohain, and Barr and I did our last reconnaissance. We stood on a slight rise of ground some two miles beyond Bohain and there looked over the

country over which we should have to attack the next day. Actually when we got back we found orders saying the attack was off and that the battalion was to go back to rest. But we did not know this then.

It was evening, and in front of us lay flat, unenclosed land covered with green grass. About a mile in front of these meadowlands was the edge of the great forest before Valenciennes. The landscape looked curiously peaceful and lovely. We were not used to the fresh green of the trees and grass. There were no troops to be seen. Our men lay out in the meadows in front of the forest, but we did not know where the Germans were. As we finished our examination of the land, a few guns opened fire, and red splashes appeared over the dark green mass of the woods. A few stars appeared in the sky, and the cold night wind blew gently in our faces. There was another burst of gun fire; and as the reverberations rolled over the flat meadows, we turned our backs on the front line. We had seen our last shells fired.

On our return we heard the good news that we were to go back to rest areas to get new tanks and refit. A few days later we were at Beaumetz – the former railhead for Wailly. And so we entered on our usual routine – training reinforcements, drawing new tanks and so on.

I am coming to the end of the diary now and will not dwell long on the rest. Our arrival at Beaumetz was heralded by armistice talk – rumours that the Germans would accept *any* terms and so on. These were immediately contradicted by Army Orders as G.H.Q. did not want the troops to be weakened by premature hope of peace. The general policy of officers and men, as far as I could judge, was simply that the time was ripe for a just peace – a peace that would make war impossible. There was no feeling or desire of any kind for revenge. Wilson's 14 Points seemed just and reasonable and promised the kind of settlement that would give Christian idealism a place in international affairs.

Towards the end of the month the battalion began to prepare for action. One company was to go up to the front – a composite company from the whole battalion. Gatehouse was in command of it, and four tanks from my company were to join it. The company was to entrain on the 11th November.

On the evening of November 9th wireless messages came through saying that the German courier was lost, or had not reached German

H.Q. at any rate. On Sunday, late in the evening, we picked up wireless saying the Germans had signed the terms. I don't think we really believed this. It certainly made very little impression.

At 10.30 next morning as I sat in the company office – I was now commanding B Company and had done since Aitches' departure – a wire arrived. I opened it and found it was a general wire to all troops of the British armies. All troops were to stand fast in their positions and cease fire at 11 a.m. that morning. So the war was over.

The news did not create much of a sensation. I don't know why. I suppose we were all too numbed to appreciate it. Drill went on as usual, and no one seemed to know quite what to do. In the evening the officers messed as usual, and a few of us speculated pleasantly on the prospect of sleeping in beds for ever and ever and never getting up to see 'dawn' again. The men – mostly reinforcements – didn't realize their luck. One or two hardy spirits were under the impression that they were now free from the hated necessity of revering their officers any longer, and spent the weary night watches in the Guard Room. These men were all new to the battalion and didn't find themselves at all popular in the company.

Life after the armistice consisted chiefly in drill and games. There was a good deal of discontent as everyone wanted to get demobilized at once and the food was bad – three or four potatoes to an entire company was a frequent occurrence. But when it was pointed out that the food they did not get was being given to the population of the liberated areas, grousing died down a lot. Some companies had serious trouble – there was almost a mutiny in C Company, but we had no trouble.

As time wore on, we became more accustomed to the idea of no more war. Christmas seemed to mark the thawing-point with us all. We now had a new Company Commander. I reverted to my position of second in command, and a Major Craig took over. He was a first-class fellow. In very little time he was immensely popular with officers, N.C.O.s and men. He made our Christmas and New Year a really good show, and I shan't forget either in a hurry. I never saw anyone really drunk the whole time. But I think any outsider would have thought us all either drunk or mad.

On January 3rd Carter, now demobilization officer, told me I was to leave for demobilization the next day. A few men from the battalion were going as well, and at 2 p.m. on the 4th, after we had said our

farewells, we mounted our lorry and drove off. It was a cold winter afternoon, and as we drove off through the mist I could hardly believe it was all over.

As we drove out, Corporal Short and another man chased us and clambered onto the front of the lorry. They wanted to say goodbye to me and mumbled out thanks for my having pulled them out of the last action when they were gassed. They jumped off, and the company camp was soon lost to sight in the winter mists.

I will miss out the journey to England. It was uncomfortable and miserable. Arrangements were bad, and food was bad. The staff who had to see to the demobilization were inexperienced and discontented because they were not being demobilized themselves. On the morning of January 11th we sailed from Dunkirk in a rough sea. Everyone was too pleased to be sea-sick. We landed at Folkestone and here found the arrangements excellent. We were each, officers and men, provided with biscuits and a large cup of tea. We then marched up to Shorncliffe camp. I think to some extent we were depressed by the lack of welcome. No one took any notice of us, no one seemed to know we had been fighting and were glad to be back. We simply trailed up to camp – about 1,000 of us from all parts of the British Front and from every conceivable unit – and no one even deigned to look at us!

There was one exception. And the sensation it caused showed, I think, that the men had missed a welcome. As we marched up the steep road to the camp, an old lady came out of her door and, waving a small Union Jack, said 'Welcome home, boys, welcome home', in a quavering deep voice. Of course she looked rather ridiculous – but no one minded that then, and as the troop marched past they cheered and blew her kisses! Poor old soul! She looked very pleased – and indeed she had done more to thank us than the great British Government ever did.

By 6 p.m. we were free men – free to do what we liked and go where we would. The special train left the camp station for London at 6.30 p.m. and we were to journey up as civilians. We had got our release – but it might have been the sack, as far as the Government was concerned. The last scene on the station was curious. Two trains were at the platform – one a civilian express to town and the other our special. The civilian train was lit up properly, but ours – through some official carelessness – was in darkness. The men greatly resented

it, and one Boer War man, who wore the D.C.M. for this war, got on a carriage roof and aired his feelings. These were his words: 'We were b_____ heroes in the Boer War and so much dirt when it was finished. In this war we were b_____ heroes again – till it's all over. Nothing too good for the dear boys while it lasted – but *now* – well, we're so much dirt again. Thank you, kind ladies and gentlemen, for your patient hearing.' With this he took off his cap, bowed elaborately to the assembled crowd of ex-Tommies and civilians, and clambered off the roof to the platform. The station staff then bustled round and, after some delay, lit up the train. An hour or so later we steamed into London to separate and disappear again into that obscurity from which the world's most astonishing armies had emerged.

COMMENTARY

In the early 1970s I decided to make a typescript of Bion's diary to facilitate any future reading of it and as an insurance against any possible loss of the original – somewhat late in the day, its having already survived many house removals in the '20s and '30s, London bombing raids in the '40s, further house removals in the '50s and '60s, and a voyage of six thousand miles to California in 1968. That typescript tempted Bion to read the account for the first time since he wrote it fifty years earlier and to make some revealing comments on his reactions. As he rightly observes, 'I am amazed to find I wrote like an illiterate when I had already been accepted at Queen's'.

The Commentary is written in the form he used in *A Memoir of the Future*, although here the conversation is between two characters only: Bion, the inexperienced young man of twenty-one, and Myself, the wise old man of seventy-five. Memories come flooding back, reinforcing his dislike of his personality and poor opinion of his performance as a soldier. He says, '. . . I never recovered from the survival of the Battle of Amiens. Most of what I do not like about you [myself] seemed to start then'. Fortunately this lack of self-esteem was offset by his pride in his family and his work as a psychoanalyst – the two areas of his life that were of greater importance to him than any other.

Francesca Bion

1972

Lying beneath the stars, wrapped warmly in our blankets, my friend and I discussed the wonderful news. 'I really feel almost sorry for the Germans. They haven't a chance with France and ourselves against them. They have really gone too far this time.'

It was August 1914. The diary was written in 1919 at The Queen's College, Oxford. Since I wrote it I have not referred to it again till now, sixty-three years later. I write this under Californian skies.

* * *

I have changed some names as a way of avoiding hurting those who might recognize someone loved and no longer able to defend themselves. Nevertheless, I know that very little effort would be required to link the battles, the units engaged and the people who took part. I rely on the inertia of those who might make cruel use of what I say, to protect myself and others from unnecessary pain. There is no criticism that I make of others which could not with equal justice be applied to me.

There is one spirit from the 'vastie deepe' [Shakespeare, *Henry IV*] that I can conjure up. Here he is: powerfully built, inclined to fat but otherwise, superficially at least, physically fit; somewhat surly, though rarely given to outbursts of laughter; it is noticeable that he does not smile. His best friend at The Queen's College once told him, with shrewd and kindly acuteness, 'You do rather retire from the college and sulk.' His name is BION.

Myself [today]: Let's look at your 'diary' now. Having read it, I feel it is interesting and worth publishing as it stands. Do you mind if I cut out the 'verys' and superlatives? You had a 'very' bad attack of the 'verys', verily very virulently. They make it difficult to read.

Bion [age 21]: No, of course not. But I don't want it to appear that I was better educated than I was. I find it salutary to be reminded of these disconcerting facts that I had forgotten.

MYSELF: Well, then – out with the 'verys' and superlatives, but otherwise the unvarnished 'Bion'. After all, it has to be 'Myself' unvarnished.

BION: But apart from that?

MYSELF: Alter nothing.

BION: I am glad you found it good enough . . .

MYSELF: Oh, no: interesting enough, but certainly not good.

Bion (*abashed*): Oh. Then may I ask why you think it worth publishing? What's wrong with it?

MYSELF: That is difficult to answer. I think the best thing would be to go through it together, and I will tell you more precisely and in detail my appreciation (positive or negative).

BION: Looking at it again, I am amazed to find I wrote like an illiterate when I had already been accepted at Queen's.

MYSELF: You had in fact been accepted before your war service, and had had no education from that time on. It is a surprise – though it makes me fear I am no more advanced now.

BION: Why is that? What have you been up to?

MYSELF: That is a long and interesting story. I think it would depress you. Let's leave it for the present. How did you get to Tanks?

BION: I don't remember. I was extremely anxious to see these newly invented things, and joining seemed the only way of seeing them. But I cannot remember how I worked it. I was becoming less of a greenhorn by that time. On the way up to the camp from Wool station, there at last my ambition was achieved – there was a TANK!

MYSELF: Let's look at your 'diary' again. Why are you so down on the officers?

BION: I fear I was a narrow-minded prig. I often think my fellows must have had a good deal to put up with.

MYSELF: From what I remember, that is true. Indeed, from what

I have learned since, I and my closest friends did not stand up to the rigours of war very well.

BION: Of course we did not know that, though I was always afraid I would not. I think even the diary shows that as it goes on, though at Oxford I was still too ashamed to admit it. And very glad of the opportunity that Oxford gave me to be seduced into a more self-satisfied state of mind. But I never quite got rid of the sense that all was *not* well.

MYSELF: That ultimately drove me into psycho-analysis.

BION: So, that is what you have been up to. Do you find it interesting?

MYSELF: Yes, finally I did – after many years of hating it. But let's get on with your war; later I may tell you what I have done to us both since. You were explaining your priggish superiority.

BION: It was not that only, but also ignorance of the strain to which combatants had been exposed in previous fighting.

MYSELF: I thought your comment that they had gone into Tanks to avoid fighting [p. 16] was quite breath-taking in its disparaging insolence. Do you still mean it?

BION: Let it stand, like my lack of culture, as a monument to my effrontery. I am ashamed and would like to cross it out.

MYSELF: As long as it serves as a reminder of what we are really like, and not as a slur on 'them'.

BION: I fear that much of the diary will appear, on this reading, to be an exercise in sheltering my complacency from the chilling blast of truth.

MYSELF: It does read like that. Your reference to the boy as 'street-bred' [p. 14] and a 'grouser' makes me wonder if the war and Oxford had gone to your head. I hope not, but then it is disconcerting to think such 'street-bred' superiority is a basic quality. Maybe at twenty-one you had not grown past adolescence. That poor boy later showed what I learned to call 'schizophrenic-type reaction'.

BION: You remind me of my senior officers, though I don't know much about your competence. I was aware that *I* was not competent, particularly as I was so scared and that did not seem to fit in with being a soldier. I could not even be sure of what I was frightened. Death? No. Being terribly mutilated? Perhaps; I knew a bit more about the possibilities later. Going mad? No. Whatever I thought

of, it didn't seem to be right. Anyhow, I was right about our senior officers.

MYSELF: I don't think you were, although there were certain plausible, superficial qualities that were reprehensible. Your failure to write home was reprehensible and not superficial.

BION: I could not. I agree – I knew – it was reprehensible. But I could not do it. I wrote once, after Cambrai.

* * *

BION: The Sunday before we were to leave Bovington [p. 16], the padre preached a sermon to the whole battalion. His text was, 'Soldiers, be content with your wages'. I don't remember what he said, but he remarked smoothly that some of us might think his choice peculiar.

MYSELF: You obviously did, but how odd that it is the only part you remember.

BION: I was probably hoping I would not run away. I know I feared it before I knew what action was. I was not awake to much of the next day; we must have marched down to a stirring military tune whose name I forget.

MYSELF: 'Bollocks, Bollocks – and the same to you.'

BION: That was *not* what it was called. 'Marche Militaire', perhaps. I say, it's a bit odd your remembering words like that after all these years and an Oxford education, isn't it?

MYSELF: One's early priggishness wears off. Or perhaps it simply becomes socialized as pornography.

BION: I hated the band playing 'Auld Acquaintance' and 'Home, Sweet Home'. My mother stayed in her cottage in Wool, or I would have hated her too.

MYSELF: I had forgotten the Brigadier shook hands with all the officers; I suppose you were right?

BION: Oh yes. It was a bit embarrassing – 'manly gesture' and all that, you know. I wonder if that was what made them so rude to Henry V before Agincourt. It was a bloody night on the *Australind*.

MYSELF: All I remember about Le Havre [p. 17] is the astonishment of a waitress on being asked by Greene, in his best French, to bring some teacake '*avec la vitesse de l'antelope*'.

BION: I didn't think it worth mentioning. I was fond of Greene, an officer in A Company – always cheerful and amusing. A barrister

and wit. As we marched through Le Havre the band played the 'Marseillaise', and the people seemed surprised to see such a large body of large men. I heard one or two say, as they saw our regimental badges, '*Mitrailleurs*', as we had Machine-Gun Corps insignia in those days – 'Heavy Machine-Guns' was the term, to avoid advertising 'Tanks'.

MYSELF: I suppose it sounds cynical to say that the Germans must have been amongst the most interested and informed part of the audience. If not, why not? One of the great armies of the world cannot surely have omitted to keep a capable body of spies at such key places as the ports.

BION: I don't think we believed it in spite of all the '*Taisez vous: Mefiez vous*' in the world, though we had a profound belief in our own Secret Service.

MYSELF: With some reason, I think. Unfortunately we also had some reason later for bitter army gibes about the RN as the 'Silent Service'. We didn't see the positive side – that nothing had interfered with our own crossing.

* * *

BION: These clichés [p. 18] do nothing to convey an impression to anyone who had not had the experience, but to me – sixty years later – their very banality recalls that immensely emotional experience. The behaviour, facial expression, and poverty of conversation could give an impression of depression and even fear at the prospect of battle. Fear there certainly was; fear of fear was, I think, common to all – officers and men. The inability to admit it to anyone, as there was no one to admit it to without being guilty of spreading alarm and despondency, produced a curious sense of being entirely alone in company with a crowd of mindless robots – machines devoid of humanity. The loneliness was intense; I can still feel my skin drawn over the bones of my face as if it were the mask of a cadaver. The occasional words exchanged echoed like a conversation heard from afar. 'Wipers', 'Yes, the Salient.' 'Guns sound a bit frisky.' 'Awful – but cheer up – you'll soon be dead.' 'You've said it.'

* * *

MYSELF: I had forgotten these details [p. 59]. I remembered the episode as a recommendation from the Company Commander. I had

been correspondingly uncomforted – having added to my disillusions the fear that I must have grossly misrepresented my youthful escapade.

BION: I was anxious at the time, and troubled at my good fortune in coming out unscathed where Cohen, Stokes and, to a lesser extent, Quainton had suffered disaster. I did not know how badly Quainton had suffered till long after.

MYSELF: I remember meeting him, quite by accident, years later in Oxford. He was changed from a cheerful, frank fellow whom I had envied for his easy capacity for deep friendliness, into a timid, cautious and scared apology for a man. I could not penetrate his reserve, and he would say nothing of what had happened to him in the war, or since he left the Maudesley.

BION: Of course, I did not know that the Quainton I knew was only surviving as a physical representation of himself.

MYSELF: Now you have reminded me of it, I think his story of using whisky to topple the tank into safety is probably a fabrication of an already disordered personality. Incidentally, I think the VC could have toppled *you* into a 'breakdown'. You were lucky not to get it.

BION: Most people got killed trying to deserve the award later. I only knew one, and he seemed to be insensitive to an ordinary conversation. Of course, he may have been like that before.

MYSELF: Who knows? I suppose awards for valour do stimulate the impulse to be valorous. I think professional soldiers may be able to survive them unharmed better than people with fewer years of discipline. And yet . . . those brave rows of ribbons: I often wonder what they portend. I see you mention that you were all very nervy, which I had forgotten.

BION: I felt embarrassed to meet my crew. It seemed so ridiculous that I should be singled out. I was able to recommend Richardson for a Military Medal, which he obtained. I indulged in a shuffling apology; they knew I had been recommended for something – mercifully, they did not know for what.

* * *

MYSELF: Our senior officers were *not* inefficient [p. 28], but we could not know that our world had reached its Niagara. We were bits that betrayed the accelerating speed of the flood.

BION: The only flood we knew came down in sheets from the grey, shell-shattered skies and up from the sodden, glistening mud. I did not know of any officer or man who did not admire our staff and preferred them to Lloyd George, Asquith or Curzon, and sundry very important snoopers who came out to have a cosy shudder of patriotism. You forget that we could see for ourselves what our immediate seniors were. I knew only too well that if I relaxed my grim, determined jaw, my teeth would chatter.

MYSELF: Don't you think your immediate seniors had fears that likewise had to be masked? They too had seniors in rank and time.

BION: They died; we were killed.

MYSELF: Somehow, I am not sympathetic. Perhaps I am too comfortable and too forgetful; your self-pity does not leaven; it is flatulent.

BION: At Oxford, when I wrote the account, we were not so critical. I don't think it was because it was against orders, but because it was less awful to think all was well than to believe our bigger enemy was what you later called . . .

MYSELF: . . . the Establishment. Certain gross words would have been – still are – more appropriate.

* * *

MYSELF: 'The rain continued practically without stopping . . .' (p. 28). I remember this as peculiarly horrible. We used to go for apparently aimless route marches, but I suppose they were intended to keep us physically fit. I remember one that ended up in darkness – dank, steamy, wet. On the way back we heard a raid – and saw it – lighting up the sky. Our guns made the sky a white, bright backcloth against which the 'hills' of the salient were silhouetted. The light was continuous but pulsed. It was punctuated by spots of red fire; these were the enemy shells bursting in reply. I suppose we must have initiated the raid – they were only replying. I heard a man mutter, 'struth' as we stared at this terrifying spectacle. It seemed the only comment possible as the sight struck chill in one's heart. How the infantry stood it I cannot even now imagine – and they would have to lie in the mud and wet all night.

BION: I remember. Of course, I did not know then what I knew later about straying from No. 5 Infantry Track.

MYSELF: Could any amateur army like ours have survived? Surely that, and the Somme before it, must have killed the heart of our soldiers, our initiative.

* * *

BION: How well we were prepared [p. 59]! We had not been prepared for the victory; we had not been prepared to take seriously the information our intelligence services had given us.

MYSELF: This is in no way different today – or ever was. The success of the First World War was thrown away, the good fortune of our survival at the end of the Second was likewise frittered away.

BION: Are you not blaming the Staff and the Establishment, as you call it? It sounds as if you are grousing as much as you say I am.

MYSELF: It does; but I do not blame the Establishment. It is us I blame – all of us. Victory seems to be regarded by us as desirable because it leads to an opportunity to sink into slumber again.

* * *

MYSELF: The part I remember, that impressed me most [p. 60], was the sight of the Guards Division advancing in open order and in formation so perfect it might have been a parade-ground exercise. They took Gouzeaucourt and swept on to Ribécourt.

BION: Yes, now you remind me. I forgot it as soon as I saw it because we who were left without arms to 'stand to' had to march back in the afternoon. The Guards set up a 'prisoner-of-war' cage into which they shepherded the fleeing remnants of the infantry division. This was done by their camp details while the main body continued their advance. I hated the machine-gunning from the air, though it didn't seem to do any harm.

MYSELF: I seem to remember that though we had Lewis guns, we did the planes no harm either.

BION: Well, they came so fast and so suddenly.

MYSELF: You could hardly expect them to walk, or give you notice. You were on the open road, and a battle had been raging for about fifteen hours.

BION: They didn't come back, so we hadn't a second chance.

MYSELF: Second chances are rare; second, even third, thoughts are possible, but choice of which thought to transform into action has to be instant and not dependent on second chances.

BION: I certainly felt demoralized; so much so that I do not remember bothering about my threatened decoration. I loathed having to go back and take over the tanks we had left in charge of Quainton and others.

MYSELF: I had hardly any memory of going back to Moult and the return till you reminded me.

BION: I am not surprised. I forgot it as fast as I could. At Oxford, when I was writing the diary, I used to have a recurrent dream of clinging to the slimy bank of a torrent that rushed by some twenty feet below. As I was slipping, I tried to dig my fingernails into the mud. But as I became tired I moved to ease myself – and this meant a further slither. This vast raging torrent waiting for me below was the Steenbeck. I have described the trickle of dirty water that was the geographical fact.

MYSELF: Your 'dream', as you call it, sounds a better description of the 'facts' than the facts. The crossing of the Steenbeck swallowed up many an English soldier – for what?

BION: I remember the corpse in the shell-hole that sheltered us both – his bluey-green skin stretched tight over the bones of his face, his mouth pulled open by the contraction of death.

MYSELF: I renewed the acquaintance in the dissecting room.

BION: We held Ypres.

MYSELF: No. Peace broke out with its customary virulence. With heavy industry idle, workers rotting for lack of work, we 'prepared' to fight another war without arms, without training, without spirit. We did NOT 'keep on' holding Ypres. And now we slither to our Niagara. This time it is not a dream.

BION: It was no dream at Méaulte. We went back after one stint with the supporting troops. Merry Christmas to you all. Quainton had a marvellous fur coat, which, he declared proudly, excited the Colonel's envious eyes – as well it might. But the future was hidden from both: no comfort could keep out the chilly blast of the future.

* * *

MYSELF: Your description of Méaulte [p. 71], which was admittedly a horrible camp, a horrible Christmas, and a period of low morale in the troops, is certainly evocative, but I am disagreeably impressed by your sanctimonious priggishness – not only in the army, but at Oxford where you wrote your account. I cannot believe that

your army friends were as bad. If so, it was not surprising that Cook, Homfray, and Clifford disliked you as much as you did them.

BION: I think the 'diary' is a fair enough reflection of me.

MYSELF: It must have been your athletic skills that saved you at Oxford.

BION: I could *not* work, and though I swam and played rugger, I did not know what enjoying games meant. Very occasionally a friend took me round to the rooms of another Queen's man who played the piano and sang to us. He was charming and unpretentious; sometimes I secretly wished I could be released from my athletic prowess. But I could not – it was too important a lifebelt for me to be able to let go my hold of it.

MYSELF: Like your DSO?

BION: I suppose so, but in fact I did not find that compelling. I forgot it, and remember one occasion at least when it was quite a shock to be reminded of it by a friend.

MYSELF: I remember that.

BION: Then perhaps you will not be surprised that I would have been shocked had I known what I should become if I survived the war.

MYSELF: What upsets you most?

BION: Your success, I think. I hesitate to say it, because it sounds ungrateful. I cannot imagine what was wrong, but I never recovered from the survival of the Battle of Amiens. Most of what I do not like about you seemed to start then.

MYSELF: As you had not realized it then, I am surprised that you say so little about events that in retrospect seem utterly horrible.

BION: I should have thought that there was nothing material excluded.

MYSELF: Possibly. It may not have struck you as dramatic enough to mention the time, long before Ypres, when you were asleep on the stone floor of a farmhouse that had been levelled in previous fighting. That sickly, sweet stench of corpses which . . .

BION: . . . we couldn't locate. I remember perfectly. What about it?

MYSELF: Nothing: that was what was so awful. You were not even frightened. By the time you got to Oxford, you had 'forgotten' it. *I* don't remember it, but my gut does. I was and am still scared. What about? I don't know – just scared. No, not even 'just' scared. Scared.

BION: That 'sweet smell of the dead' I remember. It was pervasive. Where was that? I know it was before we had tanks.

MYSELF: And how could you have been such a damned fool as to let that Boche drag you to the dug-out where his dead pal was? On August 8th it was.

BION: I remember. Asser was about to die – refusing to surrender. He could have been fighting for something of which I could not be aware. But his death killed me. At least, it made me feel I could never be a man with such intensity that I would knowingly embrace certain death.

MYSELF: Years after, many years after, I learned that I could hardly claim to love a woman because the woman's love included her love of the father of her children. I do not know. I can only aspire to such love and suffer the uncertainty that it is only an aspiration of which I fall short.

BION: I had no doubt – do not ask my why, but I repeat *no* doubt – that Asser, nearly a year younger than I, was such a man. I do not feel that about you, who I have survived to become.

MYSELF: I certainly do not claim it. I am still 'becoming', though. It depends if death forestalls my growth. I can hardly claim more time as of a right.

BION: What else surprises you?

MYSELF: Your enthusiasm to go into battle and the fact that it seemed to endure.

BION: I recognize a quality that you might mistake for endurance, but I do not remember any behaviour I would call enthusiasm. Once, perhaps twice, I felt enthusiasm when I saw the guns in the field near school, and when I saw the North Midland Division marching.

MYSELF: Before you went to war, you had what I think of as a morbid change-and-decay-in-all-around-I-see religiosity.

BION: That was shared by all my contemporaries; it was indistinguishable from the Headmaster's sexual pi-jaws [pious talk; public school slang]. I had a vague sense of impending ill-defined DOOM mixed up with 'poison in the food' – another of his solemn and terrifying ploys. I also had a vague feeling that I would be killed for a pleasurable sin – probably masturbation.

MYSELF: I do not remember your ever feeling that abstinence would confer immunity.

BION: No, I could hardly achieve that degree of stupidity. Facts of action could not fail to penetrate. After Cambrai it was obvious – not a single one of my personal friends was in existence.

MYSELF: Except Cohen and Quainton.

BION: Both were recognizable only in the way that an insect's chitinous sheath could be recognized as something from which the pupa had emerged.

MYSELF: What about Hauser?

BION: He did not become a friend, but a fellow officer for whom I developed an immense and enduring respect.

MYSELF: His comment on your stolid and unhurried loading of your revolver after Mont Kemmel had fallen impressed you.

BION: It must have done, but I did not realize it at the time. I was only aware of a sense of utter emptiness. I thought the infantry officers who saw me walking to my machine-gun crews regarded me as some sort of pathological case.

MYSELF: I think they were right. After all, you had not the background of training and discipline of a real soldier.

BION: I don't suppose they had either; we were all amateurs without an amatory tie with a warlike profession. The Guards Division at Hazebrouck, at Cambrai – *they* could stand up to any troops in the world.

MYSELF: I still feel the admiration that was born then.

AMIENS

As Bion writes in the Prelude to this unfinished narrative, memories were aroused by our train journey in France on August 3rd 1958. I remember his being visibly moved as he talked of his painful recollections; I became heavy-hearted, thinking of the lost generation of young men and those who were left to carry with them the burden of bitterness and disillusionment throughout their lives.

He writes in the third person and becomes the story-teller, attributing some of his own actions and experiences to other characters. It is a solemn chronicle of tired men grown cynical after years of futile losses and dashed hopes, unable to feel any enthusiasm now that the tide has turned in their favour and an end to fighting is at last a possibility. The only relief from the atmosphere of anxiety and fear is in the wry, ironic picture he draws of Major de Freine, although at the time, as he told me, he (transposed to Cook) found it impossible to see the 'funny side' of that living caricature of a cavalry officer of the 'old school'.

The account ends in mid-sentence – other more pressing commitments intervened. He was working on *Learning from Experience* at the time (1960), followed by four more books published by 1970. I know he did not read my typescript, which was filed and half forgotten by me over the ensuing thirty years until recently, when publication of the diary became a possibility. I have edited it, as I did many of his writings, in the way of which he approved. The titles, Prelude and Fugue, are my choice, the latter meaning 'loss of one's identity, often coupled with disappearance from one's usual environment' (*OED*).

Francesca Bion

Prelude

[August 3rd 1958]

The train was now travelling at speed. The sideways gentle oscillation of the coaches blended rhythmically with the thundering forward surge of the train itself. It was hot. The men working in the fields were bare to the waist. We could see them toiling over the vast rolling expanses of cornland that the train was now passing through.

Francesca sat opposite to me, looking as usual cool, neat, beautifully turned out, with her sweetly smiling face. She studied the menu, and in a moment or two the waiter came up to us, and we ordered our cocktails, which arrived in glasses already frosted with the contrast of their contents and the warm, humid air of this hot summer's day.

The fields disappeared as we approached the outskirts of a town, and soon we were threading our way through the network of rails and points that made up Amiens station. Amiens – so that explained it. Some twenty minutes earlier we had passed a peculiar configuration of the ground about which Francesca had questioned me. I had recognized at once the signs of shell-holes overgrown with weed. They pock-marked the ground round about some marshy pools, where the willow trees hung green and graceful in the bright sunlight. Still they seemed to be ineradicable, to be very little older than the shell-holes had been in the war, where one marvelled at the speed with which they were covered up with weed and willowherb in the period of the war itself. What surprised now was that so little further disguise had taken place.

As the train sped through the complex of lines, I said to Francesca that it seemed strange that it was almost forty years ago to the day when I had last been here, and in such very different circumstances. It

was a dream for her to be sitting opposite to me – a girl so beautiful, so loving, so near to a dream that I had always thought could never, never come to pass for me.

The train, freed of the marshalling yards, had settled down into the steady rhythm of its speedy rush towards the sea. Was it not Julian Grenfell who wrote, 'The naked earth is warm with spring"? I think it was in that poem that he spoke of the man 'who dies fighting has increase' ['Into Battle', published in *The Times*, 27 May 1915].

I wonder. But what an army it was. Can there ever be collected together again so many men of splendid minds and splendid physique? And is it possible that, if they were collected together again, they could be suffused with so fantastic a devotion to war, so mystical and overwhelming a belief that it was the cure for all the ills of the world – 'as swimmers into cleanness leaping', as Rupert Brooke had it ['Peace', 1914], speaking of his entry into the war? The wonderful experiences of peacetime were really nothing; or rather had in them the seeds of some kind of disease that would be purged away by the actual process of war itself.

There were not many of those left by 1918, and yet there were some. I remember Asser – Asser, who was only nineteen and who joined our battalion with all the freshness, enthusiasm and youthful belief that he was joining in some wonderful and glorious adventure. He did not grow old, 'as we who are left grow old' [Laurence Binyon, 'For the Fallen'].

Fugue

1

In the early evening of August 7th, 1918, Captain Bion, DSO, had been ordered to rest before the battle, since he had been at work from early dawn after several days of prolonged preparation of his tanks for action. He lay down on a rug on the grass of a high plateau overlooking the valley of the River Luce. Before him was a screen of trees of the wood in which the tanks of his battalion were concealed from enemy observation. The green leaves hung heavily in the hot evening air, their colour touched with bronze in the rays of the declining sun. He was twenty years old, and he commanded a section of the 3rd Company of the 5th Tank Battalion. Sharing the rug with him was 2nd Lieutenant Asser, aged eighteen, just newly joined with the battalion. The time was approximately 14.00 hours. The battalion was due to take up its positions for action, commencing the march-to-battle positions at 18.00 hours. The 3rd Company was to lead the battalion, and Bion's section was the last one in the order of route. He and his companion composed themselves for sleep.

The move to the forward area had commenced four days previously, when the battalion, lying some twenty miles behind the front line already prepared, had been ordered forward to entrain and then proceed to Amiens where they were to start the forward move in their vehicles. The journey, which had to be performed in the utmost secrecy, had been extremely arduous. The first stages of the approach to the entraining-point had been over untouched country, which was therefore particularly likely to take the imprint of the tank tracks. So it had been necessary, in addition to the usual ardours of an approach march, for parties with brooms to cover up the tracks, so that they

would not be visible to the enemy aerial photographers. This burdensome task had employed at least half of each tank crew. Every forward move, including the journeys by train, had to be performed after night had fallen. The days were accordingly spent in greasing the tanks, oiling, filling with petrol, and general maintenance duties. In this way it had been possible for few to obtain any rest at all, nor had there been any time for speculation as to what the new move might portend. It was, however, vaguely known that the impending battle was to be extremely important for the fate of the whole Western Front. Some details were known to the company commanders, but below that rank the information did not go. Even company commanders and higher officers were still kept in the dark regarding the actual location of the coming battle.

The battalion arrived at railhead before dawn on August 6th; the tanks were detrained with the greatest possible rapidity and driven into a neighbouring copse for shelter. Then before light came the tracks were again obliterated by the same laborious process as before. It was then that Bion had the idea of attaching a large hurdle to the back of his tank and, telling the men whose duty it was to obscure the tracks to stand on this hurdle, dragged it behind the tank and so saved a great deal of unnecessary labour.

For this Bion was commended by his Company Commander. Such commendation was for him not unusual; as his ribbon of the DSO showed, he had the reputation of being a courageous officer in battle in spite of his extreme youth.

His second in command, Asser, had only been appointed to that position on Bion's representations to the Company Commander on the day on which the forward move had been inaugurated. He had displaced an officer some two years older than Bion, named Cartwright, on the grounds that he was not a suitable officer for that position. In Bion's view he was lacking in courage and initiative and was too much disposed to mix on over-familiar terms with the men of his crew; furthermore, he showed a great lack of discretion in his attitude and manner when addressing his subordinates and was disposed to behave as if he found their company more congenial that that of his fellow officers. Bion considered Asser, although only newly arrived from England, far more suitable for the post, qualified both by his natural disposition – one of a cheerful cast of mind – and by his general grasp and aptitude for the duties he had to fulfil. He

had taken his promotion, which involved no official recognition in the army lists, with modest assurance and pleasure but without any undue elation. Cartwright, on the other hand, as might have been expected, became still further disgruntled and even more disposed to speak and behave in a manner that was considered to be unworthy of an officer. It was assumed, however, that his crew, a good one, would not come to much harm from this behaviour except that which arises through not being able to have a great deal of confidence in the officer in whose hands they were placed.

When all the tanks of the battalion had been safely moved into the positions pre-ordained by the advance party in the wood, they were further camouflaged for additional precaution, although they would seem to be amply hidden by the leaves of the trees. When this was completed, the officers tried to tidy themselves, to shave and carry out such ablutions as were possible with hot water they obtained through strapping water-filled petrol cans onto the sides of the exhaust vents of the tanks. Men and officers then had their early morning meal. Since no fires were permitted, this consisted of cold water, bully beef and ration biscuits. After the meal the men set about their routine tasks of tank maintenance, but the officers, down to the most junior taking part in the battle, were summoned to a conference to be held in a tent pitched in the wood. This conference was to brief them on their orders and to explain to them the nature of the approaching operation.

On arrival at the tent, Bion and his officers, Asser, Cartwright, Broom and Hauser, all tank commanders, were issued with their maps. Bion, as section commander, had no tank but proceeded into action on foot in the front ranks of the leading infantry. On opening their maps, they discovered that they had been allocated a sector, a front of advance lying to the right of a straight road, which ran from Amiens to Roye. Amidst excited but subdued talk and the rustling of the maps being unfolded, there entered the Corps Commander with the GSO1 and his brigadiers. The noise was hushed as all the officers stood to attention. The Corps Commander and his staff motioned to them to sit down, and they took their seats at an improvised dais.

'Christ, this looks like the big stuff', said Broom, whispering to Hauser, who sat there, short-sighted, almost bat-like, disgruntled, famous with officers and men alike for his unique perversity of disposition.

Hauser, who spoke with a habitual snuffle, looked caustically towards the exalted officers on the dais and replied in not too soft a whisper, 'With all these big guns here, they should be able to produce a bigger balls-up.'

Broom was shocked. His excited eyes seemed to protrude from the pink moon of his face. 'You don't mean that', he said.

'You watch', hissed Hauser briefly, for the Corps Commander was already speaking.

His speech at least belied Hauser's gloomy prognostications. He was precise, he was accurate; he appeared to know minutely the orders he wished to communicate. He hardly ever referred to notes except in matters of minor detail, and then only to confirm what he had said, never to make a correction. He began by explaining that for reasons of security he proposed only to deal with the immediate front, which concerned the battalion and its neighbours on either flank. He said that the battle was to be a major one and would probably decide the fate of the war.

Hauser, reduced to silence by the importance of the occasion, thought that he had heard this before, like the last battle, and the one before that, and the one before that, and the one before that . . . he reflected bitterly.

The Corps Commander continued: up to the present there was no sign that the enemy was aware of what was going on on his front. Secrecy had apparently been entirely successful; the latest reports from our agents indicated that there were no extra troop movements on his front. Nevertheless, he emphasized, the enemy were in great strength because it was their intention to launch an attack within the next few days that was designed to capture Amiens and so break an important hinge on the front of the allies. This front was the point at which the French and British armies joined. Our attack was intended not only to forestall the enemy move, but to be a major contribution to his total defeat.

Bion's heart sank. 'Why the hell', he thought to himself, 'do we always have to choose the point at which the enemy is most powerful?'

The attack was to be carried out, the Corps Commander continued, by two divisions of the British army, by the Canadian Army Corps, by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps and by the First French Army. Some of the battalion's tanks would be operating

with troops of the First French Army. He showed on a map a line that marked the respective fronts of the right flank of the attacking British, and of the left flank of the First French Army. At some 3,000 metres from the front line this limiting line joined the Amiens–Roye road, which, from that point onward, would provide the frontier separating the British Armies, the Fourth Army and the First French Army. After he had spoken in fairly general terms, he sat down and handed over to his CSO1, who then gave detailed instructions to the companies and sections that were to operate.

In tense silence all the officers followed the instructions with the aid of their maps. Bion and his officers became tense when they heard the orders that affected them as a section. It appeared that they were to be on the extreme right of the British Army, that they would start operating with troops of the Canadian Army Corps, and then, when the Amiens–Roye road was reached, they would be taking over the protection of the French Nancy Division. This division would consist of the Foreign Legion, the Chasseurs Alpines and –

'It's the French Iron Division', whispered Hauser, momentarily dropping his attitude of disillusionment.

The staff officer went on to say that the utmost precaution must be taken to preserve secrecy; there must be no risks taken whatsoever. Up to the present, he said, there had only been one aeroplane over our lines, and that had been shot down. There were some ironical murmurs at this point as ground troops had very little faith in the marksmanship of the anti-aircraft batteries. He explained that, since the enemy were not anxious to spring a surprise upon us, it was quite likely that they would not risk sending out any reconnaissance planes more than they could help for fear of arousing our suspicions. One of the difficult problems, he continued, was how to keep the enemy from being suspicious when our tanks moved forward into battle position. It had therefore been arranged that flights of Handley Page bombers would take place over the front lines at the time when our tanks started forward before the battle. It was hoped that the noise of the aeroplane engines would mask the sound of the tanks, and that the sound of the tank engines would be explained to the listening enemy as being made by the Handley Page bombers, which they themselves could see.

Detail followed detail for something over an hour; then came the questions, terse and tensely delivered. As a matter of course, nobody

less exalted than a company commander could ask the questions. Then the Corps Commander rose, indicated that the conference was at an end, and with his fellow staff officers left the tent. The officers of the battalion broke up into small groups, discussing the information they had been given. Bion's officers kept together.

'This means Croix de Guerre for all of us', said Broom. 'You can never go into action within ten miles of the French without being showered with the things.'

'If the Boche are so stupid that they can't tell the difference between a tank and a Handley Page bomber, I wonder why we have to fight them at all', said Hauser.

'It will be too late by then, anyway', said Bion.

'Oh no, it won't', said Hauser. 'What about that German major fellow at Cambrai? He chewed us up pretty thoroughly then if you remember. You've only got to give these chaps a little bit of notice, and they sit there with their guns nicely trained waiting for us to show our snouts over the top.'

'Don't be such a wet blanket', said Bion somewhat uneasily. 'You know very well that we will have a very heavy barrage put down on him.'

Asser, who had been silent all this time, absorbed with thoughts of excitement about his first battle and the thrill of seeing so many important officers whose names were legends to him, now broke in. 'I think there should be far too big a barrage for it to be possible for any German major to be firing over open sights at our tanks. After all, you have heard what they said about Greenwood Copse: he said the Boche had sixteen machine-guns in there, and they were turning five 9.5 Howitzers on to it for that part alone. That ought to finish them off if anything should.'

'Rubbish', said Hauser acidly, 'you know perfectly well that whenever one of those idiotic guns fires, all that happens is that the Boche is presented with a huge crater. He simply shoves a little bit of barbed wire round the top, puts a few machine-guns in it, and there you are – a perfectly good strong point – and he hasn't even had to bat an eyelid digging one single spadeful of earth out of this mucky soil.'

'I see you're in very good form, Hauser', said Bion. After many months of fighting, he knew Hauser was one of the stoutest-hearted officers in the battalion. He covered up whatever feelings he might have by a perpetual flow of acid comment about the world in which

he was living. It was not unamusing, although it sometimes had a very irritating effect, both on his colleagues and on his men. His men, however, in between intervals of hating him, really worshipped him, because they knew he was utterly reliable, that there was no chance of his ever failing them in battle, or neglecting any detail at all that could make for their comfort and care.

The Battalion Intelligence Officer, Captain Carter, approached the group. 'Tell Captain Bion that he is wanted by Major Hotblack.'

Major Hotblack was standing some few yards away, and when Bion approached him, he said that he would be glad to take him up to the front to have a look at the River Luce. 'We might as well have a look round if you feel like it first thing tomorrow morning, I think. Perhaps have a peep into no-man's land.'

Bion did not much relish the prospect at all, although he was not able to say so, for Hotblack was a man with a legendary reputation for his actions both in battle and in the Secret Service, where he was reputed to have carried out some extraordinary feats behind the German lines. There was nothing to do but to agree with him. 'But', said Bion, 'I have to be back in time to go to the H.Q. of the Iron Division.'

'Yes, I know', said Hotblack, 'but I think we shall have plenty of time before then just to have a little look at our friend over the way.'

They arranged to meet at the bridge over the River Luce just before dawn on the following day.

2

It was after this reconnaissance and the conference at French Divisional H.Q. that Bion had now had his first chance of a rest. Something about the morning's work had clearly upset him. He appeared to be nervous and anxious, rather pale and not by any means the self-assured person that one would have expected from somebody with as good a reputation as his. However, he and Asser were now at last able to lie down and snatch a few hours of sleep before the battle – if they could. For Asser the main obstacle to sleep was undoubtedly his excitement and pleasure at the thought of his first battle. Mixed with it, of course, there were also fears and anxieties, as might well be supposed. Yet for Bion the state of affairs was different and much

more complex: he had been frightened; he did not like being on this reconnaissance, and he did not like being in company with a person whose courage was so outstanding that he would find it easy to detect in Bion signs of the fear, the deterioration as a soldier that Bion felt he was only too well aware of himself but did not wish to communicate to others. Something had happened on the reconnaissance, yet from a certain point of view nothing could have been more peaceful.

The two of them had met at the appointed time at the small bridge over the River Luce and had then gone forward without any difficulty, on a glorious morning, towards the front-line positions. There they had finally decided, under a burst of machine-gun fire and with the advice of the infantry on whose front they were, to proceed more cautiously, going into a stooping position and finally crawling forward as best they could, making use of any cover they could find in order to advance towards the enemy without being detected or running, as Hotblack said, 'any undue risks'. Nevertheless Bion had felt extremely frightened. Whether he was more frightened of the enemy or of Major Hotblack it would be difficult to say, but the upshot of it was that at one point he had become so extremely panicky that he had had to resort to taking a whole series of compass bearings of the position that he said he had to occupy with his tanks that evening. Hotblack seemed to be somewhat amused at this, but at the same time he did not raise any objections; he did not appear even to be unduly impatient about it. Yet to Bion his whole attitude was sinister; it seemed incredible that anybody with Hotblack's experiences could fail to observe the trembling of his hand, the tenseness of his expression and manner, his inability to converse clearly. Furthermore, there seemed to be absolutely no excuse for taking the compass bearings. 'Just to be on the safe side', he had said. But the safe side of what? Hotblack did not visualize there would be any need for these bearings at all; the landmarks were clear, the position was easy, there was nothing whatever to suggest that when the time came in the evening to lay down the tapes for the tanks to be led into position, there would be any difficulty. No, there was no doubt about it – it must be obvious to Hotblack that the compass bearings had very little indeed to do with the impending action but a great deal to do with Bion's need for camouflage to hide his true feelings.

As Bion had hoped, Hotblack finally said that he was going forward a little bit, as there was something that he found attractive and

interesting, and that he would rejoin Bion when his observations were complete. This gave Bion the much-needed respite he was seeking; it was with great relief that he continued to observe, to take bearings, to scribble in his notebook, trying more and more to feel that what he was doing was justified by the military needs of the situation and that his manner in doing it showed nothing but that of the calm, collected, wise and prudent officer. By the time Hotblack had returned, he felt that he had thoroughly restored the situation. Nevertheless he was uneasy. He fancied that Hotblack looked at him queerly as if he suspected something.

The pair were back again now at the Luce bridge from which they had started. Hotblack said he would walk with Bion some of the way towards the Divisional H.Q. because it lay on his path, and then he would go on his way while Bion went by himself to the Division.

'What do you think of the new officers you recently had out from England as reinforcements?' asked Hotblack.

'They seem to me to be quite first-class', said Bion.

'Sincerely, though, do you really think they are up to the old standard?'

'Yes', said Bion, 'Indeed, I think that one I have just had in my section is perhaps one of the most efficient officers I have come across. He had all the keenness and enthusiasm we used to have at the beginning of the war – at least, perhaps I should say at the time I first came into the army myself.'

'Well, that's very good news', said Hotblack, 'but you know, I'm not sure that this experience of yours is altogether typical. I know the Brigadier is very worried about some of the reports he has had. Of course, you can't expect the country to be producing the same number of first-class officers now as they could in the old days when we had the pick of the public schools. Some of the people who have been promoted from the ranks cause us a great deal of trouble and distress.'

'You mean', said Bion, 'that you feel they lack a good deal of polish and so forth?'

'Oh no, not at all', said Hotblack, 'that would be a minor matter. I don't think anybody minds very much about that. What is much more serious is if their lack of manners – or 'polish', as you call it – really shows the vulgarity or indifference of their minds. Too often, it seems to me that these people have any amount of personal

ambition and drive, but very little idea that they may have obligations to fulfil when they reach positions of importance.'

'Yes, I see what you mean', said Bion, 'but I don't think officers have been lacking in the past who had just the same defects and indeed some that were even worse. I remember one man we had who, I think, got his commission because the head of his firm had a certain amount of pull; why he should have been commissioned as an officer otherwise I cannot possibly imagine. He had neither manners nor polish nor any sort of courage.'

At this point Bion became somewhat anxious and troubled. He was not feeling that he was a very good officer himself, nor was he at all sure that if he spoke too loudly and too clearly in his criticism of others, expressing thereby his belief in his own worth, he might not invite criticism, silent though it might be, from Hotblack. Indeed, he had begun to feel that Hotblack would realize he was just exactly one of these undesirable officers about whom he had so many misgivings.

At last they had reached the point at which Hotblack had to get back to Corps H.Q., and Bion went on by himself. 'You'll find them quite a nice lot', said Hotblack in parting. 'They are a very fine division – they've had a good deal of battling.'

Bion's mood was not helpful to him when he at last found himself at Divisional H.Q. He was introduced to the senior officers there, particularly the Battalion Commanders whose troops his tanks were to cover. When they found that he was unable to speak French – typical of the British, the French seemed to think – they lost all interest in him, and though this gave him an opportunity to stand rather to one side and watch the strange spectacle of French H.Q. at work, it intensified his feelings of being basically an outsider and one who would be recognized as such if his true worth were known, as opposed to the appearance he managed to project of himself and which in some respects he felt was projected onto him.

It was a large dugout. There seemed to be a general air of confusion, of telephones. Seated at a table was a senior officer, certainly not the Divisional Commander, but probably the equivalent of the GSO1; at another table there were three junior officers, and at still another there were drawn up a few chairs where the Colonels were studying their maps and were to hear from Bion an account of his proposals. These orders he then attempted to explain in English. The French officers listened for a while, then wearily laid aside their maps and

gave up any pretence to be understanding what was said. It seemed to be understood that his tanks would he there, and the French commanders did not expect to receive any valuable help beyond possibly harbouring the hope that Bion's tanks would not open fire on the French troops.

A one-armed officer came up and offered Bion a drink, which he took more because he could think of nothing else to do than for any other reason. This officer wore the ribbon of the Legion d'Honneur and the Croix de Guerre; he was pale and seemed to be an extremely sick man. Bion could not help wondering whether he had completely recovered from his wound.

There was an atmosphere of starkness, of bitterness, one might say, alien to the somewhat schoolboyish, football-playing enthusiasm of the British armies, and even alien to the rather irresponsible inconsequent cheerfulness of the French troops such as Bion had seen on the retreat from Mont Kemmel, when they had relieved his own battalion.

As soon as he conveniently could, he escaped from the H.Q. and worked his way back again to his own company lines, feeling very much worse for his whole morning's work, and in particular a prey now to the feelings of anxiety and dread lest his deterioration, as he felt certain it was, should show itself in some spectacular manner in the oncoming battle. Indeed, in some respects he felt a fear that it would not be anything spectacular but simply the sort of terrible decline that he had so often seen in others. He remembered with what astonishment he had heard the news of Captain Yates.

Yates was a man he had not liked, a man who, when he arrived at the battalion as a newly joined subaltern just commissioned, seemed to occupy a great position because he had been present at the Gallipoli landings. Even then he appeared to be drinking too much, to be hectically over-cheerful, ostentatiously bawdy and somewhat assertive. On one occasion somebody had joked to him about his wearing the holes in his rank tabs for far senior rank to that which he held at the time. To this he had replied that he had already held that rank, but his manner was disgruntled and assertive, as if he felt he should still hold the rank. Nevertheless he passed as a man of experience far superior to the youthful subalterns; yet when it had come to the first action of the battalion, news had rapidly spread that when he had been ordered to go forward to a reconnaissance, he had at a certain

point broken down, taken shelter in a ditch by the side of the road although there were no sounds of gunfire and although they were many miles from the front line, and had refused to go forward any more. He had burst into tears and remained huddled up in the ditch, with the unfortunate subaltern by his side trying to encourage him to continue with their task. Bion was then too young to sympathize with Yates, but he had been able to take in what seemed to him the horrible disgrace of this situation – a situation in which an officer to whom had been attributed so much courage and bravery, who had had such a distinguished war service, should suddenly be reduced to a point where it was obvious that he was far less use than the most inexperienced and recently joined subaltern. It is clear that the spirit of man cannot contend with years of inanimate flying steel and bullets; sooner or later the morale goes; that was the thought that was haunting Bion at this time. He himself was by this time a veteran of some eighteen months of warfare – no mean life for an officer in a tank regiment.

He composed himself to rest, pulling over him a grey service blanket. It is nice of the army, he thought, to provide these without any further charge for the burial of the dead; extraordinarily generous of the British nation to allow a man who dies in battle to be buried in his service blanket as his winding sheet, no charge made against the relatives for the expenses incurred in the loss of the blanket.

In the meanwhile work was proceeding at Battalion H.Q. in a manner that seemed to be both desultory and feverish. The Colonel was not present, but the Battalion Intelligence Officer, Captain Carter, was. He had much to do and was engaged in conversation with various company reconnaissance officers who had the task of laying down the tapes that were to lead the tanks into position. None of this could be done until after dark, lest the enemy should send over a plane that would be able to detect the tapes on the ground and thereby deduce that something was afoot. The clerks were busily engaged in various minutiae of administration, filling up forms and so forth. Every now and then a new officer would come in to raise some point that seemed to have been neglected or, it was feared, had not been properly attended to already. Major Cook was also present there.

The Colonel came in for a few minutes. He seemed to be abstracted and to be at a loss to know what it was he wished to find. 'Is Major Morgan about?' he said at last. Morgan was called for, and the Colonel then discussed with him some points about the operation on the left flank, where the battalion would be contacting the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

'What about Captain Bion?', he asked 'Has he been to see the Divisional H.Q.?' Nobody seemed to know. Then a Lieutenant Greene, a newly joined officer, spoke up and said that he thought Captain Bion had been out with Major Hotblack but that they had returned. One of the orderlies said that he felt quite sure that Captain Bion had been to the French Divisional H.Q., but by this time the Colonel's attention seemed to have wandered, and he once more spoke to Major Morgan about some detail of the 1st Company's dispositions.

Such were the comings and goings throughout the course of the afternoon. 'We move off at 18.00 hours', said the Colonel unnecessarily, to nobody in particular.

'Yes, sir', said Carter, taking up the theme as if he felt that presumably it was he who was being addressed. 'I think everything is ready, sir. It ought to be a good show.'

'Quite', said the Colonel, 'Quite. I think it ought. I'm not very happy, though, about our right flank. I don't trust these French people a bit. I think they may not start at all. Has Captain Bion been told that the Corps Commander thinks it is quite likely that when zero hour comes, the French may not even move from their trenches? You know what the blackguards did at Mont Kemmel, don't you?'

'Yes, sir. I was talking to Captain Bion about this myself – we were discussing that event. He proposed to leave one tank behind to patrol on our right flank so as to form a defence against any possible counter-attack down the flanks from the enemy if the French don't move.'

'Good. Excellent idea. That's splendid. How is Captain Bion? Is he all right?'

'Oh yes, sir. I think he's quite all right.'

Greene then interposed to say that he had been talking to Captain Bion and that he felt that the whole question had been gone into very thoroughly.

'I am going to my tent now to get some rest', said the Colonel, turning to Carter. 'You know where to find me. If there is anything

you want, send Mr Greene along with a message and I shall deal with it.'

He had hardly left when Greene observed to Carter that the Colonel was extremely jittery. He had no hesitation at all in making such an observation about his senior officer, although Carter, as one of the old school, would scarcely be likely to approve of such behaviour. However, he was perhaps more reconciled at this stage to the aberrations of the newly joined officers. Greene himself was an ex-ranker. 'I think at any rate that he's a very good colonel', said Carter.

'Well', said Greene, 'he needs to be. The last one, who didn't even know how many machine-guns a tank has got, seemed to me not quite up to the job of commanding officer of a tank battalion.'

'l don't think you should talk like that, Mr Greene', said Carter severely and left him in order to deal with some documents that an orderly had just brought to him for signature.

Quite unabashed, Greene moved away, and when Carter had finished his signatures, he found that Hauser had arrived to talk to him. A queer kind of sympathy existed between these two. Although Hauser was only about twenty-five years of age, he nevertheless had a certain rough, neurotic, obstinate maturity, which chimed in well with that of Carter, who was a man grizzled, vigorous, about forty years old, having spent most of his life in Malaya.

He gave Hauser a pleasant smile and said, 'Well, how are things going?'

'Oh, all right', said Hauser. 'I think it's pretty well complete when you consider all things. I think we've got them taped up this time, don't you?'

'Yes', said Carter, 'I think we have.'

'Nevertheless', said Hauser, 'I don't like this silence.' At that moment a battery of our guns opened fire.

'Bloody fools', muttered Carter. 'They have been told not to loose off anything at all – the orders are strictly that on the whole of this front there must be no registering of guns whatsoever, so that the enemy doesn't suspect anything's afoot.'

'Exactly the same as at Cambrai, I suppose', said Hauser.

'Yes, that's the idea. And now they do that.'

However, nothing further happened. There was no answering reply from the enemy, and the flurry of gunfire might have been just

a routine duty round such as will shake the quiet of the most peaceful front.

'I don't like the way the Boche are so quiet', said Carter 'I wonder whether they smell a rat. You always know they are up to some mischief when they are as well behaved as they are now.'

'Just what I had been thinking myself', said Hauser. 'In the whole of the approach here we have been left singularly free from any kind of molestation at all. And what is more, when I was talking to some of the other reconnaissance officers at our conference yesterday, nobody seemed to have had any experience of any activity at all from the Boche. It's altogether too good to be true. What does the Colonel think about it?'

'He's in extremely good form', said Carter. 'He's quite convinced that this is IT, that we're going to break right through and end the war.'

'Ah, yes', said Hauser bitterly, 'this war, like the last war, is to be the war to end war; and the next war, like this war, will be a war to end war, and so on ad infinitum. And all the breakthroughs are the last possible breakthroughs which break through everything of course, naturally.'

'I see you are in very good form too – sarcastic as usual. Still, I sympathize with you. I can't honestly say that I believe that this is going to be the last war, and in fact I think it would be a damned bad thing if it was.'

Hauser snorted. 'You had better be careful how you say that kind of thing to the Christian contingent. I don't think I should be inclined to air your views too much to Bion and his pals if I were you.

'No', said Carter, 'I don't think I would. Still, they're not a bad lot in their way. The trouble about these damned Christians is, of course, that although they're so full of high ideals, and so packed with enthusiasm, and so determined that right will triumph, they fail to appreciate some of the more seamy sides of this business. Then when at last it does get through to them, they have a nasty way of cracking up – in my opinion. I remember one poor devil. We used to think the world of him, but he just went west when he discovered his colonel was trying to do a bit of graft on him and had thwarted his possibilities of promotion simply because the colonel himself was afraid that if he promoted such a promising officer, his

own job would be jeopardized. He became unstuck, and the next thing he did was to have a kind of breakdown. This had the effect of proving that the Colonel was quite right, when in fact he was quite wrong. What's the time?'

'5.30', replied Greene, who had wandered back to the group again.

'In that case I'd better go and see what my lambs are up to', said Hauser, and off he went to visit his crew, whom he rarely left in peace for very long.

'What's the weather forecast, Greene', asked Carter.

'Set fair', said Greene, 'days and days of fine weather.'

'It's an absolute sitter', said Carter. 'The ground's as hard as a rock, none of that damned mud we had at Ypres. It's much more like Cambrai. There shouldn't be a tank stuck on the whole of the front, I should imagine – not unless it catches a packet from one of their field guns. Otherwise I can't see there's anything whatever to stop us. It's absolutely perfect, no dangers of any sort at all.'

'Ah, yes, nobody ever can', said Greene, 'but they'll be there all right. Very interesting to see what happens this evening; between now and tomorrow morning at dawn there is sure to be some almighty balls-up as usual. I've never known anything else in this ruddy army, have you?'

Carter remained silent. He did not like this kind of talk. It was not the sort of thing that was done in Malaya. He wishes to discourage Greene from his irreverent observation, but Greene was not so easily deterred.

He continued, 'We need a great many more professional officers. None of your peacetime officers, none of your public school boys. What you want is a few more men like me, we people who have had to learn how a machine-gun works, how to fire a rifle; also we people who know a thing or two about lying, detention barracks and thieving. We're not fighting Old Etonians on the opposite side. To be a jolly good officer, you need to be a jolly good liar, a scrimshanker, a man who keeps out of the way of any dirty job, the kind of man who unhesitatingly hits somebody else below the belt, yes, and stamps on his face when he's got him down.'

'Oh, for Christ's sake, shut up!' said Carter, and turned and walked away.

'All right', said Greene after him, 'but you'll see I'm right.' Deprived of his audience, Greene then turned to his corporal, who had come

up to take a message from him, and let him have the benefit of the remainder of his observations. 'You see, Corporal, these fellows don't know what they're talking about. Even in peacetime the best of our regular army officers were fellows who had been taught at Sandhurst and elsewhere how to take absence without leave, how to go off up to town when they weren't supposed to. The best of them were always the ones who used to do a certain amount of work, a little bit of play and the rest of it cheating and lying in one form and another, I don't believe that these so-called gentlemen really exist. And anyhow, we don't want any gentlemen in the army. Good old fifth-form louts of the public school, some of those were some use; otherwise they are no good at all, none of them. I don't believe you want anything except a handful of officers who obey orders inside out – that's the business of the private soldier, not the officer. The problem for the officer is how to be insubordinate, how to be in a state of rebellion, and how not to be caught at it – that's what I say. Why, if some of our politicians had been like that instead of talking about standing up for bloody little Belgium and honour and right, we shouldn't be here, none of us; we should be sitting snug in England, letting the old Boche fight the French and anyone else he liked, keeping our navy and army intact. You can do almost anything with an army or a navy providing you don't use it, you know.'

'Yes, sir', said the corporal dutifully.

'You got a fag?' said Greene.

The corporal handed him one without further comment. 'Can you tell me, sir, what army we're in here?'

'Yes, 4th Army. Good God: Do you mean to tell me you didn't know that? You'll be saying you don't know who the army commander is next.'

'Well, sir, I don't know who the army commander is.'

'Rawlinson. Wherever were you brought up?'

'Rawlinson, sir? I never heard of him.'

'Never heard of him?' It was now Greene's turn to be scandalized. As an old ex-army ranker, he was quite familiar with the names of the senior officers – Plumer, Allenby, Byng, Home – they were all people of whom he had heard, albeit in junior rank. Much of this was, of course, exaggerated by him; he had every facility for giving the impression that he was quite familiar with the big names in the way described by Shakespeare in *Henry V* [IV. iii].

'Well, to tell you the truth, sir', said the corporal, 'I don't much mind what army we're in so long as it isn't the Third Army. I've got no use for an army in which the Q Staff are so bad that you can't get proper grub and rations. Give me all the grub and rations I want, and for all I care the army can be commanded by Jesus Christ himself.'

'You're being blasphemous, Corporal', said Greene, but not with any particular sincerity. 'Still, there is something in what you say. I can't say that I think your theology matters very much, but I think that from a military point of view your ideas are correct – if you give the troops the food they need, you needn't worry about anything else.'

'Women too?' asked the corporal emboldened by his officer's friendliness.

'No', said Greene, 'I don't know that I would agree with that. I think they're a bit of a nuisance sometimes; from all I've heard tell of the Peninsular War, they used to carry their women with them, but they got in the way as much as anything. Still, not that I'm averse to a bit of stuff myself if I can get a twenty-four hour . . .' He broke off as all the officers and men stood to attention at the entry of the Adjutant.

He was a clean-shaven, rather horsey-looking man of about thirty, sparely built; he was unkindly described by those who were not friendly disposed to him as having all the smartness of the jockey. Nevertheless he had the reputation amongst all ranks of the battalion of being efficient, courteous and agreeable, although there were many who were given the impression that he felt himself to be socially superior to them. He had had many years of experience in the editorship of a small paper in the provinces and prided himself on his erudition and education – a pride that was not altogether misplaced. He had withal a pleasing wit of which he made good use on occasions, such as mess nights, when he had composed some entertaining rhymes bringing in the names of various officers and hitting off their characteristics in a few simple and entertaining phrases.

'How are things getting on, Sergeant-Major?' he asked. 'No fresh messages? I suppose everything is all right? The battalion will have to be moving off within the next four or five minutes. I suppose everybody has their orders clear.'

'Oh, yes, I think so, sir', said the Sergeant-Major. 'We have had one or two queries here. There's one lot come in from B Section H.Q. Rear. They want to know about the return . . .'

'Oh never mind about all that stuff now, for heaven's sake. We've got something else to do. I don't know why it is that even when you've got a battle on your hands, you have to be cluttered up with heaven knows what rubbish from the rear.'

'Latrine stuff – bumph, sir', said Greene, deciding to be witty, but he was simply ignored for his pains.

'Better just send up the runners to company commanders, Sergeant-Major. There's not much point in it – they all know what to do – but just to make sure of the job. And see they all get started on time.'

'Very good, sir', said the Sergeant-Major.

'Overture and beginners', said the corporal who prided himself on his theatrical experience, having spent some weeks of his life in a small touring repertory company.

'You had better tell the batman to get the Colonel's and my kit moving too. From now on we shall be in the forward H.Q., as you know.'

'Yes, sir', said the sergeant-major, 'the orders have already been given, and the men have started moving things forward.'

3

Bion and Asser were moving uneasily in their sleep as the declining sun began to touch the tops of the trees. Finally Bion woke up with a start and woke his companion.

'Time we were getting moving, old boy. It's just about a quarter to six. Better see that all the tanks get started up, because we ought to be on the road. As you know, our section have to be the first over the bridge. I don't know about you', he added, 'but I can't say I feel I've had much of a rest. I always hate this sleep before action; one gets the most appalling dreams, and then when you wake up you don't know whether it wouldn't have been better to go on sleeping. The dreams are so much nicer than the actual reality we have to face now.'

'Just what I was thinking, sir' said Asser laughing. 'I had a most foul dream, but I must say I feel much happier awake than to go on sleeping with that. Blue trains – that's what I was dreaming about.'

'I can't see very much wrong with that', said Bion. 'From what you told me of your experiences on the continent before the war, Blue trains ought to mean something very pleasant to you.

'So they do, but Blue trains in dreams are a different proposition', said Asser. 'Anyhow, I suppose we had better get on with this stuff now.' He went off to the wood to his tanks.

Bion, after making one or two adjustments to his equipment – his batman having arrived with his harness, his revolver and ammunition – started off a few minutes later. His was not in an enviable state of mind: he still felt filled with his uneasy sleep and dreams, and he had woken to a consciousness of the unpleasant anxieties that he had had in his reconnaissance with Major Hotblack that morning. 'If only I could pray', he thought bitterly, 'but somehow I don't seem to get any consolation from religion now in the way I could when old Quainton was here.'

Quainton had been a good friend, a man who appeared to possess a placid and calm outlook, and a deep religious faith, which Bion had thought a solid foundation that could not possibly be shaken until Quainton had gone on leave to England and had then written back a letter that seemed, to Bion, to be entirely incredible; he had been driving a car, had had a sudden breakdown and had driven the car into a ditch. While he himself was uninjured, the doctors had seen him, pronounced him suffering from a nervous breakdown, and told him he could not return to the front. The worst of it was that he had written a similar letter to Broom, of all people, a man who could not possibly have been felt by Quainton to be a friend. Broom had made the most of it, not concealing in the least his belief that Quainton had worked the whole thing as a method of escaping from the war. He showed, in the most undisguised manner, his belief that Quainton was nothing more or less than a coward and, by implication, so were the other officers who were friends of his, such as Bion himself. As he buckled on his belt, walking slowly towards the copse in which the tanks were waiting, he suffered sensations of nausea and fear and was filled with feelings of impending disaster.

Carter caught up with him as he was going and wished him good luck. 'As far as I can see, old boy, it's a sitter. I don't think the Boche expects a thing. Everything is absolutely taped out, and I think we've got the most marvellous ground on which to operate. By the way, you ought to be able to get a Croix de Guerre out of this at the very

least. I think even the Colonel expects he's going to get a medal for agriculture, or something of the sort, out of the French.'

'Well, let's hope it won't be for manuring the ground with our dead', said Bion gloomily.

'You're in an extremely cheerful state of mind, I must say', said Carter. 'I don't see why you think we should have any casualties at all. We've got the most terrific gun barrage, I don't mind telling you. You remember what the Corps Commander said, but I know for a fact that even then he wasn't telling you everything. It's the biggest concentration of gunfire I think we've ever had.'

'The gunfire at Cambrai didn't do us much good', said Bion.

'The gunfire at Cambrai was chicken-feed compared with this lot. That was just a trial run. I tell you, the Staff learnt something then. This time we've got ten guns to every one we had at that show, and you know it wasn't such a bad bombardment even so.'

'As long as the guns knock out the enemy and don't just fire short and get our tanks, or plough up the ground so much that we can't get through, I don't mind', said Bion.

Well, it isn't Ypres', said Carter. 'At Ypres they certainly made the place into a frightful mess; in fact, it was such a frightful mess before we ever started that no tank could possibly live in it, but this time we've got ground that's as hard as iron. Even if they went on with a bombardment for a fortnight, I don't think it would make a great deal of difference to the way our tanks go. Well, good-bye for the present – I shall see you down there before zero hour I expect, anyway', and Carter strode off.

By this time the air was electric with excitement. There was still every need for precautions; it had been impressed on the entire battalion that there must be no let-up whatsoever until the actual moment of zero hour. No fires, not even cigarettes were to be lit unless in some concealed spot so that the flame of the match could not be visible to the enemy, nor should there be any undue noise lest his listening posts should pick it up and interpret it as a sign of the impending attack. In spite of this suppression there could be felt the excitement in the men as they bustled to and fro, finding their tanks, manning the starting handles and checking up in the last few moments the various gauges that showed the petrol and oil supply. The shelter of the wood allowed for some relief from the restraint that everyone felt had been imposed upon them and which, in any case, the dread of battle

imposes even without the orders for caution. The cool and bustle of the wood contrasted vividly with the heavy silence and heat outside the shelter of the leaves.

Although a certain uniformity had been imposed upon the battalion for its starting time since it was imperative that the order of march should be preserved on the restricted approach routes, it was not felt to be desirable that all tanks should start at the same moment as that would put too heavy a load upon the camouflage arrangements that had been made to disguise the noise of the tank engines. Therefore the various individual tanks would start freely in their own time, while ensuring only that they would get on to the mud tracks in their right order at approximately the right starting hour.

Bion's visit to the tanks was only short, as he was due to go down to the River Luce in order to repair the bridge that spanned it at the crossing-point for the tanks of his company. After a word or two with Cartwright and then with Asser, who looked at him with undisguised admiration, he went to collect his small party of troops with picks and shovels and then marched them down the slope from the high plateau to the River Luce in the valley below. For the sake of safety he told the corporal in charge to keep the men in single file and scattered, though they were not to lose touch with each other; also that it would be better if they avoided the dirt track, in case the enemy were making observations. It was imperative that nothing at all should be done to arouse suspicion, even the marching of a small body of men such as this was.

Bion went on ahead independently. The bridge was only a mile and a half from the copse in which the tanks were concealed. It was nothing much more than a small culvert across a stream that could hardly be called a stream. A dirty trickle of water went through the centre of the shell-holes, for this particular point was subject to much bombardment as the enemy were anxious to destroy the bridge and to deny its use to the British troops. The bridge itself was a ruin of stonework that had fallen into the bed of the virtually dry stream. It had been decided that it was unnecessary to make any attempt at rebuilding the bridge, but rather that the passage should be ensured by filling the stream with facines of wood. These were huge bundles of faggots, tied powerfully together with wire rope, that weighed anything up to about 15 cwt each. It was an arduous job trundling them into the stream from the dump where the lorry had placed

them earlier in the day, and the task was not made any more pleasant because it was well known that about this time every evening the enemy would open fire on this spot as a routine matter, seeing to it that any repair work that had been done was efficiently demolished the same day. Bion, who had really nothing to do beyond the nominal supervision of what was essentially a task involving no brains at all, did not feel he was in a position to keep at a safe distance – which he would very much like to have done. He therefore, somewhat ostentatiously, sat upon the remains of some rubble on the actual site of the crossing and smoked.

Some of these jobs, he thought to himself, might just as well be done with a dummy stuffed with straw. I wish I was a dummy stuffed with straw now. Unfortunately, if I'm hit it hurts, and I hate being hurt. I don't think anybody knows how much I am afraid of physical pain. If I could be sure that I should be killed, I don't think I would mind, but the ghastly and terrible thing, the awful thought of one's shins crumbling up inside one's legs at the burst of a shell and the flying splinters, is more than I can stand. Why am I such a damned fool as to sit here and think about it then, I wonder.

Not for the first time, he felt that he had no morale left. He felt confident that there were many soldiers who regarded him as being a person of some consequence and courage, but he himself remembered only too vividly the earlier part of the year, when the enemy were attacking the Messines Ridge, when he had felt for some terrible hours, in a small tin shelter, the full force of passivity in the face of imminent death, when there seemed to be no courage, no resource, no reservoir of courage on which it was possible to draw. On that occasion he had thought, 'If the enemy come over, I know that I shall automatically put up my hands. I cannot fight. I want only to be removed from this ghastly hell of mud and shell-holes and corpses.' It was all very different now, but *he* didn't feel particularly different. The British armies were now on the offensive, the whole Western Front in flame ever since the French attack at Soissons earlier in the year. The allies were attacking, the enemy were finished, they were on the run – that was the official story. Yes, that might be true for armies as a whole; it might be true for the nations gathered together to administer the death blow to the German forces, but it was not true for the individuals. He felt that there was nothing in front of him except steady decline. There was no corresponding excitement

or pleasure in him as he heard of further advances, of battles successfully fought in which the enemy was thrown back. It was no thrill to be told he was now participating in one of the major battles of the war. The optimism and cheerfulness were appropriate to members of the Staff, of those whose chances of death were minimal and then restricted to the few occasions when they were right up in the forward areas. As for him, he had been in battle after battle in which only two out of every three who took part in the tank war survived to tell the tale within twenty-four hours of the start of the action. This was not a matter, then, for any optimism; it was not even a matter of fighting; it seemed to be simply a question of statistics and the laws of chance.

The men sweated and grunted and swore, working sullenly, with depression and heaviness showing in every movement they made with the heavy, recalcitrant facines that would not roll, could not be lifted and could only be steered with the greatest difficulty and by the exercise of sheer brute force on the part of the tired men. Bion looked at his watch. Half an hour had passed. There were yet another two hours to go before the tanks would be starting the approach march, and at any moment the enemy shelling, their evening routine fire, would open. But it had not happened so far, and the enemy were reputed to be very regular here, as always. They should have opened fire half an hour before; Bion reflected uneasily that there was plenty of time yet because it would take at least until zero hour before the river could be effectually filled in. This operation had been timed to be completed before the first tank arrived; it had not been feasible earlier, because it was necessary to make it as late as possible in order not to arouse the enemy's suspicions. In any case, any repair that had been done before six o'clock would be likely to be demolished by the six o'clock strafe.

As time passed and no shells fell, the men began to be more cheerful. The corporal came up to Bion. 'It looks, sir, as if we're going to be lucky.' 'I hope so, sincerely', said Bion. The men's work became more animated; instead of the heavy, silent slogging, there were exchanges of comment, banal enough in all conscience, but still it was comment. It was nerve-racking work; there was nothing to be afraid of, there was nothing happening – just physical strain, and yet at any moment the whole operation might be thrown into complete chaos by the dropping of a few shells. After a time the very silence of the enemy batteries began to be a source of unease. Once again the thought

obtruded itself – why were they so quiet? Why did they not fire? It was notorious that when they were most quiescent and most well-behaved, they were up to something. This was a commonly accepted part of the story throughout the British Army, and indeed seemed to have much substance in it.

Every train of thought Bion took up was soon dropped; it was impossible to pursue any to its logical conclusion. Just as one anxiety broke up, another took its place.

'That's about it, sir', said the corporal. Bion looked at the work, inspected it thoroughly and agreed that it seemed to be sturdy and ample for the task it had to fulfil, formidable though the crossing of such a stream was by a number of very heavy vehicles.

'Get the men away from the bridge as far as you can, then, Corporal. Over there, about four hundred yards back, will do. We don't need to go back, we can wait here for the first tanks to arrive.' He looked at his watch and saw ten minutes to nine. The crews would shortly be starting their engines.

He joined his men some four hundred yards from the bridge, and all lay down on the grass by the side of the track. It was a lovely evening, now turned dark so that there would be no risk of the tanks being seen by aerial observation. The air was calm and heavy, scented with the summer smells of the countryside – a most unusual experience for those who had been used to fighting in the mud of Ypres and other battlefields so fought over that trees were non-existent and the song of birds completely unknown.

'Good God!' exclaimed Gunner Harrison, 'hark at that!' It was the sound of a tank engine starting up.

At this distance, even a mile and a half away from the wood, the sound of the engine roaring into life seemed completely to shatter the peace of the entire front. How on earth, they thought as they listened to this infernal din, could anybody possibly fail to hear that row? At the same time the Handley Page bombers were heard droning overhead. The sound, to people expert in tank warfare, was absolutely unmistakable; there could be no confusion of the two noises. To Bion, Hauser's comment when the project of camouflaging the noise of the tanks by Handley Page bombers had first been raised, had been entirely apposite: it was inconceivable that anybody could be deceived by it. But whether it was that nerves were on edge or for what other reason, the starting of the other tank engines seemed

hardly perceptible. The characteristic, rhythmic throb became merged in that of all the other engines and settled down to a dull, steady murmur, which was far more capable of camouflage than had been the sound of the single tank.

'I think, Corporal', said Bion, 'that we might just as well stroll back gently to meet them coming.'

And so the party got up and gradually and informally straggled along the pathway towards the wood.

4

The final check-up tended to be a somewhat desultory affair: throughout the whole of the approach march to the battle area, the tanks had been fully maintained. No matter what the fatigue of the crews, the orders were strict – before they went to attempt any rest whatever, the tanks were to be fully greased and oiled. In addition, the ammunition had been sized – that is to say, every round of small-arms ammunition carried by the tanks had been tested to see that its fit was perfect for the barrels of the machine-guns by dropping each single round into the breach and extracting it and replacing it in its clip. This arduous task had been made necessary because it was well known that there was much defective ammunition, in particular that supplied from the United States. This had now been withdrawn and was used only for practice purposes; it was useful for training in rectifying stoppages in machine-guns while they were firing. Nevertheless there were still anxieties that, by some chance, defective ammunition existed, and a stoppage of a machine-gun in battle was too serious a matter to be risked through any negligence in preparation.

As Asser saw over his tank and talked to his corporal, Corporal Smith, he noted the various items that had to be in order, and then passed on to have a word with other tank commanders, chatting to members of the crews and occasionally to the officers. He was at some pains to talk to Cartwright, who, he knew, must be very sore at having been displaced by him. It is doubtful whether a more experienced officer would have worried to do this, because it was quite clear that Cartwright was suffering not merely from chagrin at being displaced, but was already a seriously demoralized man. However, the

desultory exchange of comment went on and then Asser moved over to talk to Hauser, who, as usual, was fussing around with his crew and complaining bitterly of supposed defects in their preparations.

'Are you looking for somebody?' Asser asked Carter, who came up at this moment.

'Yes. Where's Bion?'

'He's down at the bridge carrying out the repair, you know', said Asser.

'Oh, I had forgotten. I think it might be a good plan if I go down there to see how he is getting on. Is everything all right here?'

'Yes, I think so', said Asser.

'How's old Cartwright? He looked a bit blue about the gills', said Carter.

Asser laughed. 'Well, I think he's all right', he said somewhat sheepishly. 'He seems to have got his tank into very good order, and our other tanks are all ready to move off at any time now.'

'You've got another half-hour to go yet', said Carter, 'but I think I shall be moving off to see if I can find Bion down there.'

At last the time came to start. Asser collected his crew, and they swung the engine, which then roared into action. The whole 75 hp of these powerful machines filled the air with a throbbing pulsation. One by one they started, and then Asser's crew moved their tank out of the wood onto the dirt track. The orders were to proceed in top gear for the first mile. After that they were to drop into low gear and go on with the very minimum of power possible, so that there should be hardly any noise from the engines, which would then be within close reach of the forward listening posts of the German army.

Everything went smoothly, and Asser had just given the order for his tank to drop into low gear when they came upon Bion and his party. It was not usual for more than two men to remain in the tank when they were carrying out the approach march. Only the driver and one other to help him were in each tank, the remainder walking at ease behind the machines, ready for duty if they were called upon by the two inside.

Bion hailed Asser, asked him if all was well, and in turn reported on the bridge. 'Everything is perfectly all right. We've got it absolutely bunged as full of facines as it possibly could be. Even if you stray off the narrow path. it won't matter. We've got it broad enough to take two tanks abreast at least, I should think. Anyhow, there's

no water in the stream worth talking about. It's just a little trickle and that's about all. I don't know really why we bothered to have a bridge, though of course the real trouble would be that we'd churn the whole lot into complete mud soup if we hadn't bothered but had driven straight through it.'

'It's a wonderfully clear evening', said Asser.

* * *

[Three pages missing here; the following extract has been inserted from *The Long Week-End* for continuity.]

No one had mentioned the fog. There could not be a fog; the river, the banks, the low ground, all were as dry as a bone. I myself had seen it. Why, oh why, had I not reported back from the reconnaissance that there was a danger of fog? I had cursed the fools who acted as if forty tons of steel could float on Ypres mud. Yet here was I. . . .

I could see the report: 'An experienced Tank Corps officer had been sent forward to examine and report on the suitability of the terrain for tanks. Unfortunately he thought of absolutely everything and even noticed that there was no water in the river bed, but still failed to see the obvious point that since the water had abandoned the river, it must have take to the air.' There it was – thick, solid, impenetrable.

'Now what?' said Carter. I heard my own voice talking. 'Let's go and have a look.' We walked down and came to the wall. The next step and we were trying to see our hands. At arm's length they were out of sight.

* * *

If I hadn't been in such a terrible funk, he thought, I might have done those compass bearings properly, and now would be the time to use them. I don't even know if they are any use at all. I was spending my time trying to do them simply so as to keep my hands from trembling and to prevent Hotblack from seeing my state of mind. He wondered whether he should tell Carter that he had got the compass bearings. It would be so much simpler to leave it unsaid. The responsibility, after all, was not his, and he had no reason at all to place any particular reliance on the bearings he had taken with such meticulous care since he felt that he had not really been concentrating on the work itself.

'I suppose', said Carter, 'you didn't by any chance take the directions when you were down there with Hotblack this morning.'

'Well', said Bion, his hand forced, 'as a matter of fact, I did, but I really don't know whether they are very much good. You know I'm not an awful lot of use at this kind of thing.'

'My dear chap, it doesn't matter a damn if you're much use at it or not. It's those compass bearings of yours or nothing. We shall never get any tapes down to lead these tanks into action unless we get the routes taped out and the tank positions for them. I've got my men all ready here; let's have a look at them. Can't you leave Asser in charge of the section?'

'Yes, that's easy enough', said Bion, 'I haven't any doubt that he will manage the job perfectly easily. Would you like me to come with you?'

'Indeed, I would', said Carter with great relief.

Since the pace of the tanks was so slow, there was ample time for Bion, and Carter with his men, to go forward to the bridge and to set about the task of putting out the tapes – or would have been ample time for them to do so if it were not for the fog, which was so intense. However, Bion and Carter hurried forward, and as they went the fog swirled up to meet them. In a moment or two everything was absolutely blotted out in pitch darkness, with the mist swirling through lungs and throats and blinding everyone's eyes.

'We'll have to start working by compass now before ever we get to the bridge', said Carter. 'You didn't by any chance take bearings from here?'

'Yes, I think so – I think I've got them. In any case, I know this bit well enough', said Bion.

By slow degrees they went forward and found the bridge easily and quickly. From that point on it was a matter of Bion studying his field service notebook and reading out the compass bearings to Carter, who passed on the instructions to his sergeant and men. There was nothing for it but tense, concentrated attention to the work in hand, and somehow or other the task was ultimately finished; the positions were taped.

By this time the leading tank, which was Asser's, had reached the fascine bridge and picked up the tapes that had been laid down. One after another the tanks crossed and swung left to form up behind the front line of the infantry, which at this point lay some 200 yards in advance. Bion and Carter worked their way back to the bridge by means of the tapes, exchanging words and passing on instructions to

the tank commanders as they came up with their machines. At the point where the tanks swung left, they waited, for at this point they had a rendezvous with the Company Commanders and the Battalion Commander who had arranged beforehand that they should station themselves here. It was not Bion who should have been there, but in view of his compass bearings he remained with Carter, leaving the command of his section to Asser.

At the rendezvous, they waited. 'I'm jolly grateful to you, Bion', Carter said.

'You wait till you know the results of the bearings', said Bion. 'I wasn't bargaining for this, and with all these tanks about the place, goodness knows what sort of distortion the compass has. I *think* they're all right, but I really don't know.'

'Here's the Colonel. Good evening, sir.'

The Colonel shook hands with Carter whom he had not seen for some time. 'This is a pretty mess. I don't think I've ever seen a fog anything like it. Is your company in position all right?'

'Yes', said Major de Freine, who had come up at this moment, 'it is, sir. We've got the tanks out in their proper positions.'

'But A and B Companies are not out in theirs – they don't know where they are at all. There have been no compass bearings taken. Bion, I think you had better go and help them get it all sorted out. You've got the compass bearings, haven't you?'

'No, sir, I haven't', said Bion. 'I've only got those for my section. I had to extend them to get the whole company positions .'

'Yes, but surely to God, man, you can do better than that, can't you? Is there any difficulty at all about extending it as far as the end of the Canadian Divisional front?'

'No, sir – but I only did the bearings for my own section.'

The Colonel was now very angry indeed. 'Aren't you able to do a bit more than the barest minimum of your job? As a section commander I expect you to be able to take full command of the company if need arises, and here you are telling me that you don't know how to extend your compass bearings properly.'

'Excuse me, sir, I didn't say that. I said that I don't know whether I can extend them properly.'

'Well, dammit man, go and try' said the Colonel, absolutely furious by this time.

Bion's state of mind became angry and further depressed by this new burden thrust upon him.

'Hard luck, old boy', said Carter. 'After all, it's not your fault. If anybody is to blame for this, it is really myself as the battalion reconnaissance officer. The Colonel has got the wind up properly. I don't know that I blame him – after all is said and done, it is his battalion that is in action; it covers the whole of the Canadian Division, and we're responsible for the tanks of the French Division as well. So if he hasn't got the tanks properly positioned for the battle, he might well have the wind up. I can see myself getting a court martial out of all this. I'm not at all sure that the Colonel doesn't see himself getting one.'

'I think it's much more likely', said Bion, 'that he's thinking he is going to get a DSO out of it. I wish somebody would give it to him. These damned people always wanting to get a ruddy decoration are more than a pest when it comes to real battle.'

'Well, old boy, you ought to know', said Carter. 'You've got a DSO out of it, anyhow.'

'Yes', said Bion, 'but that was an accident.'

'Oh, don't be so banal – every damned fool who had got a decoration always talks rot like that. You know perfectly well that if anybody deserves a decoration in action you do. Not that I hold any brief for the things myself. I suppose we've got the right tape', he added in an undertone, groping on the ground to pick up the markings.

From that time on there was silence as they grunted and felt their way forward until at last they came to Asser's tank. From there Bion extended his researches still further to find the rest of the company, and from that point on he and Carter proceeded laboriously to work out further bearings for the remainder of the battalion beyond the Amiens–Roye road to the left of the divisional flank, where it joined up with the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. Eventually, after Carter and Bion had put the remainder of the battalion into their battle positions, they found on rejoining Hauser that there were only a couple of hours left before zero hour.

'I gather', said Hauser, 'that you have done something to modify what appears to be a first-class balls-up. Funny thing', he continued happily, 'they always manage to get a balls-up somehow. Nobody seems to have heard of the River Luce producing a fog until tonight,

and yet it must have done so every evening for years and years and years. Let me congratulate you. It takes some doing to stop the British Staff once they get into form.'

They spoke in whispers in the pitch darkness while the fog swirled round them.

'I really believe it's thicker than ever', said Carter.

'Yes', said Hauser, 'I wish I could see what I'm doing. It's damned serious not being able to see a thing you do.'

'Well, what *are* you doing ?' asked Carter.

'I'm trying to shave, dammit', said Hauser. It appeared that he had ordered hot water to be prepared on the tank exhaust simply so that he should be able to do this. He was most meticulous that his appearance should be correct and precise before going into action.

'Do you mean to say', said Bion, 'that you make your poor devil of a batman undo your shaving kit at this time in the morning before you start off a battle?'

'Well, of course I do. You don't expect me to go about looking like a tramp all the time, do you?'

A runner came fumbling along the tapes. 'Is Captain Bion here?' 'Yes', replied Bion.

'Major Morgan wishes to see you, sir', said the orderly.

Bion then turned and found his way wearily to the extreme left flank of the battalion. I wonder what the devil he wants now, he thought. When he reached Morgan, he found that he was simply anxious to ask whether Bion was quite sure that the bearings were correct. Funny, thought Bion, fetching me all this distance at this time of day, as if I had nothing whatever to do with my own section, to ask me damned silly questions like that. He reassured Morgan, who seemed to be disposed to be chatty and wished to walk along the tapes checking up with his tanks and to have Bion with him. At last Bion managed to take his leave and find his way back to his own section on the grounds that he had urgent work to do with his own men.

As he worked his way along the line, he came across group after group of officers at various points along the tape, all talking in whispers exchanging views about the uncanny silence of the enemy. Nearly all the officers and men were alike disquieted by this phenomenon.

'It would be something of a lark if we found that the enemy attacked at the same time as we did. It would be a real mess-up, I'm bound to say', said one of the A Company section commanders.

'I think we've got a pretty fair mix-up already', said Morgan, who was accompanying Bion on his journey up to the end of his own company front. 'I don't think I have ever known such a fog as this. It's worse than anything we have ever come across. Even before we start, the place seems to be absolute chaos. You still can't see your hand in front of your face – look', and he held up his hand. 'I can't distinguish a single finger from this distance.'

'It certainly gives you a pretty rum feeling, sir', said one of his tank commanders. 'It makes you feel as if you were wrapped up in cotton wool . . .'

'. . . cotton wool of a very frightening kind', said Morgan. 'I don't like cotton wool with bullets concealed in it flying about the place.'

'I wish there were a few more, sir. I think a few pinging overhead adds a pleasant sensation of liveliness. But this is absolutely dead – you can't see anything, you can't hear anything, you're just wrapped in silence.'

'The more silence, the better', said Morgan. 'Put that light out', he roared as somebody lit a match trying to light a cigarette. 'You tell these damned men they mustn't show a light anywhere – oh, I beg your pardon, I didn't realise it was you, Carter.'

'Very sorry, sir, I forgot myself.'

Before long the wandering of senior officers ceased. They took up their positions in the H.Q., which they had arranged to occupy in the early stages of the battle so that all would know to what point messages were to be sent as soon as the action started – or before, should the enemy begin action first. From Villers Bretonneux on the left to the French First Army on the right, the tanks were all in their battle positions, or so it was hoped in so far as could be told, thanks to the all-pervading fog. Small groups of officers continued to chat with each other in the increasing anxiety and tension as the time for zero hour drew near. Above all there was the silence, occasionally broken by the chatter of a machine-gun in the distance. Sometimes there would be the Sherman gun, noticeable for its slow and heavy movement; then the answering chatter of the Lewis gun or the British Maxim.

Carter was passing methodically from each group of officers to the next in order to check with them the exact time; all watches had to be synchronized at the last moment. As he came to each group, he would count out the seconds, ten . . . nine . . . eight . . . seven . . . six . . . until at last everyone had precisely the same hour, which he himself had in turn obtained from the Brigade H.Q. The tank crews stood by the side of the doors of their tanks, getting the last breath of fresh air before they shut themselves in for they knew not how many hours of the stifling, carbon-monoxide-laden air of the tanks.

'Do you know – that short-arsed little runt wanted his shaving water again today. He always does it, he doesn't seem to mind if there's a battle or not. He's got to have it hot, or you catch it hot.'

'I don't care', another man was saying, 'whore or no whore, she done it for 'im free, and that's wot caused all the trouble.'

Now orders were being given to the tank crews to man their tanks and start their engines. The officers who would be in battle on foot instinctively turned back to look in the direction from which the tanks had come, back over the position where the River Luce ought to be, towards the heights of the plateau where the copses had been used to shelter the tanks from aerial observation.

'What wouldn't I give', said Harrison to his second in command, 'to be back there. Nothing so comfortable as those lovely woods, a sort of paradise compared with this hell – or the hell that's going to be here in another minute or two.'

The attack was timed to start at dawn, but the thick fog meant that all was still bathed in darkness, as if it were still night. The British guns massed for the bombardment were in positions sloping from the heights of the plateau down the gentle slope all the way to the front line itself, where the lighter 6-inch Howitzers were in position. Nothing of the plateau or its slopes could be seen from the valley because of the all-pervading fog, which had not lifted or abated to the least extent.

As the hands of their watches reached zero hour, the officers, staring back towards the top of the plateau from whence they had come, saw it suddenly stabbed with white flashes of light. The bombardment had started. For a moment or two it seemed as if there was some vast wall of fog illuminated from within by these ghostly explosions. It was a wall, however, in which the officers felt themselves embedded; at one and the same moment gun flashes seemed

to be at a distance and yet to be up against their very eyes and faces.

At first all was a silent fiery curtain, and then came the sound, a rushing, pulsating sound which came in gusts against the skin of face and hands as well as ears. 'They looking back, all the eastern side beheld/ Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,/ Wav'd over by that flaming brand, the Gate/ With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms' [Milton, *Paradise Lost,* Book xii].

Bion, who was in Asser's tank by his side, said, 'Let her go, and good luck to you', then tumbled out into the open to stand watching with others the wall of fire behind. For a time nothing happened. Why didn't the German guns reply? A minute passed, two minutes, three – and still nothing happened. Then suddenly the earth around rocked and swayed with the falling shells. Bion turned towards the front to walk slowly forwards trying to judge his pace so that he would keep at the distance of some thirty yards behind the line that his tanks were supposed to be following; with one hand he held his runner, Sweeting, by the belt to his side, as with the other he held his compass.

A large shape suddenly loomed in front. It was a tank, stopped. Bion went round to the front flap and shouted at the top of his voice through it to the tank commander inside. He could not hear the reply, but went round to the door, which was opened for him to enter while Sweeting lay down by the side of the tank sheltering from the shell-fire. Inside he found the tank was Cartwright's. What had happened? The petrol feed had gone, came the reply. The corporal driver, Stone, was already by the side of the feed apparatus, looking at it helplessly, stonily, while the tank wobbled in the blast of shell-fire.

What's the matter with it? Think, Corporal, think. Hear what comfortable words your sergeant instructor, Broomback, said. It is a hot summer's day at Bovington camp. The hut is silent but for the buzzing of a bluebottle, which drifts drowsily about, hypnotizing the hearers. Outside the windows can be seen, swimming in the heat, the rhododendrons flaming with fire. What is it? What is it? This feed pipe, says the instructor, is much superior to the old-fashioned pump. That was very efficient in some respects. . . . Oh, do get on with it man, get to the point. What do you do when you have an engine on your hands, when you have forty tons of steel immovable in a barrage, what do you do? The old-fashioned feed was one that had

great merits in that it never broke down, but should the tank be hit by a shell, then at once the tendency was for flames to be fed by the sprays of petrol still under pressure. Yes, yes, that is so, but I want to get on to the point where you know what you should do when the feed fails. Listen to the bluebottle, keep awake, Corporal Stone, keep awake. Listen to it. Yes, it will be pleasant to go into Bournemouth this afternoon. But listen to what your instructor is saying. Don't stare helplessly at it. My God, are these tanks made of jelly? Why do these walls wobble so? Not bluebottles now, but Handley Page bombers. Not bluebottles, no, but crumps; great things that hurtle through the sky like express trains, as the soldiers always say. Ah, at last he is coming to it. Tap the sides of the container gently with the knuckle. Yes, gently with the knuckle, not with a 95 Howitzer shell. Gently, with the knuckle. Filter, gently, nothing happens. Swing her again. Nothing happens. Swing her again. Nothing happens. Filter. Now try her once more. Nothing happens. Filter. Ah, yes, that's right. Filter. Take out the filter. Good heavens, it looks as if the birds have been nesting in it. Ah, that's it, blow through it, that's right. The beautiful flaming rhododendron bushes in the hot sunlight. Listen, Corporal, listen. He put back the filter. Swing her again – this time the engine broke into a roar. Bion dropped out of the back door, lay flat while the tank moved forward.

Suddenly its sides seemed to open like a flower, a sheet of flame shot above it, and there lay the tank with its sides bulged open and its roof gone. The end of Sergeant O'Toole, yes, and the whole crew. In the reeking fumes Bion could see some bodies flung over the top of the now bulging walls from where the roof ought to have been. It looked like the guts of some fantastic animal hanging out of a vast gaping wound.

Sergeant O'Toole is dead, thought Bion glumly as he went steadily forward with his hand still gripping tightly onto Sweeting's belt. Suddenly he felt that the nature of the ground had altered. He stooped down and noticed that it seemed to be some sort of track, maybe metalled. He and Sweeting threw themselves into a shell-hole and sheltered, waiting, as they were in advance of their time. Bion felt sick. He wanted time to think. Sweeting pressed himself as hard as he could against Bion, who then realized how frightened the young boy was; certainly there was reason for fear. The shell bursts were incessant; there was no pause between one and another, and it was

now impossible to distinguish the sound of any guns – it was lost in one colossal storm of sound.

He tried to think: there was this rendezvous . . . he had to get to Berle au Bois . . . he had got to get to the *estaminet* at Berle au Bois . . . he must be at Berle au Bois by 10.15 . . . there he was to meet Asser . . . Asser's tank . . . there he was to meet Asser's tank and to give further orders. He tried to think. He tried to keep up against the battering of thundering pressure of the wind of the explosions against his body. What was he doing here? Why should he be here? Surely, Captain Bion, you ought to know that a metalled road, if that is what it is, is not the place in which to rest. Surely you ought to know better than this. Have you not been told *never* to wait by a landmark, something on which the enemy guns can easily register. Do you not know that shell-fire is always most intense at a point that is well marked on a map? What are you waiting for? The shell-fire is too heavy, I can't move. It's better to wait here. If I try to go forward out of the shelter of this hole, then I shall be blown to bits. I can't move. What are those trees there? He was looking across the way he had come, and there in the distance it seemed, through the lifting fog, that there was this row of poplars, a long straight line of poplars. What could it possibly mean? This long straight line of trees? Obviously it could only be one road. Surely it must be a main road. It was the Amiens–Roye road. But what was it doing there? Why was it in this peculiar position then? The terrible truth came to him: he must have got his compass bearings wrong. He was sure then that some terrible blunder had occurred. If that was the case, this road would be leading straight into the enemy's lines, and he had launched the battalion tanks not towards the enemy, but across the British Front. He compelled Sweeting to look back and see the road. He asked him what it meant. Sweeting agreed that it must be the Amiens– Roye road. It could be nothing else. Nothing on earth could look so like a dead-straight heavy road, lined with these tall poplars as he knew the Amiens–Roye road to be. Pale with fear, Sweeting again buried himself as deep as he could into the shell-hole, clutching closely to Bion's side for further shelter.

Bion was aware that Sweeting was trying to talk to him. Above the sound of the barrage it was impossible to hear any ordinary speech. Bending his ear as close as he could to Sweeting's moving lips, he heard him say, 'Why can't I cough, why can't I cough, sir? What's the matter, sir? Something has happened.'

Bion turned round and looked at Sweeting's side, and there he saw gusts of steam coming from where his left side should be. A shell splinter had torn out the left wall of his chest. There was no lung left there. Leaning back in the shell-hole, Bion began to vomit unrestrainedly, helplessly. Then, somewhat recovered, he saw the boy's lips moving again. His face was deadly pale and beaded with sweat. Bion bent his head so that his ear came as near as possible to Sweeting's mouth.

'Mother, Mother, write to my mother, sir, won't you? You'll remember her address, sir, won't you? 22 Kimberly Avenue, Halifax. Write to my mother – 22 Kimberly Road, Halifax. Mother, Mother, Mother, Mother.'

'Oh, for Christ's sake shut up', shouted Bion, revolted and terrified.

'Write to my mother, sir, you will write to my mother, won't you?'

'Yes, for Christ's sake shut up.'

'Write to my mother, mother, mother. Why can't I cough, sir?' Gusts of steam kept billowing out from his broken side. 'Why can't I cough? You will write to her, sir?' His voice began to grow faint. 'You will write to her, Mother, Mother.'

He fell limply into Bion's arms, now no longer attempting to press himself into the hole. His face, ghastly white, turned up to the sky. The fog swirled as thickly as ever around them. Every moment they seemed to be bathed in showers of bright sparks of red-hot steel from the bursting shells.

Never have I known a bombardment like this, never, never – Mother, Mother, Mother – never have I known a bombardment like this, he thought. I wish he would shut up. I wish he would die. Why can't he die? Surely he can't go on living with a great hole torn in his side like that.

5

Asser elected to take over the driving of his tank himself. He let in the gears and opened up to full throttle, the engine responding with a tremendous roar as the tank moved forward. The enemy

bombardment had not yet opened, and there was only the sound of British guns, formidable though that was. Filled with exultation, he drove as fast as he possibly could.

His driver said, 'This'll make 'em think there are tanks in action all right, sir.'

'Yes, I mean to make them think just that. I hope by the time I've finished with them they'll notice us', said Asser, laughing happily.

Within a few moments the opening German barrage began to hurl clods of earth against the side of the tank.

'This thing wobbles like a jelly', said Asser. 'I used to think tanks were pretty solid affairs till we began to rock about like this.'

By this time it was necessary to talk in shouts if there was to be any communication whatever. The driver caught the infection of excitement from his officer, and this in turn seemed to permeate the crew in a mysterious way, although they could not hear the conversation taking place in the front.

'I think we had better shut down the flaps slightly', said Asser. 'There seems to be just a bit too much stuff flying in here, and although I like to see where I'm going, since I can't see anyway we might just as well have a bit more safety.' The front flaps were pulled down, leaving only a slight slit.

'I think the light is coming through, don't you, sir?' said the driver.

'Where?' said Asser.

'Look, over there, that's the high ground in front, isn't it, sir? It seems to be quite bright above the horizon there.'

'You idiot!" said Asser. 'Don't you realize what that is?'

'No, sir.'

'That's the shining of the lights from behind. Switch them off.'

His driver responded, and at once the supposed dawn disappeared. It was only the reflection on the front flap of the lights of the tank itself.

After a while Asser said, 'I suppose we're going in the right direction. I know we are on the right compass bearing according to our compass, but I don' t suppose for a single moment the thing is all right by this time. Not that I care much where we are going, so long as we're going somewhere. I hope we see some Boche sooner or later.'

A hail of sparks came off the front of the tank. 'That's a bit better', said Asser, 'that's somebody firing at us, I think.'

'Yes, I hope it's the Boche and not our people though, sir.'

'Oh, I don't think it's likely to be our people, do you? I haven't seen any of them.'

'I haven't seen anything of anybody, sir, if it comes to that. I can't see a thing. It seems to me to be just pitch-black.'

At that moment a bullet came in through the front flap and splashed on the tank engine cover behind the driver.

'Pull down that flap a bit more', said Asser. 'I don't think you ought to go shoving your snout out just now.' A moment later, 'Hello, what's this? Tree trunks? Oh no, I see they're men. Must be ours. We've caught up with our front line, I do believe. I think it's all rot this business of our staying behind the infantry. I'm going to go right through them. We can always say they got held up and we had to go in front. After all, what is the good of tooling around here as if we were carrying drinks for the troops? I'm all for having a bit of a scrap if we can, aren't you?'

The driver assented though with not quite the same degree of enthusiasm. As it happened, there was no need for Asser to disobey orders. The men in front, who still seemed to be shadows, began to drop and then one of them waved agitatedly to the tank, pointing in a certain direction. Asser did not have time to notice that the fog must have lifted considerably for him to be able to see any men at all. He drove straight forward and then, turning the tank more or less in the direction the man had indicated, he soon found the machine-gun bullets again spattering off flakes of red-hot sparks from the front of his tank.

'Shut the flaps', he ordered. 'I think we can deal with this all right. All we have to do is to keep on driving so that the sparks keep coming off in front of you and me. Then we're bound to run down the sod sometime.'

'But he may shut up firing', said his driver, 'and then we would go over him and not know anything about it.'

'That's true – better open the flaps slightly. I'll open my flap and keep a look-out. After all, it would be a bit of a fluke if a bullet came through the flap.'

'I've known it happen though, sir', said the driver, and indeed he had.

'Anyhow, nobody can say we've got any damned infantry in front of us now', said Asser. Peering through the chink, the fog suddenly

disappeared, and he found himself in bright sunlight. 'Good God, what's happened now? An absolute transformation scene', he said to his driver. 'You have a look.'

His driver cautiously opened his flap. There was no doubt about it – as far as either of them could see through this restricted slit, they were right out into the open country and on rolling grassland. In front there was a little scrabble of white stuff that looked like chalk.

'That's probably the chap', said Asser. 'It seems to me somebody has been digging something there. It can't just be rabbits.'

They drove hard at the spot and were rewarded by seeing a frightened-looking German machine-gunner putting up his hands, partly unable to stifle his curiosity at seeing a tank at such close range.

'Well, what do we do with him now? We can't stop and take him prisoner. I think we had better wait here just a moment covering him with our guns until the infantry come up.'

'Yes, sir, but all the same we had better keep on the move because they may have a field gun trained on us.'

'You think of everything', said Asser.

'Well sir, I've had plenty of chance to do it. I've been in action now for about a year one way and another. I know most of their little tricks. The only thing I don't know is driving a tank over this kind of country where tanks ought to be used. It's a novelty that unhinges me slightly, sir.'

They had arrived at a small strong point consisting of a few trenches in which there were probably two or three machine-guns, although the gunners were not visible to the members of the crew. Asser passed the word back that they were to keep their guns trained on this patch of torn earth and trenches, and that he was going to circle the tank round it until the infantry were able to come up. It was not many minutes before they saw an infantry sergeant who came with his men and took over the German prisoners who were getting out of their trenches, starting to work their way back with their hands above their heads.

'Now I think we can get on', said Asser. 'I hope this compass is right. I've got to get us onto our line again. We're miles before our time.'

'For God's sake, don't run into any field guns, sir. I had my belly-ful of that at Cambrai. We came across that German major chap – you know, the fellow who knocked out so many tanks. He got our tank,

but he only got it in the tail. Even so, we had to get out pretty quick before the flames spread.'

'Hello, what does this chap want?' said Asser.

An infantry lieutenant had appeared at the flap and was shouting through it. It was extremely difficult to make out what he was saying because of the din of the engine and the very heavy bombardment outside. As last Asser got the message.

'Can't you take your bloody tank away?' said the officer. 'They'll start shelling us to hell here if you don't.'

Asser felt extremely indignant and wanted to reply that this was his battle and he had just taken the position. Instead of that, he said, 'Anywhere else you want us to do some more jobs for you?'

'Yes, lots', said the officer, 'but do get away from here. You know perfectly well that the Boche start shelling anywhere they see a tank, and if they see you sitting here they will know that the position has been lost and they don't bother very much about shelling their own men once they have been taken prisoner. Get over there, about four hundred yards over to the left. I think you'll find there are some shrubs there that seem to be giving a lot of trouble. We're getting fire from that, and several of our chaps have been dropped.'

By this time it was a glorious day. The sun beat down brilliantly on an entire wide plateau that they had reached, a plateau standing over the valley of the Luce in the way that the plateau at the starting-point had done. A half-mile to the left of Asser's tank the Amiens–Roye road stretched out in a straight line, the poplars waving in a stiff breeze. Everywhere else the ground was grass-covered. Far away on the right front was a village marked by wire that stuck like a slender finger into the dark blue of the sky.

'My God, I believe we've got right through', said Asser. 'There's nothing between us and the Rhine, if you ask me.'

At that moment a heavy burst of machine-gun fire with bullets spattering through the louvres in front of Asser and the driver caused him to shut down hurriedly.

'It seems I'm a bit premature', he said. 'I think it must be this damned bit of scrub.'

With that he turned the tank so as to bring the flying sparks off the sides and opened up full throttle.

'Steady on, sir', said his driver. 'There are probably trenches there, and if you go like this you'll find yourself completely ditched in the middle of it.'

'It seems to me', said Asser, 'that you had better command this tank.'

'Sorry, sir.'

'Not at all, I'm afraid you really ought to be running it. You chaps have seen a great deal more action than I have.' Asser felt quite contrite.

He heard his sergeant shouting in his ear, 'There's something wrong with our right-hand gun, sir. I don't know what it is, but we can't get it to fire at all. It doesn't seem to be a normal stoppage.'

'There never is a normal stoppage', said Asser. 'Look through the rear port and see if you can see anything from outside.'

In a moment the sergeant was back again. 'It looks as if the cat has been at it, sir. It's all chewed to ribbons. I never saw anything like it.'

The driver broke in, 'I know what it is, sir. It's the machine-gun fire which has cut the gun off from outside. We had it like that at Cambrai in our tank. When they open up a heavy burst like that, it shears right through the gun cover and cuts it to ribbons.

There was a sudden crash, and Asser and his driver were both thrown violently against the front edge of the tank, receiving cuts on the foreheads which began to bleed profusely.

'Look out, sir', said the driver. Asser at once stopped the engine and reversed. 'Must be a wall or something.'

They opened the flap very cautiously and saw that they had indeed driven full tilt into what appeared to be a piece of masonry. 'Looks like a sort of pillbox to me', said Asser, 'only it's made of brick.'

At point-blank range the 6-pdr guns opened up on the building from which they had backed away a few yards. Before very long, enemy began to appear with their hands above their heads, running towards the advancing infantry to give themselves up.

Asser suddenly felt depressed and frightened. 'My God, I've forgotten the time – I've got to be in Berle au Bois for the rendezvous.' He looked at his watch. No, we are still on time, he thought with relief. 'We had better start off to get over to that church spire there – that's Berle au Bois, I'm absolutely certain.'

'Very easy to see now, sir', said his driver. 'It's not like that fog we've been having – it's not like any of the battles we've had so far. This time you can really see something on the ground that looks what it's supposed to look like on the map.'

By this time the first driblets of the infantry had arrived at the position, and as soon as Asser had satisfied himself that they did not need his help any longer and were firmly in possession of the trench system that lay hidden in the scrub, together with the low pillbox-like structures – into one of which he had just driven the tank – he turned half-right in order to face towards the direction of the church spire.

'I think we had better put in our spare guns here to take the place of those that have been shot away', he said.

'Yes, sir, if we can get them out of the hole. It's very difficult sometimes to withdraw these guns through the ports because of the spattering of the outer casing.'

'Well, anyway, we've got to do it', said Asser, 'because we're changing over into the French sector, and we don't even know if they have started. They were certainly making a hell of a row this morning with their star shells and the rest of it, and I think it's likely they got off the mark at the same time as we did, but we can't afford to take any risks. Better be careful, too, not to shoot down any of the French – they wouldn't like it a bit.'

On the even ground Asser was able to keep the tank in top gear with the engine at full throttle, which meant that it was making very good pace, presenting a frightening spectacle to any of the enemy – and perhaps some of their own troops – who might see its career.

Within a few minutes he passed the enemy gun position. 'My God, look at that!' he said. Scattered around the deep trench work in which the German field guns had been placed were men lying in many different and grotesque positions. Some of them even wore pyjamas, showing the completeness of the surprise that had overwhelmed them with the onset of the British bombardment.

'What do you think of that? It seems that our guns have got their range right from the very start. All the Boche guns are upside-down as far as I can see. None of these men seem to have had a chance.' Asser drove on, feeling somewhat sick in the pit of his stomach.

He was still driving across the advancing front and wondering what sign he should look for to show him when he had actually

reached the line of demarcation between the British and French armies, when he suddenly saw groups of troops sitting about in bunches of two or three. The line seemed to stretch away far to the right, and he saw that they were wearing French uniforms.

'This looks like it', he said. 'You had better put out our signal flag.' This was pushed through the top port of the tank, a red and yellow flag, the pre-arranged signal with which to identify themselves.

The French troops showed a mild interest in the proceedings, and one of the officers walked over to the tank.

'Légion Étrangères, he said through the window.

'Armes Britannique', said Asser, airing his French without any particular embarrassment at the hazards of a foreign language, which he treated with the same cavalier spirit as he treated the enemy. 'Je vais abimer les Boches Berle au Bois', he said in an atrocious accent and pronunciation, but the Frenchman obviously understood the tone of the message and grinned broadly, waving Asser on in the direction of the spire, which rose out of a clump of trees some four hundred yards distant.

'The *estaminet* ought to be just opposite the church', said Asser. 'I wonder if we can get a drink there.'

'If it's anything like the places up at Ypres, sir, you won't even be able to find it.'

'Yes, but you can see the church there already. You're a bit fond of Ypres, aren't you?' said Asser, not without a hint of jealousy and envy in his tone of his driver's knowledge of warfare.

'If there's been any drink there in the last three years', said the driver, 'I bet the Boche will have had it, sir.'

Asser opened up the front flaps fully. The gunfire had died down completely; there was no enemy gunfire at all, nor was there any from the British guns.

'It must be our guns coming up now, sir. The first stage of the advance is over. There's usually a silence while they move to forward positions.'

'Yes, but what has happened to the Boche?'

'It seems to me, sir, that what's happened to the Boche is what we saw in that last gun pit we came to.'

'It looks a bit like it', said Asser.

At this moment a flurry of machine-gun fire came from the woods above the church, and one of the French officers came up to say that

they were being harassed by gunfire from it. As far as he could tell there was no other opposition there. Asser therefore changed his direction, and instead of making for the street that entered the village he was to patrol, he went straight for the small copse surrounding the church. In a moment or two there came out a couple of German machine-gunners with their hands above their heads, and that seemed to be the end of the organized resistance.

Asser then turned and took his tank back to the outskirts of the village, where he found a small mud-track that entered into the main street. He trundled on until he came to the *estaminet*.

'Better keep on the move, I think', he said. 'We've got another five minutes to go before Captain Bion is due here, and then we shall get some orders from him.'

He kept the tank in the shelter of the houses and moved slowly up and down on the look-out for any sign of enemy fire, putting an occasional burst of machine-gun fire through the upper windows of the houses lest there should be snipers or machine-gunners lurking there. Within a short time the advance troops of the French started their forward move again and were penetrating into the outskirts of the village. Within a quarter of an hour the place was in their hands but for the mopping-up operation, in which the men were going through the houses with hand-grenades to see if there was any opposition, and to stifle it. A few grenades were trundled down the steps leading to the cellars below the houses just to make sure that there should be no trouble from that quarter. Asser told his driver to take over.

He and his sergeant then got out of the tank, leaving the driver in charge with a couple of men to man the guns in case of any accident. He gave him orders that he was to take over command of the tank in the event of anything happening to himself or to the sergeant. The two of them then entered the *estaminet* and, with their revolvers ready, decided to wait there for Bion's arrival.

'It hardly seems to be a battle at all, sir', said the driver. 'It looks to me like a complete walkover. I've never seen anything like this before, except possibly at Cambrai, and even then there were lots of Boche about the place who seemed to do a bit more fighting than this. We had a very sticky time up at the corner of Flesquières there. Then afterwards, of course, we had all that trouble at Bourlon Wood. I don't know if they've got any reserves over here, but I suppose they'll be putting in a counter-attack before long.'

Asser, probably through fatigue, was beginning to feel somewhat depressed and disillusioned. He did not at all like the way his first battle, which he thought had been extremely successful and exciting – and with reason – was to occupy such a very unimportant place. Everybody seemed to have had so much experience of real fighting and to be convinced that this was not the real thing.

'You fellows think about nothing but some terrible counter-attack. I don't know why you should think that the whole war was fought before we started this action, and that there's nothing more to be done after what you chaps have already done.'

'No, sir, it isn't like that. I was in the infantry at the Somme; I don't think the army is ever going to be the same after that business. It was terrible going over the top having taken a trench with lots of your pals dead and dying around you, and then to have to stay there night after night, day after day, with the enemy putting in everything he'd got to take you out of it, and as likely as not knocking you out of the trenches back again to the place where you started. In this, at least you get a decent meal and a shave away from the racket of war as soon as the battle has finished.

'Yes, but when do you think the battle finishes? I don't think we've finished with this, do you? Even now we shall have to go forward. I know, for my part, that I shall be very sorry to miss any more. I hope that when Bion comes he'll give us orders to go still further forward. I'm all in favour of our giving them no rest at all. Even if we have broken through, I think we ought to pursue them.'

'I don't think there's anything to pursue, sir', said the driver, not at all relishing the prospect of serving under an officer who seemed to be such a fire-eater.

'There's a frightful stink in this room, sergeant', said Asser after a pause. 'Look and see if you can tell what it is. I think it must be coming from that cupboard there.'

They opened what looked like a cupboard door and found it led into a passage. Inside was a German private, still alive, extremely frightened, with pale face and several days' growth of beard. In his terror he had passed motions into his uniform.

'Oh, my God', said Asser, 'chuck him out, for God's sake. Tell him to go to the Intelligence people. Where is the Intelligence Post?'

'I don't know, sir. I think it will have to be one of these French chaps. We can give him to one of the French privates to take off.'

'Yes, do, at all costs. We can't have this man smelling around the place like that. I was hoping to have my lunch in peace and quiet with a bit of decency about it.'

The abashed Boche was led off and handed over to the first French private the sergeant saw. 'I thought it was probably a dead one, sir', he said on returning.

'I think he is pretty dead. I wonder what has happened to Captain Bion. I hope he hasn't been killed. I can't say that I would like to have been in that barrage walking about outside. I felt the tank was dangerous enough, but at least we'd got some steel around us to keep off the worst of it. He's half an hour overdue already.' He looked impatiently and nervously at his watch. 'Funny thing', he added inconsequently, 'the way these Frenchmen go about with their overcoats on, all buttoned up to the neck on a boiling-hot day like this. You'd think they were at the North Pole. I wonder what has happened to the rest of our tanks. We shall hear, I suppose, when Captain Bion turns up. I wish to God he would buck up. I don't like this at all – we don't know what on earth we're supposed to do here. It's no use asking the French for orders, I can't understand their lingo properly anyway. If this goes on much longer, I shall work my way over to the Canadian Corps front again. I'd better find out from some French officer whether I have his permission to leave. We were supposed to patrol this place in case of any counter-attack, but I can't see a sign of any anywhere.'

The French troops began to move forward again. In front of the village on the enemy side there could be seen long-drawn-out lines in battle order slowly advancing at the rate that had been laid down originally when it was supposed that artillery support would be necessary. In fact, the German resistance was extremely feeble, although some heavy shells were bursting amongst the advancing troops, but since they were in extended order it did not seem that any particular harm was being done.

'Just as you say, sir', said the sergeant. 'It does seem a bit silly for us to be staying here with the froggies going ahead as they are. We shan't be a great deal of use to them.'

'No, but we aren't supposed to continue the advance with them beyond Chatigny, which is only the next village. After that the 1st Battalion should be coming through, but I've always understood from you old veterans that there never are any reserves. Isn't that right?'

'Well, sir', said the sergeant sheepishly, 'certainly we don't seem to have had very many up to the present time.'

'I'm fed up with this, anyway', said Asser. 'We're three quarters of an hour over our time – let's get in and get on with it. We'll go on to Chatigny.'

He assembled his crew again, in the tank this time, leaving the sergeant driver in the driving position, taking over the position of second driver himself. They went through the village and beyond to catch up the advancing line of French troops. His orders were to stay in close support, not to be in advance of them, so that he could go through the advancing lines whenever it seemed to be necessary because the troops were held up. He had almost caught up with them and was reconciled to the idea that the battle was virtually over, when there was a sudden flurry.

'My God, sir', said the driver pointing to a great stir of movement on the outskirts of the village of Chatigny. There was a great deal of gunfire and then, suddenly bursting from the houses of the village and from some supporting orchards, there came on the waves of a German attack.

'Here comes the counter-attack all right, sir. Another Bourlon Wood, perhaps.'

'Oh, shut up, sergeant, for Christ's sake. Get on to the guns – I'm going right through.'

Thereupon, putting on speed, he forced the tank forward through the French front line who were taking such shelter as they could, lying behind folds of ground, hummocks of grass and any cover as presented itself, and opening up a very heavy fire on the advancing German troops. With the appearance of the tanks the enemy forces, about the strength of a couple of battalions, wavered. Asser's crew had a very high reputation for gunfire, having in fact been Bion's previous crew before he had been promoted to the rank of section commander. Their fire was accurate and their spirits in the ascendant after the experiences of the morning. The machine-gun fire which the tank brought to bear made the enemy forces waver, and finally the line dropped. At this point the French began to advance in short rushes, a section at a time, but the Germans kept up a withering fire upon them. Asser decided to go forward and to cruise at speed along the front of the German line wherever he could find it. There was some risk attached to this because the enemy might have a field gun

in support in the approaches to the village, and a direct hit from that at such close range would be the end of the tank. However, whether it was the operation of his tank or some other factor that played its part, it was not possible to say; some of the Germans began to retreat, others began to throw up their hands and come towards the French troops. At this they were greeted by a burst of machine-gun fire from their own troops further over on the right flank of the advancing French. Nevertheless there was nothing to stop them; panic had set in, and many of them gave themselves up calling out, '*Kamerad*', and trying desperately to persuade the French not to shoot.

It was now midday, and the sun blazed down on the entire scene, which was nevertheless becoming confused because of the smoke from fires where shells had hit village houses and ammunition dumps that lay concealed there. Asser drove his tank forward down the main street of the village, having given the crew instructions to be careful with their ammunition, but even so to open fire on every window and door that they could see, and to take no chances whatsoever.

The position was extremely confused: the enemy in the village were fighting desperately; at one point a party led by a young officer came out of a side alley and threw themselves on the tank; some even clung to the projecting barrels of the Lewis guns and attempted to weigh them down so that they would fire into ground; some had succeeded in clambering on to the top of the tank. For a moment the situation looked very black indeed. Luckily for Asser and his crew, the enemy's excitement seemed to be too great for them to use their common sense, and the roof of the tank was providentially cleared by one of the Germans, who released a bomb, which blew him and his companions off the roof.

'We mustn't let that happen again', said Asser. 'Can't we lob a bomb or two out of the ports, the pistol ports?'

This was done, and after a moment or two the attack melted away.

'I think we'd better keep to the middle of this street', said Asser. 'It's evident that this is pretty heavy stuff that's going on here.'

By this time the forward French troops were running for shelter from one house door to another. By degrees the situation became less confused, and Asser turned off down the left, where he had seen a German field-gun firing. He opened fire on this with his 6-pdr before

the enemy was clearly aware of his presence. The gun crew surrendered at the sight of this unexpected opponent.

The sergeant reported that there were only a few more rounds of ammunition left and some twenty 6-pdr shells.

'My God, this is a sticky business', said Asser. 'I don't know what we can do about it. If we start withdrawing now, the French will feel that we have let them down – and of course they haven't any ammunition that fits our guns, so there's nothing much we can do about it. We'd better stop firing and simply rely on bashing into houses and suchlike, and fetching down walls wherever there seems to be any opposition. We'll keep our fire in case we need it. If we get another packet like that lot that came at us down the alley, we shall need everything we've got.'

For the next half-hour Asser's role was uneventful. Bursts of machine-gun fire, signs of confused fighting came from various parts of the village, but ultimately it was subdued and their senior French officer, a colonel, appeared. After a few words with Asser, congratulating him with great courtesy and civility on the help that he had given the French troops, he told him that he would no longer need his services, as according to orders it was now time that he stopped. Asser told him that he had no further orders, that he would be very glad to stay and assist, except that he had no ammunition and thought that he had better proceed to his starting-point. Whether the interpreter was able to make his remarks clear was not altogether certain because the interpreter simply repeated the colonel's statement that he no longer wanted Asser's services and that Asser could therefore proceed to the rallying-point that had been laid down for the company. Asser therefore turned his tank and made towards the Amiens–Roye road at the pre-determined point for the tank rendezvous.

'Just keep to your guns and keep a sharp look-out', he told the tank crew. 'We may still come across some bits and pieces as we go.'

6

Major de Freine, the Company Commander of C Company, had arranged to have his forward H.Q. in the Battalion H.Q. of the

1st ____shire Infantry Battalion, which was in the front line of trenches. He would have these H.Q. entirely to himself as soon as the attack started, because the Battalion H.Q. of the 1st _____shires would move forward at zero hour. He had taken the precaution to move in to some effect. He was a man fond of his creature comforts; in particular, he was extremely fond of port. He had therefore arranged for a case of his favourite drink to be available at the H.Q., together with his mattress.

He made himself comfortable. He was, in this respect at any rate, a good soldier and had no illusions whatsoever about regarding it as desirable to rough it when on active service. No officer who had had any experience of warfare made that mistake, and certainly de Freine was the last man to do it, even had he been an inexperienced officer. When Captain Cook came back to the H.Q., he descended into the depths of the dugout. It must at some time have been a German dugout, for no British infantry every dug so deeply or so securely, making a veritable fortresswork of what the British would ordinarily regard as a mere temporary entrenchment.

De Freine, in his own quiet way, had managed to arrange things previously with the infantry battalion commander, who, of course, would be moving out as soon as zero hour came; it was understood that he would take over possession of the dugout as soon as they left. In the meantime he was disposing himself in a corner, where he had a table and a couple of comfortable chairs, one for himself and one for Captain Cook, his second in command. There were also four runners available who shared the duties of the messengers to various parts of the front, at the same time acting as batmen to the Major. In addition to this, there was his own personal batman, whom he had somehow managed to bring into the army with him – one of his original retainers from his home in Ireland.

He did not believe in showing undue deference to the enemy; neither did he think that it was important to allow them to influence his movements too much. 'Give them an inch and they take an ell' was his motto in this respect, and in one particular way he was adamant. Some creature comforts he knew he would have to surrender; after all, war was an unpleasant business in which you had to bow to the elements of wind and rain, even sometimes to the enemy, but on one point at any rate he would make no concession, and that was

with regard to his port. He was a connoisseur of port; he therefore had with him in the dugout a case of port, and, of course, if he was going to have port, it was essential that he should have good glasses. There were accordingly the appropriate glasses, very fine, beautifully polished and waiting to be used.

He listened to Cook's report approvingly. 'Very good, very good', he murmured gently. 'One of the most important things y'know, Cook, is that the British officer should always be imperturbable. Imperturbability is the hallmark of a gentleman, and certainly of an officer in war.

'Good God', thought Cook, 'he seems to have a good deal on board already. He doesn't often launch out into these moral disquisitions unless he has had something to drink. Anyhow, he has chosen a very good spot to be imperturbable in', as his eyes wandered to the heavy beams and rafters of the dugout, which must have been at least twenty to thirty feet below the surface.

'I take it all our tanks are in position, Cook?'

'Yes, sir', replied Cook, 'I have been along the line, and they are all there. Captain Bion put down the tapes with Captain Carter.'

'Very good', said de Freine rather drowsily. 'I always say it is a very important thing to give your officers plenty of scope for initiative. The consequence is that they learn how to take responsibility, and this young fellow, Bion, who really didn't know very much about things – well, I'm very pleased with him. Honestly I think I'm in some respects at any rate responsible for his development; if he hadn't had me as his Company Commander, I very much doubt whether he would have learnt to take the initiative. Very clever of him, don't you think, Cook, to have got all those compass bearings and to have led the tanks into their proper positions? I'm sure I couldn't do it even if I tried.'

At this point de Freine's eye caught sight of an officer, a mere captain, presumably the adjutant of the outgoing battalion, who was very beribboned. Shading his mouth with his hand, he whispered to Cook, 'Who is that fellow over there, that chap who is so very highly decorated?'

Cook told him that he did not know but assumed that it was either one of the company commanders or the adjutant of the battalion. He added that he looked as if he had seen a good deal of service and

said that it was extraordinary how these infantry fellows managed to last out so long and how much strain of fighting they seemed to be able to stand.

'My dear fellow, I'm sure you are right', said de Freine. 'I don't think I could possibly disagree with you at all – they are extremely gallant fellows. God bless the infantry. Naturally, I never had anything to do with them myself, being in a cavalry regiment, but I think the wretched fellows are really quite, quite splendid. I'm not sure though that I would altogether agree with you. I always used to tell my son, John, that if you see a man with more than two rows of ribbons, you can be tolerably certain he's a waster, and I don't think this fellow is any exception. After all, I never saw such a horrible-looking moustache. He must be a ranker – that's the kind of thing that only sergeant-majors wear, and if you watch him I think you'll notice that he is doing a great deal too much "sir" and "yessir" and "no sir". The hallmark of a British officer, y'know Cook, is im-pert-urb-ab-il-ity, and I don't think he is showing himself to be at all imperturbable, not if he is showing so much deference to his commanding officer. But, y'know, I don't like being too hard on a fellow who is just going to go over the top; I daresay he has got a bit of wind up, don't you?'

Cook, who was wondering whether it was the aristocratic, fox-hunting breeding, or the deep dugout, or the fine port which contributed most to this rare blend of imperturbability valued so highly by de Freine, did not feel that it was necessary for him to reply. Nor did he flatter himself that de Freine would be likely to pay any attention if he did.

Major de Freine was a formidable fighter. He differed, however, from other formidable fighters in that his view of what constituted the enemy was not entirely the conventional one. He regarded the Germans as definitely a pestilential nuisance; he felt that they had broken up the very pleasant life he led, and that their activities on the front were definitely dangerous, if somewhat ill-aimed and indiscriminate in their effects. He was not particularly disturbed by their shell or machine-gun fire. He considered that the people who were supposed to be on his own side were considerably more dangerous, because the personal relationship with himself made it possible for their shafts to be correctly aimed and therefore more damaging to his personality. It was as a result of one such contretemps that he found himself at the present time so very far forward. It was probably that

in this particular action and at this particular hour he was nearer to the enemy than any other company commander in his or any other battalion. He had been at great pains to impress upon the Colonel that he proposed to take up his position at the advance H.Q. at the very earliest hour. The Colonel had not pressed him too much as to the nature of the advance position he proposed to occupy, but applauded his decision as being well in accordance with the traditions of an officer; and one, moreover, who was not merely by courtesy known as a gentleman. He had been adversely criticized by his previous battalion commander: on a trench raid that had to be carried out by a portion of his company, he had not been sufficiently far forward to give the necessary orders to his returning section commanders. This criticism he had taken in very bad part indeed. In fact he had gone so far as to call together his company officers, and with sundry gestures and movements of his head intended to indicate, and did indicate, that he did not propose to let the matter rest; he explained in terms unexceptionable as far as their wording was concerned but open to more criticism when their emotional accompaniment was taken into consideration, that he was sorry to hear that some of his officers had felt that they were insufficiently briefed about the action that had just taken place. He himself thought that he had made everything clear, and, of course, he quite appreciated that none of his officers themselves had been guilty of criticizing him. Still, he added, there were certain senior officers who had seen fit to criticize his conduct of the operation, and of course he fully appreciated that they had a perfect right to do so. These criticisms would, he felt sure – and he looked meaningfully around the room – be properly investigated in due course. He would not say anything more about the matter just then. The officers were dismissed, and for a month calm descended upon the battalion, in particular on C Company commanded by de Freine. However, at the end of that time a senior officer was returned to England – not Major de Freine, but the Colonel of the regiment.

The Colonel of the regiment at that time had been Lieutenant Colonel Burnett, DSO. He was a regular officer from what de Freine regarded as a somewhat obscure line regiment, and in any case the fact that he was a regular officer – what would nowadays be called a career officer – was no recommendation to de Freine, whose family had a long fighting history. They did not regard the profession of arms as one at which people earned a living – not, at any rate, if you

were above the rank of, say, sergeant-major. He accordingly started with a considerable dislike of Colonel Burnett, whom he regarded as potentially an upstart and one of the class who were not likely to appreciate fully the importance and value of the landed aristocracy. He felt that the Colonel's enthusiasm for his battalion was slightly vulgar: he was always meticulously turned out, with brilliantly polished boots, and with an attitude that he was able to strike at will, which was always intended to convey dignity, a sense of his own importance and that of his regiment. All these points were noted by de Freine with a somewhat jaundiced eye. He also felt disinclined to tolerate Colonel Burnett's manners in the mess, regarding them as the outcome of his military training and not springing naturally from the depth of aristocratic breeding.

Somehow – nobody knew quite how – the impression spread through the battalion that there had been a vigorous battle waged off-stage. Nothing was said, the outward calm remained unrippled, and yet it was as if there was something in the air like the percussions of a distant bombardment, indicating that an action of great urgency and vigour was being fought out, perhaps in the precincts of the War Office. It was therefore popularly supposed that the Colonel's departure was directly related to activities on the part of de Freine, whose reputation as a dour fighter was thereby considerably augmented. He was a man who was never rude to any of his officers; no officer ever felt that he was spoken to except in the most friendly manner, and yet no officer ever believed for a single moment that he was on friendly terms with the Major – it would in any case have been a presumption to think anything of the sort.

A formidable weapon in de Freine's armoury was his unerring instinct that enabled him to detect a gentleman at sight. He certainly was supposed to have had plenty of practice in being able to learn what constituted a gentleman. Although he allowed it to be known that he was a simple bachelor looked after by his widowed sister, it also somehow became known – not, of course, through de Freine – that his widowed sister was the Countess of Battersea and that she, while having no political ambitions whatsoever, was always disposed to be friendly and to lay open her small country house for the benefit of sundry more important politicians who might be in need of a week-end's rest or recreation. It was supposed that their interest was predominantly liberal; on the frequent occasions when

the P.M. himself was said to find a haven of rest there with perfect freedom from all political cares, nothing was ever discussed except music and literature, and then only in terms of the most brilliant and yet soothing conversation. However, as befitted a woman who protested that she was ignorant of all politics, she was not averse from arranging that her guests were not entirely of the same complexion. It was possible that the leader of the opposition might occasionally be there, perhaps even that his visit might overlap that of the P.M. In this way her innocence of intrigue in political matters enabled her to play the part of a hostess with an impartiality not open to other more politically engaged people. It was therefore improbable, in the event of a reversal of government, that there would be any reversal of the fortunes of the Countess of Battersea and her friends, amongst whom, of course, was included Major de Freine.

Obviously the popularly supposed action could not have taken place in a milieu such as that. But on the other hand it was equally obvious that many influential people, including some senior army officers, would be unlikely to believe that such a good, modest fellow with such a fine table, with such witty, entertaining companionship, could possibly be guilty of any kind of fault as an officer and a gentleman – certainly not the fault of cowardice. And yet, what possible explanation could there be for the charge brought against him, unless it was believed by Colonel Burnett that de Freine was absent from the proper rendezvous with his section commanders through some failure to do his duty? Such an explanation as that was unthinkable. It became even more unthinkable when Colonel Burnett played his cards so carelessly that it might be supposed he was even hinting at some failure of courage on the part of de Freine in that his presence was lacking at the crucial point in the battle. Colonel Burnett was, after all, only a line officer. Moreover, his substantive rank was that of captain, as became clear when one of the officers of the battalion on leave met him in Whitehall and found to his surprise, just as he was on the verge of saluting, that his late commanding officer occupied a rank junior to himself, he in the meantime having been promoted to the rank of major to another battalion. It was in discussing the aristocracy, of which Major de Freine was an exemplar, that a junior officer once said that it was an axiom of their code of honour that you should never kick a man unless you were quite sure that he was down.

The infantry officers and men were now standing about with equipment in full battle order, restlessly and nervously exchanging comments between themselves and looking for last-moment adjustments more as a method of keeping the tension at bay than because there was any real doubt about the readiness for battle. The Colonel came over to de Freine and told him to make himself at home. He said he half expected they would be thrown back again and would be glad if de Freine would keep the dugout warm, ready for their return when the enemy duly threw them out of their forward positions.

'I know this battle is supposed to be the battle to end all battles', he said caustically, quoting what was now almost an infantry slogan, 'but I dare say it will be very much like all the others, in which case we shall certainly be needing this dugout again. In the meantime I hope you will make yourself cosy.'

'Goodbye, my dear old chap', said de Freine, exactly as if he had known him all his life. 'I shall be following very shortly, as soon as the first wave of our tanks have gone through. I dare say your runners will be able to find me all right and let me know if there is anything you feel we can do.'

De Freine was not speaking the truth, but he was not lying. He felt that it was not possible to explain to infantry officers that he would probably remain stationed in the dugout for most of the battle, almost certainly having no reason to leave it unless the advance had been successful and the time had really come for him to take up his battle positions at the rendezvous, which was not due until 11.30 in the morning. He, for the same reasons, had taken care to hide his port glasses under the cover of some maps during the last feverish stages of the infantry preparations to leave the dugout and to take up their positions lying out in no-man's land in advance of the infantry trench works. It was not easy to detect where his sympathies lay, and sometimes it seemed as if he had none, but at any rate one thing was sure: his subterfuges and evasions were not dictated by any wish to make himself appear better than he was in the eyes of his fellow men.

All the infantry had now departed, except for a corporal and two unfit men, who were left to pack up the remains of the H.Q. kit and hold it in anticipation of orders for their disposal.

'It must be nearly time', said de Freine to Cook.

The latter, pale and tired, studied his watch. 'I make it two more

minutes to go, sir, but I don't suppose we shall hear much of the bombardment from here.'

'No', said de Freine, 'I don't suppose so. Just a rumble at the very most, unless of course we get a direct hit. That may stir things up a bit.'

'The fog must be as thick as ever, sir', said Cook nervously. 'Just look at the stuff coming swirling down these dugout steps even now.'

The dugout had become noticeably more opaque in the last half-hour or so. Cook, still staring at his watch, said, 'Time', and at that moment the earth began to tremble and the rafters of the dugout began to creak in a way reminiscent of an old railway coach travelling on a practically disused branch line.

'It feels as if the whole thing is moving, sir, doesn't it? You might almost think it was in a train journey.'

'Yes, you might, but I don't think we are likely to travel very far even if we get a direct hit. This place is pretty solidly built. I don't believe even a 95 Howitzer would do us much damage. D'you know, Cook, I've half a mind to go and have a look. This sounds to me to be as fierce as anything we ever had in the Somme – and that was pretty big. I don't suppose there will ever be any more barrages of that size, but this can't be far off it.'

'I think I should stay down here if I were you, sir; after all, you never know – we might get through this time, and if the tanks do break through they'll want some orders from you this time, sir. So far, on the H.Q. staff we've had nothing to do in this war, but if we do get into the open country, then I take it we shall have to provide some orders of our own and not wait for brigade and divisional staffs to work. Hello – here comes the enemy barrage.'

A shell must have burst practically at the main entrance to the dugout. It made a peculiarly unreal screaming, whistling sound as the fragments echoed through the valley, and then all was lost in the infernal din of the answering gunfire.

I suppose you're right', said de Freine. 'Anyhow, here we have to stick for the next hour and a half, and pretty useless hulks we are. There's really absolutely nothing whatever we can do. There's no chance we shall find out anything about the tanks until we're able to get out of here and start towards our rendezvous. By that time we may know something from the infantry. Poor fellows: I know what it's like for them. I had it all at the Somme. Still, perhaps when our

tanks go through the first wave they'll feel a bit better. At Cambrai they were certainly very grateful indeed; the infantry even said they would far rather be infantry than be inside our tanks.'

'And I think they're about right, sir. In our battalion we have so far had two people out of every three who went over the top killed in every action. I don't think you can do worse than that in infantry.'

'They are a good lot of fellows', said de Freine sentimentally, and then, 'Have some more port.'

7

Inside the tank, the noise of the 75-hp Ricardo engine was so deafening that it was practically impossible even to hear the shell bursts unless they were very near indeed, almost hitting the tank. On these occasions the danger communicated itself more by the wobbling of the walls of the tank, which suddenly seemed to lose all their rigidity and become flexible, than the actual noise of the explosion; in the din it was impossible to communicate except by shrieking the orders.

Hauser beckoned his sergeant towards him. 'Sergeant', he yelled, 'tell those bloody gunners to keep their fingers off the triggers – I can't have these damned idiots firing down on our own men. Remember, we don't get through the first wave of infantry until the green line, and that's not due for another half-hour.'

He choked and spluttered in the fog which swirled through the slightly open front flaps, now mingled with the smell of bursting cordite. Shrieking into the ear of his driver, he asked him if he could see the oil pressure gauges. 'I think that knock is worse than ever – it won't be long before the big end goes.'

Throughout the advance to the battle positions, Hauser's tank had been giving trouble, and it was feared that there was something wrong with the timing. The defect had apparently been remedied, and yet the knock persisted. They thought it might be due to excessive carbonization, but at the same time it was a disquieting symptom.

'I hope to God the damned thing doesn't choose this moment to conk out', said Hauser to his driver. 'Keep your eye on the oil pressure and let me know if anything odd happens. I'm not going to stay in this damned rat trap if it's going to get hit. The moment this thing

stops, out we all get with our machine-guns. He beckoned to Sergeant Wilkins again to come forward. 'Sergeant, see to it that all the men are fully armed if I tell them to get out of the tank. We'll go forward as infantry. You can stay behind here with somebody, and if you feel like it you can light the dynamite charge.'

The dynamite charge was a fad of Hauser's; it had become an obsession. To him it was the latest sign of the idiocy of the Staff. The reason for it lay in the secrecy now surrounding the new tanks. It was supposed that they consisted of all the latest improvements in armour plate, in engine power and transmission. It had therefore been decreed that no tank was ever to be allowed to fall into enemy hands. This was, in any case, a standing order, but now in addition to everything else they had been told to carry a packet of dynamite to be exploded in the event of the tank being abandoned in the middle of an enemy position. Hauser caustically drew attention to the fact that they had been very careful to order the removal of the petrol feed system to minimize the risk of fire, but had not thought that it might be rather dangerous to carry dynamite, which could be detonated at any moment in place of the relatively harmless petrol.

The men were in battle order, and owing to the great heat inside the tank the sweat was streaming down their faces. Owing to the dense fog Hauser steered by compass bearing; at the same time, he had to keep the lights on inside so as to study the pressure gauges. The men's faces showed the pallor of weariness, which was not dissipated even by the excitement of battle; the skin glistened yellow in the murk of the dark shadows and the grey steelwork of the engine coping and the gun covers.

'It should be dawn now', said the driver.

'Yes, dawn on a lovely summer day, Corporal. Wouldn't you like to be going off on your bank holiday trip? It must be a bank holiday about now – not that I have the slightest idea what day of the week it is.'

A shell burst in the immediate front of the tank and forced showers of mud through the front flaps. Hauser spluttered and swore and wiped the blood off his face.

'Are you hurt, sir?' asked his corporal.

'No, dammit, not a bit – only some scratches. I've got this filthy mud all over me.' He had only received a flesh wound just below his right eye, but it was enough to make him order the flaps to be shut

entirely. 'We can't have that kind of thing going on – we'll just have to go on with them shut. It doesn't make any difference – we can't see a thing anyway. Hello, hasn't the knock stopped?'

The corporal listened for a moment or two and then agreed that he could no longer hear it.

'Must have been that last shell', said Hauser. 'It seems to have done the tank a lot of good.'

'I think we're climbing, sir.'

'Well, it's about time we were', said Hauser. 'This is about the stage when we should be getting up onto the beginnings of the plateau on the other side of the Luce. Ought to open this flap slightly, because it's time we got to the green line, and we don't want to be running down any of our own infantry chaps.'

'Shelling is less intense too, sir.'

'Yes, but for God's sake don't say so or we'll get one whack on the roof. Hello – I believe the fog has cleared a bit, hasn't it?'

'Yes, sir, I think it has – it seems to be clearing very fast indeed. Look, sir, it's all clear now!' Sure enough, the tank was right out into the open.

There was no sign of the infantry for a moment or two, nothing but the blinding sun beating down on what appeared to be rolling grassland, and far away on the left was the stretch of the Amiens–Roye road with the poplars pointing the way.

'There go the infantry', said the driver, pointing to a small section of some twenty or thirty men who were making advance on his immediate right flank.

'Ah, yes', said Hauser, 'now we have to go right through them. I think I see one of their sergeants waving us on. Probably means nothing at all, except that he's bucked and excited to see us, but still I think we'll go through all the same. Just head for the left corner of that wood in front of you.' Hauser was pointing out a clump of trees that lay between him and the Amiens–Roye road and about 600 yards to his front. 'I wonder what happened to Greenwood Copse. We must have gone round the edge of it by this time; we were supposed to skirt past it. I can't say I remember coming under any machine-gun fire.'

'Perhaps our artillery shut 'em up after all, sir.'

'I suppose it's just possible. Anyway, I can't say I mind so long as we didn't get anything from them. I think we had better start

opening fire on that wood when we get within a hundred yards or so. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if they hadn't got a field gun trained on us. If so, driver, it'll get right between us – the worst of sitting up in front like you and I do is that if anything is coming through the front, we're sure to get it. It makes me feel quite hollow inside merely to think about it. Do you think it will take top gear, Corporal?'

'It might, sir, but we're still on a bit of a slope.'

'Well, try it.' The driver put the tank into top gear. 'Now open up the throttle, full speed – yes, that's all right. We ought not to do this, really, you know. We're going miles in front of schedule. I don't know what we shall catch at this rate. But I'm fed up with waiting about in the middle of a thick fog without being able to tell what's going on, so we may as well pretend we're having a battle, if nothing else.'

'There are some Jerries coming in to surrender, sir.' He pointed over to the right flank, where about half a dozen grey-clad troops were coming, all with their hands held high above their heads.

'They look extraordinarily like ducks waddling along like that. I must say I wouldn't be sorry to see them doubling all the way to Berlin. Serve the bastards right. I've a jolly good mind to give them a burst of machine-gun fire, it would hurry them on a bit.' He beckoned Sergeant Wilkins to him. 'Sergeant, have a look through the back gun port and see if you can tell what our infantry are up to. The sergeant came back in a moment to say they were following up fast. 'Well, the main thing is that they should be here', said Hauser, 'then there's a sporting chance they will get these damned enemy fellows under cover as quickly as possible, otherwise we can't afford to let them get through and set up a machine-gun on the other side.'

'I don't think they look very much like fighting, if you ask me, sir – not that lot any way, they're going too fast.'

The sun was blazing down out of a clear sky. It looked as if there could never have been a fog or a mist anywhere on such a magnificent day. The whole countryside lay spread out in front of them like a map.

'It doesn't seem to be at all like a battle', said Hauser, 'not the kind of thing I'm used to. I remember once seeing in a pub in Norfolk a lot of pictures – of the South African war, I think. Anyhow, there were a whole lot of Redcoats in a decent line, and a whole lot of fuzzy wuzzies in a ragged line; at one point there was even a man who had been hurt. It gave me quite a shock. Still, I don't think it does to get

too confident. Ask that damned fool Smith what the hell he thinks he's firing at, will you?' Hauser indicated his right-hand Lewis gunner who was blazing off a burst.

The reply came that he was aiming at a patch of chalk, which he suspected of harbouring a machine-gun.

'Oh, well, if it pleases him, I suppose it does no harm', said Hauser, and let him continue his short bursts. 'At the same time, we must remember, we may need some of this ammunition later on.' My God, he said suddenly to himself, I'm tired, tired, absolutely worn out. I'm fed up with the whole goddamn thing.

It was curious how suddenly the reaction set in; from one moment to the next, the elation changed to steady depression. It seemed so futile to be out in the open with such a complete and absolute breakthrough as this appeared to be. It was either a gigantic trap, or else it was The Victory for which everybody had been hoping. If so, The Victory was singularly unexciting.

'Sergeant Wilkins says, sir, that he can't see Mr Cartwright's tank anywhere. Oh, yes, I think he just says that he sees a tank going towards Berle au Bois, sir. That must be Mr Asser's tank. I don't know what has happened to Mr Greene. He ought to be up on our left somewhere, but he isn't in sight.'

'Better ask Sergeant Wilkins to keep a look-out for anybody else – there may be some of the tanks of B Company visible up beyond the Amiens–Roye road.'

Hauser now changed place with his driver and told him to start opening fire on the corner of the wood. He also gave orders to his 6-pdr gunners to open fire in the same direction together with the two flanking Lewis guns.

'We may just as well pretend we are dangerous', he said, 'otherwise they'll get their heads up and think they might as well take a shot at us. I bet there's some devil in there with a gun of some kind. It hardly seems possible they'd leave a wood like that empty.'

'Perhaps, sir, they think it's a bad place to be because it would be marked on the map and the guns would come down on it. They may expect our gunners to put their barrage down onto a corner like that.'

'They would certainly be right if it was the Greenwood Copse – they said they were doing the same sort of thing to all these woods where there might be any enemy positions, but I don't remember seeing much just here on the map except a gun position. Of course it's the

gun position that's so hellish dangerous for us. If they start firing over open sights, goodbye to you and me, Corporal.'

This time it was evident that there was no more gun-fire. The British guns were silent, and no enemy shells were falling. Only in the sky were there a few bursts of white from the enemy anti-aircraft guns still trained on any reconnaissance planes that came over.

Hauser reached the wood without casualty and then proceeded cautiously across its front, still firing into the shrubs in case they should conceal any enemy. When he came up towards the left flank, he saw a couple of Germans looking at him curiously, standing up in the open. He gave them a burst with his Lewis gun, and they promptly put up their hands and began to run towards him. By this time the infantry had also come up with the tanks and had begun mopping-up operations – that is to say they were throwing the odd grenade down into any small trench or dugout where Germans might be sheltering. It appeared, however, that the wood was not fortified. Hauser looked at his watch and said it was three-quarters of an hour before he was due to report at the rendezvous where he should meet Major de Freine and get fresh orders as to what was to be done.

'It's an extraordinary thing', he said, 'but it really does look as if this time we had broken through. Must be some kind of fluke, but I suppose we had better go and pretend to get fresh orders to "exploit the situation", as they put it.'

'It's not time yet, sir', said the corporal driver.

Hauser glanced at his watch again. 'My God, nor it is. There's still another forty minutes to go. This means we shall have to go on patrolling up and down here. What I would like to do would be to stop the tank and have a jolly good look round. Look at all these fellows loafing around here – it's the infantry. They don't seem to have to take cover, and there isn't a shot of any kind being fired. I'd like to get some fresh air instead of sticking in this thing. But we can't leave the tank stationary anywhere in case the enemy have an anti-tank gun and register a direct hit on us. I don't want to get court-martialled.'

The sun still blazed down from an intense blue sky. On the left was the Amiens–Roye road, on the right and in front lay the tiny hamlet of Berle au Bois with the spire sticking up from amidst the trees, just as Asser had seen it on his approach. In front was the small copse that Hauser had been patrolling until the infantry came up and took it. Beyond that, as far as the eye could see, it seemed to be flat rolling

country, with very few obstacles of any sort, quite untouched by shell-fire and with every appearance of being ideal countryside for the use of tanks – so much so that at a later stage even the cavalry found the temptation for action irresistible and were duly launched, with appropriately disastrous consequences. For the time being, however, all was peaceful and quiet. The men were smoking cigarettes, obviously relieved to be able to walk about in the open without thought or care. Nevertheless, anxiety gnawed at Hauser's heart. He had not enough experience to know what to do. In this respect he was typical of all the officers in the British Army at this time. They had no experience whatsoever of open warfare, and at the same time found themselves now in a situation that was either a prelude to a disastrous counter-blow by the enemy, or was precisely the open warfare for which everybody had longed, for which everybody had planned, but for which nobody had apparently been trained.

Hauser's feelings were expressed by the thought that this was a moment of extreme danger. The British guns were moving up into position; this could always be told by the lull, there was nothing new about that; all troops were familiar with it in all previous battles where there had been any kind of British advance. The enemy guns were for the time being silent; whether because they were pulling back into new positions, or because they had been put out of action like the battery that Asser had come across, it was impossible to determine. But it was at precisely such moments that the enemy was likely to launch his most dangerous counter-attacks in the days of trench warfare, when, no sooner had a position been taken and before the infantry could consolidate it, the enemy launched an attack. The British were occupying trenches that were facing the wrong way and were therefore peculiarly susceptible to attack from the enemy.

Even Hauser's pessimism and gloom were not proof against the wonderful weather that had followed the fog-bound morning. Oh, blast the blue skies, he thought. I wish somebody would go and tell these infantry that there's a war on. I'm sure this is an extremely dangerous moment. 'Corporal, I think we had better take our tank about a hundred yards in front of the infantry and patrol up and down there slowly. So long as we keep going in second gear, it ought to be all right; I don't think the enemy would find it easy to hit us. We shan't be a sitting target, and at the same time it will help to keep down any

odd Boche machine-gunner who might still be about the place. If we don't go any further than a hundred yards in front of the infantry, the sight of them will also persuade the enemy gunners not to open fire on us. Anyhow, I can't think of any other damned thing to do, so we might just as well do that. What the hell's the matter with you, Rice?' he suddenly interjected.

'I've got the itch, sir.'

'Well, keep the itch to yourself. It's your damned lice coming out to enjoy the fine day. Why didn't you shove your shirt into some petrol before we started? Nobody else has them, have they?' The rest of the crew looked somewhat shame-faced – they were not going to admit to lice at that moment at any rate. 'And what the devil do you mean by leaving your gun anyway?' said Hauser suddenly, waking up to the fact that Rice had, in his attempts to rid himself of the nuisance of the lice, dropped the handle of the Lewis gun. 'You chaps don't seem to know there's a war on.'

Truth to tell, the crew were worn out. They had had hardly any sleep at all for some four days, and the excitement and exhaustion of the morning, the great anxiety of the fog and the opening stages of the battle had been intensified by the extreme heat in the tank and the debilitation induced by the loss of fluid through sweating. It was possible that the carbon-monoxide fumes had also had their effect: in some tanks that had been carrying infantry forward, the infantry had had to be put out of the tank after twenty minutes of action because they were in a fainting condition; it had previously always been believed that it was not possible to become acclimatized to carbon monoxide, but this proved conclusively that the tank crews were able to do so and could stand anything up to seventeen hours of battle continuously in that poison-laid atmosphere. But the effects nevertheless told.

This sunny day, this lovely country, blast it, makes it impossible for anybody to believe this is a war, thought Hauser. I can't really blame these men. The only thing I can do is to blast them and keep them up to scratch. Nobody's going to believe me when I say there's a war on when everything all round us keeps telling them the war is over. Surely we ought to be *doing* something; surely there ought to be some sort of attempt to push further into the enemy territory. Why are we hanging about here on this so-called 'blue line' – our final front? If there was any kind of flexibility about our schemes we should

be chasing the enemy. They told us in our operation orders that we should do this, but they said the same sort of thing at Ypres, where anybody who had had a look at the country could see perfectly well that you could chase nobody in that, not unless you were a bird. Now, here, where we have the ideal conditions, nobody thinks of translating the operation orders into terms of actual reality, so we hang about. I can't go forward – if I do, I'll certainly run into a field gun, and that'll be the end of the tank, and I shall be deservedly blamed – not that I mind much – for having risked the tank. What I ought to do is to go forward with the infantry, but who's going to tell the infantry to go forward? There's nobody to do it.

Sergeant Wilkins interrupted his reverie. 'There's something going on just behind us, sir. I think we ought to go back and look. It looks as if the infantry are under fire.'

Hauser turned the tank towards the right flank of the advance. Some infantry were lying, opening fire at a small scratch of chalk that lay exposed bare of green turf. Hauser directed the tank against this patch, and then scrambling towards the back opened the rear door in the hope of being able to talk to an infantryman. A sergeant came up and said they were under fire from a sniper probably located in precisely this patch. Hauser drove towards the patch, but the sight of the advancing tank must have been too much for the German; he came out with his hands above his head, looking extremely frightened and sheepish. The infantry then came up and took him prisoner.

False alarm, thought Hauser, but anyway the infantry ought to be doing this sort of thing – I hope it puts them on their toes and makes them realize there's still something going on. But I'm damned if I can see where a counter-attack can come from. There seems to be nothing at all here that could hide any enemy concentration. The only possible place is Berle au Bois, and we've seen Asser's tank go in there. The French troops must be up there too, judging by that scattered line; they're standing around in groups, so I think their front line must be in advance of that.

'Look, sir', said Sergeant Wilkins, 'The French have got a first line in front of those men over there – I think those are the support troops.'

'Then we'll simply do what I said first: get in front of our infantry and patrol slowly up and down in second gear; there's nothing more we can do. How much more time have we got?'

'Still half an hour, sir.'

'My God, I never knew anything like time in a battle. You feel it's about six o'clock in the evening, and you find it's half past ten in the morning. Then suddenly, when you've got used to the idea that time stands still, it's so desperately late that you discover you've missed a rendezvous you ought to have been keeping.'

At last it was time. Hauser turned the tank towards the wood where the rendezvous was to take place, then suddenly he changed his mind.

'Sergeant Wilkins, you take over command of the tank. I think it's ruddy silly they give orders for all our company tanks to concentrate in this one spot. We don't know what enemy guns are about, and we'd make an absolute sitting target if we had the whole bunch of our twelve tanks here and no protection against anti-tank fire. You keep patrolling this, and I shall go over to the rendezvous with Gunner Smith. If you feel things are getting very tricky, then come over to the wood with the tank.'

Hauser and his gunner went on foot over to the extreme left of the section front that had been appointed as the rendezvous for the company officers to receive further orders from Major de Freine. Hauser found to his surprise that the Colonel was there with his assistant adjutant, but otherwise was alone. Major de Freine had not arrived, nor had any of the other tank commanders, including Captain Bion. The Colonel asked Hauser why he was on foot, and he explained his reasons.

The Colonel turned away, thinking that Hauser was one of the few officers who had any real sense. He reflected: I believe this chap had more soldiering qualities than the rest of us put together. I myself ought to have thought of this, or at least one of the company commanders should. It's clear that in any company rendezvous we shouldn't have all the tanks together.

He turned to Hauser. 'Well, what sort of battle have you had? Any casualties?'

'No, sir, nothing at all. It's been as quiet as the grave. We've had nothing whatever to do. The first part of it was pretty dull – we couldn't see a thing – and the last part, when we could see everything, there was nothing to see, nothing but this damned scenery.'

'What's wrong with the scenery?'

'It just puts all these chaps to sleep, sir. Just look at them hanging around the place – the infantry as well. Anybody would think there

are no enemy about, and yet they told us before this battle started that the enemy were concentrating for an attack on our position. It stands to reason there must be heavy concentrations *somewhere*. In this kind of weather and in this kind of country, with our troops used to nothing but the mud of Ypres and places of that kind, they seem to think the war's all over and it's just a bank holiday. They might be out on Hampstead Heath, the way they're going on.'

The Colonel looked at his watch. 'There's still a few minutes to go, but I can't understand why somebody else hadn't turned up by this time. I suppose you haven't seen Major de Freine or anyone else, have you?'

'No, sir, I haven't. The only person I've seen was probably Mr Asser, whose tank was over on the far right. He was last seen by Sergeant Wilkins driving for Berle au Bois.'

'Well, we had better just sit down and wait, then.'

'Yes, sir.' Hauser ordered Gunner Smith to act as sentry and to take up his rifle, keeping a sharp look-out while he and the Colonel lay on the grass and waited for the others to come up.

8

A fresh breeze blew, the fog disappeared, the sun beat down and the gun-fire stopped. Bion lay huddled in the shell-hole with the moaning boy beneath the shelter of his side. The waving poplars of the Amiens–Roye road stood revealed as tall grasses on the opposite side of the trackway in the brilliant, clear light. The transformation was so complete that the scene appeared to be utterly unrelated to the black night that had preceded it. Everything was quiet except for the moans that had now become more inarticulate. Occasionally he could distinguish the word, 'Mother', but that was all.

A party of stretcher-bearers came down the road with some wounded. He called to them, 'Will you take this man?'

'No, sir', came the reply, 'we haven't any stretchers left. Can he walk?'

'I don't suppose he can walk at all', said Bion, but one of them came over and, lifting Sweeting up, it appeared that some fresh reserves of strength were released in a body that seemed to be too

torn and broken even to maintain life. Before he could realize what was happening, Sweeting, supported by two stretcher-bearers, was tottering down the road in the train of the small RAMC party towards the casualty station.

Well, thank God he's gone, thought Bion, filled with passionate hatred of himself for his hatred of the wounded man.

Time to go, he said to himself as he stretched out of his cramped position. Even the very grasses seemed to scare the life out of him. He worked his way over to the left flank. He thought, it's now far too late to make the rendezvous with Asser at the *estaminet* at Berle au Bois. I may just as well find out what has happened to Greene's tank, and Hauser's.

In the distance, towards the Amiens–Roye road, he saw a stationary tank; there was now apparently no fighting going on at all. The sun beat down, the trees waved gently in the stiff breeze. Walking across the springy turf without seeing any sign even of infantry, he felt totally lonely and lost. As he approached the tank, he was glad to see that there was somebody moving, and then as he came nearer he saw that the left tank track had been blown back and thrown right over the tail of the tank – obviously a direct hit.

Greene came up to him and said they had had no luck at all; they had got just as far as this a little while before the fog cleared, when the tank received a direct hit on the nose to the left.

'Anybody hurt?' asked Bion.

'No, except for Gunner Harrison – he's gone nuts.'

'Oh, what happened to him?'

'Well, I got him out of the tank after a while, but about ten minutes ago some of the Germans started coming back with their hands up, and he immediately got up and began blazing off at them with his revolver, yelling something about them being a lot of bloody, murderous bastards who had killed his brother. It put the wind up us, I can tell you. I had to tackle him in the end – I thought I was going to get a shot in my innards. However, we got him down in the end. He was a frightful sight, frothing at the mouth. I thought we were sure to get into very great trouble with him bumping off unarmed prisoners – almost certainly a first-rate scandal. There was no fighting going on, not a soul in sight except these poor devils.'

'What are you doing about your tank?' asked Bion.

'There's nothing much we can do.'

'Have you tried lifting the track back onto the sprocket and starting the engine? That might help to drag it back over the top.'

'No good at all, I'm afraid, sir. Even if we did that, I don't think we could do any more because these plates at the end here – ', he walked Bion back towards the broken end of the tank track, 'are all buckled and destroyed, and I think two of them are missing; I don't know where they've got to.'

'In that case you had better send a runner back to Company H.Q. to see if you can get hold of Williams.' Williams was the engineer officer whose job it was to take on heavy-duty work of this kind. 'Where are your crew?'

'I've got 'em over there in that shell-hole. I thought, just to be on the safe side, we'd better get our Lewis guns out and turn that into something of a strong point.'

'Quite right. I don't think there's likely to be any need for it, but at the same time it's just as well to take the ordinary precautions. What the hell's this – ?' Bion broke off and turned suddenly at the feel of a tug at his sleeve.

Kneeling on the ground by his side was a German soldier who had crept up unobserved. Tears were streaming from his eyes. '*Kamerad kaput, Kamerad kaput*', he wailed. He insisted on trying to drag Bion by his sleeve to a nearby dugout, and for some reason Bion did not resist but allowed himself to be pulled in that direction. Into this small hole he was taken by the German, who pointed out to him another soldier, obviously dead, whose body was in the most fantastic position with his legs thrown back over his shoulders. The German insisted that Bion should put his hand on his heart. This he did in a perfunctory manner and shook his head indicating that the man was dead, which was in any case quite obvious. At this the German burst out into renewed floods of tears.

'Sir', said Greene, 'you shouldn't be in here; you don't know what sort of booby-trap these people might have got ready for you. I wouldn't trust the Boche, not even if he was dead. The only thing to do with him is to put another burst of Lewis gun-fire into him.' Greene was obviously very disturbed.

Bion saw the force of his argument. Feeling rather shamefaced, he straightened himself up and waved to the German to get back to the rear and surrender himself.

'Did you ever see such chaps as these, sir?' said Greene. 'There they are, a lot of bloody murderers if ever you came across any. They fight like hell; they haven't the slightest hesitation in sniping or shooting us down at any point; they're as treacherous as you damn well choose, and yet they burst into floods of tears when one of them is knocked out.'

'I wonder what the devil it's got to do with him, anyhow', said Bion. 'Is it his brother, or something of the sort?'

'Not a bit', said Greene, 'much more likely to be his tart, I should think. Anyway, can you beat it? One minute he's blazing away at our troops with his guns, the next he thinks he can grab hold of an officer and get him to come and sentimentalize with him over one of his dead pals. They're a treacherous lot of swine, sir. I don't think you should ever pay any attention to them like that. It's not our job, anyway.'

'When you have fixed up with Captain Williams about the tank, you had better leave it in charge of Sergeant Williams and the crew, and come on yourself to the rendezvous. We shall need you there to let you know what the next orders are. Maybe we shall be able to find another tank for you.'

Greene saluted, and Bion went off on his own to the rendezvous. He was angry with himself in that the episode had occurred in the presence of Greene; he was the last officer with whom he wished to discuss the ethics of war.

I don't believe the Boche are any different from ourselves, he thought. They go through the same thing, they live in the same danger, the same vile conditions and the same bloody awful staff, if only we knew it. Something has gone wrong with this war; it seems that all the decent people are fighting and killing each other, and all the wasters and war profiteers are sitting at home in Germany or England making the best of a very bad job – and it isn't a bad best from their point of view either – plenty of money, plenty of cars, safety, comfort, but here . . . here . . . Greene is right; it's not my job to be handing round buns and cups of hot tea. I'm supposed to be at the front, fighting a war – and now there's that damned rendezvous at Berle au Bois. Why didn't I make it? If it's all a matter of high ideals, why wasn't I there? What am I going to say about that? Held up in the barrage. Yes, but what the hell holds you up in the barrage? You

can't get held up in a barrage. The only way you can get held up in a barrage is to be blown to smithereens or have the side ripped out of you by a shell splinter, like Sweeting.

Bion saw the body of an infantryman lying just to his right with his rifle beside him. That reminds me, he thought, and went over to the man and collected his ammunition and rifle. These revolvers are no earthly use. It struck him as queer that this was the first dead soldier he had seen that day. Usually he relied on being able to pick up a rifle very quickly right at the beginning of an action, since he found, as did most officers, that a revolver was more of a danger to the user than it was to the enemy; a rifle, on the other hand, was a very valuable weapon. He stuffed a couple of spare clips of cartridges into his pocket and went on.

In the meantime Greene also had his own thoughts. After sending a runner to Captain Williams to ask for his help, he turned to the German prisoner. 'Come on, Fritzi, time you did some work. It'll cheer you up.' He told the corporal to give him a grease gun and show him how to set about greasing the tank tracks. For his part, the German had settled down quite cheerfully and gladly to find that he was not going to be ill-treated in any way. He seemed to be a simple-minded man, quite content and happy provided he was given a job he could understand and had all responsibility taken from his shoulders by a senior.

'Haben Sie Schutzengrabenvernichtungsautomobil gesehen?' said Greene, airing his German. The prisoner looked up astonished by this amazing hybrid that Greene had picked up from some magazine purporting to show how ludicrous, how truly comic the Germans were and what a fantastic language they spoke.

'*Ja, ja*', he said, 'plenty of tanks, plenty of tanks', and went on with his polishing and greasing.

'I could do with a pint, Sergeant', Greene said, looking at the damage to the nose of the tank where the shell had shattered the track. 'It's just as well it got it right there – another inch or two and we should all have been for it. Doesn't do to think about these things too much, you know, Sergeant. Look at that poor chap, Gunner Harrison.'

'He was a very good man, sir', said the sergeant who rather resented the presence of Greene as a new officer. He had been with the crew or with the battalion since the arrival at Le Havre; to him the

casualties were real people, whereas to Greene they were not much more than names.

'I suppose they'll call it shell-shock', said Greene, 'though I'm not at all sure that he hadn't got the right idea; it's no good being sentimental about these sods. I've lost a couple of brothers in this war, and I think we might just as well teach 'em what war is if they mean to fight us, that it's dangerous to attack our country again. Still – it's an absolutely marvellous day, and I can think of plenty of better things to do than to be waiting here, humbugging around this tank. But we don't know if the old Boche is finished yet. They could get back here quite easily; if they've got all these troops massed for an attack, they ought to be able to mount a counter-attack shortly. It seems as if our guns are moving up now, this is about the time they usually set about us. What I could do with, Sergeant, is a little bit more peacetime soldiering.'

'Yes, sir', agreed the sergeant, 'that's the thing – parades, a lot of them, hard work, knock off at twelve, and the rest of your day's your own, nothing at all to do. That's my idea of war, not this kind of thing.'

Greene ruminated, 'I don't think much of these people who go in for religion and philosophy and that kind of thing. It seems to me they miss a great deal of what is actually happening. Look at today – can you beat it? Marvellous sun beating down, lovely green trees, even green grass everywhere. If I were at the seaside now, I'd be having a fine time – I wouldn't even mind being down at Brighton, though mind you, that's not my idea of a good spot. I like to be somewhere lonely in the country or at some small seaside place, a village. You can have plenty of fun in a place like that; there are worse things, Sergeant, than sitting in a nice snug little pub knocking back a pint of bitter on a hot day and having a few words with the landlady, or maybe her daughter.'

When Greene spoke of philosophers and religious people, Bion was not very far from his mind. He felt no sympathy at all with people of that type and made no secret of it – at any rate to himself in the privacy of his own thoughts.

'I can't say I've ever held with parsons and such-like', he continued to his sergeant. 'My wife – and she's a pretty shrewd judge of character – says whenever she sees one of them parson blokes, "There

goes one of them sly, preaching buggers" – a very good description, don't you think, Sergeant?' He looked at his watch. 'Tell Haley and Cooper to get out there with their Lewis gun, right over there, just by that shell-hole about fifty yards to the right of the road. We may as well have sentries posted. They can keep a look-out and see if there is any sign of enemy counter-attack. I can't see that we'll be caught by surprise because our front lines are now miles away, but still, it's all part of the book, isn't it?'

The sergeant detailed the two men for the job and returned to Greene, who continued, 'We've got to stand up for decency and all that; we can't allow people like these Fritzis to overrun the world – I daresay they'd make a pretty mess of our country if they ever got inside it.'

'I don't know, sir', said the sergeant. 'Sometimes I wonder – would it make any difference to us? There are always people who have to govern us, and I don't think the German authorities would be any worse for simple people like me and my family and kids than the ordinary policeman and government nowadays. Sometimes the governments we get are less our friends than our enemies anyway. They make a good thing out of it, but if we do anything against the law, laws made by the wealthy, then we're for it. We'd be no worse off under the Germans.'

'Don't you believe a word of it, Sergeant. D'you think you'd be able to sit in your little pub, or go off to watch your local football match, or go out with your wife, or pick up a pretty girl when- ever you felt like it? Not a bit of it. The people swaggering around would be the Fritzis, like this chap here, in smart German uniforms. They'd be the ones who had the pick of the girls; you wouldn't catch any girl going out with a mere slave of the Germans – and that's what you'd be by that time.'

'I don't suppose we'd starve, sir.'

'I daresay not, but you'd have to work hard: you'd be going off to your factory shifts, and there'd be no trade unions or anything of that kind. Your foremen would be people working with the Germans, or they'd be German themselves; all the cushy jobs, all the plums would go to the Germans. If you saw a fine car go by, there'd be a German in it; if you saw a pretty girl well dressed, out with a man, she'd be with a German. You'd soon get fed up with a position of that kind. At present you can have your grouse, but you

wouldn't be able to do it then, not unless you wanted to be a member of some kind of revolutionary movement – and that wouldn't be a comfortable life.'

He broke off suddenly. 'Hello, what's going on up there?' He pointed into the intense blue of the sky.

'Looks as if the ack-ack have got another of their planes', said the sergeant. 'Yes, I think it is, sir, I think it's a wing coming down, yes, yes, that's it, sir, they've hit one of the Boche planes.'

'What makes you think it's a Boche plane, Sergeant?'

'Well, he's too far over our lines for it to be one of ours, sir.'

'You don't know where their line is. If it is one of our guns that's been firing, that's the second time in this battle they have hit one of the enemy planes. That must be a record.' The anti-aircraft guns were not popularly supposed to be able to hit anything.

The wing of the plane swirled uncertainly down to the ground. 'Here's Captain Williams, sir.'

Williams looked at the shattered track. 'What's up, chum?' he asked Greene. 'Won't it go?' A few minutes' examination of the sprocket and the track satisfied him. 'I'll see what I can do for you', he said. 'We may have a few spare plates that would do the trick, but I'm not at all sure we shan't find the sprocket is out of alignment, and in that case it may well turn out to be a heavy workshop job. However, it will take me about an hour before I can let you know about that, and it will take another hour after that if we can do anything. If we can do it, you'll be able to go forward straight away. You were damned lucky, weren't you? Anybody hurt?'

'No, one chap threw a fit, that's all, but we got him under control, otherwise everybody is right as rain. A few scratches and splinters. I must say, it shook us up a bit, though – it was too close for pleasure. Luckily I had the flaps shut at the time.'

'Another six inches to the right', said Williams, 'and that would have been a case of *dulce et decorum est pro patria morir* for you.'

'I don't know what you mean, sir, but I'm sure you're quite right.'

'Have you seen the enemy about at all?' asked Williams.

'I think he's gone up to the rendezvous – there's supposed to be a conference on . . . oh, I'm sorry, you mean the real enemy. I thought you meant the Colonel. No, we haven't seen any at all. We've just been riding forward nicely and quietly until that chap, whoever it was, managed to blow our track off. There must be some about

somewhere; in fact, we've just collected one here to do a spot of spit and polish on the tank, as you can see', and he pointed to the German prisoner.

'Well, I must be off', said Williams.

'Me too', said Greene. 'I shall leave Gunner Smith here in charge of the tank.' To Smith he said, 'Have a jolly good look-out and see nobody pinches the whisky. It doesn't matter a damn about anything else, but we mustn't lose the whisky, whatever happens.' He turned to Williams. 'I'm going forward to the rendezvous now, sir. Captain Bion told me I had better be there in case they want me to go into action again. I hope to God it will be with another tank and not with infantry.'

9

As Bion walked forward in the blazing heat, he thought he heard a voice hail him and looking round found it was Carter. The two of them walked together.

'So, you've managed to survive this far', said Carter. 'I see you picked up a rifle as well.'

'I always do – a revolver's no damned good', said Bion, and the two of them walked on. 'I think I want to go further over to the right flank. I'd like to know what has happened to Asser's tank.'

'What has happened to your section so far?'

'I don't know anything at all about Hauser; he seems to have disappeared. Greene is over there on the left; I've just been talking to him. His tank got a direct hit, and they're out of it for the time being. Williams is having a look at it. Cartwright's tank got a direct hit right at the start – I was nearby at the time. The whole thing simply went up in one crash. That leaves us with Asser unaccounted for. I hope he's all right, at any rate.'

'We've got plenty of time', said Carter, 'I'm just working my way forward to the rendezvous. I haven't seen anything of the Colonel because I was separated off at the beginning to go and see whether the A Company tanks got into action all right. I'm jolly grateful to you for those compass bearings. We seem to have had the tanks pointing in the right direction, as far as I can make out.'

'Yes, thank God', said Bion remembering his unpleasant experience at the mud track. He had almost forgotten the agonies he went through at that time; his fears about the direction of the battalion attack seemed now to be completely unreal.

'I wish I could find somewhere to dump my tunic', said Carter. 'This heat is terrific, it's all I can manage to stop from melting away into a drop of butter.'

'I shouldn't think you carried much fat', said Bion looking at the spare figure enviously.

They walked in silence for a few minutes. Then, 'Carter, I'm fed up with this war.'

'You don't say so', said Carter sarcastically. 'I thought most people had come to that conclusion long ago – within about the first five minutes. I certainly felt that way when I was handed a white feather within about three or four months of the beginning of the war – things were pretty poisonous then. And even now, if you go home on leave in London, it only takes you a few minutes to find out how ghastly the whole business is.'

'Yes, but I wasn't meaning that', said Bion. 'I mean out here; it's just about damned murder. I've been lying next to a runner who had part of his innards blown out.'

'I don't think that's much to worry about; it's the kind of thing one would expect. One expects to find casualties, one expects to find that the thing is murder, that's exactly what it's intended to be. It's organized in order to be murder. The main thing is to be sure you murder *them*, and not our own lot', said Carter, thinking once more about the failure to establish the correct compass bearings at the start of the action. 'I don't think I mind much, so long as I'm out here. There's a good deal of nonsense about it, of course: the odd whoring and so on in the back areas, a good deal of boring talk in the mess, and a lot of anxiety and a hell of a lot of wind-up when it comes to a battle. But at least one is with decent people.'

'I don't see why you say the people are any more decent than they would be in peace-time.'

'Ah, but they are', said Carter. 'You can say what you like about war. When you're faced with the possibility of being blown to bits at any moment, it jolly soon brings out the worst or the best in men.'

'I don't agree. Look at Quainton – he was a decent fellow if ever there was one.'

'Yes', said Carter somewhat noncommittally.

'Well, didn't you think so?'

'Yes, I did; he was an extremely decent fellow, but I don't think I put quite such a high value on him as you did. He was a charmer, he got on extremely well with everybody, and I know Colonel Burnett was extremely impressed by him, but look what happened to him. He goes into action just once, goes home on leave, and then he cracks up.'

'That's true. I must say I found that a bit of a shock, but at the same time we don't really know what happened, and we didn't hear anything from Quainton ourselves.'

'You saw the letter he wrote to Broom; it was a damn silly sort of letter. You'd think a chap who had his head screwed on straight wouldn't write like that, and he wouldn't write to Broom.'

'Something must certainly have happened to him, because when we went into action at Ypres, that show on September 29th, I had him near me, and I must say I was very glad to have him by my side. He seemed to me to have the root of the matter in him. I know his faith in God, and the confidence that it gave him, spread to me and brought me a good deal of relief too.'

'Faith in God?' said Carter doubtfully, 'I don't know much about that – I think I'll put my faith in the decent people who have the guts to stand up to things and are able to think clearly in a nasty mess. The important thing in this business is to be able to do your job, however sick you're feeling.'

'I agree', said Bion, 'but you've got to have more than that; I should have thought you must have faith in something. I don't see how you can possibly do without it. At the same time, I don't know how you, or anybody else, as a decent Christian manages to put up with this filthy mess out here.'

'But I'm not a Christian, I never have been. I put my faith in something better than that.'

'Well, then, what are you fighting for?'

'What I'm fighting for is really quite simple. I've had a lot of experience in Malaya; I've seen the way business is done there; I know our people by and large – crooks though they often are – are those on whose word you can rely. I know all about their failings; I know about the way someone, as likely as not, makes a hash of a business contract and something turns out to be defective. But on the whole when one of our commercial people says they'll deliver an order,

they deliver it. When you're dealing with the Japanese or the Boche, they're as crooked as hell; even some of the Yanks we had dealings with can't be relied on – the're treacherous, they haven't got the same business standards. You fellows who live at home in England don't really know; you think that all people, every nation, is as good as every other. That's not my experience at all.'

'Yes, but I think it's just as true to say that you, Carter, because you live in Malaya, get an exaggerated idea of things in England.'

'There's some truth in that, but on the other hand I don't spend the whole of my time in Malaya. I have to come back to England from time to time and keep contact with our head office. I do work there, and I'm convinced that there's a standard of decency and honesty that just doesn't exist in many of the people I have dealings with.

'I think you're being very narrow-minded.'

'I've seen far too much of it for that, and I'm a lot older than you, Bion.'

'How old are you?'

'Well, to tell the truth, I'm forty-six – not officially, mark you. I swore that I was thirty-five. I didn't bother much about dyeing my hair after the first interview. Even then they looked at me a bit oddly, I'm bound to say. I'm not a chicken, as you can see.'

'Why did you join up?'

'Because I felt the country was in great danger, and I think it would be a very grave thing indeed for the world at large if the British predominance were to disappear. For all I know, it will disappear anyhow – all good things come to an end sometime. But I don't think it's any good deluding ourselves; if the British fail, then something good will go out of international life, and people will find those who take their place are no more honest – and in my opinion a great deal less honest – and a great deal more unpleasant to get on with than the British have ever been. The real trouble with our country at the present time, if you'll excuse me saying so, is that a lot of you people who have been to public schools are chock full of high ideals, but you haven't got them geared to the realities of the situation. You're brought up on all this idealism about the poor and the depressed classes and the need to carry the white man's burden; the whole affair is absolutely riddled with guilt. You don't see what it's really like in the places where these jobs are done. But if you get out into the wilds, the so-called 'outposts of

Empire', you get a chance of seeing what human beings are really like. Even in this war some of the scrubby tricks you're complaining of aren't at all peculiar. They're not caused by war; it's just the war that shows them up. It shows you what people are really like. The human being is a nasty and dangerous animal. One of the reasons why he's supreme over other animals is because he is infinitely more dangerous than any tiger or wild beast possibly could be. Murder, hatred and lust – those are the predominant features. It's true they have some sort of intelligence, some kind of development of brain power, and that means they have ideals, they want to be kind to each other. I suppose it starts off with their being kind to their young, or wanting to, and then it extends to other people. But you've only got to scratch the surface – get people into a situation where there's a shortage of food, and you'll soon see what lies underneath. I can tell you, it isn't pretty; it's a case of every man for himself. I've got no illusions about this war: the Boche and others are out to get as much loot as they possibly can, and if we don't defend ourselves but take up the attitude that we are all miserable sinners, then we shall go down, we shall have failed in our job.'

'But how are we to know that? We're bound to think in that way.'

'Well, then, if we're bound to think in that way, better think in that way. What other way are you going to think?' Carter looked at Bion critically but not unkindly. They shouldn't send these youngsters out here, he thought to himself. They're fit for nothing except getting killed, or possibly getting the VC, and then they crack up. After all is said and done, what else can you expect of them? There should be a rule that nobody is allowed to come out to the front until they are at least twenty-one. I'd make it older myself.

They were now making their way over to the right flank and had got to within three or four hundred yards of Berle au Bois when heavy gun-fire broke out. There was a clump of trees beyond the village, possibly a mile distant; the shell-fire had broken out afresh, and the shells were bursting in this wood, throwing up huge clods of black earth with occasional puffs of white from what appeared to be shrapnel shells.

'I don't know who the hell's guns those can be', said Carter. 'It seems that some sort of resistance must be going on there.'

A moment or two later the fringe of the wood was peopled with

a mass of men moving in an indeterminate manner. It was not at first possible to make out what the uniforms were.

'My God, I think they're Boche', said Bion.

Carter got out his binoculars and looked. 'Yes, they are. They're massing – here they come!'

Gradually a small bunch of the enemy detached itself from the right flank and dashed forward; a bit later some more in the centre. They started coming forward in short rushes.

'It looks to me as if this is their counter-attack developing', said Bion. 'I wonder how much of it there is. If it's only this bit, there can't be much more than a brigade in the attack. They'll have to mount something a good deal more massive than that if they're going to have any effect.'

'Yes, but we don't know what's over on the left of the copse', said Carter. 'You see there, that's a crest of a rise and as far as I can see – ', he started fumbling with his maps, 'there's a considerable dip there. We can't tell from here how many more troops might be lying there; it could be anything up to two or three divisions, if our staff were right in saying that the enemy were preparing to attack on this sector. This may be it, real trouble.'

The two of them watched anxiously, and then as bullets began to come over, they made a much more cautious forward advance, still working their way towards Berle au Bois, which remained quite peaceful.

'It seems pretty clear' said Carter, 'that there aren't any enemy in Berle au Bois anyhow. The whole of this lot is in the sector that's nothing to do with us; that's where our reserve troops should be going through to attack. They're supposed to be halted here on the green line, which runs through to the wood where we should be meeting. I hope to God our support troops have got up there, because this may develop into something very ugly.'

'Those must be our shells bursting in that wood, then. I don't know if they've started up because the enemy have commenced their counter-attack, or if the gunners have spotted a concentration in the wood and have opened fire first.'

'Well, it's much of a muchness', said Carter. 'It seems to me they've got their front lines out, otherwise we shouldn't be getting their advancing troops coming towards Berle au Bois like this.'

'I wonder where the devil Asser is. He might be able to do something about it.'

'No, he wouldn't', said Carter, 'it would be very risky. I wouldn't send him forward if I were you, even if we do find him. Remember, that's the French Front.'

'Yes, Foreign Legion', said Bion.

'At this point we're not supposed to be doing any more attacking with the French. They're going forward without tanks.'

'Yes, but it might be a good thing to lend them one of ours if the enemy attack gets really serious.'

'I think you ought to get permission from Major de Freine before you do anything of that kind. We have our job to do on this front, and at this point we definitely have to keep in with the 42nd Division and not get mixed up with the French. After tomorrow we may get more orders, but just now it would only create confusion, and the French might even shoot up our tank if we sent it in there.'

'Anyway, I can't see any sign of Asser. It looks as if the enemy attack is petering out a bit; they're meeting very heavy machine-gun fire. It sounds as if those are the French guns now, don't you think?'

'Yes, though I can't see where anybody is. All we're getting here are a few riccos flying about from the enemy fire – and their fire is very ragged and poor anyway.'

It was a rash remark. A sudden burst of machine-gun fire came so close that they were both glad to have the opportunity to flatten out in a shell-hole just in front of them.

'I don't like the sound of this at all', said Bion.

'Nor do I', said Carter. 'That burst of machine-gun fire was altogether too close, and yet on the right the French are obviously holding them. I never heard such a concentration of machine-gun fire.'

The rattle of the machine-guns was continuous – there was nothing ragged about it. It did not seem to either of the two officers that the enemy could advance into the face of such an intensity of fire, and yet somewhere a German machine-gunner must have managed to creep up, perhaps towards their left.

'It would be just as well to keep our heads down for a minute or two', said Carter. 'There must be some chap who had got round on the left flank. Funny thing is, that wood seems to be pasted by our heavy guns; all that stuff looks like ours rather than the French', but

just at that moment there broke out a great furore from their right and behind them.

'It sounds like a whole lot of biscuit tins being slammed together', said Bion.

'That's the French 75', said Carter. 'They always make that infernal din. They sound like toy ones, but my goodness they can fire fast. Yes, now you can see the shrapnel bursting – and H.E. They must be sending over mixed H.E. and shrapnel, right along the edge of the wood there. That's a pretty good barrage they're putting down there; it must be one that hasn't been registered at all. The French must have got their guns up into their advance positions by this time. I don't think the Boche are going to have it all their own way by any manner of means.' There were a number of flares and star shells being fired. 'It's a funny thing how the French always seem to do that all night and all day; they go in for an enormous amount of these light signals. You'd think it wouldn't be much use in daytime, and yet you can distinguish them pretty well. There can't be much doubt about what the signals mean if you know the code.'

Out in front of Berle au Bois, towards the enemy counter-attack, they could distinguish two or three French infantry wandering about.

'I don't think I want to stay stuck in this confounded hole', said Carter, 'it's too ignominious altogether. If those chaps can walk about out there, there can't be much wrong with our doing it.'

'Anyhow', said Bion, 'we had better get on because we've got to work out how to get to the meeting. It's time we were shifting over. I wish I'd found Asser, all the same; I'd like to know what has happened to him. Come on, then.' They left the shell-hole and started walking over to the left in the direction of the Amiens–Roye road and their rendezvous.

'My God, they're letting that wood have it now', exclaimed Carter.

The gunfire was certainly intense. They could see huge branches and even trees uprooted, turned over on their sides and occasionally tossed up into the air. Great clods of earth were flying from the wood, and it was evident that heavy Howitzer guns had been trained onto it as well as the field artillery, which was maintaining a steady drum of fire on the wood and its immediate foreground where the enemy counter-attack seemed to have fizzled out. Then they noticed that a few enemy began to run back again towards the wood.

'I can't say I envy them if they're going to go back there for shelter', said Carter. 'They would do better to stay where they are.'

'Well, *some* of them seem to think they would do better to come forward', said Bion as he saw small parties begin to run towards the French lines with their hands above their heads. 'I don't think it can be the genuine counter-attack – just a local affair.'

In another ten minutes they had reached the trench that formed the advance company H.Q. There they found Major de Freine already installed with the Colonel, Asser and Hauser.

10

The small group of officers stood in the cool of the shade of the trees fanned by the breeze, which was now blowing steadily. They did not say very much to each other; they were all gazing intently at the spectacle set out before them like a vast panoramic film drama. The fact that reserves had been so conspicuously lacking in every action with which they were acquainted made it hard to believe in the reality of this scene as it unfolded. Never before had there been reserves, certainly not reserves brought up with such massive efficiency and in such great force.

The tanks were displaying into battle order, and for the first time the officers had an impression of what it might be like for an enemy if they found themselves attacked by formations that came on in the order they were supposed to do according to the textbooks. The rest of the troops still remained in column of route; obviously the Amiens–Roye road was not sufficiently wide to be able to bring forward the troops and also to carry the returning stream of empty lorries going back after having delivered their goods. Therefore the whole plateau was studded with columns, at a distance of some three hundred yards between each, advancing independently of roads in order to get forward as quickly as possible. This, combined with any lack of response from the enemy, led to a peculiar sense of exhilaration – or at least it potentially did so, for while there were ejaculations of surprise at this sight, there was also a heavy dragging at the heart, as if all felt that the event had occurred too late. Had this happened years before, then it would

have chimed in with the enthusiasm, the sense of mission and crusade that had animated the early armies. As it was, the feelings of elation conflicted with the tide of depression and disillusion, which struggled at the same time for expression because it could at last find some relief from the evils that had originally caused it and that were no longer operating. This must have contributed to the somewhat grim, rigid, set expression with which these officers stood and watched the oncoming flood.

At last the Colonel turned to Major de Freine and his fellow officers, and for a while his face had lost the harassed, neurotic look that it had been wearing for some weeks past; he seemed able to be more human.

'I don't think I need to tell you one part of the operation orders at least. There, as you can see for yourselves, gentlemen, is the 1st Battalion going through. We are therefore relieved. At the same time, it must be understood that every tank is to be put into fighting condition at once; all the greasing up, all the reloading with ammunition has to be done before any man gets any rest. You had better serve food, of course – that has to be a priority, because they have not had any decent meals, and I think it is safe to say now that you can produce heated food on dixies and so forth. Nevertheless you should still preserve all precautions with regard to aeroplane observation and the possibility of bombing attacks. In any case', he said, turning back towards the enemy front, 'you can see we are observed'; waving his arm, he pointed to the row of enemy observation balloons, which seemed to be extremely near, as was always the case with the German army. 'You may be sure', he continued, 'they will be passing back all the information they can about our doings. I don't imagine it will be very cheerful information from the point of view of the German staff, but I doubt they have really got the troops now to be able to do much about it.' He nodded to de Freine who seemed to have something he wished to say.

'What has happened to the enemy attack that was being amassed against Amiens, sir?'

'I don't know', said the Colonel. 'Have you chaps seen many prisoners? I heard some report from Divisional H.Q. that a great many guns and men had been taken.'

De Freine, looking at the other officers interrogatively, seemed to invite comment, but nobody could say very much.

'I think, sir', said Hauser, 'that the fog was so thick that it was impossible to see what was going on. I haven't seen any prisoners.'

Asser said that he had seen some handfuls of enemy troops giving themselves up, but that was with the French Front; he didn't know anything about what had been going on 'on our own corps front'.

'Of course, I haven't yet had any orders from Division', said the Colonel, 'so I can't really tell you anything official about it, but it doesn't seem to me that they have got very much of a chance – I think they've been caught out very badly indeed. I did hear some casual talk that the Australians at Villers-Plouich had had difficulty on their extreme left flank, but that is to be expected in view of the fact that the troops on their left were not due to attack at all in this battle, and presumably they had to throw back a defensive left flank, but I haven't heard that they had any trouble in taking their objectives. If that is so, it seems pretty clear that the advance has been quite general along the whole front. No doubt I shall be able to tell you more later. In the meantime I must go and find out more of what has been happening – I'm going to Divisional H.Q. first, and then on to Army Corps. You know how to get in touch with us, Major de Freine. Well, good luck you fellows, you've done extremely well.' He turned on his heel and with the adjutant, and Carter who joined them, went off towards the left flank.

De Freine decided to waive his usual procedure. He was accustomed at this stage in an action to be welcoming back the officers and men from the usual abortive offensive with a glass of port and some murmured condolences and congratulations, interspersed with gentle suggestions of 'gallant fellows' and 'brave men'. But on this occasion it was obviously not quite what was required. He therefore turned to his section commanders, saying they had heard what the Colonel's orders were – the tank crews must immediately get ready to prepare their tanks for action and remain at their particular stations. This order was queried by Hauser, who suggested that they should find specific positions in which the tanks would be secure from observation.

'Oh yes, of course', said de Freine, 'I was taking that for granted. You must all get your tanks under the shelter of trees and report at once to the section commanders, who will, of course, report to me the exact location of every tank.' He drew Hauser aside. 'Hauser, you will have to give up your tank. I think Greene had better take it

over with his crew. Your men can go into the company reserve for the time being – they deserve a rest in any case. I want you to take over Homfray's section – you'll be sorry to hear that he was killed. Bion, I'm afraid you must reconcile yourself to losing Hauser. I am sure you will be very sorry to see him go, but just as pleased as I am that at last he has the promotion he very much deserves. I think you said you actually saw Cartwright's tank hit, didn't you?'

'Yes, sir, I had just got out of it.'

'Poor fellows, no chance for any of them, of course.'

'None whatever, sir. They were obviously all killed practically instantaneously. I don't think they were even trying to get out of the tank. Some of them were blown through the door when it was blown off its hinges, and others over the top of the sides when the roof caved in. I don't think they can have lived long enough for any of them to have tried to make an attempt at escape.'

'Who was the sergeant?'

'Sergeant O'Toole, sir, my old tank sergeant.'

'What a pity, he was a very good man. He was extremely disillusioned and upset because he was not promoted to Company Sergeant-Major. There was nothing I could do about it; I think he would have made an extremely good one, but we had to take over Sergeant-Major Cannon from A Company, who had been due for promotion much longer.'

'Yes, sir, I know how he felt. He even said, poor devil, that he didn't want anything from this action except six feet of earth.'

'I think his nerve must have gone', said de Freine.

'It's very likely, sir. He had had continuous action since the time the battalion came out here.'

'Well, for that matter, so have you, but you don't show any signs of cracking up, I'm glad to say.'

Bion did not believe him. He felt that people who cracked up were merely those who did not allow the rest of the world to . . .

[*Ends here – no more written.*]

AFTERMATH

Parthenope Bion Talamo

'Had everyone gone mad?' (p. 77).

This question came to Bion's mind while commenting on what should have been one of the more peaceful and less frightening moments of his war years, the Christmas 1917 break from fighting, and refers to the brutish behaviour of men off duty. He gives it no immediate answer, but reading *War Memoirs* makes me wonder whether he did not perhaps spend a good portion of the rest of his life exploring the avenues of enquiry that it opened up, as he moved through the study of history to teaching, medicine, psychotherapy and finally psychoanalysis and the psychoanalytically informed study of groups.

The diaries themselves are almost raw material, with hardly any emotional or intellectual elaboration, a far cry indeed from the war poems of Owen or Sassoon. Even the later versions of the same experiences delineated in Bion's autobiographical writings (e.g., see Volume I, p. 209) do not seem to have undergone great changes. It is interesting to note that some episodes are carried over almost unchewed and apparently undigested into *A Memoir of the Future* (see Volumes XII–XIV), as though no further working-through were possible.

As far as *A Memoir of the Future* is concerned, this technique is justified by the fact that Bion was trying to present the reader with raw, basic, almost primitive experiences that had been dealt with at the time of their occurrence by a mind that was recognized as being ill-equipped to do so. In several places in the diaries he complains of the fact that he (and others) had not the mental equipment of a professional soldier, which, he seems to have felt, would have given him some sort of protection from the full blast of war. But the reason

he uses these episodes in *A Memoir of the Future* is to show up the co-existence of regressed states of mind, together with more sophisticated ones. It is illuminating to compare his Diary description (pp. 127–128) of gaining some comfort from lying on the bank 'just as if I was lying peacefully in someone's arms', having in the previous sentence said that he felt just like a small child 'that has had rather a tearful day and wants to be put to bed by its mother', with the slightly defiant proclamation in *Cogitations* (Volume XI, p. 161): 'Winnicott says patients *need* to regress; Melanie Klein says they *must not:* I say they *are* regressed. . . .' Reading his *War Memoirs,* one feels that he had had first-hand experience of what he was talking about.

This vision of the mind as a palimpsest with a continual potentiality for almost instantaneous regression can be seen to tie up to the theory of beta-elements, a continuous flow of unprocessed pre-mental sensory data, which then have to be subjected to alpha-function in order to be used for thinking at all, in the sense that these two theories deal with the rock bottom of mental and pre-mental life. I also feel that it is no mere coincidence that although the diaries were dedicated to his parents, it is his mother alone who is invoked every now and again as reader, as though Bion felt that she was a fundamental participant in an internal dialogue. It is perhaps not too fanciful to suppose that the fact that he had not 'written letters' during the war had not only been part of a desire to spare his mother pain, but was also an unconscious attempt to preserve her in his own mind as a container as undamaged as possible by hideous news, and hence as a part of the personality capable of alpha-function.

It is interesting to note that Bion never gave a central role to problems connected to aggression or death in his psychoanalytic theorizing. When he did deal with problems of warfare (rather than aggression) in his adult writings, it was almost as though he were forced into doing so by external circumstances (having been called up as an army psychiatrist in 1940), and at first his approach tended to be remarkable for its pragmatism rather than for its theory.[1] His later theorization of group dynamics[2] made use of the idea of the proto-mental as the matrix sustaining basic-assumption phenomena;

[1]See 'The "War of Nerves"' and 'On Groups', in Volume IV.
[2]See Volume IV, pp. 176 and 217.

and again I suspect that the experience of panic described in the Diary, his awareness of the contagious effects of high or low morale, his attempts at a rough sort of 'behaviourist' group therapy,[1] as well as his perception of the disaggregating effects of boredom and complete lack of discipline, all formed part of the real personal emotional experience on which his theories lie.

The 'madness' that Bion speaks of and describes as having experienced on more than one occasion (the two episodes described on pp. 98–99 and 111 are cases in point) and the loneliness he suffered (p. 82) were to some small extent ameliorated by the contrasting experiences of deep comradeship and real affection. He mentions Short's gratitude to him just as he is leaving at the very end (while being unrelentingly bitter over the ingratitude of the 'Great British Empire'). This more loving side of human relationships even in warfare comes out very clearly in the only episode that Bion quotes as feeling that it had done him credit – that is, his taking hot tea and stew up to the men of his section doing duty as infantry in the front line (p. 91). It is in fact clear throughout the diaries that he was capable of caring for his men, and his most scathing comments are reserved for those officers and staff who were not. To my mind, the capacity for love that can sometimes be found in group behaviour appears later on in Bion's work under the guise of the terms 'compassion' (Volume XI, p. 123) and 'concern' (Volume XI, p. 238), and his experience of it is part of the mental humus from which the theories of L, H and K links were to grow.

It would, of course, be an excessive simplification to say that Bion became an analyst 'because of' his war experiences – in fact, it might be equally true to say that he became one in spite of them; notwithstanding his exposure to mindless stupidity and the brutality of war, he still felt that there was enough goodness in mankind (and that it was thought-provoking enough) for it to be worth dedicating his life to the study of people. Since no decision can be made on the matter, perhaps it is more useful to think of his Tank Corps life as having combined with many other pieces in a mosaic that led to a certain sort of evolution. One thread in this strand that can be picked out, however, is the recurring theme that underlies the Diary of the individual

[1]See p. 95, this volume.

who is both part of his group, in tune with it, and against his group, at war with it and with himself, which in later psychoanalytic writings is carried over to illustrate the mental workings of the individual and his internal group. Another aspect of Bion's personality that appears clearly in the Diary and which was never to leave him was his remarkable capacity both for curiosity and for enquiry, supported by acute observation, even when the subject matter for investigation was painful or literally terrifying.

Although the comments Bion makes on war, aggressiveness, courage and cowardice are scattered throughout his works in a somewhat haphazard way, and after *Experiences in Groups* he never attempted any systematic approach to these problems, Bion continued to buy books on warfare, histories of war, memoirs of partisan warfare and so on right up till his death, as though the subject were never far from the surface of his mind, perhaps constituting, in its social and individual components, a great unsolved puzzle.

Turin
May 1997

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME IV

November 1959
Watercolour painting by WRB

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VOLUME IV

Edited by Chris Mawson

Editorial consultant Francesca Bion

KARNAC

Copyright acknowledgement
Experiences in Groups and Other Papers (pp. 95–246) first published in 1961 by Tavistock Publications Limited. Reprinted by Routledge, London and New York. A Tavistock/Routledge publication. Thanks are due to the following for permission to reprint the papers collected in *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers*: the Editor of the *Lancet* in respect of 'Intra-Group Tensions in Therapy' (*Lancet*, 27 November 1943); the publisher and the Editorial Committee of *Human Relations* in respect of 'Experiences in Groups, I–VII' (*Human Relations*, Vols. 1–4 1948–1951); the Editor of the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* in respect of 'Group Dynamics: A Re-view' (*International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. 33, Pt. 2, 1952). All rights reserved. Published by arrangement with Routledge, an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group.

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8

ISBN (Volume IV): 978–1–78220–232–5

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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*Later changed to 'Inquiry'. See 'The Grid' (1971) (Volume X, p. vii).

THE 'WAR OF NERVES': CIVILIAN REACTION, MORALE AND PROPHYLAXIS

1940

'The "War of Nerves": Civilian Reaction, Morale and Prophylaxis', was published in 1940 in *The Neuroses in War*, edited by E. Miller & H. Crichton-Miller (London: Macmillan, pp. 180–200).

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

This short paper was published as a chapter in a book, *The Neuroses in War,* in 1940. At the time of writing the paper, Bion was working in the Royal Army Medical Corps. Two years earlier he had begun an analysis with John Rickman, but it had ended prematurely because of the outbreak of war.[1] That, and his Tavistock experience, enabled him to connect his wartime experiences with psychoanalytic formulations of unconscious phantasy and the role of primitive infantile anxieties and defences against them.

There are two aspects of the paper I want to mention. One foreshadows a particular line of development in Bion's later thinking, in relation to projective identification, phantasy and informative countertransference; the other relates to the need for understanding in the wider community of the nature of trauma and its manifestations.

To develop the first of these: there is a statement about the nature of a psychological attack by an enemy, which Bion saw as consisting of a *projection* into the individual's mind, in order not only to disrupt his or her defences and psychic organization, but also to elicit specific disabling phantasies – based on early infantile anxiety situations – and to encourage the victim into a role that is advantageous to the one making the attack. This is a forerunner of how Bion later extended Klein's notion of projective identification in a way that clarified the mode of operation of what Freud had described as countertransference.[2] It also prepares the way for the later notion of *shared phantasy*: participation in

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[1]This period is described by Eric Trist (1985), in 'Working with Bion in the 1940s: The Group Decade'.

[2]This perspective on countertransference and projective identification was described in 'Group Dynamics: Re-View' (1952). See final chapter of *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers,* this volume, p. 213.

unconscious enactments and scenarios based on the complex operation of projective identification.

Second, Bion makes use of this idea to encourage those with insight into such processes to inform the wider community about them, in the service of encouraging a more humane understanding of those who have been broken by their suffering. Bion wrote in this paper:

> The psychologist should have no difficulty in feeling a sympathetic understanding of a war neurosis case; but it is much to be desired that the public generally should be informed on such points. They might then take a more tolerant attitude towards the war neurosis patient, *who often behaves in a way which is unconsciously intended to find an outlet for his deep guilt feelings by producing a condemnatory attitude in his fellows*. Similarly, they may regard more tolerantly the anxieties and stresses which they fear in themselves. [emphasis added]

The 'War of Nerves': Civilian Reaction, Morale and Prophylaxis

The 'war of nerves' is nothing new as a fact of human experience; what is new is that its existence has been recognized under an almost medical title. The subject is too vast and too theoretical for a book which is intended to be of immediate use, and this chapter will therefore be limited to the consideration of a few points that may be helpful in understanding practical suggestions made later. If the style is dogmatic, this may be taken as a symptom of the need for compression and not as a claim to omniscience.

The 'war of nerves' is an attack directed at the individual personally; if he can dissociate himself from the mass movement of a nation at war he may escape some of the effects. But then, from the point of view of an enemy, he has become a casualty. Or he can remain a member of his society; in which case, the more emotionally bound the members are, the more strongly will he feel that the attack is being launched at himself. Only if he remains at once both a member of his community and yet unaffected by the enemy's attack, in the way that the enemy wishes him to be, can he be said to remain psychologically not a casualty.

Perhaps it may not seem too late now to ask what the object of this type of warfare is. We suggest that the object of the combatant is to exploit unconscious phantasies[1] both in the enemy and in himself, in such a way that the enemy is discomfited and he himself benefited.

In short, it might be described as the opposite of a psychotherapeutic procedure in which a knowledge of the unconscious on the

[1][The words 'phantasy' and 'phantasies' are used in a technical sense and are not synonymous with 'fantasy' and 'fantasies', which are terms that refer to conscious mental events. *Ed.*]

part of one participant is used for the benefit of the other. More precisely, one of the aims of such an attack would appear to be to force an opponent to be distracted from reality dangers by fear and guilt arising from phantasies in his own mind. As this fear is concerned with matters within himself, it is not helpful to the victim of the attack in facing external dangers. While he is internally distracted by infantile emotions, his enemy hopes to be able to carry out an attack in objective fact.

Obviously the above summary is far too crude as it stands; it is clear that in the description above, the aggressor is credited with quite diabolical ingenuity and with remarkable insight. It is very unlikely that any such circumstances would arise in fact. Indeed, the desire to wage a 'war of nerves' is in itself very good *prima facie* evidence for assuming that the individual concerned is not in a satisfactory position to do so. His position is unsatisfactory because he has to exploit phantasies which are, in himself, unconscious; and this immediately introduces the fact that such an individual's aggressive tendencies, like his pacifism, are most uncertain in action. He can never be quite sure whose anxiety will become intolerable first, the enemy's or his own.

This feature of the 'war of nerves' must therefore now be briefly regarded, even if it makes for a loss of the charming simplicity of our first tentative theory. Consultation of omens, religious observances before war on the part of primitive tribes, and other attempts at allaying inner anxiety and guilt,[1] are familiar throughout history. But attention must be drawn to the 'war of nerves' as an attempt to combine in itself both an aggressive movement towards an enemy and a therapeutic movement in the aggressor.

To quote Tacitus for an example may serve to give point to this feature: "The Germans abound with rude strains of verse, the reciters of which, in the language of the country, are called Bards. With this barbarous poetry they inflame their minds with ardour in the day of action, and prognosticate the event from the impressions which it happens to make on the minds of the soldiers, who grow terrible to the enemy, or despair of success, as the war-song produces an

[1]Reference is here made to emotions which arise from unconscious levels. For fuller explanation of these points the reader should turn to the chapter on Psychopathology. [Bion is referring to the chapter by H. Crichton-Miller, "Psychopathological Theories of Neuroses in War Time", in Miller (1940). *Ed*.]

animated or a feeble sound. Nor can their manner of chanting this savage prelude be called the tone of human organs; it is rather a furious uproar; a wild chorus of military virtue. The vociferation used upon these occasions is uncouth and harsh, at intervals interrupted by the application of their bucklers to their mouths, and by the repercussions bursting out with redoubled force".[1] It would be interesting to know how Tacitus arrived at this brilliant observation. Were the original German bards sufficiently introspective to give him a clue? If so, they were worthy forerunners of the modern bard to whom we are indebted for the title of 'War of Nerves'.

The civilian in modern war is at a disadvantage when subjected to the threats and war-songs of the enemy. He has not the trained soldier's knowledge and grip of the realities of warfare to help him to assess appeals which are made to the infantile phantasies in himself. If he is threatened with air raids he is at a disadvantage in picturing what this threat means. The soldier can form a tolerably accurate picture which is drawn from experience of related phenomena; the novice tends to be flooded with emotions which arise from phantasies that are set in motion by the threat, and which he cannot check by appeals to fact. Therefore there is a danger that the aggressive component of these emotions will be towards his own side rather than towards the enemy or towards hostile objects in reality, as would be the case if it were a conscious aggression.

This may be illustrated by an example to which we shall return later. In one of the South African wars British infantry were being attacked. The enemy advanced in short rushes interposed with a series of united leaps into the air, clashing shields as they did so. This procedure, part of their 'war of nerves', began to have its effect upon a recruit in the waiting line. His nervousness was perceived by a veteran by his side who turned to him and said, 'Just watch me shoot one while he jumps', suiting his act to his words.

The steadying of the recruit was at least in part due to the brutal demonstration of the difference between a flesh-and-blood opponent and the recruit's phantasy of him as a ghostly return of some terrifying bogy of infancy.

At present, almost universally, the field is held by *phantasies* of air raids, and will be till reality brings a contrast.

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[1]Tacitus, *Germania*, paragraph iii (trans. by Arthur Murphy, 1793).

This must not be taken to mean that all civilian reactions to modern war are simply those of the novice; far from it. Perhaps it would be as well now to turn to this point, but first a warning: it is not proposed to venture into the realms of prophecy. Little is known about civilian reaction to intensive totalitarian war, and since facts are not available it seems perhaps most helpful to draw attention to certain problems that exist, in the hope that their consideration may help the reader to draw his own conclusions when facts are available.

The first point that engages attention is that a civilian has not sought the objective relief from inner tension that is provided by a military career. His choice would appear to be very different, although it has to be remembered that a professional soldier has almost invariably joined an army at peace, while the 'civilian', in the sense used here, is a person who is only likely to join one at war. Furthermore, the soldier is confined to a male atmosphere, with the slight exceptions of leave; the civilian is in a mixed society. It is perhaps noteworthy, however, that today there seems to be a tendency to modify this by banding together women in various organizations, such as the A.T.S. Leaving for the time being any further consideration of the above points as outside the scope of this chapter, it may be helpful to pass directly to a consideration of the differences that exist between civilian and military populations at war. It is hoped that this may draw attention to factors that will help in a sympathetic understanding of the civilian reaction to war conditions in general and to aerial warfare in particular.

Psychological problems, such as morale, have been approached empirically by leaders of armies and navies from time immemorial. The solutions achieved, and embodied in traditions of training and discipline, from the point of view of the psychologist suffer in being too little informed by a knowledge of psychological theory and psychopathology; but at least they have been worked out on a solid body of fact. In setting out to deal with civilian reactions, a writer is at once confronted with a most serious difficulty – his formulations must be based almost entirely on theory – an opposite and far more serious defect. The writer, however, shares the view expressed by Dr Glover (Glover, 1933) that knowledge obtained from individuals is applicable to a society with sufficient exactness to make that application valuable. Therefore it may not be unreasonable to hope that, by bringing to bear modern knowledge of psychopathology on time-hallowed

procedures of the fighting services, some workable suggestions can be evolved for dealing with the rather different problems of a civilian population. At least it may be possible to combine the two in order to assess some of the differences in the stresses to which soldier and civilian are subjected.

If little is said about the stresses within the individual it is not because they are unimportant; they will be dealt with by other writers and are outside the scope of a chapter that is dealing with methods of prophylaxis other than analysis.

The soldier has a definite aim. The dangers inherent in its achievement have been invested with a certain glory from early years in his life. It does not seem incongruous to risk death in attacking an enemy position. In contrast, the civilian today may be called upon to risk death in order that some quite unromantic task should be carried out by the end of a given day. It requires a considerable degree of sophistication to feel that it is worth while to risk death so that a firm's ledger may be kept up to date. This can be perceived to be helping his country to win a war, but the chain of causality is feeble in the face of strong emotion, such as fear in an air raid. There is little emotional force in this ideal with which to combat or control violent primitive emotions.

The soldier is a member of a close unit expressly designed for facing tasks which involve the possibility of death. He knows that if anything happens to him his name is on a 'nominal roll' and that his absence is not likely to go undetected for long. Even so, the Army is quite familiar with the difficulties of maintaining morale on outpost duty or in an attack where extended order is imperative. The civilian is always isolated or at best a member of a very small outpost group. This isolation can help produce that loss of social sense which is one of the characteristics of panic fear.

The soldier is in uniform; anyone who remembers schoolboy 'shockers' will realize that he is not unused to the idea of blood and wounds on a uniformed body. The sight of blood on civilian clothes is, however, liable to be particularly unnerving. The soldier lives in a framework of rigid discipline that saves him from having to consider his own safety, except in so far as it touches the military efficiency of his group. The civilian has no really powerful check to the desire for self-preservation; indeed, he is licensed to consider his own safety to an extent that no soldier can be. The flood-gates are therefore open to

desires for self-preservation which can take a form that is primitive and not well adapted to a reality situation. There is a real danger that he will seek, not security, but infantile security.

The authorities in an army are supported and trained by manuals (such as the deservedly famous *Manual of Infantry Training*) which are veritable mines of rule-of-thumb applied as psychological prophylaxis.

These instances can be multiplied, but perhaps enough has been said to suggest a fruitful train of thought. The psychologist should have no difficulty in feeling a sympathetic understanding of a war neurosis case; but it is much to be desired that the public generally should be informed on such points. They might then take a more tolerant attitude towards the war neurosis patient, who often behaves in a way which is unconsciously intended to find an outlet for his deep guilt feelings by producing a condemnatory attitude in his fellows. Similarly, they may regard more tolerantly the anxieties and stresses which they fear in themselves.

From what has been said it will be seen that the strain of war will to some extent be diminished for those who are serving in some organization which has definite, clear-cut aims, with powerful emotional appeal and a discipline. The medical profession is, of course, just such an organization; and there are others.

From consideration of this rather crude summary it might be suggested that a simple way of cutting the Gordian knot would be to put everyone into uniform. Even if such a thing were possible it would be a mistake. Salvation probably lies in a full exploitation of the virtues of a democratic organization, not in its repudiation; for, to take one point alone, universal uniforms would, in fact, represent a complete repudiation of the stand upon which the war aims of this country are based. At the other extreme, the abandonment of the populace to fend for itself would lead at once to unbridled rumour-mongering, panic, and aggression towards all authority from the heads of the Government downwards.

For civilians it is necessary to find some modification of the disciplinary framework that exists in a fighting service and to base the organization of this discipline on the needs of a civil population.

Before examining these needs in greater detail it is important to consider the channels through which these needs can be satisfied. The first point is that as far as possible fresh organizations should

not be created; they would suffer from a lack of tradition and from being unknown quantities in the eyes of the public. In time of stress an unknown quantity is, by virtue of its being unknown, a hostile object. Therefore, as far as possible, the work of maintaining civilian morale and preventing widespread breakdown should be entrusted to authorities with which the public are already familiar. In the forefront of such organizations are of course the police. Their position is well established in the minds of the public; they have been trained in the handling of crowds and of individuals over whom their disciplinary hold has an elasticity and tolerance which is lacking in a military N.C.O. It is probably too late now, but it might have been advantageous if, in the first instance, no new organization had been created for Air Raid Wardens, but rather that the present Wardens had been made a part of a system of Special Constabulary. The great advantage of keeping as far as possible to known organizations is that in time of danger of death – to most people *the* Unknown – a real need is fulfilled in deep phantasy levels by the presence of authorities that have been familiar since childhood.

For the present we shall not elaborate this theme, but rather return to another aspect of the methods by which psychological A.R.P. is to be administered. It has been suggested above that all officials should be members of organizations, and that all activities should be functions of organizations, with which the public are familiar. The second point is that as far as possible the whole A.R.P. organization – Wardens, Fire Service and so on – should be divided into a small permanent staff and a huge temporary staff. The latter would if possible include almost the entire civil population and would only assume their duties, although as fully trained as possible for them, at the moment an air-raid emergency was signalled in any given district. At the end of the emergency period, be it short or long, they would relinquish their duties and authority, and return immediately to their ordinary civil work.

It is hoped that the above description arouses an echo in the mind of the reader as something with which he is not unfamiliar. This suggestion is put forward not merely because part-time service may be practically and financially advisable, for that has already been appreciated by the authorities, but because necessity can here be made a perfect advantage. In this country, mother of a colonial empire, most of us have been familiarized with stories of pioneering in distant

lands, of caravans trekking great distances and being attacked by Red Indians and other foes. Cannot this heritage be capitalized? Most of us remember how, when the alarm sounds, the men folk rushed to their weapons, a circle of carts was formed as a palisade, and the women fell to their allotted tasks of ammunition carriers, nurses and even warriors. The fight over, the attack beaten off, the march was resumed.

An air-raid warning, which is a call to arms should be, for everyone, an immediate call to a previously allotted duty. It can become an inspiriting experience if only the importance, reality, and present value of the phantasies and day-dreams of childhood are realized and used. If any reader will consider the possibilities of a working-out of a scheme built on such lines and compare them with the dreary defeatism of A.R.P. as we have seen it function on the few false alarms so far, he will surely agree that a scheme utilizing our mental heritage of adventure has power of eliciting just those emotional forces which were so useful to the soldier and so conspicuously lacking in the civilian's war.

The tasks allotted to aged people or to others unsuited to anything strenuous need not be much more than some trifling manipulative act. The writer remembers the satisfying feeling that was produced on one occasion during the last war, when the objective situation appeared desperate and the enemy commenced an attack, by the simple act of having to buckle on belt and equipment before standing to arms. There must be many who remember similar experiences, even if at the time they were unaware, as the writer then was, of the *modus operandi* of such an act (Rickman, 1938).

The alarm, then, must be a call to action, and there must be an action, however trivial, to which every man and woman is called. Not the least important aspect of such a procedure will be the engendering of a corporate feeling, a matter of great importance in a large town such as London, where the very high degree of urbanization has emphasized an isolationist individualism to an extent unknown in small communities.

It is not enough that this organization for raids should exist only in the working hours of a citizen's life. He must not feel part of a community if an air raid takes place during working hours, and completely lost if it takes place when he is at home. He should be a unit in the civil defence scheme of whatever place he is in at the time

of the raid. This point is quite fully appreciated in the organization of a munition factory. It has not been so easy to appreciate that, from the point of view of civilian morale, similarly detailed organization is essential in the meanest shop or the most insignificant home.

Its neglect is the first step towards giving the ordinary citizen a feeling that his home defence scheme, and consequently he himself, is of no importance to anyone. The social bonds have already been dangerously loosened.

Here is an example of this sort of A.R.P. scheme as it has already been worked out in an ordinary commercial house, admittedly a big firm, but not one whose services are invested with the glamour of war service in the same direct way as is the case in a munition factory. The shop sells almost entirely women's goods. Notices displayed to all customers state that on the sounding of an air-raid warning the assistant serving them has full instructions and will take them to shelter. The assistants thus form a framework, such as is provided in infantry units by section leaders. These 'wardens' then take customers to shelters. Each shelter holds only a few people and communication is provided between the separate shelters. There is a trained matron in attendance and bandages and simple drugs are available, drinking water and latrine accommodation. The staff are largely engaged in their spare time in knitting comforts for the troops.

They are encouraged to take this work with them so that they can pass the tedium of the raid period.

This scheme, it will be agreed, reflects very great credit on the firm's willingness and ability to meet a crisis. The point that probably is hard to realize is that the existence of this scheme, even throughout uneventful periods, has probably been of the greatest value to the psychological well-being of that firm's staff, and even of the shoppers who have inevitably seen the notices. The existence of the scheme and the evidence of careful forethought it provides produce an effect far beyond the crisis for which it is intended. From an individual aspect the great defect of the scheme – it has obviously nothing to do with the firm – is that the assistants probably return in the evening to homes where the sense of provident forethought is lacking. This point is not intended to be a criticism of the A.R.P. It is simply that for most people the return home represents a return to responsibility; a responsibility which, in spite of A.R.P. organizations, must on the whole be a lonely one. If the individual is a member

of a firm with a well-organized A.R.P., he can look up to superior authorities for help in dealing with customers who have temporarily become dependent upon him. At home he finds himself, as likely as not, the head of the unit. In consequence there is grave danger that the citizen faces the time of greatest responsibility and stress, and, in short, has to do the greatest amount of psychological 'work', just at that period – night – when phantasies obtrude most powerfully. Furthermore, this is a time which is supposed to be dedicated to recuperative rest from labour. It is probably inadvisable to try to extend the psychological atmosphere of the 'work' A.R.P. to the 'home' A.R.P.

It is far better if possible to devise some scheme whereby the individual's feeling for home should be helped to dwell on its 'good' or security-giving elements.

The psychologically sound A.R.P. scheme of a firm helps the worker to feel the care of a good parental image that feeds and clothes. A bad organization produces a bad image, e.g. the firm is something that 'gives me the sack'. Similarly a bad home A.R.P. will give the feeling of a home as a place that is nothing but a source of expense, anxiety and worry – i.e. a deprivatory image. Obviously a worker in a well-organized firm with good employers is better able to dispense that same atmosphere in his home than one whose employment conditions are bad. Can the A.R.P. home organization do anything to ameliorate the position of the latter?

Probably it can; but it is as well to see that no mean task has been thrust upon the organization. Hostile feelings will have been aroused towards parental images – the warden, however humble his authority, may easily find himself the first receptacle for their discharge. Perhaps his soundest course would be to try to bring such a person into his scheme. It is laid down in the handbook for Air Raid Wardens that they should keep in touch with members who could be relied on in an emergency. This should include the apparently disgruntled. But it is important that, unlike the subordinate assistant in the firm, the individual at home should be treated as one with *equal* authority. This may not be successful, but it presents the greatest hope of success.

There is a further point about the details of the scheme outlined above; it may have occurred to the reader. In the firm's scheme obviously it has not been possible to utilize the abilities of the customers who might be present when a warning sounded. The Government or appropriate local authorities could arrange that every citizen on the

National Register was able to display, if necessary by a badge (see below) worn only when a raid sounded, just what duties he was fitted to perform. Thus a nurse who was shopping would, by putting on some recognized badge, immediately notify the authorities of the store that if necessary she was available to fulfil certain duties during the time she was forced to remain in shelter. In this way, not only would the capacities of the permanent staff be mobilized, but also the potentialities of the customers at that moment in the shop.

The number of people condemned to a harassing passivity would be at once reduced, and with it the danger of panicky reactions.

If a system of official badges is too elaborate, at least wardens and others in charge of shelters should be encouraged to carry out an immediate enquiry of the people present with them in a raid.

This enquiry itself would have a calming effect by introducing a community feeling. Raids are bound to leave their train of psychological casualties. Some of these will be so serious that nothing short of specialized treatment will help; that treatment, it is assumed, will have to be carried out in some allegedly safe area. The problem of civilian reactions and morale is, however, more concerned with the so-called mild cases. In theory there are dangers in leaving them to return to their homes, where they may act as 'carriers'. In practice one may doubt whether this will be as dangerous as some are inclined to think. The real danger lies not so much in returning such a patient home, but in doing that and nothing further. Some way ought to be evolved by which such patients are given assistance; if possible a method of assistance that could surreptitiously be extended also to include the so-called normal individual. Now that war is upon us, the procedure of analysis is ruled out for rapid large-scale measures and it is worthwhile seeing whether any of the points already considered in this chapter can help us to evolve a scheme that will help to solve the problem of mild civilian breakdown.

It has been suggested that the best plan is to enlist the help of a series of organizations to train the individual not to be unduly alarmed by the echoes that are evoked in his own mind by the nightmare noises of others, further, that the function of these organizations will be to wean him from the phantasy levels of his mind by steady insistence on the facts of objective reality.

It has been suggested that this work should be done by existing organizations. So far only the police force have been mentioned. But

for the more active proposals which are to be put forward it will be necessary to elicit the aid of educational authorities, Citizens Advice Bureaux, and others who ordinarily administer the wide series of activities known as 'Social Services'.

With regard to personnel, it would seem a pitiful waste not to make use, to the widest possible extent, of the fund of knowledge of the reality of war that is latent in many thousands of quite insignificant ex-service men. If they are not used they may represent a source of danger, for no one can be quite sure how a veteran of the last war, after twenty years of armistice, is going to react to the stresses and strains of a new war; one, moreover, which he has to face in unfamiliar circumstances and without the framework of the Army organization to support him. But if he can be used wisely he may become the unofficial N.C.O. of the civil population of today.

In all probability it will not be possible to provide authorities, who are willing to co-operate, with a sort of foolproof rule-of-thumb bible which can help them in the way that Army training manuals help the N.C.O.; but some means must be found by which the procedures adopted by the various authorities shall be based on psychologically sound principles. This does not mean that the 'psychological' aspect must be made to obtrude itself in this, any more than it does in military training. Experience shows that unless psychological training has been very thorough, a half-baked knowledge of the subject is only synonymous with a loss of intuition and even of common sense.

The incident of the recruit and the veteran referred to earlier may perhaps serve here as a concrete reminder of the main (but not the only) principle for such therapeutic activity as can be carried out by existing organizations. The object is to produce an educational system that emphasizes the reality elements in the war situation.

It may be helpful to consider now some possibilities in greater detail. They are only suggestions, which can no doubt be amplified and improved by the imagination of the reader and according to the dictates of further experience. Immediately an attempt is made to suggest the practical application of these ideas fresh difficulties become obvious. Perhaps the most obstinate of these, and one that may have occurred to the reader at the outset, is the moral or philosophical bias implied in the writing of this chapter. Admittedly the object of the discussion is to evolve methods by which a civil population is to be assisted to resist physical violence (if necessary by physical

violence) in an attempt to maintain a certain international policy. In analytical forms of therapy the need for strict impartiality on the part of the analyst is a commonplace of the technique. The need for a similar impartiality in suggestion or re-education techniques has not, however, been so clearly understood, partly because it appears to be in conflict with the whole method of 'suggestion'. Nevertheless it is a part of the educational ideal of this country that education should, if possible, be kept free from political bias. The difficulty of doing this is not as apparent to laymen as to psychologists who have been trained to be familiar with the workings of unconscious phantasies. Regarding the matter strictly from the point of view of a psychologist, some means must be found by which morale must be maintained without in any way dictating the ends to which the individual uses the capacities which he is helped to retain in efficiency. In theory this means that for those who are concerned with the maintenance of psychological health the first step is to deal successfully with the 'Hitlerism' in themselves. In practice today it means that occupational therapy or prophylaxis must be confined to such matters as give to the teacher the minimum scope for impressing his own political or other views on the individual.

Fortunately it should not be difficult to avoid the grosser pitfalls. The first general check on unsound tendencies might be provided by attempting to keep in the forefront of psychological A.R.P. the aims of elaborating a system which should be as useful in peace as in war, and capable of being adapted to the change from one to the other. For example, at present a series of courses in adult education could be devoted to the simpler aspects of making life liveable in war. The essence of the curriculum should be its adaptability to meet changing circumstances. Subjects chosen would have to have very limited objectives. There could be courses in wartime cookery. Instruction might be given that would enable the average householder to set about the kind of simple household repairs and tasks which he has done for him in peacetime, but for which labour is not available in war. The utter helplessness of the urbanized civilian of today when confronted with the simplest tasks outside his ordinary work is not only likely to be a potent factor in inducing the impotent fretfulness that spreads rapidly in a wartime community, but is a matter that needs to be combated if a peacetime community is to retain its vigour. Together with instruction in matters which affect the citizen from day

to day, preparation should be made for more specialized courses to be interpolated at will if circumstances changed. For example, in a district that had been heavily raided it should be possible for the instructional centre immediately to interpolate a few hours of instruction, for those who care to attend, in making a habitable shelter of a wrecked or partially wrecked house. Most ex-service men have learned the knack, in no mere academic school, of obtaining for themselves some sort of creature comforts in the most adverse circumstances. It must be remembered that to them a wrecked house would, in the last war, have represented possibilities for almost palatial comfort. The British Legion, perhaps, would be able to pool its resources and make them available, at need, to any instructional centre that requested it. It is hoped that enough has been said to enable the reader to elaborate further and perhaps better detailed schemes. The point that is perhaps worth emphasizing is that any institution should make its course *flexible* so that an instant appeal could be made to the individual; it is no good producing elaborate courses in field fortification for the delectation of a populace that has not experienced an air raid. It must be prepared to put on a thoroughly practical demonstration of how to make a lean-to splinter-proof shelter that would be in the compass of any citizen who had just had his home blown down. Any instructional centre that succeeded in being thus practical and topical would have learned lessons that would stand it in good stead in happier times.

For those inclined to deplore such suggestions as lacking in cultural value, it may be pointed out that they are only first steps. Moreover, while it is not intended to exclude more elaborate courses, it seems best at first to exclude matters that can be made the vehicle for pernicious propaganda. But more important is the need to elaborate schemes that involve fairly simple manipulative acts of a constructive nature and with a strong emotional appeal. It must be remembered that the aspect of these activities with which this chapter is concerned is their value in maintaining and fortifying psychological health. In practice any elaborations of these suggestions found to be prophylactically valuable, and any variations upon them, would be matters which should be given the widest immediate publicity by their originator.

Similarly, suggestions found to be ineffectual should be ruthlessly scrapped. There is nothing more damning to a scheme of instruction,

as those who experienced the more high-falutin' Army instructional schools of the last war will remember, than a lecture or course that suggests that the teacher is out of touch with changed conditions.

To recapitulate briefly, existing organizations should be used in preference to new organizations. They should be asked to produce educational schemes of a simple nature that could be carried out by psychologically untrained people. The courses themselves should be not only practical but based upon the advice of trained psychologists who have chosen them for their value in satisfying deep emotional needs. Some of these courses could include the passing of tests which carried the right to a badge of the kind suggested on pages 14–15.

After this necessarily brief consideration of practical details, a new problem presents itself. Granting that such instructional facilities are made available, how is the psychological casualty to be handled? The thoroughgoing breakdown will go through medical channels. The so-called 'normal' will, it is hoped, be helped to continue being 'normal' by being given an educational and social framework into which he can fit. The problem lies in the sort of person who goes to a casualty station or a doctor wanting something for his 'nerves', or because he can't sleep. If he merely wishes to impress his infantilism on a Citizens Advice Bureau it may be possible to ease him off on to a course of disguised occupational therapy.

But if the patient has reached the stage of feeling 'ill', then tact and care will have to be exercised by the doctor. By all means let him put the patient on 'the bottle', on mist. gent, alk., or whatever his favourite tipple is. But let him also go further and wean him from it. This may be easier to do if as his next therapeutic measure he can take the step of sending the patient back to school – even if it is now for adult education. It may be as well now to turn to the problem presented by a deterioration of morale in any given district. For the doctor this will probably show itself by an increase in the number of irritable and 'jittery' people with whom he has to deal, and by a very great increase in his sick.

In London, where communal bonds are unfortunately slight at the best of times, except in poorer districts, it may not be so easy to detect a loss of community spirit, but it is worth watching for. The spread of rumour may also be a valuable index, particularly if the type of rumour is carefully regarded. The writer remembers with gratitude a certain divisional artillery that used to delight in the daily

manufacture of rumour in burlesque. Real rumour has not always this therapeutic quality, as will be easily realized by those who remember sinister suggestions of privilege in high places, which occasionally went the rounds in the last war. A deterioration of morale that has gone to very serious lengths can show itself in negligence in the burial of the dead and in slovenliness in personal hygiene, but such a state, it is hoped, will not be allowed to occur.[1]

When symptoms of deterioration are observed, it would be as well to look to certain points. The first of the civilian's difficulties lies in the trying nature of his position and his inadequate opportunity for finding an outlet for aggression.

He is 'not seriously engaged but in the thick of it' (cf. description of retreat from Mons in *The War the Infantry Knew*, p. 47 [Dunn, 1938]). But morale can suffer if there is an influx of strangers into a neighbourhood – be they fresh authorities or 'refugees'.

The stranger is distrusted and morale deteriorates even in an army battalion if it is heavily reinforced and put into action; the newcomers are disliked as newcomers. The trade union objection to 'dilution' is not simply based on a desire to profiteer.

Again, the formation of coteries amongst the well-to-do would reflect itself rapidly in a break-up of morale in the mass of civilians who in some sense look to them for leadership. This would be particularly marked if the authorities in any A.R.P. district were felt to be split up into cliques.

Morale may deteriorate if authorities are felt to be out of touch with subordinates; but actually this is more liable to occur because of the failure to maintain equality of psychological development between leaders and led, as, for example, when one party or other is out of the danger zone. In this context it must be remembered that the populace is not likely to object, at first, to leaders who provide themselves with extra protection. There can be a tacit agreement to allow the privilege of greater security to the leaders in return for the privilege of maintaining the right to repudiate all personal responsibility for the war or its consequences. A similar attitude may result from too rigid a censorship of news or any other activity that is felt to debar a civil population from being 'seriously engaged', but still leaves them 'in the thick of it'.

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[1]Edmonds (1934), *Military Operations, 1918,* iii, p. 215 n.

Finally a warning must be uttered against 'safety first', especially as the emphasis has been placed heavily on this aspect of war by the evacuation schemes. Whether he is aware of it or not, each citizen is waging war against the enemy. It saddles him with an almost intolerable burden of personal responsibility if he is told at the same time not to risk his life.

A doctor who has to deal with a returned 'evacuee' should not suggest that he is a criminal to risk his life, and that no one will be responsible for the consequences that follow. He should rather point out that now that the individual has returned, he will, if need be, be *expected* to risk his life. If a doctor finds he is continually being called upon to deal with patients from one particular district, or firm, or factory, he should make it his business to enquire into conditions there. A word of advice or help may work wonders, and it is hoped that some part of what has been said here may help him in the choice of what advice to give.

It is very probable that any reader who has read as far as this, particularly if he be a doctor, has by now developed a headache. Burdened already with the cares of practice, with patients physically ill, he may be aghast at the matters that are implied here to he within his purview. It must be his only consolation that no doctor is ever spared responsibility and, whether he likes it or not, the responsibility for the maintenance of morale will, to very great extent, fall upon him. He will be the first to know, by the length of his out-patient queue, if his district is in bad psychological condition. He may well, therefore, take some part in bringing to the notice of non-medical colleagues in his district, factors which ultimately concern him very closely indeed.

In conclusion, for those who are unduly depressed by 'subversive' ideas, we must remember Act IV of *Henry V,* and in particular this quotation:

> *Henry V.* . . . Methinks I could not die anywhere so contented as in the king's company – his cause being just and his quarrel honourable.
>
> *Williams.* That's more than we know.
>
> [*Henry V,* Act IV, sc i.]

Michael Williams was not a supporter of the Duke of Alengon and the French did not win Agincourt.

ON GROUPS

1943

‘On Groups’ was written in the summer of 1943 but was never published. It is included here because of its importance as a background to the other publications on groups in this volume.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In 1940, Bion sent a paper to his former analyst, John Rickman, concerning the use of group methods in the therapeutic rehabilitation of traumatized soldiers. The paper was known later as the Wharncliffe Memorandum, because of the establishment in which Rickman was posted at the time, the Wharncliffe Emergency Hospital. Rickman's attempts to put into practice these ideas of Bion's were felt to be so incompatible with the existing medical relationships – the power and authority structure in particular, as well as the initial chaos involved at the beginning of such a venture – that his attempts failed. It subsequently became known as the Wharncliffe Experiment.

In the autumn of 1942 Rickman was working at the Northfield Military Hospital in Birmingham, with permission to try out new forms of treatment. Bion joined him there, and they applied some of the main ideas in the 'memorandum' paper. Substantially, these notes (published here as 'On Groups'), found among Bion's War Office Selection Board (WOSB) notes, are the backbone of that approach. They were fleshed out for 'Intra-Group Tensions in Group Therapy', which was published in the *Lancet*, 27 November 1943, and subsequently included as the first in the papers about group mentality collected together in 1961 and published as *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers* (this volume), at the instigation of John Harvard-Watts and Francesca Bion.

Bion's primary aim was to acquaint the men with a method for studying their intra-group tensions,[1] in relation to the levels of organization in

[1]Later, as a psychoanalyst, Bion, following Freud's structural model of the mind, was to consider internal anxiety situations within the psyche of the individual as particular instances of 'intra-group tensions', arising from the fact that the processes of introjection and projection are associated with identificatory

which they existed, and this goal was more important than a notion of 'cure'. This was to be one of the most important and consistent principles in Bion's life as a psychoanalyst. This primary task – of acquainting participants with their intra-group tensions by learning from experiences in their groupings – was described by Bion in the following terms in a section that later appeared in the 1946 paper, 'The Leaderless Group Project':[1]

> Throughout the whole experiment certain basic principles, believed to be absolutely essential, were observed. In order of their importance they are set down here, even though it involves repetition.
>
> 1. The objective of the wing was the study of its own internal tensions, in a real-life situation, with a view to laying bare the influence of neurotic behaviour in producing frustration, waste of energy, and unhappiness in a group.
> 2. No problem was tackled until its nature and extent had become clear at least to the greater part of the group.
> 3. The remedy for any problem was only applied when the remedy itself had been scrutinized and understood by the group.
> 4. Study of the problem of intra-group tensions never ceased – the day consisted of 24 hours.
> 5. It was more important that the method should be grasped, and its rationale, than that some solution of a problem of the wing should be achieved for all time. It was *not* our object to produce an ideal training wing. It *was* our object to send men out with at least some understanding of the nature of intra-group tensions and, if possible, with some idea of how to set about harmonizing them.[2]
> 6. As in all group activities, the study had to commend itself to the majority of the group as worthwhile and for this reason it had to be the study of a real-life situation.

Bion's notes are useful alongside such accounts in understanding the innovative group study and treatment initiatives that came to be known as the 'Northfield Experiment'. These were important initiatives in the development of psychiatry and in the formation of the notion of a therapeutic community, in spite of the first of them, led by Bion, being closed down by the military authorities after just a few weeks.

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phantasies that produce an inner world containing groups – object relations – constituting group mentality as an inextricable part of an individual's personality.

[1]The next paper in this volume after 'On Groups'.

[2]This, together with the first point listed, is the basic principle governing the Group Relations model of working with groups.

On Groups

In the treatment of individuals neurotic disability is attacked as a problem of the individual. In the rehabilitation centre neurotic disability had to be attacked as a problem of the society. But this fact had to be made clear to the patients and it had to be done in such a way that the men could see early for themselves that this was not simply a pious aspiration but was a job of work that lay before them and the doctor alike. How this was to be done was in itself a problem.

A way of solution presented itself in an unexpected manner. In the course of attempting to build up a healthy and sound discipline it seemed best not to attempt some formal and drill-like obedience but rather to aim at the sort of discipline that pervades a good regiment in action or in a theatre of war. As anyone with combatant experience is aware, contact with the enemy brings about the sort of relaxation in discipline that is analogous to the difference that can be observed between the studied accuracy of a coach demonstrating a stroke at tennis, and the same stroke carried out by an experienced player during a match. Petty detail is not insisted on, yet the discipline as a whole is rigorous in the extreme; the letter of the law is not binding but the observance of its spirit is exact. But how was such an ideal to be attained? In action there is an enemy and there is danger; there is a unifying purpose to give point to obedience and to make clear at last the value of procedures long endured but never loved. What could take the place of this enemy?

The common purpose to be substituted for the fighting soldier's aim to defeat the enemy had to be found, and it had to possess the same reality and urgency and importance for the survival of the society and the individuals composing it. Obviously, there was only one aim in a psychiatric hospital that could be comparable and which in

the event proved itself to be comparable – the determination to tackle neurotic disability as a problem, a social problem, of each man in the psychiatric centre.

This analogy, to call it no more, with the fighting front proved most fruitful. It became clear that if the best results were to be achieved it would be necessary for the patients to gain an appreciation of neurotic disability as their problem and not merely a problem that concerned one little part of the community – the officers or doctors for example. The patients had to be partners in the attack on neurosis just as the soldiers in a good regiment are partners in an attack on the enemy.

It was hoped that a realization of the problem and its dangers would lead to the spontaneous building up of '*esprit de corps*' and a powerful and healthy discipline; in the event this hope was more than justified and that in a surprisingly short space of time.

How was this brought about? A short account of the growth of the training centre may help to make it clear. On the first day some nine men were picked up who were loafing about in the wards excused from a route march that the rest were paraded for each afternoon. They were invited to start on an informal discussion so that a start could be made on getting to know the men and something of their outlook. It immediately became clear that they were so disaffected and resentful about grievances, real or imaginary, that nothing could be expected of them but a flood of complaint. It was decided to listen to this as a means of assessing the morale of the wing, insofar as these men represented it.

There was very little evidence of ability to make any constructive contributions – nevertheless, valuable information was obtained and towards the end of the long session one man began to put forward sensible suggestions for the organization of activities. The most important point, however, was contained in a grievance that slipped out almost accidentally – "Why can't they get our co-operation in what they want to do?" – "they" presumably referring to the Officers.

Later, walks round the wards of the training centre suggested a feeling of impotence and aimlessness amongst the patients with a considerable barrier between the permanent staff and themselves.

The staff N.C.O.s were interviewed and it was found that they had little real appreciation of their task, and indeed, they said they did

not know what they were at the hospital for. As a whole, the N.C.O.s were anxious to learn but complained that they were not concerned with training but had to fulfil such tasks as fire piquet.

No alteration was made in existing arrangements except to open the Carpenter's shop and see that as many men as wanted to could have recourse to that and to the handicraft room.

In order to lay the foundation for a period later on for group therapy a parade was ordered for half-an-hour before the mid-day meal. This took place in one of the day rooms. A fortnight after the wing was started the mid-day parade was made a daily event. The object of the meeting was therapeutic but this, of course, was not stated.

The following rules of the running of the wing were announced:

> Every man on the Training Wing must do P.T. once a day unless excused on medical grounds.
>
> Every man must be a member of a group; he could form a group of his own or (join) any group already in existence. Each group would have as its aim the pursuit of some occupation chosen by itself. The group would have to make its own proposals and when these were sufficiently far advanced bring them to the psychiatrist, who would as far as possible give facilities for any scheme that had been worked out in sufficient detail.
>
> A man could be a member of any number of groups he chose and could fill in his day by attending such groups of his choice as were operating on any given day. Any man unable at any time to take part in a group because he did not feel up to it could absent himself from his groups but would have to spend this time in the rest room where a M.N.O. would take his name.
>
> The rest room had to be kept quiet but could be used for reading or writing or playing games such as chess; or the patient could lie on a couch if he so wished. He could talk if he let the M.N.O. know first and provided he did not disturb other patients.
>
> The route march would still take place but on a voluntary basis; Any man going on it and finding himself unable to keep up would have to get a pass back to the camp.

After announcing these plans, the men were told to start at once to suggest groups that they wanted to form and put their names down

for them. Groups were formed for the following occupations all suggested by the men themselves.

Car maintenance – about half a dozen; Table-making – two sergeants; Handicrafts – about fifteen; Swimming – half a dozen; Carpentry – six; Correspondence Class – three; Music and gramophone – six; Map-reading – two. Miniature range – three. But the only enthusiasm was shown for a suggestion that they should be dancing lessons, and 20 men put themselves down for this. Their attitude was faintly defiant and gave the impression that they wished to test the sincerity of the statement that they could choose their own groups and that facilities would be given if they put forward concrete proposals. All these groups were told to get started and discuss any difficulties that arose. On succeeding days fresh groups were formed and dealt with in the same way.

The Sand Table group started operations straight away, and so for the most part did the handicrafts group, but only one or two turned out in the work room for the first few days.

For the first two or three days very little was done, but clearly a great deal of discussion was going on. Most of it was rather suspicious. On the fourth day the staff N.C.O.s asked for a meeting to raise various points. There were about nine of them present and it was arranged to hold a daily meeting with them so that there could be a free exchange of ideas and so that they might feel that they were not being debarred from any part of the work.

On the Sixth Day during P.T. men were asked to criticize the work of different squads. They themselves observed that it was listless and aimless.

In the meantime, the meetings were becoming more alive and the training wing as a whole began to show interest in the new experiment. There was, however, still considerable suspicion. In particular, it was noticeable that the discussion at the daily parade meeting, though lively and apparently practical, led to very little activity.

A Car Maintenance group was formed, and tools obtained by the patients themselves; yet quite often nobody was found doing maintenance during work hours.

THE LEADERLESS GROUP PROJECT

1946

'The Leaderless Group Project' was published in 1946 in *The Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic, 10*: 77–81.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

This short paper was published in the same volume of the *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* in which Harold Bridger published his account of the Northfield Experiment – the group initiative to which Bion and Rickman had also contributed. The core principle of that initiative appears in 'The Leaderless Group Project' as follows: "The therapeutic occupation of the group was the study of the tensions within itself."

In the field of Officer Selection Bion had felt it important to be able to find realistic opportunities to observe how potential leaders of men would fare in their attempts to maintain relationships under conditions of strain. In situations of strain, observed Bion, the soldier would be drawn by the threats in the prevailing emotional circumstances into relinquishing his feelings of concern and responsibility for his fellows and to look instead to his own interests. Bion was to meet this predicament again later in his career when he became familiar with the theories developed by Melanie Klein, particularly her descriptions of the tensions between the depressive position – in which the capacity grows for personal concern for the welfare of internal and external objects – and the paranoid-schizoid position, in which the survival of the endangered self takes precedence.

Many years later, when Bion was training to become a psychoanalyst, one of his seminar leaders was Hanna Segal. She had asked each member of her seminar what they thought was the most significant capacity required to function as a psychoanalyst, and she recalled Bion's response, which stood out as having been derived from hard-won experience. He had said, without hesitation, "the capacity to maintain an important relationship under strain".

It was this capacity, together with that of being able to understand and to manage the anxieties inherent in being part of a group, which

were studied by Bion and his colleagues in the Northfield Experiment in the 1940s, in what Eric Trist (1985) termed the 'group decade'. The experiences of such groups and the processes arising from them were a major factor in stimulating Bion's interest in psychoanalysis. In his observational, leaderless groups, one of the guiding principles of his primarily observational and leaderless groups was that greater importance was attached to the comprehension of the method being applied and its underlying values than to the concrete resolution of problems. The aim of these pioneers in the analysis of group mentality was to foster understanding, to "send men out with at least some understanding of the nature of intra-group tensions and, if possible, with some idea of how to set about harmonizing them". This statement echoes the values reflected in the paragraph with which Bion concluded his 1948 paper, 'Group Methods of Treatment':

> As far as I have been able to judge, most of the patients who have claimed to be better have not approached any standard that I should regard as satisfactory in individual treatment. The nature of these cures has, also, seemed to me to be quite easily explained on the basis of suggestion, a flight from self-knowledge, and so forth. Nevertheless. I think that there is an element or improvement which is stable and genuine. I do not know what this is due to, but I think it probably depends upon the fact that the psychological experience which the patient has had in the group has enabled him to attain, not to knowledge, but to the pursuit of it.

The Leaderless Group Project

When the War Office Selection Boards were set up, it was believed by many that both the supply and the quality of officers was falling off and must continue to fall off as the war went on. There was certainly very little doubt that that belief was true in so far as it referred to the past. But as the senior psychiatrist called in to advise on selection and methods of selection, I pointed out that there was no reason why this statement should be regarded as an axiom. It could be maintained that in a nation at war the supply of leaders could be made to increase, and their quality, thanks to the compulsion of national need, could be made to improve. For this to happen, selection of candidates would have to be at least as careful as the selection, in forestry, of trees to be converted to timber.

The proposals put forward to bring this state of affairs to pass, over the whole field of selection and not merely at the War Office Selection Boards, were rejected and need detain us no longer. It became necessary to confine our activities to the selection of candidates from among those who appeared at the Boards.

Technique of selection

The essence of the technique which was evolved, and which has since become the basis of selection techniques in many different fields, was to provide a framework in which selecting officers, including a psychiatrist, could observe a man's capacity for maintaining personal relationships in a situation of strain that tempted him to disregard the interests of his fellows for the sake of his own. The situation had to be a real-life situation. The situation of strain, and the temptation to give

full rein to his personal ambitions, was already there: the candidate arrived prepared to do his best and get himself a commission, and, naturally, he feared the possibility of failure. Furthermore this was a real-life situation. The problem was to make capital of this existing emotional field in order to test the quality of the man's relationships with his fellows.

This was done by a method so simple and so obvious, when it has been propounded, that its revolutionary nature can easily be lost sight of. The man found he was not entered in a free-for-all competition with other candidates. Instead, he found himself the member of a group, and, apparently, all the tests were tests, not of himself, but of the group. In concrete terms, a group of eight or nine candidates, an 'eye-full' from the testing officer's point of view, was told to build, say, a bridge. No lead was given about organization or leadership; these were left to emerge, and it was the duty of the observing officers to watch how any given man was reconciling his personal ambitions, hopes and fears with the requirements exacted by the group for its success. That, in brief outline, is the basic principle of all the Leaderless Group Tests.

A little consideration will show that the situation thus created is closely parallel with countless other emotional situations in an officer's life, not even excluding action. For though the emotional tensions in this situation are low compared with those in battle, they are nevertheless sufficiently powerful to make all candidates feel that their time at a War Office Selection Board has been a heavy strain despite the interest of the experience and the apparently easy program. It was found that if the testing officers watch what they are meant to watch, they have no difficulty in matching what they have found out about a man's personality with what they know will be the sort of job with which he will have to cope as an officer.

It is safe to say that nearly all mistakes arise through failure to keep the selecting officers mindful, throughout all the tests, of the very simple basic principles mentioned above. Either officers tend to interfere, and so distort the field, or else they watch how well the group does any given task. It is important to insist that the actual task of the test is merely a cloak of invisibility for the testing officers who are present: an artificiality intended to explain, and therefore to explain away, the presence of the testing officers. It is not the artificial test, but the real-life situation that has to be watched – that is, the way

in which a man's capacity for personal relationships stands up under the strain of his own and other men's fear of failure and desires for personal success.

Parallel situation in the psychiatric hospital

The difficulty which is experienced in teaching officers to watch the real-life situation in these selection procedures is unhappily met again in psychiatric hospital practice. An observer with combatant experience could not help being struck by the great gulf that yawned between the life led by patients in a psychiatric hospital, even when supposed to be ready for discharge, and the military life from which their breakdown had released them. Time and again treatment appears to be, in the broadest sense, sedative: sedative for doctors and patients alike. Occupational therapy meant helping keep the patients occupied – usually on a kindergarten level. Some patients had individual interviews; a few, usually the more spectacular, were dosed with hypnotics. Sometimes a critic might be forgiven for wondering whether these were intended to enable the doctor to go to sleep.

It thus seemed necessary to bring the atmosphere of the psychiatric hospital into closer relationship with the functions it ought to fulfil. Unfortunately for the success of any attempt to do this, psychiatry has already accepted the doubtful analogy of physical maladies and treatments as if they were in fact similar to neurotic disorders. The apparatus of the psychiatric hospital, huge buildings, doctors, nurses and the rest, together provide a magnificent smoke screen into which therapists and patients alike disappear when it becomes evident that someone may want to know what social function is being fulfilled, in the economy of a nation at war, by this aggregate of individuals.

It must of course be remembered that in a psychiatric hospital there are collected all those men with whom ordinary military procedures have failed to cope. In this brief account it is not necessary to recapitulate in detail the steps taken to deal with this situation. They have already been described elsewhere. But, briefly, it was essential first to find out what was the ailment afflicting the community, as opposed to the individuals composing it, and next to give the community a common aim. In general all psychiatric hospitals have the same ailment and the same common aim – to escape from the

batterings of neurotic disorder. Unfortunately the attempt to get this relief is nearly always by futile means – retreat. Without realizing it, doctors and patients alike are running away from the complaint.

Group discussions

The first thing then was to teach the community (in this case the Military Training Wing) to seek a different method of release. The flight from neurotic disorder had to be stopped; as in a regiment, morale had to be raised to a point where the real enemy could be faced. The establishment of morale is of course hardly a pre-requisite of treatment: it is treatment, or a part of it. The first thing was for the officer in charge not to be afraid of making a stand himself; the next to rally about him those patients who are not already too far gone to be steadied. To this end discussions were carried out with small groups. In there the same freedom was allowed as is permitted in any form of free association: it was not abused. These small groups were similar in organization and appearance to the Leaderless Group Tests, known as group discussions, which had already been used, though for a different purpose, in the W.O.S.B.[1]

As soon as a sufficient number of patients had in this way been persuaded to face their enemy instead of running away from it, a daily meeting of half an hour was arranged for the whole training wing, consisting of between 100 and 200 men. Ostensibly these meetings were concerned only with the organization of the activities of the wing. The wing by now had been split up into a series of voluntary groups whose objects varied from learning dancing to studying the regulations governing army pay. In fact the problems of organization, of course, hinged on the problems of personal relationships. Lost tools in the handicraft section, defective cinema apparatus, permission to use the local swimming baths, the finding of a football pitch – all these matters came back to the same thing: the manipulation and harmonization of personal relationships. As a result, almost immediately these big meetings, as well as the small ones, became spontaneously a study of the intra-group tensions, and this study was established as the main task of the whole group and all smaller groups within it.

[1][War Office Selection Boards. *Ed.*]

Study of tensions

Thus occupational therapy had been given a new meaning. The therapeutic occupation of the group was the study of the tensions within itself. It was not basket making, or learning to swim, or carpentry, or studying army pay, even though such activities might, and often did, bring relief. It was a result of this therapeutic activity that the group began to think, and a deputation voiced the thought, that 80% of the members of the training wing were 'skrim-shankers', 'work-shys', malingerers and the rest, and ought to be punished. A month before, the training wing had complained indignantly that inmates of a psychiatric hospital were regarded by the rest of the community as being just these things. It was disconcerting, but a revelation of what psychiatry could mean, when the psychiatrist refused to accept this wholesale diagnosis and simple proposal of punishment as the appropriate form of therapy, as a sound solution of a problem which has troubled society since its commencement. The therapeutic occupation had to be hard thinking, and not the abreaction of moral indignation. Within a month of the start of this metier these patients began to bear at least a recognizable resemblance to soldiers.

Guiding principles

Throughout the whole experiment certain basic principles, believed to be absolutely essential, were observed. In order of their importance they are set down here, even though it involves repetition.

1. The objective of the wing was the study of its own internal tensions, in a real-life situation, with a view to laying bare the influence of neurotic behaviour in producing frustration, waste of energy, and unhappiness in a group.
2. No problem was tackled until its nature and extent had become clear at least to the greater part of the group.
3. The remedy for any problem was only applied when the remedy itself had been scrutinized and understood by the group.
4. Study of the problem of intra-group tensions never ceased – the day consisted of 24 hours.

5. It was more important that the method should be grasped, and its rationale, than that some solution of a problem of the wing should be achieved for all time. It was *not* our object to produce an ideal training wing. It *was* our object to send men out with at least some understanding of the nature of intra-group tensions and, if possible, with some idea of how to set about harmonizing them.
6. As in all group activities, the study had to commend itself to the majority of the group as worthwhile and for this reason it had to be the study of a real-life situation.

The psychiatrist's problem

One of the difficulties facing a psychiatrist who is treating combatant soldiers is his feeling of guilt that he is trying to bring them to a state of mind in which they will have to face dangers, not excluding loss of life, that he himself is not called upon to face. A rare event, but one that does occur, is when an officer is called upon to stop a retreat which should not be taking place. His prominence at such a time will certainly mean that he will be shot at by the enemy; in extreme cases he may even be shot at by his own side. Outside Nazi Germany psychiatrists are not likely to be shot for doing their job, though of course they can be removed from their posts. Any psychiatrist who attempts to make groups study their own tensions, as a therapeutic occupation, is in today's conditions stopping a retreat and may as a result be shot at. But he will lose some of his feeling of guilt.

In conclusion it must be remembered that the study of intra-group tensions is a group job. Therefore, so long as the group survives, the psychiatrist must be prepared to take his own disappearance from the scene in not too tragic a sense. Once the rout is stopped, even quite timid people can perform prodigies of valour so that there should be plenty of people to take his place.

PSYCHIATRY AT A TIME OF CRISIS

1948

‘Psychiatry at a Time of Crisis’ was an Address from the Chair to the Medical Section of the British Psychological Society on 22 January 1947. It was published in 1948 in the *British Journal of Medical Psychology, 21* (Part 2): 81–89, and was reprinted in 1992 in *Cogitations* (London: Karnac, pp. 337–352).

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The paper is a rare example of Bion linking his method of observation in relation to group mental life, together with his speculations, to the institutions and wider culture of society. It has echoes of Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930a).

It begins with a beautifully concise summary of the reasons for setting up the first Northfield Experiment. The presenting problem is described thus: "[I]n the methods employed to deal with neurosis, some sort of equilibrium of insincerity had been achieved by patients, doctors and community alike."

The treatment he described in these terms: "The only occupation that could be therapeutic was the study by the group of the nature of the affliction from which they individually and collectively suffered." The outcome: "The experiment was brought to a close by the authorities, and since it has not proved possible to investigate their state of mind I cannot suggest a cause of failure."

What he learned from the experiment, and went on to explore over the course of the next few years in what Eric Trist (1985) has called the 'group decade', stemmed from his finding that "something in the dynamics of unconscious tendencies in a group made the group peculiarly sensitive to any investigation of its emotional tensions" – the equivalent in group mental life to what Freud (1930a) had earlier described in the individual psyche as the active resistance presented by the dynamic unconscious to its contents and processes being rendered conscious by the psychoanalytic method.

Bion makes a learned case for the inclusion of what he calls 'the emotional component in human relationships' and the importance of the study of it rather than its manipulation. His major themes he outlines as: (1) The existence of disparate academic disciplines studying

group and institutional life, each with different languages and aims. (2) The problematic relationship between the rapid rate of technological advances and the slower, more fragile development of emotional growth. (3) The question as to whether Western civilization will be able to gather the maturity required to face up to the challenge of recognizing the operation of the powerful unconscious impulses contained within it. And (4) that the direction of civilization in the West appears to be towards greater time and opportunities for leisure, a condition precisely suited to the obtrusion of powerful infantile unconscious impulses and primitive phantasy relationships. Bion brings together his wide-ranging thoughts and speculations in the paper, showing how, for the citizen and the psychiatric profession, the four themes converge in the present time of crisis.

Psychiatry at a Time of Crisis

A visit to the occupational therapy department of a military psychiatric hospital during the early part of the war convinced me that, in the methods employed to deal with neurosis, some sort of equilibrium of insincerity had been achieved by patients, doctors and community alike. The nature of this equilibrium was not understood or even observed; I concluded that the only occupation that could be therapeutic was the study by the group of the nature of the affliction from which they individually and collectively suffered.

When I had the opportunity some years later of putting this idea into practice the result was a powerful release of emotion which showed itself chiefly in heightened morale amongst the patients, acts of indiscipline by two warrant officers of the staff – *ex officio* stable personalities – and minor but persistent obstruction of obscure origin. The experiment was brought to a close by the authorities, and since it has not proved possible to investigate their state of mind I cannot suggest a cause of failure.

Subsequent developments, in particular the Civilian Resettlement Units set up by the War Office, have persuaded me that this experiment had the characteristics of a chain reaction and so had the requisites for growth. But it showed, too, that something in the dynamics of unconscious tendencies in a group made the group peculiarly sensitive to any investigation of its emotional tensions. This sensitiveness manifested itself particularly in the class that Arnold Toynbee calls 'the dominant minority' (*A Study of History*, Vol. 3, p. 77). "The ailing civilization", he says, "pays the penalty for its failing vitality by being disintegrated into a dominant minority, which rules with increasing oppressiveness but no longer leads, and a proletariat (internal and external) which responds to this challenge by becoming conscious

that it has a soul of its own and by making up its mind to save its soul alive." I shall have more to say of the dominant minority later.

From what I have said so far you may think that in speaking of crisis I had in mind the last war; this is not so. Let us consider for a moment some of the events that men and women of my generation have witnessed in the past forty years. In this period Russia and the United States have risen to supremacy. The British Empire has ceased to exist, and its place has been taken by a loose federation, the exact nature of which will probably not be determined for many a year. Germany, having achieved immense power, appears now to be annihilated. During the same period mankind has achieved depths of barbarism that will ensure that our era will go down in history as one in which all the bestialities of recorded time have been easily surpassed. Indeed, our only claim to fame and our brightest hope for the future is that it never will be surpassed.

Forty years ago civilization bore an aspect almost benign from the purely personal point of view. Yet even we who live in a land that was never invaded can give an account of personal catastrophe and suffering that could not have been foreseen in 1907.

In technical advance the changes during this time have been immense. Forty years ago the Channel had not been flown; twenty years ago broadcasting was in its infancy. It is probably true to say that man is more skilled in the mechanics of handling anything from an aeroplane to a mass of his fellow-men than he was forty years ago. It might be instructive if members of our section were to attempt to record their own experiences during this period, first recording the development of material comforts – refrigerators, cars, wireless sets and so forth – then recording their personal losses in terms of domestic happiness. If the psychologists in our section could make a survey of material which the section as a whole could supply it might provide surprising and valuable information. If I were to say that in the past forty years great technical advances had been accompanied by a great increase in human unhappiness, many would agree. But I could equally well say the technical advances and catastrophes alike had had no effect whatever in depressing the survivors, and it is characteristic that either opinion can be held and action based upon it without one shred of evidence that the opinion was justified in fact. And this is precisely how political, economic and international affairs are habitually conducted. A machinery for fact-finding is required,

and unless it is provided by people with our training and outlook, no one else is likely to do so.

However problematical the effect on the individual of the events of our time, we may be quite certain that the state of mind of the individuals making up national groups has had a profound effect upon the events of our time. Our belief that this is so would have been strengthened during the past forty years by a series of technical developments that I have not mentioned – namely, the developments in treatment of the neuroses; before this audience I can describe the advance quite briefly as being from *sal volatile*[1] to psychoanalysis.

There is no corpus of knowledge that does for the study of the group what psychoanalysis does for the study of the individual. The material that is relevant for our study is embedded in the information amassed by several at present widely separated disciplines. All I wish to show is that many thinkers have been more or less closely preoccupied with a subject which to them remained ill-defined but which today has begun to assume clearer outlines. I consider only Western Civilization.

In *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Reinhold Niebuhr makes a distinction between what he describes as the Classical and Romantic approaches to the subject. He is referring to the Platonic and Aristotelian views of the organization of the state as contrasted with the approach made by thinkers such as St Augustine, Marx and Engels, and Nietzsche. Accepting this subdivision, I would say that the Classical writers were wedded to a belief in the supremacy and integrity of reason while the Romantics were more aware of the emotional component in human relationships. To me it appears that, as far as they go, it would be mistaken to ignore the importance of the Classical contributions. Even today the Platonic view of the importance of the function of the individual is implicit in vocational guidance and such derivatives as the Annexure Schemes of the army (a scheme by which men could, on psychiatric recommendation, be placed in an arm of the Service or a locality where they could render service within the limitations imposed by their psychiatric condition). My criticism of the thinkers here labelled as Romantic is that they had a genius for the manipulation rather than the comprehension of unconscious

[1][Ammonium chloride, used as 'smelling salts', which was first used in the mid-seventeenth century. *Ed.*].

emotional impulses. It is perhaps this fact that gives Christianity the appearance, described by Flügel in *Man, Morals and Society*, of not having 'an adequate and positive goal for social and political endeavour' and an 'attitude of indifference to the larger social problems'. For the most part, references to external events seem to be made not with a view to expressing the desirability for external change, but rather to indicate a framework within which the individual had to carry out his internal readjustments.

Flügel's criticism that not enough has been said to assist the aggressive or dominating individual seems to be borne out by the history of our time. On the other hand, Niebuhr criticizing Nietzsche doubts the value of a feeling of vitality that is achieved by the release of aggressive impulses. This appears to be a reaction from the optimistic liberal outlook that assumes that emotion and reason are easily harmonized, but on further reflection Niebuhr leaves an uneasy feeling that in a liberal world there is only room for a desiccated intellectualism.

To me it seems that in so far as man has set about the regulation of external relationships by law, he has been tolerably successful; the failure arises when it comes to producing any method for dealing with the underlying emotional tensions in human relationships. And yet it is precisely these primitive unconscious tensions that present the fundamental problem in all human relationships. Whenever they obtrude themselves as an intrinsic element in the problem that is being studied, men retreat into further exploration of the possibilities of external regulation. These repeated preoccupations with machinery, being themselves nothing more than a by-product of the failure to grapple with the main problem, never achieve any higher level than the technicalities of police operations, no matter how magnificent the language in which they are clothed.

Now this is doubly unfortunate; not only is the main problem shirked, but the leaders of communities have, by the nature of the refuge they have found in their failure, ceased to be the creative leaders that Toynbee describes as essential for the healthy growth of civilization, and become instead the dominant oppressive minority.

Though it may appear that a failure to grapple with the main problem – if this is a just estimate of the situation – is all that is required to explain our present distresses, it is relevant to my purpose to draw attention to another component in the success or failure of

attempts at the solution of problems of human relationships. I refer, of course, to the training of those whose lot it has been to interpret and apply the theories and doctrines of the original thinkers. Part of the difficulty in assessing the value of a leader, e.g. Jesus, is that we have to go by the results that his *followers* produce – not the leader himself. We have to bear in mind that it is not enough for the leader to be creative if his followers, through ill-training or unfitness, bear all the characteristics of the dominant minority. I would remind you again of Flügel's criticism of Christianity after it had achieved a dominant position.

What I have said about the political scientist and the religious leader seems to me to be equally true of the philosopher – he falls back defeated when the factor of emotional impulses obtrudes. This will, I am sure, be very ably denied. That is my point: it is the function of philosophy to deny it.

The position of the historian appears to be too often little more than that of the national bard translating into modern terminology, sometimes in the guise of science, sometimes literature, rarely both, the primitive war-songs of the tribe. Had he been more, he would have been more prominent in the investigation of guilt of the parties to the last war. When he is not being manipulated by the emotions of the group, he, too, is falling back from the hard task of grappling with and elucidating them.

It occurs to me that my criticisms may seem censorious; if so, I repent, for it is hardly just to renounce other disciplines for not having a technique with which we psychiatrists have not yet equipped them. My object has been merely to insist that there is a central core of material that is of vital concern to investigators in these fields and that until its existence, and indeed its very nature, has been understood, no further progress is possible.

At this point I must bring forward some speculations – I cannot call them more than that – on the interplay between technical advance and emotional development. It seems that man in his growth cannot solve any problem without immediately opening up more problems that present themselves for his solution. Thus, having achieved his adjustment to one member of the family, he has to learn to adjust to two. Having learned to walk, he is immediately presented with a vastly greater field than the one he has hitherto known, and this new and more complex world demands investigation and

further development. Having achieved speech, his horizons are again expanded, with similar consequences. And so on through his life. On the success with which he meets the successive demands created by his own progress depends his mental health, and on his mental health depends the success with which he meets the new demands – I will not attempt to disentangle the interplay. At the risk of being accused of Aristotelian dichotomy, I propose to treat as separate entities a kind of simian capacity for acquiring technical skills on the one hand, and a capacity for full emotional and intellectual development on the other. One of the peculiarities of technical skills of the mechanical type is that these skills are easily communicated; this we must contrast with emotional development, which is not. As a result a man who is peculiarly gifted in scientific invention can almost immediately put fresh power into the hands of thousands of his fellow-men; mimesis in that sphere is both easy and satisfactory. In the field of emotional and intellectual development the situation is very different; mimesis is of no value and, indeed, is a great danger, for it produces a spurious appearance of growth; no method of communication of emotional development has yet been found which is not hopelessly limited in its field of influence. The result is that in the social group the fate of technical advance lies, on the whole, in the hands of the more technically gifted. But the fate of emotional development lies, on the whole, in the hands of the emotionally under-developed but mimetically well-equipped. Hope must therefore depend on the development of a technique of emotional development, and, one would imagine, that is precisely what we in this Society are concerned to provide. But there are still some aspects of the acquirement of technical skills that I want to discuss. They are these: technical developments have a way of repeating early situations; thus modern methods of travel repeat the problems and stimuli presented by first attempts to walk; modern methods of communication repeat, on a more complex level, the problems of infant speech; modern weapons of destruction have produced a repetition of problems of infantile destructiveness; modern facilities for leisure have repeated the early problems of curiosity and play. And I would remind you that in social group situations the problems are created for the individual not by his own technical advances but by the technical advances of people vastly more skilled than himself.

The kind of technical advance that produces these problems is not always obvious. I remember talking to a friend who lived in the

Fen country, and I remarked that the advent of the motor-bus must have made an enormous difference to the isolated life of villagers. He replied that it had made very little; the real revolution had occurred on the introduction of the bicycle. Before that a villager scarcely knew of the existence of a village three miles away. With the arrival of the bicycle new realms of social contact were opened up, and this brought with it fresh problems for the villagers. The more gifted made use of their opportunities; the others stayed where they were. This example is interesting simply because it indicates that what is a stimulus to one community is not necessarily a stimulus to another. Clearly, motor transport would be more important than the bicycle in a mountainous district once roads were established. Of course it is not merely technical progress that produces problems for emotional development; we have also to bear in mind those organizations of society which in themselves produce problems for the majority of those living in that organization. It is possible for society to be organized in such a way that the majority of its members are psychiatrically disinherited.

I should not like to be called upon to define what I mean by psychiatric disinheritance; nevertheless, I hope my meaning will be clear enough for all practical purposes. It seems to me that, within wide limits, for his full development man requires scope for the development of his political appetite. Today I suppose we should describe this as scope for personal relationships, but I mean personal relationships over a wide range. It has been claimed for the Greek city-state that its members were able in person to exercise their capacities for human companionship in many different functions. This view, which I associate largely with Lowes Dickenson, and more recently with Gilbert Murray,[1] obviously may contain more of wishful thinking than historicity, but nevertheless it seems to me to contain the germ of an idea that should be retained as a criterion in our consideration of the psychologically hygienic community. The point that is made is that in the small community it is possible for men to exercise their special talents without being condemned to the frustration and atrophy of their other desires. A citizen of Athens was not represented in parliament – he was a member. He took part, if he wished to do so,

[1][Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (1862–1932) was a Cambridge philosopher closely associated with the Bloomsbury Group. George Gilbert Aimé Murray (1866–1957) was a British classical scholar who specialized in the study of the language and culture of Ancient Greece. *Ed.*]

in legal decisions. He was called upon to defend his country, and he had to produce food. Obviously it is no easy matter to decide at what point a desire for specialization from within the individual becomes transformed into an externally imposed denial of all but one or two special skills. This should not, however, prevent us from keeping a critical eye on the kind of spiritual drift which leads communities into the elaboration of forms of association that are as destructive of the psychological health of the individual as a community without a public health service would be of its physical health.

The few remarks that I make now are by way of defining the scope of the field of inquiry which seems to me to be necessary. The suspicion that an inquiry was needed was brought to my mind most powerfully in the war when it appeared to me that the majority of patients that one saw belonged to the psychologically disinherited class. Obviously they may have disinherited themselves, but it did not appear to me to be so, and in any event this is one of the problems that require investigation. Even if we admit that the individual is a more than willing participator in depriving himself of the full range of personal relationships, we still have to bear in mind the educational system of home and school which has allowed him to progress along a path of progressive limitation without any awareness that he was, in fact, doing so. No doubt, once frustration occurs, renunciation of the frustrated impulses produces some degree of comfort, and the renunciation is made easier by the piling up of external difficulties against the satisfaction of those impulses. As psychiatrists, we are well aware that such a renunciation is in fact never wholly efficient. Stimuli are removed but return as provocations on another level. We are bombarded with stimuli to which no direct reaction is possible. The newspapers inform us of political problems and decisions that move us emotionally, but to which we can make no direct response. The machinery of the press does little more for us than to ensure that we start and end the day with our daily dose of a sense of frustration and impotence. We contemplate an aeroplane crash in Newfoundland but can do nothing for the victims. We follow the fortunes of our favourite football team but cannot even help by giving up smoking. The vast apparatus of films and cheap fiction feeds phantasies of a world in which moral problems present no intellectual difficulties, and personal relationships assume an irreducible minimum of complexity. Such a state of affairs is worse than escapism because,

by being a substitute for reality, it denies the pleasures and pains of reality.

The value of a group decision in an industrial concern may derive from a restoration to the individuals of the group of a part of their inheritance. As a prelude to scientific investigation it is worth speculating on the possibility that, first, the Trade Union movements, and now unofficial strikes represent a reaction against psychological disinheritance far more than profound dissatisfaction with wages or lack of material comforts.

Part of the inheritance of all living things is pain and adversity. It is at least as easy to be cruel by a denial of this as a component of a man's life, as it is to be cruel by the denial of mutual help.

Donne said that 'affliction is a treasure and scarce any man hath enough of it. No man hath affliction enough that is not matured and ripened by it.' No one today is likely to complain that there is any shortage in this commodity, but is it possible that our elaborate machinery, social as well as individual, for the denial of the existence of everyday troubles and difficulties has led to a revolt that has taken the form of an artificial production of calamity on a vast scale? Some such feeling may beat the bottom out of the quite commonly expressed idea that war and its attendant hardships are good for the race.

It is, of course, extremely improbable that any single component of this kind will provide more than a starting-point for investigation, but I propose to discuss group relationships from a fresh angle.

The growth and decline of civilizations has always excited the curiosity of mankind and has recently been studied in great detail by Arnold Toynbee. In all investigations there is a preoccupation with the part played by adversity in compelling the emergence of culture and a reciprocal interest in the part played by ease in producing inertia or, alternatively, in the case of a civilization that has already developed, decline and disintegration. Race and environment have both been cited as fundamental causes, but neither has been accepted as really explaining more than a modicum of the facts. It seems obvious that a gifted race might naturally be expected to produce those characteristic features of society that make us classify that society as civilized, and history certainly seems to support the view that difficult conditions, though they might prove too difficult and so lead to extinction of a community, have, in fact, time and again been associated with

growth of a high level of civilization. Means (1964), quoted by Toynbee (see *Ancient Civilizations of the Andes*, pp. 25–26), states, 'Environment . . . is not the total causation in culture-shaping . . . [it] is beyond doubt, the most conspicuous single factor . . . But there is still an indefinable factor that may best be designated quite frankly as *x*, the unknown quantity, apparently psychological in kind. . . . If *x* be not the most conspicuous matter in the factor, it certainly is the most important, the most fate-laden.' Toynbee himself elaborates in detail theories based on the relationship of the groups within and without a given society. In particular, he stresses the part played by the interplay between a dominant creative group and the internal proletarian mimetic group on the one hand, and a similar out-group on the other. He appears to attribute change to the effect on society of a loss of creativeness in the dominant group, which becomes at the same time oppressive and disinclined to lead. Here I will observe that in groups, if the psychiatrist becomes disinclined to lead, he certainly becomes oppressive. I merely quote them as indications of an awareness that psychological factors are playing some unknown part in the growth and development of groups. I may be pardoned for mentioning that in 1943 I drew attention to the need for the community to gain insight into the psychological origin of at least some part, and in my opinion a major part, of its distresses. I propose now to make some tentative suggestions that I hope will be recognized as claiming to be no more than hypotheses worthy of investigation.

First, I will say that I have no difficulty in accepting the importance of environment or of racial characteristics as playing very important roles in the growth or development of civilization, just as I have no difficulty in recognizing the importance of an individual's inherited characteristics when he comes for treatment, or the importance of the circumstances of his life. But I need no persuasion to agree with Toynbee that explanations based on race or environment or senescence are quite unsatisfactory. I will explain in a moment why I consider environment, particularly as it gives rise to adversity on the one hand or ease on the other, to be important. Before doing this, however, I will say at once that I suspect the unknown psychological factor that Means speaks of to be the capacity that is shown by individuals in a community for a personal relationship and the quality of that relationship.

To return now to the part played by environment: it will be remembered that observers such as Bagehot and many others have been struck by the fact that environment is such a conspicuous factor. We need not be detained by instances where the environment has been too difficult for the society. If we consider the difficult but productive environment, the main feature of such an environment is that it compels co-operation through the driving force of the impulse to survive. Those members of the community in whom the impulse was not sufficiently strong to compel co-operation would not survive. The society as a whole, however, gradually masters its objective difficulties, the individual members co-operating with the sort of ease and the sort of difficulty that we have all of us witnessed in air raids and similar types of dangerous situations. The history of civilizations that have arisen in this way seems, if the historians are reasonably correct, to have followed much the same pattern in that they achieve a life of ease and then disintegrate. The society that has been in easy circumstances from the first appears to develop no culture but to remain in a state of sottishness, often made hideous by anxiety. H. Drummond (in *Tropical Africa*) says that the African 'does not need to work; with so bountiful a nature round him it would be gratuitous to work'. They live, he says, 'without clothes, without civilization, without learning, without religion'. Though he describes them as thoughtless, careless and contented, he states that the village communities live in terror of one another and of their common foe, the slave trader.

The point that strikes me as most important for the community that finds itself in a bountiful environment, whether that environment existed in the first place or was produced by the efforts of the society itself, is that in both instances a very important element has come into the life of the society: that element is leisure.

I am fully aware that in using the word, 'leisure', I shall give rise to a very mistaken impression if you think that by it I simply mean a rather pleasant absence of work. On the contrary; I mean to convey by this word a dynamic state of personal relationships which, properly induced and properly used, is one of the most potent forces in psychiatric investigation. To explain this statement I shall illustrate my point by telling you of the one leaderless group technique that I never succeeded in establishing. The machinery of it was quite simple: I suggested that in every series of War Office Selection Board

leaderless group tests there should come a point at which the testing officer would have collected his group of candidates about him and then, as it were, subjected them to a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes' delay, as if waiting while some administrative hitch or other was straightened out. During this time he would casually watch what the men did. A similar technique, if such it can be called, is employed by myself in my therapeutic groups. The whole point is that the group has nothing in particular to do. It will of course be obvious that there is a similar quality about an analytic session. What happens is that the personal relationships between members of the group immediately obtrude themselves on the attention of each member of the group and on the conscious attention of the observer, if he will permit it.

I suggest that the unknown psychological factor in the growth and decay of civilizations need not really be unknown. It is of course always present, even in the society facing adversity, but its obtrusion into consciousness can be more easily resisted when there are real tasks, vital to the survival of the community, to be done. Its obtrusion can still be resisted when a state of leisure develops, but distractions have a way of drawing attention to the thing from which distraction is sought. In the absence of any leadership towards resolution of the problems of personal relationships, disintegration of the group takes place. It may be argued against this that civilizations in the past have succumbed to conquest by foreign invaders. This, I suggest, is only one manifestation of the same thing. I will repeat as my justification for this statement a phrase I have used to describe the rationale of the leaderless group techniques when explaining the relevance of personal relationships to tasks that an officer is called upon to fulfil in war: 'If a man cannot be friends with his friends, he cannot be an enemy to his enemy.' A group composed of such persons will succumb to an internal hostile group.

I shall now attempt to demonstrate four themes that appear to me to emerge from my speculations.

The first theme is the concern of widely separated disciplines with the problems of individual and group relationships. The priest, the philosopher, the political scientist, the law-giver and the statesman have all been concerned with this problem, but all have failed to produce anything but pontifical, and often ephemeral, solutions. This failure has been due to the fact that since the existence and operation

of unconscious emotional impulses in the community had not been recognized, leaders in these activities were flung back onto superficial and therefore sterile reconsiderations of the *machinery* of personal relationships. The suggestion is made that knowledge of the nature and operation of the unknown factor has, during the last fifty years, begun to be provided in varying degrees by the followers of Freud, Jung and Adler.

The second theme is concerned with the interplay of advance in technical skills and the development of emotional growth. The production of techniques for dealing with emotional growth appears to be leading to a resolution of this dichotomy.

The third theme, concerned with the growth and decay of civilization, seems to lead to the conclusion that the growth of civilization is a product of the response of the community to a challenge presented to the community. The advances in psychiatry that I have mentioned indicate that the challenge that confronts civilization today is not environment but the operation of unconscious emotional impulses. The growth of civilization depends upon a successful response to this challenge.

The fourth theme indicates that technical advance helps to produce leisure and that leisure is the state that is most conducive to the obtrusion of unconscious emotional impulses in human relationships. The work of the atomic scientists presents mankind with a dilemma: on the one hand lies the destruction of mankind; on the other the production, by virtue of increased power and the need for restricting bellicosity, of leisure. The history of technical advance therefore also indicates that the problems of personal relationships will shortly obtrude themselves as demanding a solution.

These four widely separated themes therefore converge, not only on the same problem, but at the same time, and that time is the present.

In the early part of this address I referred in passing to the disappearance of the British Empire. The spectacle of a great power divesting itself of material possessions has, in the light of our past history, something of the characteristics of an introspective withdrawal. I will not put forward my reasons now for thinking that this may be an event of great significance in the development of civilization. It does, however, resemble in some important particulars the picture

presented by Toynbee of the Hellenic society when it was, according to Thucydides, 'repressed from all sides over a long period of time' (1935, Vol. 3, p. 190). Toynbee points out that during this time the expansion of the Hellenic society was transmuted, thanks to Athens, 'from an extensive into an intensive process', and that this was 'the age which in the sight of posterity stands out as the acme of Hellenic civilization'. If there is anything in this comparison, then my four themes seem to converge not only on this subject and in this epoch, but also in this place.

It would be pleasant to think that psychiatrists were now destined to lead in the development of civilization still further. If I have given the impression that this is my view, my address has failed in its purpose. It is one thing for a community to be placed in a position where it has a challenge to meet, but quite another, as our survey has shown, for it to accept the challenge and overcome it.

In the first place, the nature of the challenge and the challenge itself must be perceived. Just how difficult that is can be illustrated by the obvious point that we cannot be sure that we all mean the same by the words, 'unconscious emotional impulses'. I am only too conscious that I am speaking of certain phenomena demonstrated in the course of the psychoanalytic relationship, but I have no reason to suppose that these phenomena are those described in the same words by other investigators using different methods.

Then, from what has been seen of the communication of intuitions of earlier leaders in the field of personal relationships, it is obvious that an enormous amount depends on the selection and training of the followers. They must be, and yet seldom are, capable of leadership and capable of something more than imitation of the original thinker.

Further, a means must be found whereby the peculiar kind of facts in which we deal can be properly investigated and recorded – you will remember my remarks on the lack of material on which to base any judgement about the relationships between technical and emotional progress in our own lifetimes.

Finally, the group that aspires to lead has to steer between the Scylla of arousing so much anxiety that it is suppressed, and the Charybdis of inspiring a widespread but mimetic discipline whose mechanicalness, as Toynbee calls it, infects the quality of the leaders and forces them by loss of creativity to degenerate into a dominant

oppressive minority. Whether our country, of all countries, and our group, of all other groups in the country, are capable of meeting the challenge of our time will only be determined by what we ourselves do. Psychiatrists may leave the challenge to be taken up by other groups in the nation, or the nation may leave it to other nations. Or mankind may simply postpone once more, through lack of creative leaders or through incompetence, the solution of the problem to future generations. If that is so, the outlook is black indeed. And that, Ladies and Gentlemen, is what I mean by Psychiatry at a Time of Crisis.

GROUP METHODS OF TREATMENT

1948

‘Group Methods of Treatment’ was presented at the International Conference on Medical Psychotherapy held in London from 11 to 14 August 1948. It was published in 1948 in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Medical Psychotherapy, Vol. 3*, edited by J. C. Flügel (London: H. K. Lewis; New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 106–109).

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Bion presented his paper 'Group Methods of Treatment' at the International Conference on Medical Psychotherapy in 1948, where he was introduced as a "Physician at The Tavistock Clinic, London".

The paper begins with Bion making clear the requirement for a specific *setting* for the study of group processes. It requires us to shift our perspective from the setting designed specially for the psychoanalytic couple to that which is requisite to a group – as Bion puts it, a form that is 'natural and proper to the group situation'. This implies minimum conditions necessary for the task, so that valid psychoanalytic observations may be made of its processes and functioning.

Bion is describing to the audience his own 'internal equipment' for studying a group while experiencing it. Bion felt that the concept of transference could not simply be imported wholesale into group work from the individual situation, although he was more comfortable with making use of the countertransference (to detect the operation of phantasies mobilized by the group's shared, or 'pooled', transference-based phantasies). Bion also felt it necessary to assume that the individual in a group setting possesses a specific capacity to be sensitive to the emotional situation that he appears to occupy not only in relation to other members, but also in relation to the group as a whole. Bion makes the point that the emotional components of the group situation are as salient for the individual as are the objects of the material world. Implicitly he is referring to the psychic reality of the emotions present in the group.

There appears in this talk a clear statement of Bion's method; it shows similarity to the neutrality and reserve of the analyst in the individual situation – his receptive 'non-action' – and demonstrates the centrality in his technique of the insight he had into the workings of

projective identification in the group context, which he related to the use of countertransference as a tool for enquiry:[1]

> When a group starts I usually wait until I become aware of a complexity of feelings which sooner or later are aroused in myself. I find it usual to verbalize these feelings in terms which purport to describe the group's attitude towards myself. The mere fact of my doing so causes a change in the emotional situation within the group, and I then wait until I feel that I can describe this changed situation.

When Bion develops this description of his process-oriented activity in groups, it reminds those readers who have undergone an analysis of a feeling of resonance, of recognition – particularly in relation to the prevailing atmosphere of ambiguity and uncertainty in the situation:

> This demonstration does not, of course, do anything to modify the group's feelings that they are dealing with a very odd customer, but, after a time, continued demonstration of this kind of thing seems to reconcile most members of the group to tolerating a continuance of the experience entailed in being a member of a group which contains me. I cannot put it any higher than this because I do not believe that evidence of the usefulness of this procedure can be educed for a long time, and, in any case, usefulness depends upon the point of view of each individual judge.

Finally, it is worth noting here that the paper contains Bion's first reference to the term *group mentality*, which he defines as "my name for the product of group co-operation achieved on the level of anonymous contributions". Thus he is able to say to the group that he has no problem in believing that the individuals do not feel hostility, for example, and yet, at the same time, that he is quite sure that the group is hostile.

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[1]Described in "Re-view: Group Dynamics", in *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers* [this volume], under the section: The Basic Assumptions.

Group Methods of Treatment

The Tavistock Clinic has been using group methods on a large scale for the treatment of patients who would have to wait many months, and possibly years, if the Clinic relied upon the use of individual methods only. As a part of these activities I have been asked to investigate the possibilities of group methods of treatment, and it is about this that I wish to write.

In my opinion it was necessary to see if a form of treatment could be developed which was natural and proper to the group situation. In a psychoanalysis it is felt that certain conditions are essential to its proper conduct, the most obvious of these being the fact that there is one patient and one doctor. Most analysts would agree that this relationship between two people – and two people only – was essential for psychoanalysis. It was my desire to try to elaborate a form of treatment for the proper carrying out of which a group would be as essential as the intimate relationship between two individuals in psychoanalysis. In other words, I think that any form of treatment in which one feels that one has a group of patients *faute de mieux* is bad treatment; whereas any form of treatment, if it could be elaborated, to which a group was essential would be good treatment.

In psychoanalysis a means of investigation is at hand in the transference, but in the group situation I do not feel quite as happy about postulating a transference situation as I do about postulating a counter-transference. I know that it is not possible really to separate the two, but this description of the position as I see it, does, I hope, indicate a change of emphasis that I feel takes place when I change from individual to group treatment. It appears to me useful also to postulate a capacity in the individual for being sensitive to the emotional situation which he occupies in a group. I do not see how I

could address an audience unless I had an idea, however erroneous, about what the audience felt about myself. I think everybody would agree that it would not be possible to be active in any group of people with any degree of efficiency unless one's actions were constantly modulated in regard to what one felt was the attitude of the group towards oneself. Mistaken impressions, and mistaken assessments of the impressions which one receives about the group's attitude to oneself, must lead to inappropriate behaviour.

It seems to me, then, that in any group situation the individual has to be as sensitive to the emotions of the group towards himself as to the presence of concrete objects as he walks about his world. It does not do to stop short at that point – for obviously the individual must be able to judge correctly the information which is conveyed to him by the impressions which he receives. If a man wishes to get out of a room it is usually considered to be to his advantage if he is sufficiently sensitive to his surroundings to be able to tell where the door is. I maintain that an analogous capacity is required in the psychological sphere. I feel justified, therefore, in laying stress in a group on the working of this capacity, both in myself and in others. It is not, however, primarily in order to exercise this capacity that I draw attention to the part which is played in the social life of the group by its employment, but rather in order to make use of it as a method of investigation of the group. How does this work out in practice?

When a group starts I usually wait until I become aware of a complexity of feelings which sooner or later are aroused in myself. I find it usual to verbalize these feelings in terms which purport to describe the group's attitude towards myself. The mere fact of my doing so causes a change in the emotional situation within the group, and I then wait until I feel that I can describe this changed situation. I shall not attempt to describe the great variety of changes that can occur, because presumably there is no limit to the myriads of different responses possible. But at some point it becomes clear that one response of the group is to wonder what on earth my contribution to the group has to do with any reasonable activity of group life. In particular, there seems to be a feeling that even if what I say is true, it would seem to be of very limited concern to the group.

At this point I prefer to fall silent if I can, and to remain silent until other members of the group have had an opportunity to make their

contributions felt. The moment at which a member makes his contribution felt is, in my opinion, also the moment at which the member becomes the centre of the kind of emotional experience which, up to this moment, I have been describing merely as centring in myself. It is usually not very long before I am able to draw attention to the fact that A has said: "I know what you are thinking . . ."; or B has said: "I feel I am taking up too much time . . ."; or C has said: "I know nobody agrees with me but . . . ".

This enables me to suggest that, however inaccurate I may have been in interpreting the attitude of the group towards myself, I was, at least interpreting an attitude, and that I am not the only person to whom the group has an attitude. What is more, I am not the only person who feels that the group has an attitude towards himself.

This demonstration does not, of course, do anything to modify the group's feelings that they are dealing with a very odd customer, but, after a time, continued demonstration of this kind of thing seems to reconcile most members of the group to tolerating a continuance of the experience entailed in being a member of a group which contains me. I cannot put it any higher than this because I do not believe that evidence of the usefulness of this procedure can be educed for a long time, and, in any case, usefulness depends upon the point of view of each individual judge.

Sooner or later it becomes clear that this attempt to describe what one feels to be the attitude of the group towards oneself is running one into difficulties. For example, I can be absolutely certain at some point that my presence in the group is not welcome. but when I interpret this, individuals reply, with what seems to me to be complete sincerity, that they have no feeling of hostility to my presence.

Anyone acquainted with an individual approach to treatment could hardly expect anything different, and, indeed, the objection which usually occurs to anybody who contemplates group treatment of an analytic sort is that the group must offer heaven-sent opportunities for evasion, externalization, and the rest of it. The only thing to do is to hope that if the group affords such a heaven-sent opportunity for the practice of these arts, it also affords a heaven-sent opportunity for their demonstration. With this possibility in view I prefer not to press my point, but to rest content with saying that I have no difficulty in believing that individuals do not feel hostility – if that is the emotion

which I have attributed to the group – and, at the same time, that I am quite sure that the group is hostile; then I wait for signs that two or three others have had the sort of experience I am talking about. I then suggest that we assume that every individual contributes to the group in two ways. There are some contributions which he has no hesitation in making in such a way that the whole group can be well aware that that is his contribution. There are, however, other contributions which he makes anonymously. I suggest, furthermore, that these anonymous contributions are dependent upon the existence of a group for their expression.

The scene is now set for a hunt for the anonymous contributions. I can be quite sure that it will not be long before the members of the group sit down to complain that they can find no trace. I suggest that it is extremely unlikely that we should take the trouble to make our contributions anonymously if we were immediately going to expose them for all to see. In fact, as is quite obvious, any attempt to elucidate this aspect of the mental life of the group is resisted. I have been very much struck by the way in which a group will sometimes take flight into vivacious conversation, with plenty of manifest content, at the mere suggestion that there are signs that anonymous contributions are influencing the group, and might be susceptible of demonstration. The first time this happens it is very easy to think that quite striking change has taken place in the personality of the members of the group. so vivid and un-neurotic do their relationships become.

It is well to realize, and to make the group realize, that one very obvious way in which anonymous contributions can be made is by exploiting the possibilities of meetings between the patients outside the official therapeutic sessions. A great deal of difficulty can be created, both for doctor and patients, by omitting to point out this very obvious fact. I shall not go into this matter further because it will be obvious to everybody that the investigation of this aspect of the mental life of the group is almost certain to be a story of which I, at any rate, have only touched the fringe. I would, however, like to say that I believe it is in the sphere of these anonymous contributions that the group achieves its earliest, most primitive, and, within the limits of its kind, most efficient co-operation. All kinds of non-verbal methods of communication are freely used, and are fascinating to watch.

It is not possible to investigate one aspect of the mental life of the group without investigating others: one of the things that strikes me

forcibly in a group is the way in which the group mentality[1] (which is my name for the product of group co-operation achieved on the level of anonymous contributions) seems to be opposed to the avowed aims of the individuals in the group. Indeed, I am inclined to think that one of the striking peculiarities of the patient group is that the individual comes to the group in the hope that the group will enable him to achieve relief of his symptoms through its benevolence, and it is quite common for a patient to say: "At any rate, since we all have the same sort of difficulty, we can sympathize with each other"; and then to discover that the patient group, so far from being sympathetic with neurotic conditions, is, in fact, quite intolerant of neurosis, neurotic patients, and doctors who take such complaints seriously. This is not quite so surprising as it may seem when it first becomes obvious, because, of course, patients would not come for treatment at all unless they were intolerant of neurosis. Nevertheless, the experience of this phenomenon in a group is extremely thought-provoking. The point I wish to make just now is that, in my opinion, individual interpretations in the group situation should always be made with reference to the individual's relationship with the group mentality as I have defined it above. It seems to me to be obvious that to give an interpretation which would be correct in the situation of individual treatment must be quite incorrect when given in the situation of the group. This does not mean that my suggestion is correct, but I think interpretation along some such lines affords greater promise than any attempt at wholesale transplantation of the fruits of experience gained in one situation to a situation which is entirely different.

Interplay between the group mentality and the attempt of the individual to achieve a full satisfaction within the group, expresses itself in what I call the group culture. I consider it important at all times to be elucidating one aspect or another of these three things – the group mentality, the attempts of the individual to achieve a full life in the group, and the culture of the group – and, if possible, to demonstrate their interplay. Furthermore, it is very important to say precisely what facts one is observing in support of one's description of the group situation at any given moment.

Finally, I must say a word about results. In attempting research of this nature one has always to contend with the difficulty that if

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[1][Bion's first use of this term. *Ed.*]

something is to be learned about the validity of a theory it is essential not to compromise in the application of the theory; yet the temptation is always present to apply knowledge gained in other situations as a first-aid measure to assist a particular patient whose welfare would seem to be in danger if one persisted rigidly with the application of the particular theory one was testing. Generally speaking, this has to be resisted; compromise may produce results but does not produce knowledge. The need to maintain the integrity of one's procedure leads one to believe afterwards that results could easily have been better if . . .[1]

As far as I have been able to judge, most of the patients who have claimed to be better have not approached any standard that I should regard as satisfactory in individual treatment. The nature of these cures has, also, seemed to me to be quite easily explained on the basis of suggestion, a flight from self-knowledge, and so forth. Nevertheless. I think that there is an element or improvement which is stable and genuine. I do not know what this is due to, but I think it probably depends upon the fact that the psychological experience which the patient has had in the group has enabled him to attain, not to knowledge, but to the pursuit of it.

[1][This sentence petered out in the original. *Ed.*].

LANGUAGE AND THE SCHIZOPHRENIC

1955

‘Language and the Schizophrenic’ was published in 1955 in *New Directions in Psychoanalysis*, edited by M. Klein, P. Heimann, & R. E. Money-Kyrle (London: Tavistock Publications, pp. 220–239).

Language and the Schizophrenic

Introduction

In this paper I shall discuss the schizophrenic patient's use of language and the bearing of this on the theory and practice of his analysis.[1] I must make it clear, for the better understanding of what I say, that even where I do not make specific acknowledgment of the fact, Melanie Klein's work occupies a central position in my view of the psychoanalytic theory of schizophrenia. I assume that the explanation of terms such as 'projective identification' and the 'paranoid' and 'depressive positions' is known through her work.

Freud made numerous references to the bearing of psychoanalysis on psychosis, but for the purpose of introducing my paper I shall refer only to one or two of these. In his 1924 paper 'Neurosis and Psychosis' he gives a simple formula for expressing perhaps the most important genetic difference between neurosis and psychosis, as follows: "Neurosis is the result of a conflict between the ego and its id, whereas psychosis is the analogous outcome of a similar disturbance in the relation between the ego and its environment (outer world)."[2]

As it stands this statement would appear to equate an endo-psychic conflict with a conflict between the personality and the environment and to open the way to confusion. I do not think it unjust to his views to assume they are more correctly represented by passages in which the dynamics of neurosis and psychosis are uncompromisingly

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[1]The theme of this paper was stated in a much compressed form in a contribution to the International Congress of Psycho-Analysis in 1953.

[2]*Collected Papers*, Vol. II (London, 1924) [*Standard Edition*, 1924b (1923)].

based on the concept of endo-psychic conflict. Yet Freud's formula does, by pointing to the psychotic patient's hostility to reality, and conflict with it, help us to grasp one element that determines the nature of the endo-psychic conflict, and I remind you of it for that reason. I would now turn to some passages from his paper, written in 1911, entitled, "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning".[1] I shall consider that succession of adaptations, which the new demands of the reality principle make necessary, in the mental apparatus which, Freud says, "on account of insufficient or uncertain knowledge, we can only detail very cursorily", for I believe that certain experiences that have come my way enable me to make some suggestions about them.

He says, "The increased significance of external reality heightened the significance also of the sense organs directed towards that outer world, and of the consciousness attached to them; the latter now learned to comprehend the qualities of sense in addition to the qualities of pleasure and 'pain' which hitherto had alone been of interest to it." It will be one of my contentions that the conflict with reality, of which Freud speaks in my first quotation, leads the psychotic patient to developments which make it doubtful whether he has ever learned to "comprehend the qualities of sense in addition to the qualities of pleasure and 'pain'." Further I shall suggest there is evidence which may indicate that destructive attacks have been directed by the patient, or the patient's id, against the newly significant sense organs and "the consciousness attached to them". In my view, what Freud describes as the institution of the reality principle is an event that has never been satisfactorily achieved by the psychotic, and the main failure takes place at the point which Melanie Klein describes as the development of the depressive position. The reality principle, if it were allowed to operate, would make the psychotic infant aware of his relationship with whole objects, and thereby of the feelings of depression and guilt associated with the depressive position. It is at this point however that the patient makes destructive attacks on all those aspects of his personality, his ego, that are concerned with establishing external contact and internal contact. What are these special aspects of the ego? Freud cites (i) "attention"; (ii) "notation", which he says is a part of that which we call memory;

[1] *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV (London, 1925) [*Standard Edition*, 1911b].

(iii) "an impartial passing of judgment"; (iv) a new function entrusted to motor discharge, which is now concerned with action, and (v) restraint of action "by means of the process of thought, which was developed from ideation". Freud says, "thought was endowed with qualities which made it possible for the mental apparatus to support increased tension during a delay in the process of discharge. It is essentially an experimental way of acting, accompanied by displacement of smaller quantities of cathexis together with less expenditure (discharge) of them."

I shall explain why I think that all these special adaptations, except (iv) (about which I shall have something to say in another context), are really aspects of the establishment of verbal thought; further, that this development is one aspect of the synthesizing and integrating forces which Melanie Klein has described as characteristic of the depressive position. I hope also to show that I regard disturbances in the development of verbal thought as an important aspect of psychosis, particularly, but not exclusively, of schizophrenia, even though I do not wish it to be supposed that I ignore the peculiarity of the schizophrenic's object relations, of which verbal thought, for all its importance, is but a subordinate function. I may best do this by a quotation from a paper to which I shall have occasion to refer later—Freud's paper, in 1911, on the Unconscious.[1] In discussing one of the cases I quote, he says, "Analysis shows that he is working out his castration complex upon his own skin." I shall suggest, relating my experiences to Freud's formula that in psychosis the conflict is between the ego and the environment, that this view of his patient would be even more fruitful if we suppose that the psychotic's castrations are worked out on his mental skin—i.e. on the ego; more precisely still, castration of the ego is identical with destructive attacks on (i) the consciousness attached to the sense organs; (ii) attention—the function which Freud says is instituted to search the outer world; (iii) the system of notation which he describes as a part of memory; (iv) the passing of judgment which was developed to take the place of repression; and finally, (v) thought as a way of supporting the increased tension produced by restraint on motor discharge. With regard to this last point I would add that in my view, verbal thought is the essential feature of all

[1] 1911b.

five functions of the ego and that the destructive attacks on verbal thought or its rudiments is inevitably an attack on all.

To pass now to the nature of these attacks: I shall suggest that they are all true examples of the mechanisms described by Melanie Klein in her discussion of the paranoid and depressive positions, and particularly of projective identification. In her paper on 'The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego' (1930b),[1] she describes the child's phantasies about the contents of the mother's body and the sadism with which the child makes attacks upon these supposed contents. It is my belief that the same oral, urethral, anal, and muscular sadism that she describes as typical of the attack on the mother's body and on the sexual parents, is in action against the ego. The "castration" of the ego, then, is manifested in extremely sadistic attacks on (i) the consciousness attached to the sense organs; (ii) attention; (iii) the system of notation; (iv) the passing of judgment; (v) the capacity to support frustration of motor discharge and therefore upon the whole development of verbal thought of which all these, and not merely the last, as Freud says, are particular aspects.

Prominent amongst the methods by which the sadistic attacks on verbal thought are given effect is the splitting which Freud and others have so frequently described. But the point is that the splitting of verbal thought is carried out cruelly, and the attempts at synthesis which are typical, in psychotics as in others, of the depressive position, are frustrated because the splits are brought together cruelly.

I shall also hope to show that the splitting mechanism is brought into action to minister to the patient's greed and is therefore not simply an unfortunate catastrophe of the kind that occurs when the patient's ego is split in pieces as an accompaniment of his determination to split his objects; it is the outcome of a determination which can be expressed verbally as an intention to be as many people as possible, so as to be in as many places as possible, so as to get as much as possible, for as long as possible—in fact timelessly.

The material is derived from the analysis of six patients; two were drug addicts, one an obsessional anxiety state with schizoid features, and the remaining three schizophrenics, all of whom suffered from hallucinations which were well in evidence over a period of between

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[1] *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 2 (1930); also in *Contributions to Psycho-Analysis* (London, 1948).

four to five years of analysis. Of these three, two showed marked paranoid features, and one, depression.

With one exception I made no conscious departure from the psychoanalytic procedure I usually employ with neurotics, being careful always to take up both positive and negative aspects of the transference. For a short period I had to visit one patient in hospital but otherwise all visited me, sometimes with a male nurse in attendance. The exception I shall make clear by approaching the main theme of my paper. This, as I have indicated, is the Theory of Schizophrenia as it appears when it is approached through analysis of the difficulties that attend communication between the schizoid patient and the analyst. For the most part the discussion centres on the rudimentary stages of what, for want of a better term, I have called verbal thought. But, before that stage is reached in analysis, much work has to be done, and it is in the course of this work that I make interpretations that most analysts will criticize as exceptions to sound analytic procedure, and therefore matter for scrutiny.

The analyst who essays, in our present state of ignorance, the treatment of such patients, must be prepared to discover that for a considerable proportion of analytic time the only evidence on which an interpretation can be based is that which is afforded by the counter-transference. What this means in practice I shall attempt to indicate by a description of part of one such session; this is how it went: The patient had been lying on the couch, silent, for some twenty minutes. During this time I had become aware of a growing sense of anxiety and tension which I associated with facts about the patient which were already known to me from work done with him in the six months he had already been with me. As the silence continued I became aware of a fear that the patient was meditating a physical attack upon me, though I could see no outward change in his posture. As the tension grew I felt increasingly sure that this was so. Then, and only then, I said to him, "You have been pushing into my insides your fear that you will murder me." There was no change in the patient's position but I noticed that he clenched his fists till the skin over the knuckles became white. The silence was unbroken. At the same time I felt that the tension in the room, presumably in the relationship between him and me, had decreased. I said to him, "When I spoke to you, you took your fear that you would murder me back into yourself; you are now feeling afraid you will make a murderous attack

upon me." I followed the same method throughout the session, waiting for impressions to pile up until I felt I was in a position to make my interpretation. It will be noted that my interpretation depends on the use of Melanie Klein's theory of projective identification, first to illuminate my counter-transference, and then to frame the interpretation which I give the patient.

This mode of procedure is open to grave theoretical objections and I think they should be faced. I need not mention the debate which still centres on Melanie Klein's theories, but I would discuss further the use which I make of counter-transference.

The objection that I project my conflicts and phantasies on to the patient cannot and should not be easily dismissed. The defence must lie in the hard facts of the analytic situation, namely that in the present state of psychoanalytic knowledge the analyst cannot rely on a body of well-authenticated knowledge. Further, he must assume that his own analysis has gone far enough to make disastrous misinterpretation unlikely. Finally, I think there are signs that as experience accumulates it may be possible to detect and present facts which exist, but at present elude clinical acumen; they become observable, at second hand, through the pressure they exert to produce what I am aware of as counter-transference. I would not have it thought that I advocate this use of counter-transference as a final solution; rather it is an expedient to which we must resort until something better presents itself.

To some extent, for reasons I give later, it has to be accepted that the psychotic patient 'acts out', but I have no doubt whatever that the analyst should always insist, by the way in which he conducts the case, that he is addressing himself to a sane person and is entitled to expect some sane reception. This point is of importance for, as I shall show later, patients will use the mechanism of projective identification to rid themselves of their 'sanity'. If the analyst appears by his conduct to condone the feasibility of this, the way is open to massive regression, and in my experience, if the patient is once allowed to do this, a great deal of work has to be done to retrieve the position. In this respect I am absolutely in agreement with Maurits Katan in his views on the importance of the non-psychotic part of the personality in schizophrenia.[1]

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[1]M. Katan, 'The Importance of the Non-Psychotic Part of the Personality in Schizophrenia.' *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 35* (No. 2, 1953).

I may mention two reasons for hoping that the procedure I have outlined may be sound. The first is that a safeguard exists in the psychotic patient's readiness to indicate when he thinks he is the victim of the analyst's projections. His view is not proof that projection is taking place, but it does deserve attention. My second point is that the procedure works.

Schizophrenic language

Language is employed by the schizophrenic in three ways: as a mode of action, as a method of communication, and as a mode of thought. He will show a preference for action on occasions when other patients would realize that what was required was thought; thus, he will want to go over to a piano to take out the movement to understand why someone is playing the piano. Reciprocally, if he has a problem, the solution of which depends on action, as when, being in one place, he should be in another, he will resort to thought—omnipotent thought—as his mode of transportation.

At the moment I want to consider only his use of it as a mode of action in the service either of projective identification or of splitting the object. It will be noted that this is but one aspect of schizophrenic object relations in which he is either splitting or getting in and out of his objects.

The first of these uses is in the service of projective identification. In this the patient uses words as things, or as split-off parts of himself, which he pushes forcibly into the analyst. Typical of this is the belief of a patient who felt he got inside me at the beginning of each session and had to be extricated at the end of it.

Language is employed also as a mode of action for the splitting of his object. This obtrudes when the analyst becomes identified with internal persecutors, but it is employed at other times too. Here are two examples of this use of language: The patient comes into the room, shakes me warmly by the hand, and looking piercingly into my eyes says, "I think the sessions are not for a long while but stop me ever going out." I know from previous experience that this patient has a grievance that the sessions are too few and that they interfere with his free time. He intended to split me by making me give two opposite interpretations at once, and this was shown by his next

association when he said, "How does the lift know what to do when I press two buttons at once?"

My second example has wide implications, which I cannot take up here, because of its bearing on insomnia. The technique depends on the combination of two incompatible elements thus: the patient speaks in a drowsy manner calculated to put the analyst to sleep; at the same time he stimulates the analyst's curiosity. The intention is again to split the analyst who is not allowed to go to sleep and is not allowed to keep awake.

You will note a third example of splitting later on when I describe a patient splitting the analyst's speech itself.

Before I consider the schizophrenic's difficulties with language as a mode of thought, I want to turn for a moment to a discussion of semantics. I think that our difficulties as analysts are made to appear greater than they are by an inadequate theory of semantics, and in particular the use of the Augustinian theory as if it were valid for the whole field. Wittgenstein[1] has deprecated this view and seems to me to put forward a theory which is both more comprehensive and more realistic. In ordinary speech the meaning of any given word, and still more the meaning of the sum total of what a man says, depends upon the synthesis of a complex variety of elements; sounds have to be combined to form words, and words, sentences. Culture and personality of the person to whom the remark is addressed is also rapidly assessed and integrated with other elements in the speaker's mind. The appropriate intonation and pronunciation must be employed, and so on. As I shall show later, reasonably correct colloquial speech can be so treated by the listener that its meaning is destroyed. Reciprocally the speaker can be so incapable of synthesis or show such aberration in his modes of integration that a deal of work has to be done merely to appreciate what has happened to the verbal communication, let alone to grasp the meaning. I shall hope to make these points clearer by actual clinical examples which I shall cite in the development of my theme.

To turn now to the schizophrenic's difficulties with language as a mode of thought. Here is a sequence of associations all in one session, but separated from each other by intervals of four or five minutes.

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[1]L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford, 1953).

"I have a problem I am trying to work out."

"As a child I never had phantasies."

"I knew they weren't facts so I stopped them."

"I don't dream nowadays."

Then after a pause the patient went on in a bewildered voice, "I don't know what to do now." I said, "About a year ago you told me you were no good at thinking. Just now you said you were working out a problem—obviously something you were thinking about."

Patient: "Yes."

Analyst: "But you went on with the thought that you had no phantasies in childhood; and then that you had no dreams; you then said that you did not know what to do. It must mean that without phantasies and without dreams you have not the means with which to think out your problem." The patient agreed and began to talk with marked freedom and coherence. The reference to the inhibition of phantasy as a severe disability hindering development supports Melanie Klein's observations in her paper, 'A Contribution to the Theory of Intellectual Inhibition' (1931).

The severe splitting in the schizophrenic makes it difficult for him to achieve the use of symbols and subsequently of substantives and verbs. It is necessary to demonstrate these difficulties to him as they arise; of this I shall shortly give an example. The capacity to form symbols is dependent on:

1. The ability to grasp whole objects.
2. The abandonment of the paranoid-schizoid position with its attendant splitting.
3. The bringing together of splits and the ushering in of the depressive position.

Since verbal thought depends on the ability to integrate, it is not surprising to find that its emergence is intimately associated with the depressive position which, as Melanie Klein has pointed out, is a phase of active synthesis and integration. Verbal thought sharpens awareness of psychic reality and therefore of the depression which is linked with destruction and loss of good objects. The presence of internal persecutors, as another aspect of psychic reality, is similarly unconsciously more recognized. The patient feels that the association between the depressive position and verbal thought is one of cause

and effect – itself a belief based on his capacity to integrate – and this adds one more to the many causes of his hatred of analysis, already well in evidence, which is, after all, a treatment which employs verbal thought in the solution of mental problems.

The patient at this stage becomes frightened of the analyst, even though he may concede that he feels better, but, and this is where the kernel of our problem lies, he shows every sign of being anxious to have nothing whatever to do with his embryonic capacity for verbal thought. That is felt to be better left to the analyst; or, as I think it more correct to say, the analyst is felt to be better able than he to harbour it within himself without disaster. The patient seems, despite all the work done, to have reverted to the use of language that I have described as characteristic of the schizophrenic before analysis. He has greater verbal capacity but prefers to employ it as he did when it was slight.

Development of capacity for verbal thought

To explain why the patient is so chary of using his increased capacity, I must report an experience which seems to have peculiar significance for him. The patient said to me, "I am a prisoner of psychoanalysis"; later in the session he added, "I can't escape." Some months later he said, "I can't get out of my state of mind." A mass of material, to which quotations cannot do justice, had accumulated over a period of three years to give the impression that the patient felt unable to escape from a prison which seemed sometimes to be me, sometimes psychoanalysis and sometimes his state of mind which is a constant struggle with his own internal objects. He thus shows the same attitude to verbal thought as he has to his potency and his equipment for work and love.

The problem to which I am addressing myself can best be understood if it is seen to appertain to the moment when the patient feels he has effected his escape. The escape appears to contribute to the patient's feeling which he occasionally reports, that he is better; but it has cost him dear. The same patient said, "I have lost my words", and meant by this, as further analysis disclosed, that the instrument with which he had effected his escape had been lost in the process. Words, the capacity for verbal thought, the one essential for further

progress, have gone. On expansion it appears that he thinks he has reached this pass as a penalty for forging this instrument of verbal thought and using it to escape from his former state of mind; hence the unwillingness I described to use his greater verbal capacity except as a mode of action.

Here now is the example I promised you when I was speaking of the difficulty that schizophrenic splitting caused in the formation of symbols and the development of verbal thought. The patient was a schizophrenic who had been in analysis five years; I describe some essentials of two sessions. I must warn you that compression has compelled me to leave out many repetitive formulations which in fact would mitigate the baldness of the interpretations as I report them here. I think interpretation should be in language that is simple, exact and mature.

Patient. I picked a tiny piece of skin from my face and feel quite empty.

Analyst. The tiny piece of skin is your penis, which you have torn out, and all your insides have come with it.

Patient. I do not understand . . . penis . . . only syllables.

Analyst. You have split my word "penis" into syllables and it now has no meaning.

Patient. I don't know what it means, but I want to say, "If I can't spell I cannot think".

Analyst. The syllables have now been split into letters; you cannot spell—that is to say you cannot put the letters together again to make words. So now you cannot think.

The patient started the next day's session with disjointed associations and complained that he could not think. I reminded him of the session I have described, whereupon he resumed correct speech; thus:

Patient. I cannot find any interesting food.

Analyst. You feel it has all been eaten up.

Patient. I do not feel able to buy any new clothes and my socks are a mass of holes.

Analyst. By picking out the tiny piece of skin yesterday you

injured yourself so badly you cannot even buy clothes; you are empty and have nothing to buy them with.

Patient. Although they are full of holes they constrict my foot.

Analyst. Not only did you tear out your own penis but also mine. So today there is no interesting food – only a hole, a sock. But even this sock is made of a mass of holes, all of which you made and which have joined together to constrict, or swallow and injure, your foot.

This and subsequent sessions confirmed that he felt he had eaten the penis and that therefore there was no interesting food left, only a hole. But this hole was now so persecutory that he had to split it up. As a result of the splitting, the hole became a mass of holes which all came together in a persecutory way to constrict his foot.

This patient's picking habits had been worked over for some three years. At first he had been occupied only with blackheads, and I shall quote from Freud's description of three cases, one observed by himself, one by Dr Tausk and one by R. Reitler, which have a resemblance to my patient. They are taken from his paper, 'The Unconscious' (Freud, 1915).

Of his patient Freud said, "he has let himself withdraw from all the interests of life on account of the unhealthy condition of the skin of his face. He declares that he has blackheads and that there are deep holes in his face which everyone notices." Freud says he was working out his castration complex on his skin and that he began to think there was a deep cavity wherever he had got rid of a blackhead. He continues: "The cavity which then appears in consequence of his guilty act is the female genital, i.e. stands for the fulfilment of the threat of castration (or the phantasy representing it) called forth by onanism." Freud compares such substitute formations with those of the hysteric, saying, "A tiny little hole such as a pore of the skin will hardly be used by an hysteric as a symbol for the vagina, which otherwise he will compare with every imaginable object capable of enclosing a space. Besides, we should think that the multiplicity of these little cavities would prevent him from using them as a substitute for the female genital."

Of Tausk's case he says, "in pulling on his stockings he was disturbed by the idea that he must draw apart the knitted stitches, i.e.

the holes, and every hole was for him a symbol of the female genital aperture."

Quoting Reitler's case, he says the patient "found the explanation that his foot symbolized the penis; putting on the stocking stood for an onanistic act."

I shall now return to my patient at a session ten days later. A tear welled from his eye and he said with a mixture of despair and reproach, "Tears come from my ears now."

This kind of association had by now become familiar to me, so I was aware that I had been set a problem in interpretation. But by this time the patient, who had been in analysis some six years, was capable of a fair degree of identification with the analyst and I had his help. I shall not attempt a description of the stages by which the conclusions I put before you were reached. The steps were laborious and slow even though we had the evidence of six years' analysis on which to draw.

It appeared that he was deploring a blunder that seemed to bear out his suspicion that his capacity for verbal communication was impaired. It seemed that his sentence was but another instance of an inability to put words together properly.

After this had been discussed it was seen that tears were very bad things, that he felt much the same about tears which came from his ears as he did about sweat that came from the holes in his skin when he had, as he supposed, removed blackheads or other such objects from the skin. His feeling about tears from his ears was seen to be similar to his feeling about the urine that came from the hole that was left in a person when his penis had been torn out; the bad urine still came.

When he told me that he couldn't listen very well I took advantage of his remark to remind him that in any case we needed to know why his mind was full of such thoughts at the present juncture, and I suggested that probably his hearing was felt to be defective because my words were being drowned by the tears that poured from his ears.

When it emerged that he couldn't talk very well either I suggested that it was because he felt his tongue had been torn out and he had been left only with an ear.

This was followed by what seemed to be a completely chaotic series of words and noises. I interpreted that now he felt he had a

tongue but it was really just as bad as his ear – it just poured out a flow of destroyed language. In short it appeared that despite his wishes and mine we could not, or he felt we could not, communicate. I suggested that he felt he had a very bad and hostile object inside him which was treating our verbal intercourse to much the same kind of destructive attack which he had once felt he had launched against parental intercourse whether sexual or verbal.

At first he seemed to feel most keenly the defects in his capacity for communication or thought, and there was a great deal of play with the pronunciation of tears (teers or tares) the emphasis being mostly on the inability to bring together the objects, words, or word pronunciation, except cruelly. But at one point he seemed to become aware that his association had been the starting-point for much discussion. Then, "Lots of people" he murmured. On working this out in turn it appeared that he had swung away from the idea that his verbal capacity was being irretrievably destroyed by the attacks to which our conversation was being subjected, to the idea that his verbal communication was extremely greedy. This greed was ministered to by his splitting himself into so many people that he could be in many different places at once to hear the many different interpretations which I, also split into "lots of people", was now able to give simultaneously instead of one by one. His greed, and the attacks on verbal communication by the internal persecutors, were therefore related to each other.

Clearly this patient felt that splitting had destroyed his ability to think. This was the more serious for him because he no longer felt that action provided a solution for the kind of problem with which he was struggling. This state is equated by the patient with "insanity".

The patient believes he has lost his capacity for verbal thought because he has left it behind inside his former state of mind, or inside the analyst, or inside psychoanalysis. He also believes that his capacity for verbal thought has been removed from him by the analyst who is now a frightening person. Both beliefs give rise to characteristic anxieties. The belief that he has left it behind has, as we have seen, helped to make the patient feel he is insane. He thinks that he will never be able to progress unless he goes back, as it were, into his former state of mind in order to fetch it. This he dare not do because he dreads his former state of mind and fears that he would once more be

imprisoned in it. The belief that the analyst has removed his capacity for verbal thought makes him afraid of employing his new-found capacity for verbal thought, lest it should arouse the hatred of the analyst and cause him to repeat the attack.

From the patient's point of view the achievement of verbal thought has been a most unhappy event. Verbal thought is so interwoven with catastrophe and the painful emotion of depression that the patient, resorting to projective identification, splits it off and pushes it into the analyst. The results are again unhappy for the patient; lack of this capacity is now felt by him to be the same thing as being insane. On the other hand, resumption of this capacity seems to him to be inseparable from depression and awareness, on a reality level this time, that he is 'insane'. This fact tends to give reality to the patient's phantasies of the catastrophic results that would accrue were he to risk re-introjection of his capacity for verbal thought.

It must not be supposed that the patient leaves his problems untouched during this phase. He will occasionally give the analyst concrete and precise information about them. The analyst's problem is the patient's dread, now quite manifest, of attempting a psychoanalytic understanding of what they mean for him, partly because the patient now understands that psychoanalysis demands from him that very verbal thought which he dreads.

So far I have dealt with the problem of communication between analyst and schizophrenic patient. I shall now consider the experience the patient has when he lives through the process of achieving sufficient mastery of language to emerge from the "prison of psychoanalysis", or state of mind in which he previously felt himself to be hopelessly enclosed. The patient is apparently unaware of any existence outside the consulting room; there is no report of any external activity. There is merely an existence away from the analyst of which nothing is known except that he is "all right" or "better" and a relationship with the analyst which the patient says is bad. The intervals between sessions are admitted and feared. He complains that he is insane, expresses his fear of hallucination and delusion, and is extremely cautious in his behaviour lest he should become insane.

The living through of the emotions belonging to this phase leads to a shift towards higher valuation of the external object at the expense of the hallucinated internal object. This depends on the analysis of the

patient's hallucinations and his insistence on allotting to real objects a subordinate role. If this has been done the analyst sees before him the ego and more normal object relations in process of development. I am assuming that there has been an adequate working through of the processes of splitting and the underlying persecutory anxiety as well as of reintegration. Herbert Rosenfeld has described some of the dangers of this phase. My experiences confirm his findings. I have observed the progress from multiple splits to four and from four to two and the great anxiety as integration proceeds with the tendency to revert to violent disintegration. This is due to intolerance of the depressive position, internal persecutors, and verbal thought. If splitting has been adequately worked through the tendency to split the object and the ego at the same time is kept within bounds. Each session is then a step in ego development.

Realization of insanity

One of the penalties of attempting to clarify the complex phenomena of the schizophrenic patient's relationship with his objects is that if the attempt is successful it is delusively misleading. I would now redress the balance by approaching the phenomena I have already described from a rather different angle. I wish to take up the story at the point at which the splits are brought together, the patient escapes from his state of mind and the depressive position is ushered in. In particular I wish to draw attention to this concatenation of events when it is suffused by the illumination achieved through the development of a capacity for verbal thought. I have made it clear that this is a most important turning-point in the whole analysis. You may therefore have formed the impression that at this point the analysis enters into calm waters. It is necessary therefore that I should leave you with no illusions about this.

What takes place, if the analyst has been reasonably successful, is a realization by the patient of psychic reality; he realizes that he has hallucinations and delusions, may feel unable to take food, and have difficulty with sleep. The patient will direct powerful feelings of hatred towards the analyst. He will state categorically that he is insane and will express with intense conviction and hatred that it

is the analyst who has driven him to this pass. The analyst ought to expect concern for the patient's welfare to drive the family to intervene and he must be prepared to explain an alarming situation to them. He should strive to keep at bay surgeons and shock therapists alike while concentrating on not allowing the patient for a single moment to retreat either from his realization that he is insane or from his hatred of the analyst who has succeeded, after so many years, in bringing him to an emotional realization of the facts that he has spent his whole life trying to evade. This may be the more difficult because, when the first panic begins to subside, the patient himself will begin to suggest that he feels better. Due weight must be given to this, but care must be taken to prevent its being used to delay investigation in detail of the ramifications in the analytic situation of the changes brought about in the patient's object relationships by the realization of his insanity.

Some subsequent developments

I wish now to give some idea of a session when this phase is well established and the patient has accepted both his insanity and the necessity for the analytic work demanded of him. The examples I give typical of the sessions which I have described as 'steps in ego development'. The first is of a patient whose psychological problem may be summarized as a lifelong rebellion against the depression to which he was compelled to cling, with the utmost tenacity, through fear of the "catatonic schizophrenia" (his words) which would take its place were he to abandon it. The session took place some fifteen months after what his doctor had described as a schizophrenic breakdown: he had been called in to see him when he was in a "depressive stupor". At the time of this session he had become able to discuss, without much fear, whether various experiences that arose from day to day were what he severally called "visual images", or "delusions", or "hallucinations", or "nightmares", or "dreams", or "real". He accepted that it was necessary to make the distinction and showed, implicitly and explicitly, that it was more important to know whether something was true than whether it was pleasant. He was also prepared to accept that fact, which I was

able to demonstrate, that he was frequently passing from "depression" to "schizophrenia" and vice versa; in short, that the dreaded breakdown was not a thing of the past, over and done with, but a recurrent phenomenon. He still intended to deny it by drawing my attention to the fact that he was now regularly attending lectures and courses in engineering. I always acknowledged that, but pointed out that this fact did not necessarily refute my interpretations.

In the session I am describing I had been giving an interpretation to the effect that his inability to make a judgement, of which he had just complained, had followed associations in which he was once more experiencing difficulty in the use of words:

Patient: "I can't properly remember all you have just said."

Analyst: "Since you feel you lack words you also feel you lack the means to store ideas in your mind. This feeling is so strong that it makes you think you have forgotten, whether you have or not."

Patient: "Oh yes; I remember now" (Then, becoming depressed) "I am afraid I am a great trouble to you."

Analyst: "As soon as you have been able to think, and so to remember, you fear you have done me an injury, been a trouble to me, and the depression comes on."

Patient: "My muscles are becoming stiff." (Stretching out his arms, each in turn, rather stiffly but with much of the character of the movement accompanying a yawn, or the gesture of an athlete limbering up). "Is this schizophrenia?"

Analyst: "We know how you dread depression; but now you need not be depressed because you have this very bad 'schizophrenia' inside, controlling your arms."

Patient: (Depressed). "I don't know how I shall get through the day."

Analyst: "Now you are depressed again – either you believe you have this bad 'schizophrenia' or bad 'depression'; nothing but one or the other."

Patient: (Puzzled). "Funny. Because I go to lectures now and enjoy them."

Analyst: "You cannot understand how you can be working or happy when you feel, as you have felt all your life, that you can only be depressed or what you call 'schizophrenic'."

I have chosen this example because it gives a good idea of the way a patient will compress into a few associations the whole of a "breakdown" which it has taken years to accomplish in the first instance; the experience against which he has mobilized so much of his resistance is now lived through with comparative ease. It shows how the depressive position can be used as an escape from the paranoid-schizoid position and vice versa; and it shows the part that is played in these changes by the integration and disintegration of verbal thought.

My next example I include as one showing the kind of difficulty that a schizophrenic patient encounters in his attempt to employ words. This patient had been working through the "breakdown" for some nine months at the time of this episode. The session had been marked by a good deal of rather abstract speculation over some difficulty he had had at work, and in the course of it he used the word "selexual". He reacted to this by a gesture of angry impatience. "What was that?", I asked him. "Oh, nothing; two words got on top of each other and became sexual." I replied, "You are feeling that your words will not help you when you want them to, but instead become sexual with each other. They seem to be behaving rather like the parents inside you who, you remember, seem always to persecute you by having sexual intercourse." He remembered the reference as we had done a great deal of work about the primal scene in its many aspects, and he was familiar with manifestations of it as an internal object. The striking thing about this association was that it showed a synthesis in which his objects were coming together, or were being allowed to come together, in a far more creative manner than had been the case before the "breakdown". Then they had never been able to come to life even when brought together, and more often than not had been brought together cruelly – i.e. incongruously and frustratingly. Further, the patient was angry but not persecuted. Finally, there was an emotional quality about the episode which I find difficult to convey, but which I must attempt because I have no doubt of its importance. It was the first time in his whole analysis that I had felt amused and able to believe that, had he been aware of my own amusement, he would have forgiven it. Before this time there had been occasions,

such as that on which he had reported a dream of animals composed of two incompatible halves joined together, where I seemed to be invited to share in what I can only describe as an "unfunny" joke; there had been a number of occasions when he had felt, with dangerously mounting anger, that he was being laughed at. But there had been no occasion such as this, where asperity seemed to be softened by an element of tenderness. For the first time it seemed possible that a day might come when the patient would show a sense of humour. I pointed out to him immediately, while the intonation he had employed was presumably fresh in his mind, that he had spoken of the sexual behaviour of these two objects with exasperation but also with love; and I reminded him, for contrast, of the unrelieved hatred with which he had previously spoken of the sexual parents.

My last example from this phase is a reply which a schizophrenic patient made when I pointed out to him that he, as I supposed, was doubting the accuracy of an interpretation I had given him. "I was concentrating on whether it was pleasant or unpleasant", he replied, "so I didn't know anything about its being true or not."

I suggested that this might explain his complaint, a few days previously, of the anxiety he suffered through not being sure whether an experience was an hallucination or not. "If you feel you only want to know if something is pleasant or unpleasant you would naturally suppose that you had not learned how to tell the difference between real and unreal."

The developments that sprang from my patient's flash of insight persuaded me that a feeble deployment of the depressive position was very closely associated with the continuing dominance of the pleasure principle and the destructive attacks on the ego which I have discussed in this paper. I am disposed also to attach importance to the fact that in this patient, and one other, hatred of pain was apparently a stronger motive than love of pleasure[1]; that is to say, attacks on the ego were stimulated by the patient's determination to avoid pain at any cost, even the cost of sacrificing the chance of experiencing pleasure. But the attacks on the ego are, I believe, the source of the fears – extremely acute fears – of disintegration, annihilation, death. In so far

[1]I would further suggest, as a theory for testing, that in the paranoid-schizoid position pain becomes identified with the early superego. [This sentence was included inside parentheses in the text at this point. *Ed.*]

as the destructive attacks are felt to have been a success, the patient seems to feel that inner disaster has taken place, that the absence of painful stimuli achieved is evidence that death has supervened; that he has gone back to where he was; gone back to the state of mind in which he was before he was born.

Results

I am not yet prepared to offer any opinion about the prospects of treatment except to say that two of the three schizophrenics of whom I am speaking are now earning their living. I believe that if the course I have indicated above is followed there is reason to anticipate that the schizophrenic may achieve his own form of adjustment to reality which may be no less worthy of the title of 'cure' because it is not of the same kind as that which is achieved by less disordered patients. I repeat that I do not think that any cure, however limited, will be achieved if, at the point I have tried to describe to you, the analyst attempts to reassure the patient and so undoes all the good work that has led to the latter's being able to realize the severity of his condition. At this point an opportunity, which must not be lost, has been created for exploring with the patient what it means to do analytic or any other kind of work when insane.

The experiences I have described to you compel me to conclude that at the onset of the infantile depressive position, elements of verbal thought increase in intensity and depth. In consequence the pains of psychic reality are exacerbated by it and the patient who regresses to the paranoid–schizoid position will, as he does so, turn destructively on his embryonic capacity for verbal thought as one of the elements which have led to his pain.

EXPERIENCES IN GROUPS AND OTHER PAPERS

1961

Experiences in Groups and Other Papers was first published in 1961 by Tavistock Publications, London, and Routledge, New York; it was reprinted in 2001 by Brunner-Routledge, Hove.

'[Pre-View:] Intra-group Tensions in Therapy' (with J. Rickman) was published in the *Lancet, 2* (27 Nov. 1943): 678–681.

The chapters in 'Experiences in Groups' were published separately:

Chapter 1. *Human Relations, 1* (1948): 314–320.
Chapter 2. *Human Relations, 1* (1948): 487–496.
Chapter 3. *Human Relations, 2* (1949): 13–22.
Chapter 4. *Human Relations, 2* (1949): 295–303.
Chapter 5. *Human Relations, 3* (1950): 3–14.
Chapter 6. *Human Relations, 3* (1950): 395–402.
Chapter 7. *Human Relations, 4* (1951): 221–227.

'Re-View: Group Dynamics' is a slightly modified version of 'Group Dynamics: A Re-View', published in 1952 in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 33*: 235–247 and reprinted in 1955 in *New Directions in Psychoanalysis*, edited by M. Klein, P. Heimann, & R. E. Money-Kyrle (London: Tavistock Publications), pp. 440–477.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The last of the papers eventually published in *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers* had already been completed by 1951 when Bion (at the Tavistock Clinic) met Francesca McCallum, who was to become his wife. At the Tavistock Francesca was approached by John Harvard-Watts, who asked her whether she would to try to persuade Wilfred Bion to allow his papers on work with groups to be published together as a book. Bion agreed, reluctantly at first; he felt the book could go ahead if he added a paper, 'Group Dynamics: A Re-view' (1952). It is in this paper that Bion brings together his theoretical model of group processes explicitly with Klein's theories.

The whole book, however, was not published until much later – 1961. This was because, as Francesca later explained:

> Due to his absorption in psychoanalysis, the writing of seven papers between 1952 and 1957, and his habitual lack of interest in past work as he always preferred to concentrate on the present – *Experiences in Groups* was not published until 1961. It proved to be his most successful book in terms of copies sold. Its success surprised him, especially as he was used to being told by reluctant publishers in the 60s that his books sold, "very, very slowly".[1]

Although Melanie Klein was not supportive of his group work, Bion persisted with his view that a psychoanalytic perspective on group mentality was compatible with individual psychoanalysis, stating in the introduction to *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers*:

> I am impressed, as a practising psychoanalyst, by the fact that the psychoanalytic approach, through the individual, and the approach these papers describe, through the group, are dealing with different

[1]Francesca Bion, 'The Days of Our Years' (1995): see Appendix A, Volume XVI.

> facets of the same phenomena. The two methods provide the practitioner with a rudimentary binocular vision.

In his Introduction Bion also stated something of his fundamental orientation as a psychoanalyst. He was convinced, he wrote,

> . . . of the central importance of the Kleinian theories of projective identification and the interplay between the paranoid-schizoid positions. Without the aid of these two sets of theories I doubt the possibility of any advance in the study of group phenomena.

Some of what he says in that Introduction was prompted by the frequent question, "Why did you give up group work?" He was already engrossed in the practice of analysis while taking groups but ultimately realized that, for him at any rate, to practise both methods in parallel would not be beneficial to the group, the individual or the analyst.

Experiences in Groups and Other Papers

INTRODUCTION

The articles printed here aroused more interest than I expected; consequently there have been requests for reprints which it has been impossible to supply from the stock available.

The solution, as I now realize, would have been to republish them at the outset. I was reluctant to do this without changes embodying later experience. However, rewriting is seldom successful, and much can be lost by the exclusion of tentative theories that show how ideas were developed. The articles are therefore reprinted without alteration. It will be seen that two do not belong to the series that originally appeared in *Human Relations*; the first is reprinted because it throws light on the origins of my belief that this approach merited further trial, and the last because it summarizes conclusions that I would like to have taken further, and that others might like to develop. I have also a purely personal reason for wishing to acknowledge the collaboration with John Rickman and the inspiration which his generosity and enthusiasm always engendered.

I regret not having discussed sovereignty and power. In small groups like those used here, power and sovereignty do not develop to maturity. The mature form is extrinsic and impinges on the group only in the form of invasion by another group. These matters I shall discuss in a further volume, if I have time, and I shall then take up the extra-economic sources of the value of money, which not only are important in themselves but also contribute significantly through their influence on economics to the dynamics of sovereignty and power.

I am impressed, as a practising psychoanalyst, by the fact that the psychoanalytic approach, through the individual, and the approach these papers describe, through the group, are dealing with different

facets of the same phenomena. The two methods provide the practitioner with a rudimentary binocular vision. The observations tend to fall into two categories, whose affinity is shown by phenomena which, when examined by one method, centre on the oedipal situation, related to the pairing group, and, when examined by the other, centre on the sphinx, related to problems of knowledge and scientific method.

My present work, which I hope to publish, convinces me of the central importance of the Kleinian theories of projective identification and the interplay between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions.

Without the aid of these two sets of theories I doubt the possibility of any advance in the study of group phenomena. The part played by the mechanisms to which these theories relate is adumbrated in the last chapter, to which I commend your attention.

PRE-VIEW

Intra-group tensions in therapy: their study as the task of the group

The term 'group therapy' can have two meanings. It can refer to the treatment of a number of individuals assembled for special therapeutic sessions, or it can refer to a planned endeavour to develop in a group the forces that lead to smoothly running co-operative activity.

The therapy of individuals assembled in groups is usually in the nature of explanation of neurotic trouble, with reassurance; and sometimes it turns mainly on the catharsis of public confession. The therapy of groups is likely to turn on the acquisition of knowledge and experience of the factors which make for a good group spirit.

A SCHEME FOR REHABILITATION (W. R. B.)

In the treatment of the individual, neurosis is displayed as a problem of the individual. In the treatment of a group it must be displayed as a problem of the group. This was the aim I set myself when I was put in charge of the training wing of a military psychiatric hospital. My first task, therefore, was to find out what the pursuit of this aim would mean in terms of time-table and organization.

I was not able to work at this task in an atmosphere of cloistered calm. No sooner was I seated before desk and papers than I was beset with urgent problems posed by importunate patients and others. Would I see the NCOs in charge of the training wing and explain to them what their duties were? Would I see Private A who had an urgent need for 48 hours' leave to see an old friend just back from the Middle East? Private B, on the other hand, would seek advice

because an unfortunate delay on the railway had laid him open to misunderstanding as one who had overstayed his leave. And so on.

An hour or so of this kind of thing convinced me that what was required was discipline. Exasperated at what I felt to be a postponement of my work, I turned to consider this problem.

Discipline for the neurotic

Under one roof were gathered 300–400 men who in their units already had the benefit of such therapeutic value as lies in military discipline, good food, and regular care; clearly this had not been enough to stop them from finding their way into a psychiatric hospital. In a psychiatric hospital such types provide the total population and by the time they reach the training wing they are not even subject to such slight restraint as is provided by being confined to bed.

I became convinced that what was required was the sort of discipline achieved in a theatre of war by an experienced officer in command of a rather scallywag battalion. But what sort of discipline is that? In face of the urgent need for action I sought, and found, a working hypothesis. It was, that the discipline required depends on two main factors: (i) the presence of the enemy, who provided a common danger and a common aim; and (ii) the presence of an officer who, being experienced, knows some of his own failings, respects the integrity of his men, and is not afraid of either their good-will or their hostility.

An officer who aspires to be the psychiatrist in charge of a rehabilitation wing must know what it is to be in a responsible position at a time when responsibility means having to face issues of life and death. He must know what it is to exercise authority in circumstances that make his fellows unable to accept his authority except in so far as he appears to be able to sustain it. He must know what it is to live in close emotional relationship with his fellow men. In short, he must know the sort of life that is led by a combatant officer. A psychiatrist who knows this will at least be spared the hideous blunder of thinking that patients are potential cannon-fodder, to be returned as such to their units. He will realize that it is his task to produce self-respecting men socially adjusted to the community and therefore willing to

accept its responsibilities whether in peace or war. Only thus will he be free from deep feelings of guilt that effectually stultify any efforts he may otherwise make towards treatment.

What common danger is shared by the men in the rehabilitation wing? What aim could unite them?

There was no difficulty about detecting a common danger; neurotic extravagances of one sort and another perpetually endanger the work of the psychiatrist or of any institution set up to further treatment of neurotic disorders. The common danger in the training wing was the existence of neurosis as a disability of the community. I was now back at my starting-point – the need, in the treatment of a group, for displaying neurosis as a problem of the group. But, thanks to my excursion into the problem of discipline, I had come back with two additions. Neurosis needs to be displayed as a danger to the group; and its display must somehow be made the common aim of the group.

But how was the group to be persuaded to tackle neurotic disability as a communal problem?

The neurotic patient does not always want treatment, and when at last his distress drives him to it he does not want it wholeheartedly. This reluctance has been recognized in the discussion of resistance and allied phenomena; but the existence of comparable phenomena in societies has not been recognized.

Society has not yet been driven to seek treatment of its psychological disorders by psychological means because it has not achieved sufficient insight to appreciate the nature of its distress. The organization of the training wing had to be such that the growth of insight should at least not be hindered. Better still if it could be designed to throw into prominence the way in which neurotic behaviour adds to the difficulties of the community, destroying happiness and efficiency. If communal distress were to become demonstrable as a neurotic by-product, then neurosis itself would be seen to be worthy of communal study and attack. And a step would have been taken on the way to overcoming resistance in the society.

Two minor, but severely practical, military requirements had to be satisfied by the training wing. The organization should if possible provide a means by which the progress of the patients could be indicated, so that the psychiatrist could tell if a man were fit for discharge. It would also be useful to have an indication of the patient's direction,

of his effective motivation, so that an opinion could be formed about the sort of work to which he should be discharged.

I found it helpful to visualize the projected organization of the training wing as if it were a framework enclosed within transparent walls. Into this space the patient would be admitted at one point, and the activities within that space would be so organized that he could move freely in any direction according to the resultant of his conflicting impulses. His movements, as far as possible, were not to be distorted by outside interference. As a result, his behaviour could be trusted to give a fair indication of his effective will and aims, as opposed to the aims he himself proclaimed or the psychiatrist wished him to have.

It was expected that some of the activities organized within the 'space' would be clearly warlike, others equally clearly civilian, others again merely expressions of neurotic powerlessness. As the patient's progress was seen to run along one or other of these paths, so his 'assets and liabilities', to use a phrase employed in the sphere of officer selection by Major Eric Wittkower, could be assessed with reasonable objectivity. As his progress appeared to be towards one or other of the possible exits from this imaginary space, so his true aim could be judged.

At the same time the organization could be used to further the main aim of the training wing – the education and training of the community in the problems of interpersonal relationships. If it could approximate to this theoretical construct it would enable the members of the training wing to stand (as it were) outside the framework and look with detachment and growing understanding upon the problems of its working.

The experiment

The training wing, consisting of some hundred men, was paraded and was told that in future the following regulations would apply:

1. Every man must do one hour's physical training daily unless a medical certificate excused him.
2. Every man must be a member of one or more groups – the groups designed to study handicrafts, Army correspondence courses, carpentry, map-reading, sand-tabling, etc.

3. Any man could form a fresh group if he wanted to do so, either because no group existed for his particular activity or because, for some reason or other, he was not able to join an existing similar group.
4. A man feeling unable to attend his group would have to go to the rest-room.
5. The rest-room would be in charge of a nursing orderly, and must be kept quiet for reading, writing, or games such as draughts. Talking in an undertone was permitted with the permission of the nursing orderly but other patients must not be disturbed; couches were provided so that any men who felt unfit for any activity whatever could lie down. The nursing orderly would take the names of all those in the rest-room as a matter of routine.

It was also announced that a parade would be held every day at 12.10 p.m. for making announcements and conducting other business of the training wing. Unknown to the patients, it was intended that this meeting, strictly limited to 30 minutes, should provide an occasion for the men to step outside their framework and look upon its working with the detachment of spectators. In short, it was intended to be the first step towards the elaboration of therapeutic seminars.

For the first few days little happened; but it was evident that among the patients a great deal of discussion and thinking was taking place. The first few 12.10 meetings were little more than attempts to gauge the sincerity of the proposals; then the groups began to form in earnest. Among the more obvious activities there was a programme group to chart out working hours of groups and their location, to make announcements, and to allocate tickets for free concerts and such-like. In a very short time the programme room, which showed by means of flags on a work-chart the activities of every man in the training wing, now growing rapidly in size, became almost vernal in its display of multi-coloured flags of patterns suggested by the ingenuity of the patients. By a happy thought a supply of flags bearing the skull and cross-bones was prepared, ready for the use of such gentlemen as felt compelled to be absent without leave.

The existence of this brave display gave occasion for what was probably the first important attempt at therapeutic cooperation at a 12.10 meeting. It had been my habit, on doing the rounds of the groups, to detach one or two men from their immediate work and

take them with me 'just to see how the rest of the world lives'. I was therefore able to communicate to this meeting an interesting fact observed by myself and by others who had gone round with me. Namely, that, although there were many groups and almost entire freedom to each man to follow the bent of his own inclinations, provided he could make a practical proposal, yet very little was happening. The carpenter's shop might have one or two men at most; car maintenance the same; in short, I suggested, it almost looked as if the training wing was a façade with nothing behind it. This, I said, seemed odd because I remembered how bitterly the patients in the training wing had previously complained to me that one of their objections to the Army was the 'eyewash'. Its presence in the training wing, therefore, really did seem to be a point worth study and discussion.

This announcement left the audience looking as if they felt they were being 'got at'. I turned the discussion over at that point as a matter of communal responsibility and not something that concerned myself, as an officer, alone.

With surprising rapidity the training wing became self-critical. The freedom of movement permitted by the original set-up allowed the characteristics of a neurotic community to show with painful clarity; within a few days men complained that the wards (hitherto always claimed to be spotless) were dirty and could not be kept clean under the present system of a routine hour for ward fatigues. They asked and were allowed to organize under the programme group an 'orderly group', whose duties it would be to keep the wards clean throughout the day. The result of this was that on a subsequent weekly inspection the Commanding Officer of the hospital remarked on the big change in cleanliness that had taken place.

Some results

It is impossible to go into details about the working of all the therapeutic aspects of the organization; but two examples of method and result may be given.

Shortly after the new arrangement started, men began to complain to me that patients were taking advantage of the laxity of the

organization. 'Only 20 per cent', they said, 'of the men are taking part and really working hard; the other 80 per cent are just a lot of shirkers.' They complained that not only was the rest-room often filled with people simply loafing, but that some men even cut that. I was already aware of this, but refused, at least outwardly, to have its cure made my responsibility. Instead, I pointed out that, at an Army Bureau of Current Affairs meeting some weeks before, the discussion had at one point centred on just that question – namely, the existence in communities (and the community then under discussion was Soviet Russia) of just such uncooperative individuals as these and the problem presented to society by their existence. Why, then, did they sound so surprised and affronted at discovering that just the same problem afflicted the training wing?

This cool reply did not satisfy the complainants – they wanted such men to be punished, or otherwise dealt with. To this I replied that no doubt the complainants themselves had neurotic symptoms, or they would not be in hospital; why should their disabilities be treated in one way and the disabilities of the 80 per cent be treated in another? After all, the problem of the '80 per cent' was not new; in civil life magistrates, probation officers, social workers, the Church, and statesmen had all attempted to deal with it, some of them by discipline and punishment. The '80 per cent', however, were still with us; was it not possible that the nature of the problem had not yet been fully elucidated and that they (the complainants) were attempting to rush in with a cure before the disease had been diagnosed? The problem, I said, appeared to be one that not only concerned the training wing, or even the Army alone, but had the widest possible implications for society at large. I suggested that they should study it and come forward with fresh proposals when they felt they were beginning to see daylight.

It is worth remarking at this point that my determination not to attempt solution of any problem until its borders had become clearly defined helped to produce, after a vivid and healthy impatience, a real belief that the unit was meant to tackle its job with scientific seriousness. One critic expostulated that surely such a system of patient observation would be exceedingly slow in producing results, if indeed it produced results at all. He was answered by reminding him that only a few days previously the critic himself had

spontaneously remarked that military discipline and bearing of the training wing had improved out of all recognition within the short period of one month.

The second example illustrates the development of an idea from the stage of rather wild, neurotic impulses to practical common-sense activity.

By far the largest group of men proposed the formation of a dancing class. Despite the veneer of a desire to test my sincerity in promising facilities for group activity, the pathetic sense of inferiority towards women that underlay this proposal, by men taking no part in fighting, was only too obvious. They were told to produce concrete proposals. The steps by which this was done need not detain us; in the end the class was held during hours usually taken up by an evening entertainment; it was confined, by the volition of the men themselves, only to those who had no knowledge at all of dancing and the instruction was done by ATS staff. In short, a proposal, which had started as a quite impractical idea, quite contrary to any apparently serious military aim, or sense of social responsibility to the nation at war, ended by being an inoffensive and serious study carried out at the end of a day's work. Furthermore, the men concerned had had to approach the Commanding Officer, the ATS officers, and the ATS, as a matter of discipline in the first place and social courtesy in the second.

In the meantime, the 12.10 parades had developed very fast into business-like, lively, and constructive meetings, and that in spite of the fact that the wing was now receiving heavy reinforcements of patients new to the organization, as well as losing others who had been discharged from hospital, often when they had become very useful.

Within a month of the inception of the scheme big changes had taken place. Whereas at first it almost seemed difficult to find ways of employing the men, at the end of the month it was difficult to find time for the work they wanted to do. Groups had already begun to operate well outside what were ordinarily considered parade hours; absence without leave was for a considerable period non-existent, and over the whole period there was only one case; patients not in the training wing became anxious to come over to it; and despite the changing population, the wing had an unmistakable *esprit de corps*, which showed itself in details such as the smartness with which men came to attention when officers entered the room at the 12.10

meetings. The relationship of the men to the officers was friendly and co-operative; they were eager to enlist the officers' sympathy in concerts and other activities which they were arranging. There was a subtle but unmistakable sense that the officers and men alike were engaged on a worth-while and important task, even though the men had not yet grasped quite fully the nature of the task on which they were engaged. The atmosphere was not unlike that seen in a unit of an army under the command of a general in whom they have confidence, even though they cannot know his plans.

Comment

It is not possible to draw many conclusions from an experiment lasting, in all, six weeks. Some problems that arose could not be fully explored in the time; others could not be openly discussed while the war was still in progress.

It was evident that the 12.10 meetings were increasingly concerned with the expression, on the part of the men, of their ability to make contact with reality and to regulate their relationships with others, and with their tasks, efficiently. The need for organization of seminars for group therapy had become clear, and the foundation of their commencement appeared to be firmly laid.

The whole concept of the 'occupation' of the training wing as a study of, and a training in, the management of interpersonal relationships within a group seemed to be amply justified as a therapeutic approach. Anyone with a knowledge of good fighting regiments in a theatre of war would have been struck by certain similarities in outlook in the men of such a unit and the men of the training wing. In these respects the attempt could be regarded as helpful; but there were also lessons to be learnt.

Some of these raised serious doubts about the suitability of a hospital milieu for psychotherapy. It was possible to envisage an organization that would be more fitly described as a psychiatric training unit; and, indeed, some work had been done in the elaboration of an establishment and a *modus operandi* of such a unit. With regard to the psychiatrist, also, there was room for some readjustment of outlook. If group therapy is to succeed it appears necessary that he should have the outlook, and the sort of intuitive sympathetic flair, of

the good unit commander. Otherwise there will always be a lingering suspicion that some combatant officers are better psychiatrists, and achieve better results, than those who have devoted themselves to the narrow paths of individual interview.

Finally, attention may be drawn again to the fact that society, like the individual, may not want to deal with its distresses by psychological means until driven to do so by a realization that some at least of these distresses are psychological in origin. The community represented by the training wing had to learn this fact before the full force of its energy could be released in self-cure. What applied to the small community of the training wing may well apply to the community at large; and further insight may be needed before whole-hearted backing can be obtained for those who attempt in this way to deal with deep-seated springs of national morale.

APPLICATION OF GROUP THERAPY IN A SMALL WARD (J. R.)

An experiment in the application of group therapy, in the newer sense, to patients in a ward of 14–16 beds was made in the hospital division of the same institution. Each patient had an initial interview with the psychiatrist in which a personal history was taken in the usual way; thereafter there were group discussions every morning before the hour's 'route march'; and after it, as the patients returned to the ward, they could call in at the psychiatrist's room to discuss privately the topic of the group discussion, which had usually been the subject of conversation of the route march, and their personal feelings about it.

The therapeutic talks centred on their personal difficulties in putting the welfare of the group in the first place during their membership of the group. The topics of the group discussion included the following:

a. Since residence in this ward is temporary, some going into the training wing and others coming from the admission ward to take their place, how is this changing situation to be met? We – the

distinction between physician and patient, officer and other ranks, was another special topic – should have to accommodate ourselves to people entering our group to whom our attitude to our ward (it was always referred to as 'our ward') meant nothing at all; either we could regard them as outsiders or as imperfectly accommodated insiders. So, too, with those who 'went out' into the training wing: they could not expect to retain the ward-group attitude indefinitely, nor could they expect to include the much larger training wing in their ward-group; they would have to find their place in the new groupings and allow their ward experience to be but a memory, but it was to be hoped a helpful memory.

Then there was the further point whether those in the training wing should come back to the daily group discussions, the question being not what they would get out of them (there seemed little doubt they were among the most interesting experiences we had ever had) but whether, coming from another group-formation, or having lost their ward contact, they might not prove a distraction to those who were finding their feet in the ward-group.

b. How far were the differences of rank acquired 'outside' to determine the behaviour of the members of the group to one another while in the ward? Would an attempt at equality work? Or would it be better, while not forgetting the rank acquired outside, to consider what equivalents of rank emerge when in the ward, and, if so, the basis of these equivalents?

c. What makes for discontent in the ward? Is it something peculiar to the war, and any ward, or to any association of people?

d. What makes for content and happiness in the ward? Is it the exercise of individual initiative having for its sole criterion the free expression of the person's own private enterprises, or does that come only after recognition of what the ward needs from the individual? Is there a fundamental incompatibility between these two points of view, and, if so, does it apply to all or only some members? If to only some, what causes it to appear in these, and is it a characteristic they carry through in their lives all the time or is it stronger at some times than at others? If it varies, can the ward diminish it without being oppressive to those individuals so endowed?

The effect of this approach to the problem of neurosis was considerable. There was a readiness, and at times an eagerness, to discuss both in public and in private the social implications of personality problems. The neurotic is commonly regarded as being self-centred and averse from co-operative endeavour; but perhaps this is because he is seldom put in an environment in which every member is on the same footing as regards interpersonal relationships.

The experiment was interrupted by posting of personnel, so I cannot give clinical or statistical results; but it seemed to show that it is possible for a clinician to turn attention to the structure of a group and to the forces operating in that structure without losing touch with his patients and, further, that anxiety may be raised either inside or outside the group if this approach is made.

CONCLUSIONS

We are now in a better position to define the 'good group spirit' that has been our aim.

It is as hard to define as is the concept of good health in an individual; but some of its qualities appear to be associated with:

a. A common purpose, whether that be overcoming an enemy or defending and fostering an ideal or a creative construction in the field of social relationships or in physical amenities.
b. Common recognition by members of the group of the 'boundaries' of the group and their position and function in relation to those of larger units or groups.
c. The capacity to absorb new members, and to lose members without fear of losing group individuality – i.e. 'group character' must be flexible.
d. Freedom from internal sub-groups having rigid (i.e. exclusive) boundaries. If a sub-group is present it must not be centred on any of its members nor on itself – treating other members of the main group as if they did not belong within the main group barrier – and the value of the sub-group to the function of the main group must be generally recognized.

e. Each individual member is valued for his contribution to the group and has free movement within it, his freedom of locomotion being limited only by the generally accepted conditions devised and imposed by the group.
f. The group must have the capacity to face discontent within the group and must have means to cope with discontent.
g. The minimum size of the group is three. Two members have personal relationships; with three or more there is a change of quality (interpersonal relationship).

These experiments in a rehabilitation wing of a military psychiatric neurosis hospital suggest the need for further examination of the structure of groups and the interplay of forces within the groups. Psychology and psychopathology have focused attention on the individual often to the exclusion of the social field of which he is a part. There is a useful future in the study of the interplay of individual and social psychology, viewed as equally important interacting elements.

EXPERIENCES IN GROUPS

1

Early in 1948 the Professional Committee of the Tavistock Clinic asked me to take therapeutic groups, employing my own technique. Now, I had no means of knowing what the Committee meant by this, but it was evident that in their view I had 'taken' therapeutic groups before. I had, it was true, had experience of trying to persuade groups composed of patients to make the study of their tensions a group task, and I assumed the Committee meant that they were willing that I should do this again. It was disconcerting to find that the Committee seemed to believe that patients could be cured in such groups as these. It made me think at the outset that their expectations of what happened in groups of which I was a member were very different from mine. Indeed, the only cure of which I could speak with certainty was related to a comparatively minor symptom of my own – a belief that groups might take kindly to my efforts. However, I agreed; so, in due course, I would find myself sitting in a room with eight or nine other people – sometimes more, sometimes less – sometimes patients, sometimes not. When the members of the group were not patients, I often found myself in a peculiar quandary. I will describe what happens.

At the appointed time members of the group begin to arrive; individuals engage each other in conversation for a short time, and then, when a certain number has collected, a silence falls on the group. After a while desultory conversation breaks out again, and then another silence falls. It becomes clear to me that I am, in some sense, the focus of attention in the group. Furthermore, I am aware of feeling uneasily that I am expected to do something. At this point I confide my anxieties to the group, remarking that, however mistaken my attitude might be, I feel just this.

I soon find that my confidence is not very well received. Indeed, there is some indignation that I should express such feelings without seeming to appreciate that the group is entitled to expect something from me. I do not dispute this, but content myself with pointing out that clearly the group cannot be getting from me what they feel they are entitled to expect. I wonder what these expectations are, and what has aroused them.

The friendliness of the group, though sorely tested, enables them to give me some information. Most members have been told that I would 'take' the group; some say that I have a reputation for knowing a lot about groups; some feel that I ought to explain what we are going to do; some thought it was to be a kind of seminar, or perhaps a lecture. When I draw attention to the fact that these ideas seem to me to be based on hearsay, there seems to be a feeling that I am attempting to deny my eminence as a 'taker' of groups. I feel, and say, that it is evident that the group had certain good expectations and beliefs about myself, and are sadly disappointed to find they are not true. The group is persuaded that the expectations are true, and that my behaviour is provocatively and deliberately disappointing – as much as to say, I could behave differently if I wanted to, and am only behaving like this out of spite. I point out that it is hard for the group to admit that this could be my way of taking groups, or even that I should be allowed to take them in such away. At this point the conversation seems to me to indicate that the group has changed its purpose.

While waiting for the group to settle on its new course, it may be useful if I try to offer the reader some explanation of behaviour which may, by this time, puzzle him as much as it does the group. I would not, of course, dream of doing this in a group, but the reader is in a different position from that of the man or woman who has much more evidence to go upon than the written word. Several questions may have occurred to the reader. He may think that my attitude to the group is artificially naïve, and certainly egotistical. Why should a group be bothered by having to discuss irrelevant matters such as the personality, history, career, and so forth, of one individual? I cannot hope to give any kind of full answer to such questions, but will say provisionally that I do not consider that I forced the group to discuss myself, though I do agree that the group was forced to do so. However irrelevant it may appear to be to the purpose of the meeting, the

preoccupation with my personality certainly seemed to me to obtrude itself, unwelcome though that might be to the group or to myself. I was simply stating what I thought was happening. Of course, it may be argued that I provoked this situation, and it has to be admitted that this is quite possible, although I do not think so. But even supposing my observations are correct, it may be wondered what useful purpose is served in making them. Here I can only say I do not know if any useful purpose is served in making them. Nor am I very sure about the nature of this kind of observation. It would be tempting, by analogy with psychoanalysis, to call them interpretations of group transference, but I think any psychoanalyst would agree with me that, before such a description could be justified, a great deal of evidence from groups would have to be evaluated. But at least I can plead that observations of this kind are made spontaneously and naturally in everyday life, that we cannot avoid making them, unconsciously if not consciously, and that it would be very useful if we could feel that when we made observations of this kind they corresponded to, facts. We are constantly affected by what we feel to be the attitude of a group to ourselves, and are consciously or unconsciously swayed by our idea of it. It will be seen at once that it does not follow that one should blurt it out in the way I have so far described myself as doing in the group. This, I confess, must be regarded as peculiar, although if precedent were required, we are all familiar with certain types of people, particularly those who tend to feel persecuted, who behave in this manner. Not a happy precedent, the reader will think, and it will not be long before it is evident that the group thinks so too. But it is necessary now to return to the group, whom we left in the process of changing course.

The first thing that strikes us is the improvement that has taken place in the atmosphere. Mr X, who has a likeable personality, has taken charge of the group, and is already taking steps to repair the deplorable situation created by myself. But I have given a mistaken impression if I seemed to suggest that we can watch this group in detachment, for Mr X, who is anxious for the welfare of the group, quite rightly turns his attention to the source of the trouble, which, from his point of view, is myself. You can see that he has a very good idea of tackling at once those elements in his group which are destructive of morale and good fellowship. He therefore asked me directly what my object is, and why I cannot give a straightforward

explanation of my behaviour. I can only apologize, and say that, beyond feeling that the statement that I want to study group tensions is probably a very inadequate description of my motives, I can throw no light on his problem; he has a good deal of sympathy from the group when he turns from this very unsatisfactory reply to question one or two others, who seem to be more cooperative and frank than myself. I think, however, I detect some unwillingness on the part of the group to follow his lead wholeheartedly. The dissidents seem to have reassured themselves that the Committee of the Tavistock Clinic must have had some good purpose in saying that I was to take the group; they give the impression that they are determined to believe that experience of a group taken by myself is valuable, in spite of their observations so far.

Nevertheless, Mr X is having some success. Mr Y tells him he is a Probation Officer, and has come to get a scientific knowledge of groups, which he feels would be of value to him. Mr R, though not professionally concerned, has always had an interest in the scientific study of groups. Mr X, Mr Y, and Mr R also give some details of their background, and explain why they feel a scientific study would help them.

But now difficulties appear to be arising. Other members of the group are not so forthcoming as Mr Y and Mr R. Furthermore, there seems to be some irritation with Mr X for taking the lead at all. Replies become evasive, and it looks as if even the information that has been obtained was not really quite the information that was wanted. I begin to feel, as the conversation becomes more desultory, that I am again the focus of discontent. Without quite knowing why, I suggest that what the group really wants to know is my motives for being present, and, since these have not been discovered, they are not satisfied with any substitute.

It is clear that my interpretation is not welcome. One or two members want to know why I should take curiosity, which would seem to be valid without any further explanation, upon myself. The impression I receive is that very little importance is attached to the view I express as a possible explanation of what is going on. It seems to me either to be ignored, or to be taken as evidence of a warped outlook in myself. To make matters worse, it is not at all clear to me that my observation, however correct, is really the most useful one to make at the moment. But I have made it, and prepare to watch what follows.

I should explain that this bald description does not do justice to the emotional state of the group at this point. Mr X seems harassed to find his initiative ill-received, and the rest of group seem to be in varying stages of discomfort. For my part, I have to confess that it is a reaction with which I am familiar in every group of which I have been a member. I cannot, therefore, dismiss it simply as a peculiarity of this group. To me it is clear that whatever the group may think about Mr X, it has much more serious misgivings about myself. In particular, I suspect that my personality, and especially my capacity for social relationships, and, therefore, my fitness for the role I am expected to fill, is in question. In the group we are contemplating at the moment, discontent with what is taking place, and particularly with my part in producing it, has risen to such a pitch that even the continued existence of the group becomes a matter of doubt to me. For some uncomfortable moments I fear it will all end by my having to explain to the Professional Committee that their project has broken down through the inability of the group to tolerate my behaviour. I suspect from their demeanour that similar gloomy thoughts, differently orientated, are passing through the minds of the rest of the group.

In the tense atmosphere prevailing my own thoughts are not wholly reassuring. For one thing, I have recent memories of a group in which my exclusion had been openly advocated; for another, it is quite common for me to experience a situation in which the group, while saying nothing, simply ignores my presence, and excludes me from the discussion quite as effectively as if I were not there. On some occasions of this kind of crisis, the reaction has taken the milder form of suggestions that I have already excluded myself from the group, and that I make things difficult by not participating. A reaction as mild as this is quite reassuring, but I cannot forget that when I first attempted to put such methods into operation the experiment was terminated by my removal in fact from my post. I should prefer to believe that on that occasion the dismissal was due to coincidental circumstances, but I remember that, even so, the patients with whom I was dealing had constantly warned me, on what grounds I did not know, that serious attempts were being made to sabotage the scheme. I have, therefore, every reason, in such a situation as I am describing, to believe that the discontent is real, and may easily lead to the disruption of the group.

But on this occasion my anxieties are relieved by a new turn of events. Mr Q suggests that logical argument at this point would hardly be likely to elicit the information wanted, and, indeed, it is possible that I would rather not explain why I make such an interpretation, because it would run counter to any idea of leaving the group to experience the nature of group phenomena for itself. He argues that, after all, I must have good reason for taking the line I do. The tension in the group is immediately relaxed, and a far more friendly attitude towards myself becomes apparent. It is clear that the group has a high opinion of myself after all, and I begin to feel that I have been perhaps treating the group unfairly by not being more communicative. For a moment I am impelled to make amends by responding to this friendly change with some explanation of my behaviour. Then I check myself, as I realize that the group has simply gone back to its former mood of insisting that hearsay is fact; so, instead of this, I point out that the group now appears to me to be coaxing me to mend my ways and fall in with their wish that my behaviour should conform more to what is expected or familiar to them in other fields. I also remark that the group has, in essence, ignored what was said by Mr Q. The emphasis has been shifted from what Mr Q intended to only one part of what he said, namely, that, after all, I was likely to know what I was about. In other words, it has been difficult for an individual member to convey meanings to the group which are other than those which the group wishes to entertain.

This time the group really is annoyed, and it is necessary to explain that they have every right to be. It is perfectly clear that nobody ever explained to them what it meant to be in a group in which I was present. For that matter, nobody ever explained to me what it was like to be in a group in which all the individual members of this group were present. But I have to realize that the only person whose presence has so far been found to be disagreeable is myself, so that any complaints I may have have not the same validity as those of other members. To me it is more than ever clear that there is some quite surprising contradiction in the situation in which I find myself. I, too, have heard rumours about the value of my contribution to groups; I have done my best to find out just in what respect my contribution was so remarkable, but have failed to elicit any information. I can, therefore, easily sympathize with the group, who feel that they are entitled to expect something different from what, in fact, they

are getting. I can quite see that my statements must appear to the group to be as inaccurate as views of one's own position in a given society usually are, and, furthermore, to have very little relevance or importance for anybody but myself. I feel, therefore, that I must try to present a broader view of the situation than I have done so far.

With this in view, I say that I think my interpretations are disturbing the group. Furthermore, that the group interprets my interpretations as a revelation of the nature of my personality. No doubt attempts are being made to consider that they are in some way descriptive of the mental life of the group, but such attempts are overshadowed by a suspicion that my interpretations, when interpreted, throw more light on myself than on anything else, and that what is then revealed is in marked contrast with any expectations that members of the group had before they came. This, I think, must be very disturbing, but quite apart from any point of this sort, we have to recognize that perhaps members of the group assume too easily that the label on the box is a good description of the contents.

We must recognize now that a crisis has been reached, in that members may well have discovered that membership of a group in which I am a member happens to be an experience that they do not wish to have. In that way we have to face frankly that members of our group may need to leave, in exactly the same way as a person might wish to leave a room which he had entered under a mistaken impression. I do not myself believe that this is quite a correct description, because, I remind the group, it was quite clear that in the beginning the group was most unwilling to entertain any idea that they had not properly satisfied themselves of the accuracy of hearsay reports about myself. In my view, therefore, those who felt that they had been misled by others, and now wished to withdraw, ought seriously to consider why they resisted so strongly any statements that seemed to question the validity of their belief in the value of my contributions to a group.

At this point it is necessary that I should say that I consider the emotional forces underlying this situation to be very powerful. I do not believe for a moment that the objective fact – namely, that I am merely one member of a group possessing some degree of specialized knowledge, and in that respect no different from any other member of the group – would be likely to be accepted. The forces opposed to this are far too strong. One external group – that is, the

Clinic responsible for saying that I am to take a group – has given the seal of its authority to a myth of unknown dimensions; but apart from this, I am certain that the group is quite unable to face the emotional tensions within it without believing that it has some sort of God who is fully responsible for all that takes place. It has to be faced, therefore, that no matter what interpretations may be given, by myself or anybody else, the probability is that the group will reinterpret them to suit its own desires, exactly as we have just seen it do with the contribution of Mr Q. It therefore becomes important to point out that the means of communication within the group are tenuous in the extreme, and quite uncertain in their action. Indeed, one might almost think that it would be less misleading if each individual member of the group spoke a language unknown to the remainder. There would then be less risk of assuming that we understood what any given individual said.

The group has now turned somewhat resentfully, but with more anxiety than resentment, to another member of the group. I get the impression that they are looking to him to be leader, but without any real conviction that he can be leader. This impression is strengthened because the man in question shows every desire to efface himself. The conversation becomes more and more desultory, and I feel that for most of the group the experience is becoming painful and uninteresting. A fresh thought occurs to me, so I pass it on.

I tell the group that it seems to me we are determined to have a leader, and that the leader we want seems to possess certain characteristics against which we match the characteristics of the different individuals we try out. Judging by our rejections, we seem to know perfectly well what we want. At the same time, it would be very difficult to say from our experience so far what these desirable characteristics are. Nor is it obvious why we should require a leader. The time of meeting of the group has been laid down, and really there seem to be no other decisions that the group has to make. One would imagine that a leader was required in order to give effective orders to the group, to implement moment-to-moment decisions; but, if this is so, what is there in our present situation that would make us think that a leader of this kind is required? It cannot be the external situation, for our material needs and our relationships with external groups are stable, and would not seem to indicate that any decisions will be required in the near future. Either the desire for a leader is

some emotional survival operating uselessly in the group as archaism, or else there is some awareness of a situation, which we have not defined, which demands the presence of such a person.

If my description of what it is like to be in a group of which I am a member has been at all adequate, the reader will have experienced some misgivings, harboured some objections, and reserved many questions for further discussion. At the present stage I wish only to isolate two features of the group experience for inspection; one of these is the futility of the conversation in the group. Judged by ordinary standards of social intercourse, the performance of the group is almost devoid of intellectual content. Furthermore, if we note how assumptions pass unchallenged as statements of fact, and are accepted as such, it seems clear that critical judgement is almost entirely absent. To appreciate this point the reader must remember that he is able to read this account in tranquillity, with unfettered use of his judgement. This is not the situation in the group. Whatever it may appear to be on the surface, that situation is charged with emotions which exert a powerful, and frequently unobserved, influence on the individual. As a result, his emotions are stirred to the detriment of his judgement. The group accordingly will often wrestle with intellectual problems that, one believes; the individual could solve without difficulty in another situation – a belief that will later be seen to be illusory. One of the main objects of our study may well turn out to be precisely the phenomena that produce these perturbations of rational behaviour in the group – phenomena whose existence I have only been able to indicate by descriptions of facts that bear less relationship to the object of our study than the lines of a monochrome print do to the colours of a painting in which colour is the all-important quality.

The second feature to which I must allude is the nature of my own contribution. It would be satisfying if I could now give a logical account of my technique – the technique the Professional Committee, it will be remembered, wished me to employ – but I am persuaded that it would also be very inaccurate and misleading. I shall, in the course of the sections that follow, give as accurate a description as I can of what I say and do, but I propose also to indicate what groups think I say and do, and this not merely to illustrate the mental working of a group, but to provide as much material as possible for the reader to use in reaching his own conclusions. I will, however, emphasize

one aspect of my interpretations of group behaviour which appears to the group, and probably to the reader, to be merely incidental to my personality, but which is, in fact, quite deliberate – the fact that the interpretations would seem to be concerned with matters of no importance to anyone but myself.

2

I ended the previous section by saying that my interpretations of group behaviour in terms of the group's attitude to myself must seem to be a contribution as impertinent as it was likely to be inaccurate. Criticisms of this feature of my behaviour in a group require careful investigation, and the sequel will show that to these criticisms I shall provide answers, not refutations. Let us first consider a few group situations.

As we sit round in a rough circle, the room softly lit by a single standard lamp, a woman patient in the group complains angrily:

> You (that is, the group) always say I am monopolizing, but if I don't talk you just sit there like dumb things. I'm fed up with the whole damn lot of you. And you (pointing to a man of twenty-six, who raises his eyebrows in a smoothly efficient affectation of surprise) are the worst of the lot. Why do you always sit there like a good little boy – never saying anything, but upsetting the group? Dr Bion is the only one who is ever listened to here, and he never says anything helpful. All right, then, I'll shut up. Let's see what you do about it if I don't monopolize.

Now another one: the room is the same, but it is a sunlit evening in summer; a man is speaking:

> This is what I complain about here. I asked a perfectly simple question. I said what I thought was happening because I don't agree with Dr Bion. I said it would be interesting to know what other people thought, but do any of you reply? Not a bloody one. And you women are the worst of the lot – except Miss X. How can we get anywhere at all if people won't answer you? You smile

> when I say except Miss X, and I know what you're thinking, but you're wrong.

Here is another: a woman patient says:

> Everyone seems to agree absolutely with what Dr Bion has just said, but I said the same thing five minutes ago, and because it was only me no one took the slightest notice.

And yet another; a woman says:

> Well, since nobody else is saying anything, I may as well mention my dream. I dreamed that I was on the seashore, and I was going to bathe. There were a lot of seagulls about. . . . There was a good deal more like that.
>
> *A member of the group:* Do you mean that that is all you can remember?
>
> *Woman:* Oh, no, no. But it's all really rather silly.

The group sits about glumly, and each individual seems to become rapt in his thoughts. All contact between members of the group appears to have broken.

> *Myself:* What made you stop talking about your dream?
>
> *Woman:* Well, nobody seemed very interested, and I only said it to start the ball rolling.

I will draw attention only to one aspect of these episodes.

The first woman patient said: You (the group) always say I am monopolizing. . . . In actual fact, only one person had said this, and that on only one occasion, but her reference was to the whole group, and clearly indicated that she thought the whole group always felt this about her. The man in the second example said: You smile when I say except Miss X, and I know what you're thinking. . . . In the third example the woman said: . . . because it was only me no one took the slightest notice. In the fourth example the woman felt that the group was not interested, and that she had better abandon her initiative. I have already pointed out above that anyone who has any contact with reality is always consciously or unconsciously forming an estimate of the attitude of his group towards himself. These examples

taken from groups of patients show, if there is really any need for demonstrations, that the same kind of thing is going on in the patient group. For the time being I am ignoring obvious facts, such as that there is something in the speaker which colours his assessment of the situation in which he finds himself. Now, even if it is still maintained that the individual's view of the group attitude to himself is of no concern to anybody but himself, I hope that it is clear that this kind of assessment is as much a part of the mental life of the individual as is his assessment, shall we say, of the information brought to him by his sense of touch. Therefore, the way in which a man assesses the group attitude to himself is, in fact, an important object of study even if it leads us to nothing else.

But my last example, of a very common occurrence, shows that, in fact, the way in which men and women in a group make these assessments is a matter of great importance to the group, for on the judgements that individuals make depends the efflorescence or decay of the social life of the group.

What happens if I use this idea of group attitude to the individual as a basis for interpretation? We have already seen some of the reactions in the first section. In the examples I gave, there could be seen, though I did not stress them, some results of this sort of interpretation; but one common reaction I shall mention now. The group will tend to express still further its preoccupation with myself, and then a point seems to be reached where, for the time being, the curiosity of the group is satisfied. This may take two or three sessions. Then the group begins the thing all over again, but this time with some other member of the group. What happens is that another member is the object of the forces that were previously concentrated on myself. When I think enough evidence has accumulated to convince the group, I say that I think this has happened. One difficulty about doing this is that the transition from a preoccupation with myself to a preoccupation with another member of the group is marked by a period during which the preoccupation with the other member shows unmistakable signs of containing a continued preoccupation with myself. I have depicted this situation in the first section (p. 124), where I describe myself as giving an interpretation that, in questioning others, the group is really preoccupied with myself. I think that on that occasion I would have been more accurate if I had interpreted the emotional situation as a transition of the kind I have just described.

Many people dispute the accuracy of these interpretations. Even when the majority of members in the group have had unmistakable evidence that their behaviour is being affected by a conscious or unconscious estimate of the group attitude to themselves, they will say they do not know what the rest of the group thinks about them, and they do not believe that anyone else does either. This objection to the accuracy of the interpretations must be accepted, even if we modify it by claiming that accuracy is a matter of degree; for it is a sign of awareness that one element in the individual's automatic assessment of the attitude of the group towards himself is doubt. If an individual claims he has no doubt at all, one would really like to know why not. Are there occasions when the group attitude is utterly unmistakable? Or is the individual unable to tolerate ignorance about a matter in which it is essential to be accurate if his behaviour in a society is to be wise? In a sense, I would say that the individual in a group is profiting by his experience if at one and the same time he becomes more accurate in his appreciation of his position in the emotional field, and more capable of accepting it as a fact that even his increased accuracy falls lamentably short of his needs.

It may be thought that my admission destroys the foundations of any technique relying on this kind of interpretation; but it does not. The nature of the emotional experience of interpretation is clarified, but its inevitability as part of human mental life is unaltered, and so is its primacy as a method. That can only be attacked when it can be demonstrated that some other mental activity deals more accurately with matters of greater relevance to the study of the group.

Here is an example of a reaction where the accuracy of the interpretation is questioned; the reader may like to bear the preceding passages in mind when he considers the conclusions I draw from this and the associated examples.

For some time I have been giving interpretations which have been listened to civilly, but conversation has been becoming more and more desultory, and I begin to feel that my interventions are not wanted; I say so in the following terms: During the past half hour the group has been discussing the international situation, but I have been claiming that the conversation was demonstrating something about ourselves. Each time I have done this I have felt my contribution was jarring and unwelcome. Now I am sure I am the object of your hostility for persisting in this kind of contribution.

For a moment or two after I have spoken there is a silence, and then a man member of the group says very civilly that he has felt no hostility at all to my interpretations, and has not observed that anybody else has either. Two or three other members of the group agree with him. Furthermore, the statements are made with moderation, and in a perfectly friendly manner, except possibly for what one might think was an excusable annoyance at having to give a reassurance that ought to have been unnecessary. In some respects I might say again that I feel I am being treated like a child who is being patiently dealt with in spite of his tiresomeness. However, I do not propose to consider this point just now, but rather to take perfectly seriously the statement made by these members of the group who seem to me to represent the whole group very fairly in denying any feeling of hostility. I feel that a correct assessment of the situation demands that I accept it as a fact that all individuals in the group are perfectly sincere and accurate when they say they feel no hostility towards myself.

I recall another episode of a similar kind.

Besides myself, three men and four women are present in the group; a man and a woman are absent. One of the men says to a woman:

How did your affair go last week?

The woman: You mean my party? Oh, that went all right. Very well, really. Why?

The man: Well, I was just wondering. You were rather bothered about it if you remember.

The woman (rather listlessly)*:* Oh, yes. I was really. After a slight pause the man starts again.

He says: You don't seem to want to say very much about it.

She replies: Oh, yes, I do really, but nothing much happened. It really went all right.

Another woman now joins in and tries to carry the conversation further, as if she felt aware that it was faltering, but in a minute or two she also gives up. There is a pause, and then another woman comes forward with an experience she had during the week. She starts off quite briskly, and then comes to a stop. One or two members attempt to encourage her by their questions, but I feel that even

the questioners seem to be oppressed by some preoccupation. The atmosphere of the group is heavy with fruitless effort. Nothing could be clearer to me than the determination of the individuals to make the session what they would consider to be a success. If only it were not for the two absentees, I think, I believe this group would be going very well. I begin myself to feel frustrated, and I remember how much the last two or three sessions have been spoilt because one or more members of the group have been absent. Three of the people present at this session have been absent at one or other of the last two sessions. It seems too bad that the group should be spoilt like this when all are prepared to do their best. I begin to wonder whether the group approach to problems is really worthwhile when it affords so much opportunity for apathy and obstruction about which one can do nothing. In spite of the effort that is being made, I cannot see that the conversation is anything but a waste of time. I wish I could think of some illuminating interpretation, but the material is so poor that there is nothing I can pick up at all. Various people in the group are beginning to look at me in a hopeless sort of way, as much as to say that they have done all they can – it is up to me now – and, indeed, I feel they are quite right. I wonder if there would be any point in saying that they feel like this about me, but dismiss this because there seems to be no point in telling them what they must know already.

The pauses are getting longer, comments more and more futile, when it occurs to me that the feelings which I am experiencing myself – in particular, oppression by the apathy of the group and an urge to say something useful and illuminating – are precisely those which the others present seem to have. A group whose members cannot attend regularly must be apathetic and indifferent to the sufferings of the individual patient.

When I begin to wonder what I can say by way of interpretation I am brought up against a difficulty that will have already occurred to the reader: what is this group which is unsympathetic and hostile to our work? I must assume that it consists of these same people that I see struggling hard to do the work, but, as far as I am concerned at any rate, it also includes the two absentees. I am reminded of looking through a microscope at an over-thick section; with one focus I see, not very clearly perhaps, but with sufficient distinctness, one picture. If I alter the focus very slightly I see another. Using this as

an analogy for what I am doing mentally, I shall now have another look at this group, and will then describe the pattern that I see with the altered focus.

The picture of hard-working individuals striving to solve their psychological problems is displaced by a picture of a group mobilized to express its hostility and contempt for neurotic patients and for all who may wish to approach neurotic problems seriously. This group at the moment seems to me to be led by the two absentees, who are indicating that there are better ways of spending their time than by engaging in the sort of experience with which the group is familiar when I am a member of it. At a previous session this group was led by one of the members now absent.

As I say, I am inclined to think that the present leaders of this group are not in the room; they are the two absentees, who are felt not only to be contemptuous of the group, but also to be expressing that contempt in action. The members of that group who are present are followers. I wonder as I listened to the discussion if I can make more precise the facts that give me this impression.

At first, I must confess, I see little to confirm me in my suspicions, but then I notice that one of the men who is asking the questions is employing a peculiarly supercilious tone. His response to the answers he receives appears to me, if I keep my mental microscope at the same focus, to express polite incredulity. A woman in the corner examines her fingernails with an air of faint distaste. When a silence occurs it is broken by a woman who, under the former focus, seemed to be doing her best to keep the work of the group going, with an interjection which expresses clearly her dissociation from participation in an essentially stupid game.

I do not think I have succeeded very well in giving precision to my impressions, but I think I see my way to resolving the difficulty in which I found myself in the first example. On that occasion, it will be remembered, I felt quite positive that the group was hostile to myself and my interpretations, but I had not a shred of evidence with which to back my interpretation persuasively. Truth to tell, I found both experiences very disconcerting; it seemed as if my chosen method of investigation had broken down, and broken down in the most obvious kind of way. Anyone used to individual therapy might have foretold that a group of patients would deny an interpretation, and

anyone could have foretold that the group would present a heaven-sent opportunity for denying it effectively. It occurs to me, however, that if a group affords splendid opportunities for evasion and denial, it should afford equally splendid opportunities for observation of the way in which these evasions and denials are effected. Before investigating this, I shall examine the two examples I have given with a view to formulating some hypothesis that will give form to the investigation.

It can be seen that what the individual says or does in a group illumines both his own personality and his view of the group; sometimes his contribution illumines one more than the other. Some contributions he is prepared to make as coming unmistakably from himself, but there are others which he would wish to make anonymously. If the group can provide means by which contributions can be made anonymously, then the foundations are laid for a successful system of evasion and denial, and in the first examples I gave it was possibly because the hostility of the individuals was being contributed to the group anonymously that each member could quite sincerely deny that he felt hostile. We shall have to examine the mental life of the group closely to see how the group provides a means for making these anonymous contributions. I shall postulate a group mentality as the pool to which the anonymous contributions are made, and through which the impulses and desires implicit in these contributions are gratified. Any contribution to this group mentality must enlist the support of, or be in conformity with, the other anonymous contributions of the group. I should expect the group mentality to be distinguished by a uniformity that contrasted with the diversity of thought in the mentality of the individuals who have contributed to its formation. I should expect that the group mentality, as I have postulated it, would be opposed to the avowed aims of the individual members of the group. If experience shows that this hypothesis fulfils a useful function, further characteristics of the group mentality may be added from clinical observation.

Here are some experiences that seem to me to be to the point.

The group consists of four women and four men, including myself. The ages of the patients are between thirty-five and forty. The prevailing atmosphere is one of good temper and helpfulness. The room is cheerfully lit by evening sunlight.

Mrs X: I had a nasty turn last week. I was standing in a queue waiting for my turn to go to the cinema when I felt ever so queer. Really, I thought I should faint or something.

Mrs Y: You're lucky to have been going to a cinema. If I thought I could go to a cinema I should feel I had nothing to complain of at all.

Mrs Z: I know what Mrs X means. I feel just like that myself, only I should have had to leave the queue.

Mr A: Have you tried stooping down? That makes the blood come back to your head. I expect you were feeling faint.

Mrs X: It's not really faint.

Mrs Y: I always find it does a lot of good to try exercises. I don't know if that's what Mr A means.

Mrs Z: I think you have to use your will-power. That's what worries me – I haven't got any.

Mr B: I had something similar happen to me last week, only I wasn't even standing in a queue. I was just sitting at home quietly when . . .

Mr C: You were lucky to be sitting at home quietly. If I was able to do that I shouldn't consider I had anything to grumble about.

Mrs Z: I can sit at home quietly all right, but it's never being able to get out anywhere that bothers me. If you can't sit at home why don't you go to a cinema or something?

After listening for some time to this sort of talk, it becomes clear to me that anybody in this group who suffers from a neurotic complaint is going to be advised to do something which the speaker knows from his own experience to be absolutely futile. Furthermore, it is clear that nobody has the least patience with any neurotic symptom. A suspicion grows in my mind, until it becomes a certainty, that there is no hope whatever of expecting co-operation from this group. I am led to ask myself what else I expected from my experience as an individual therapist. I have always been quite familiar with the idea of a patient as a person whose capacity for co-operation is very slight. Why, then, should I feel disconcerted or aggrieved when a group of patients demonstrates precisely this quality? It occurs to me that perhaps this

very fact will afford me an opportunity for getting a hearing for a more analytical approach. I reflect that from the way in which the group is going on its motto might be: 'Vendors of quack nostrums unite.' No soon have I said this to myself than I realize that I am expressing my feeling, not of the group's disharmony, but of its unity. Furthermore, I very soon become aware that it is not accidentally that I have attributed this slogan to the group, for every attempt I make to get a hearing shows that I have a united group against me. The idea that neurotics cannot co-operate has to be modified.

I shall not multiply examples of teamwork as a characteristic of the group mentality, chiefly because I cannot, at present, find any method of describing it. I shall rely upon chance instances as they occur in the course of these papers to give the reader a better idea of what I mean, but I suspect that no real idea can be obtained outside a group itself. For the present I shall observe that in the group mentality the individual finds a means of expressing contributions which he wishes to make anonymously, and, at the same time, his greatest obstacle to the fulfilment of the aims he wishes to achieve by membership of the group.

It may be thought that there are many other obstacles to the fulfilment of the individual's aims in a group. I do not wish to pre-judge the matter, but for the time being I shall not attach very much importance to them. It is clear that when a group forms the individuals forming it hope to achieve some satisfaction from it. It is also clear that the first thing they are aware of is a sense of frustration produced by the presence of the group of which they are members. It may be argued that it is quite inevitable that a group must satisfy some desires and frustrate others, but I am inclined to think that difficulties that are inherent in a group situation, such, for example, as a lack of privacy which must follow from the fact that a group provides you with company, produce quite a different sort of problem from the kind of problem produced by the group mentality.

I have often mentioned the individual in the course of my discussions of the group, but in putting forward the concept of a group mentality I have described the individual, particularly in the episode in which the two absentees played a big part in the emotional orientation of the group, as being in some way opposed to the group mentality although a contributor to it. It is time now that I turned to

discuss the individual, and in doing so I propose to take leave of the neurotic and his problems.

Aristotle said man is a political animal, and, in so far as I understand his Politics, I gather that he means by this that for a man to lead a full life the group is essential. I hold no brief for what has always seemed to me an extremely dreary work, but I think that this statement is one that psychiatrists cannot forget without danger of achieving an unbalanced view of their subject. The point that I wish to make is that the group is essential to the fulfilment of a man's mental life – quite as essential to that as it is to the more obvious activities of economics and war. In the first group described above (pp. 121 et seq.), I could say that the group was essential to myself because I wished to have a group to study; presumably the other members could say the same; but even had I admitted this as the aim of the individual members, including myself – and it will be remembered that I did no such thing – I consider that group mental life is essential to the full life of the individual, quite apart from any temporary or specific need, and that satisfaction of this need has to be sought through membership of a group. Now, the point that emerges in all the groups from which I have been drawing examples is that the most prominent feeling which the group experiences is a feeling of frustration – a very unpleasant surprise to the individual who comes seeking gratification. The resentment produced by this may, of course, be due to a naïve inability to understand the point that I made above, that it is the nature of a group to deny some desires in satisfying others, but I suspect that most resentment is caused through the expression in a group of impulses which individuals wish to satisfy anonymously, and the frustration produced in the individual by the consequences to himself that follow from this satisfaction. In other words, it is in this area, which I have temporarily demarcated as the group mentality, that I propose to look for the causes of the group's failure to afford the individual a full life. The situation will be perceived to be paradoxical and contradictory, but I do not propose to make any attempt to resolve these contradictions just now. I shall assume that the group is potentially capable of providing the individual with the gratification of a number of needs of his mental life which can only be provided by a group. I am excluding, obviously, the satisfactions of his mental life which can be obtained in solitude, and, less obviously, the

satisfactions which can be obtained within his family. The power of the group to fulfil the needs of the individual is, I suggest, challenged by the group mentality. The group meets this challenge by the elaboration of a characteristic culture of the group. I employ the phrase 'culture of the group' in an extremely loose manner; I include in it the structure which the group achieves at any given moment, the occupations it pursues, and the organization it adopts. I will refer now to my speculations (p. 128) about the motives underlying the group's insistence on a leader. I said then that it would seem to be, in the situation I was describing, either an emotional survival operating uselessly, or else the response to some demand created by the awareness of a situation that we had not then defined. The attempt on that occasion to construct the group so that it consisted of a leader and his followers, above whom he towered supremely, is a very good example of the kind of thing I am meaning to include under the word culture. If we assume that the undefined situation is the group mentality of which I have been speaking, and I think there was good reason to assume that, then the group was attempting to meet the challenge presented to its capacity to fulfil the individual's need by this simple culture of leader and followers. It will be seen that, in the scheme I am now putting forward, the group can be regarded as an interplay between individual needs, group mentality, and culture. To illustrate what I mean by this triad, here is another episode taken from a group.

For a period of three or four weeks in a patient group I was in very bad odour – my contributions were ignored, the usual response being a polite silence, and then a continuation of the conversation which, as far as I could see, showed no sign of having been deflected by any comments of my own. Then suddenly a patient began to display what the group felt to be symptoms of madness, making statements that appeared to be the products of hallucination. Instantaneously I found I had been readmitted to the group. I was the good leader, master of the situation, fully capable of dealing with a crisis of this nature – in short, so outstandingly the right man for the job that it would have been presumption for any other member of the group to attempt to take any helpful initiative. The speed with which consternation was changed into bland complacency had to be seen to be believed. Before the patient began to alarm the group my interpretations might have been oracular pronouncements for all the ceremonious silence with which they were received; but they were the pronouncements of an

oracle in decay – nobody would dream of considering their content as worthy of note. After the group had become alarmed I was the centre of a cult in its full power. Looked at from the point of view of an ordinary man attempting to do a serious job, neither situation was satisfactory. A group structure in which one member is a god, either established or discredited, has a very limited usefulness. The culture of the group in this instance might almost be described as a miniature theocracy. I do not attach importance to this phrase as a description, except in so far as it helps to define what on that occasion I would have meant by culture. Having done that, the proper employment of my hypothesis of individual, group mentality, and culture, requires an attempt to define the qualities of the other two components in the triad. Before the turning-point, the group mentality had been of such a nature that the needs of the individual were being successfully denied by the provision of a good friendly relationship between the patients, and a hostile and sceptical attitude towards myself. The group mentality operated very hardly upon this particular patient, for reasons into which it is unnecessary to go. It was possible on this occasion, by exhibiting something of the culture of the group, to effect a change in the group without elucidating either the group mentality or the effect upon the individual that the group mentality was having. The group changed and became very like school-children in the latency period in its outlook and behaviour. The seriously disturbed patient, outwardly at least, ceased to be disturbed. Individuals then attempted again to state their cases, but put forward only such problems as were of a trivial or painless nature. I was then able to suggest that the group had adopted a cultural pattern analogous to that of the playground, and that while this must be presumed to be coping fairly adequately with some of the difficulties of the group – I meant coping with the group mentality but did not say so – it was a culture which only permitted of the broaching of the kind of problem one might well expect a school-child to help with. The group again changed, and became one in which all members, including myself, seemed to be more or less on a level. At the same time a woman mentioned for the first time in six months quite serious marital difficulties that were troubling her.

These examples, I hope, give some idea of what I mean by culture, and also some idea of what I consider to be the need to attempt to elucidate, if possible, two of the three components in the triad.

My attempt to simplify, by means of the concepts I have adumbrated, will prove to be very misleading unless the reader bears in mind that the group situation is mostly perplexing and confused; operations of what I have called the group mentality, or of the group culture, only occasionally emerge in any strikingly clear way. Furthermore, the fact that one is involved in the emotional situation oneself makes clear-headedness difficult. There are times, such as the occasion I described when two members of the group were absent, when it is clear that the individuals are struggling against the apathy of the group. On that occasion I attributed behaviour to the group on the strength of the behaviour of one or two individuals in it. There is nothing out of the ordinary about this: a child is told that he or she is bringing disgrace upon the school, because it is expected that the behaviour of one will be interpreted as the behaviour of all; Germans are told that they are responsible for the behaviour of the Nazi government; silence, it is said, gives consent. Nobody is very happy about insisting on collective responsibility in this way, but I shall assume, nevertheless, that unless a group actively disavows its leader it is, in fact, following him. In short, I shall insist that I am quite justified in saying that the group feels such and such when, in fact, perhaps only one or two people would seem to provide by their behaviour warrant for such a statement, if, at the time of behaving like this, the group show no outward sign of repudiating the lead they are given. I dare say it will be possible to base belief in the complicity of the group on something more convincing than negative evidence, but for the time being I regard negative evidence as good enough.

3

In previous sections I explained the contribution I make in a group. I said that the emotional situation is nearly always tense and confused, so that it is not easy for the psychiatrist, who must necessarily be a part of the group, to tell what is going on. Feelings of frustration are common, boredom is acute, and often relief is provided only by outbursts of exasperation between members of the group. When an interpretation I give clarifies a situation that has been obscure for weeks there follows immediately a further period of obscurity which lasts as long again.

I probe this confusing situation by considering what position in the emotions of the group I myself occupy at any given moment, and I like to observe, at least for my own satisfaction, the sort of leadership that is being exercised by others in the group. I have suggested that it helped to elucidate the tensions of the group to suppose the existence of a group mentality. This term I use to describe what I believe to be the unanimous expression of the will of the group, an expression of will to which individuals contribute anonymously. I said that I thought this phenomenon in the mental life of the group caused difficulties to the individual in the pursuit of his aims. My third and last postulate was of a group culture, a term I used to describe those aspects of the behaviour of the group which seemed to be born of the conflict between group mentality and the desires of the individual. I gave some examples, as an illustration in concrete terms of what I meant, of the experiences that had led me to put forward these concepts.

In making interpretation to the group I avoid terms such as group mentality; the terms used should be as simple and precise as possible.

Thus, I may say, speaking of what I call group mentality: I think the group has got together during the last five minutes in order to make anyone uncomfortable who says or does anything to help me to give further interpretations. I should then describe facts that showed how the group had done this and that had made me think that the group had been working together as a team, even though I may not have been able to detect how this team-work had been achieved. If I thought I had some evidence of how it had been achieved I would give it.

Or I might say, speaking of what I call group culture, we are now behaving as if we were equals, grown men and women, discussing the problem together freely, with tolerance for differences of opinion and without concern about a 'right' to express a point of view.

Or, speaking of the individual, I might say: Mr X is having difficulty, because he wants a problem of his dealt with, but feels he is going to get into trouble with the rest of the group if he perseveres in his attempt.

I have given this last example to show that the situation could equally have been described in terms of group mentality, as in the first example. This is not a matter of importance by itself, but the psychiatrist must decide what description best clarifies the situation for him, and then in what terms he should describe it for the group.

I shall spend no more time on the way in which interpretations should be phrased; it is important, but I do not think it can easily be communicated in a book. I will assume, therefore, that the reader understands that the situation should be described in concrete terms and the information given as fully and precisely as possible, without mention of the theoretical concepts on which the psychiatrist's own views have been based.

How did the use of these three concepts, group mentality, group culture, and individual, as interdependent phenomena, work in practice? Not very well; I found that the group reacted in a tiresomely erratic manner. I was able to give interpretations of the kind I have sketched out, and every now and then the reaction that followed could be explained as a logical development from the interpretation that I had given, but there were confusing exceptions. The group changed in ways that left me stranded and not able to apply my theories in any way that convinced me. Either I felt that they were

inapplicable or, alternatively, that they illuminated some aspect of the situation that was of no significance.

I wish I could give concrete examples, but I cannot record what was actually said, and, in any case, the thing that knocked holes in my theories was not words used, but the emotion accompanying them. I shall, therefore, resort to an avowedly subjective account.

I have said that the effect of interpretation was erratic; however, after a time I thought that some patterns of behaviour were recurring and, in particular, one that went like this: two members of the group would become involved in a discussion; sometimes the exchange between the two could hardly be described but it would be evident that they were involved with each other, and that the group as a whole thought so too. On these occasions the group would sit in attentive silence – rather surprising behaviour in view of the neurotic's impatience of any activity that does not centre on his own problem. Whenever two people begin to have this kind of relationship in the group – whether these two are man and woman, man and man, or woman and woman – it seems to be a basic assumption, held both by the group and the pair concerned, that the relationship is a sexual one. It is as if there could be no possible reason for two people's coming together except sex. The group tolerates this situation, and, although knowing smiles are interchanged, the group seems prepared to allow the pair to continue their exchange indefinitely. There are exceptions, but they are not so numerous as one would imagine, considering the other individuals in the group have a good deal that they would like to say.

Now, it is clear that two people in a group can be meeting together for any number of purposes other than those of sex; there must, therefore, be considerable conflict between the desire of the pair to pursue the aim they have consciously in mind, and the emotions derived from the basic assumption that two people can be meeting together for only one purpose, and that a sexual one.

In due course the pair fall silent, and, if they are asked why, can find ready to hand many good reasons in reply – they do not want to monopolize; they had said all they had to say. I do not deny the validity of these explanations, but I would add another, and that is that the awareness that their contact does not conform to the basic assumption of the group, or, alternatively, conforms to the basic assumption

of the group but does not conform to other views of what is proper behaviour in public.

Anyone who has employed a technique of investigation that depends on the presence of two people, and psychoanalysis is such a technique, can be regarded, not only as taking part in the investigation of one mind by another, but also as investigating the mentality not of a group but of a pair. If my observation of the basic assumption of the group is correct, it is not surprising that such an investigation seems to demonstrate sex as occupying a central position with other emotions as more or less secondary.

If the basic assumption about the pair is that they meet together for purposes of sex, what is the basic assumption in a group about people who meet together in a group? The basic assumption is that people come together as a group for purposes of preserving the group. It is common for discussions to become tiresome through preoccupation with absent members as a danger to the coherence of the group, and with present members as virtuous for being present. Anyone unaccustomed to this kind of group would be surprised to find how long a group of supposedly intelligent people can go on talking round this very limited field as if the discussion were emotionally satisfying. There is no concern to make the group worth preserving and, indeed, protests about the way the group employs its time, or any proposed change of occupation, are regarded as irrelevant to the discussion of the feared disintegration of the group. Outside the group, and sometimes in it, individuals believe that the way a group spends its time may regulate the intensity with which people wish to be members of it, but in the group it takes some time before individuals cease to be dominated by the feeling that adherence to the group is an end in itself.

My second point is that the group seems to know only two techniques of self-preservation, fight or flight. The frequency with which a group, when it is working as a group, resorts to one or other of these two procedures, and these two procedures only, for dealing with all its problems, made me first suspect the possibility that a basic assumption exists about becoming a group. Clinical observation gives as much reason for saying that the basic assumption is that the group has met for fight–flight, as for saying it has met to preserve the group. The latter is a convenient hypothesis for explaining why the group, which shows itself intolerant of activities that are not forms of fight–

flight, will, nevertheless, tolerate the formation of pairs. Reproduction is recognized as equal with fight–flight in the preservation of a group.

Preoccupation with fight–flight leads the group to ignore other activities, or, if it cannot do this, to suppress them or run away from them. The basic assumption in a group about a group conflicts as sharply with other views about what a group can do as the basic assumption about pairs conflicts with the other views about what activities are proper to pairs.

From the basic assumption about groups there springs a number of subsidiary assumptions, some of immediate importance. The individual feels that in a group the welfare of the individual is a matter of secondary consideration – the group comes first, in flight the individual is abandoned; the paramount need is for the group to survive – not the individual.

The basic assumption of the group conflicts very sharply with the idea of a group meeting together to do a creative job, especially with the idea of a group meeting together to deal with the psychological difficulties of its members. There will be a feeling that the welfare of the individual does not matter so long as the group continues, and there will be a feeling that any method of dealing with neurosis that is neither fighting neurosis nor running away from the owner of it is either non-existent or directly opposed to the good of the group; a method like my own is not recognized as proper to either of the basic techniques of the group.

We all live in groups, and have plenty of experience, however unconscious, of what that means. It is, therefore, not surprising that critics of my attempts to use groups feel that it must be either unkind to the individual or a method of escape from his problems. It is assumed that if the human being as a gregarious animal chooses a group he does so to fight or run away from something.

The existence of such a basic assumption helps to explain why groups show that I, who am felt to be pre-eminent as the leader of the group, am also felt to be shirking the job. The kind of leadership that is recognized as appropriate is the leadership of the man who mobilizes the group to attack somebody, or alternatively to lead it in flight. In this context I may mention that when with Dr Rickman[1] I tried an experiment in the treatment of troops at Northfield Military

[1]See 'Pre-View'.

Hospital it was assumed either that we were trying to get troops into battle, or alternatively, that we were concerned to help a lot of scrimshankers to go on scrimshanking. The idea that treatment was contemplated was regarded as an elaborate, but easily penetrable deception. We learned that leaders who neither fight nor run away are not easily understood.

We have now reached this point: reactions to interpretations based on concepts of group mentality, group culture, and individual suggested that my theories were inadequate. Re-examination exposed the existence of basic assumptions about the object of pair relationships and group relationships. In the light of these basic assumptions I propose to modify the concepts of group mentality, thus:

Group mentality is the unanimous expression of the will of the group, contributed to by the individual in ways of which he is unaware, influencing him disagreeably whenever he thinks or behaves in a manner at variance with the basic assumptions. It is thus a machinery of intercommunication that is designed to ensure that group life is in accordance with the basic assumptions.

Group culture is a function of the conflict between the individual's desires and the group mentality.

It will follow that the group culture will always show evidence of the underlying basic assumptions. To the two basic assumptions I have already described it is necessary to add one more. It is the basic assumption that the group has met together to obtain security from one individual on whom they depend.

The account given above[1] showed a group bewildered by the difference between what they expected of me and what they really found. There was anxiety that the group should proceed along well-established lines, e.g., those of a seminar or lecture. Although it was understood by each individual that we were meeting together to study groups and their tensions, in the group itself such an activity on my part did not appear to be comprehensible. When an alternative leader arose, before long he also was discarded, and the group returned to its allegiance to myself, though as unwilling as ever to recognize or accept the kind of lead that I gave. I described the group's desire to exclude me from membership. On another occasion, not dissimilar, members of the group had told me that attempts were

[1][That is, the first chapter of 'Experiences in Groups'. *Ed.*]

being made to sabotage the group. In that section I said that the group required a leader to fulfil a function for which there was no scope, or at least a function for which I had not observed any scope.

My revised theories would have enabled me to understand the situation better than I did; my explanations and interpretations would have presented greater cohesion had I been able to relate them to the concepts I have just described.

First, the attempt to use the group as a seminar was intended to keep the group anchored to a sophisticated and rational level of behaviour, suitable to the fulfilment of the aims individuals wished to pursue; it was as if the group were aware that without some such attempt my procedure would lead to the obtrusion of a kind of group that was a hindrance rather than an aid to the consummation of the conscious wishes of the individual.

That attempt failing, there began to emerge the group that is, according to my theory, dominated by the basic assumption of unity for purposes of fight or flight.

With the emergence of this group the leadership that I was exercising became no longer recognizable as leadership. On the occasion of the warning against sabotage, had I been the leader that the group expected I would have understood the invitation to recognize the existence of an enemy – the first requisite of this kind of group. If you can only fight or run away you must find something to fight or run away from.

The substitute leader failed, but in this respect the group was peculiar. In my experience most groups, not only patient groups, find a substitute that satisfies them very well. It is usually a man or woman with marked paranoid trends; perhaps if the presence of an enemy is not immediately obvious to the group, the next best thing is for the group to choose a leader to whom it is.

A review of my past group experiences indicates that those experiences were not incompatible with my revised concepts. I shall now turn to the application of these theories in practice.

This is what happened with a group in which I had given interpretations showing how treatment had produced unpleasant feelings in members of the group. The effect of the interpretations had been to make members feel that I menaced the 'good' group. At one point my interpretation happened to hinge on remarks made by Miss Y. She listened to what I said and passed on smoothly as if I had not spoken

at all. A few minutes later, when I gave another interpretation of the same kind, the same thing happened; a few minutes later, the same again. The group fell silent. At the moment when Miss Y had ignored my interpretation I was aware that the group had come together as a group; I had no doubt about this whatever. By the end of my third interpretation I was sure not only that the group had come together, but that it had done so to put an end to my interventions. I felt certain this determination received its embodiment in Mr X, who had not said a word at any time. Mr X was a man with strong feelings of hatred and marked fear of his aggressiveness. He talked only when the group was either a pairing group or a group meeting to satisfy the need for dependence. In both types of group, though he spoke, he spoke with diffidence, at least until he himself had developed. But in the group come together as a group he sat silent, and gave the impression of being deeply satisfied emotionally. That was the impression he gave at this point in my story.

During the silence I became aware that another patient in the group was experiencing a strong emotional satisfaction. In some respects he appeared to be of less importance than Mr X, indeed subordinate to him. Mr M, for so I shall call him, sat with his gaze fixed on Mr X. From time to time his eyes would wander pensively to other members of the group as if he were watching to see if any member of the group wished to catch his eye. Mr M speaks of his own difficulties rarely. He speaks as if he wishes to encourage the group by showing that no harm comes of being candid; yet if such is his aim he must fail, for surely the more percipient draw some other conclusion from the evidence that his contribution bears of polished and careful selection. On this occasion as his gaze rested on any individual as an invitation to speak his invitation passed unheeded.

Miss J began to give an account of some discomfort she had suffered at her work. When she had finished she briskly interposed a tentative interpretation of her behaviour. She then described some further episodes but finally gave up the attempt to ignore the stony hostility of the group and fell silent, remarking that she supposed she was too self-conscious to go on.

Miss H, who stepped into the breach next, only managed a few sentences before succumbing.

After the silence had continued for some time I remarked that individuals, Miss J and Miss H in particular, had tried to get on with

treatment, as they felt it ought to be, by talking of their difficulties, partly because they felt that that was a useful thing to do to help myself and partly because they wanted to break up the hostile feeling in the group. The silence, I thought, might be regarded both as an expression of hostility of the group, and as an expression of the awareness of individuals that in the group as it was no creative work could be done.

The situation I have described was an emotional situation and is not easily conveyed by an account of the words used. It is this kind of episode that I am talking about when I speak of the group coming together as a group. When the group has come together in this way it has become something as real and as much a part of human life as a family, but it is in no way at all the same thing as a family. The leader of such a group is far removed from being the father of a family. In certain special emotional states, which I shall describe later, the leader approximates to a father, but in this kind of group any member of the group who displays parental qualities soon finds that he has none of the status, obligations, or privileges usually associated with a father or mother. Indeed in so far as I, as psychiatrist, am expected to display parental qualities, my own position in the group at this point becomes anomalous, and the expectation operates as an additional reason for my exclusion from the group – additional to the fact that my behaviour has already made the group combine against me as the enemy of the group. It requires the authority conferred by my position as psychiatrist to keep me in the picture at all when the basic assumption implies that a person whose primary concern is with the welfare of the individual is out of place.

Mr X had no need to speak in this group; he was at one with the group, for the feelings about which he is most guilty, his destructive hatred, are feelings which are licensed by the basic assumption that the group has come together to fight or run away.

Mr M played an interesting part; I found it necessary to devote careful attention to it. Before I could give an interpretation that would be comprehensible by the group I had to observe the expression on his face, and the order in which he called upon members of the group to participate. It was as if one were watching a silent film of a man conducting an orchestra: what sort of music did he wish to evoke? Mr M's function was to keep hostility alive so that no one could fail to notice my impotence to effect any change whatever in the situation.

I kept drawing attention, in detail, to the emotional peculiarities of this situation. I was able to point out that individuals who produced difficulties of their own for help were ignored or sat upon, that attempts to be constructive were similarly dealt with, that there appeared to be subtle understanding between all members of the group, and that we worked together as a team in all that we did. I was able to show that various members of the group, for example, Mr M, were communicating by a system of gestures, often of great subtlety, with the rest of the group. I added that there might be still other means of communication not yet recognized, perhaps because our powers of observation were still very limited.

It is not quite correct to say my interpretations were being ignored. There was something going on which made me feel that some of what I said was being taken in, but as far as outward appearance was concerned I might have been cut off from the rest of the group by a sheet of sound-proof plate glass. Certainly my interpretations did not make a scrap of difference to the behaviour of the group, which continued unresponsive for a good thirty minutes until time was up. As the reader will imagine, I had to ask myself why there was no response. The theories might again be at fault, or, alternatively, my interpretations incorrect. In fact, I felt that I was dealing with a situation similar to that which obtains in a psychoanalysis when the patient's lack of response is revealed at a subsequent session to have been very partial.

This, in fact, was what happened. At the next session the group was what I have described as the group meeting for purposes of pairing off. I would, however, prefer not to carry the description of this group any further, but to describe instead an occasion in another group which would serve better to make clear the change from one group culture to another. In the example I have given the interpretations appear to work their effect in the interval between meetings. I want to describe now a session in which the change was actually taking place. I shall choose an occasion when the change was from the fight–flight group.

The group had been frequently in the fight–flight state. On this occasion the group culture was proving extremely irksome to a number of individuals in the group, and at this point a man began a conversation with myself. It would not be fair to say that it was meaningless, because it had enough substance to demand a response. After a few sentences he broke off, as if he were aware that he was at

the end of his resources in the art of talking without saying anything, and wished not to persevere to a point where this became too obvious. He was followed by a woman doing much the same. Both people behaved as if they were satisfied with the success of their venture. Each of them in turn repeated the procedure with two other members of the group. At this point others attempted to converse in much the same way as the pioneers, but it was noticeable that the conversations were no longer meaningless.

Had I seen this behaviour in a psychoanalysis I should have been inclined to think that the patient wished to obtain reassurance by establishing what he could feel to be a friendly contact with myself, without in any way divulging the nature of the anxiety against which he wished to be reassured.

In the group situation much the same interpretation could have been made, but, if this behaviour was to be accurately keyed to the emotions of that time and place, then the interpretation needed to be one that gave due weight to the social functions the individuals were performing. I accordingly interpreted their behaviour as a manipulation of the group; they were trying to break up the fight–flight culture by establishing pair relationships. As a first step in this procedure they got in touch with myself because experience had shown them that I was probably less likely to be so emotionally involved in the group situation as to be unable to react. It was then only a step to do the same thing with other members of the group, and from that point on it was only a matter of a few minutes before the group had changed over into the group meeting for purposes of pairing off. Once this had happened discussion of individual problems became possible again.

I have said that I wished to give this example to illustrate the change actually taking place, but I would like to continue with this episode to show what happens to individuals as the group passes from one group culture to another and back again.

As I said, this group had been suffering the frustrations of trying to live in a fight–flight culture. For a little while the pairing group seemed to afford welcome relief, but before long it became apparent that this sort of group had its disadvantages too. For one thing, my own role could not be very satisfactorily realized. In the fight–flight group the basic assumption of the group made it difficult for individuals to pay much attention to what I said or did. In the pairing group

the basic assumption made it difficult for any individual to sustain a conversation with myself. It made conversation for any pair difficult, but the peculiar position occupied by the therapist exacerbates the difficulty. Those familiar with psychoanalytic theory will realize the kind of difficulties that obtrude as conversation goes on.

I mentioned that in the fight–flight culture the reactions of the group throw into prominence the individual with paranoid trends. Similar effects are obtained when the group passes to other cultures. Once one is aware of changes from a group culture with one basic assumption to a group culture with another basic assumption, it becomes possible to use these changes, to the benefit of one's clinical observation, in much the same kind of way as scientists in other fields are able to use changes of wavelength to obtain different photographic appearances of the object they wish to study.

In the two group cultures I have mentioned so far, difficulties are created for the psychiatrist because his job does not fit in easily with what is required from a leader of the group by the basic assumption. This makes the group unprepared to receive the contribution that the therapist makes. The therapist experiencing a lack of response from the group must, I think, bear this in mind as a factor that contributes its quota to the other factors making for his rejection. Should the therapist suspect that his high opinion of himself is shared by the group, he should ask himself if his leadership has begun to correspond with that demanded by the basic assumption of the group.

I wish now to consider the state I have described as the 'dependent' group culture.

The basic assumption in this group culture seems to be that an external object exists whose function it is to provide security for the immature organism. This means that one person is always felt to be in a position to supply the needs of the group, and the rest in a position in which their needs are supplied. When the group enters into this culture, and establishes it as an alternative to whichever one of the other two cultures it has been experiencing, much the same sort of relief is in evidence as I have already described in the change from the fight–flight group to the group meeting to pair. As the culture becomes established, individuals again begin to show their discomfort. One quite frequent phenomenon is the emergence of feelings of guilt about greed. A moment's thought will show that this

might quite well be expected. The fight–flight culture or the culture of the group meeting for pairing do not, as far as the individual is concerned, represent survivals of an attitude beyond its proper term, although one might consider them to be primitive forms of group. But the group designed to perpetuate the state of dependence means for the individual that he is being greedy in demanding more than his fair term of parental care. There is, therefore, a quite sharp clash in this group between the basic assumption and the needs of the individual as an adult. In the other two group cultures the clash is between the basic assumption of what is required of the individual as an adult, and what the individual, as an adult, feels prepared to give. In this culture the feeling that the psychiatrist is some kind of parent is much more in evidence, and with this come the complications and difficulties that one would expect. Resentment at being in a dependent position is as much in evidence as relief. Sexual embarrassments are different from those displayed in the pairing group. Anger and jealousy are more easily expressed, but have not the massive quality and do not arouse the fear that they do in the fight–flight group. This, of course, is because of the basic assumption that a being exists who is there to see that no untoward events will follow the irresponsibilities of individuals. Hate in the fight–flight group is not accompanied by these reassurances, as the leader is felt to exist to express this and kindred emotions. Although there is relief because feelings can be expressed with greater freedom, there is conflict between the desire to do this and the desire to be mature.

When I spoke of the group that wished to see the session as a seminar, I said that one reason for this was an unconscious fear that unless the group were pegged to a mature structure the obtrusion of the kinds of group I have described would be facilitated and the ostensible aims of the individuals in joining the group thwarted instead of forwarded by coming together as a group. This impulse is expressed in the therapeutic group in the very fact of calling it a therapeutic group. It seems so rational that we should think of it as a therapeutic group, that we should assume that the psychiatrist is the leader, and that we should talk only about neurotic ailments, that it may not be observed that by thinking in this way, and behaving appropriately, we are attempting to peg the group to a mode of behaviour that will prevent the obtrusion of kinds of group that are feared.

4

In the preceding section I said that patients arrived with a preconception that serves very well as foundation for a structure intended to help the group to keep its behaviour pegged to a sophisticated level. The preconception is that the group consists of doctor and patients.

When men meet together, for example in a committee, rules of procedure are established and there is usually an agenda; the formality with which work is done varying with the group. In the groups in which I am psychiatrist I am the most obvious person, by virtue of my position, in whom to vest a right to establish rules of procedure. I take advantage of this position to establish no rules of procedure and to put forward no agenda.

From the moment when it becomes clear that I am doing this the group sets out to make good my omissions, and the intensity with which it does so shows that more is at stake than a passion for efficiency. The phenomena against which the group is guarding itself are none other than the group manifestations I described in the last section – the 'fight–flight group'; the 'pairing group'; and the 'dependent group'. It is as if the group were aware how easily and spontaneously it structures itself in a manner suitable for acting on these basic assumptions unless steps are taken to prevent it; just as a group of students may use the idea of a seminar or lecture on which to found a sophisticated structure, so the patient group has a basis for a structure ready to hand in the commonly accepted convention of neurotic disability as an illness and of therapists as 'doctors'.

The dependent group

The group concentrates at first on establishing this idea of doctor and patients as firmly as it can; it conforms to a strict discipline, imposed ad hoc, being careful to limit conversation severely to topics that are not important except in so far as they support the view that patients are talking to a doctor; thus would the group establish a sense that the situation is familiar and unchanging.

It is common at this point to see a group insisting that the doctor is the only person to be regarded, and at the same time showing by its behaviour that it does not believe that he, as a doctor, knows his job. If the psychiatrist himself feels impelled to help restore the sophisticated structure by claiming authority as psychiatrist, it shows that it is not the patient only who feels the need of a familiar situation. Maintenance of a sophisticated structure is associated with the feeling that the structure exists only precariously, and can easily be overset. When watching a group struggle with this problem, I am reminded of the warnings, frequent in recent years, that civilization itself was in danger. The problem of the leader seems always to be how to mobilize emotions associated with the basic assumptions without endangering the sophisticated structure that appears to secure to the individual his freedom to be an individual while remaining a member of the group. It was this balance of tensions which I previously described in terms of equilibrium between group mentality, group culture, and individual.

As I said, the doctor-patient foundation for a sophisticated structure soon shows its inadequacy, and one reason for this is that it is only a thin disguise for the dependent group, so that emotional reactions proper to this kind of basic group are immediately evoked, and the structure of sophistication sags badly.

Why should this matter? In the preceding section I drew attention to some of the discomforts of the situation, and we may now examine a few more. The dependent group, with its characteristic elevation of one person, makes difficulties for the ambitious, or indeed for anyone who wishes to get a hearing, because it means that in the eyes of the group, and of themselves, such people are in a position of rivalry with the leader. Benefit is felt no longer to come from the group, but from the leader of the group alone, with the result that individuals feel they are being treated only when talking to the leader of the group. This

leads to a sense – the more unpleasant since it is associated with a feeling of asking too much and giving too little – that they are being cheated or starved. Relief obtained from the idea that the psychiatrist cares for each individual is unconvincing in a group that has been in existence for any time and knows that cure differs from a presumably transient experience of pleasant feelings. As each individual thinks he is being treated only while he is talking to the psychiatrist, the session appears to all members to achieve progress at a most uneconomic rate. This impression is only partly relieved by elucidations in detail of the manner in which the dependent structure of the group is clung to in spite of its discomforts.

The essential feature of the discomforts in this kind of group is that they arise precisely from the nature of the group itself, and this point should always be demonstrated.

When a dependent structure is prominent, it is quite common for an individual to arrive with an unpleasant mental experience about which he wishes to talk. The attitude of the group makes any consideration of his problem difficult, and the frustration of the patient's aims that this involves may appear a serious defect in this group technique, but again this must be set the fact that we are not concerned to give individual treatment in public, but to draw attention to the actual experiences of the group, and in this instance the way in which the group and individual deal with the individual. There is a further point: group patients often arrive with carefully prepared statements, and talk only when they think they can participate in a manner of their own choosing. If the psychiatrist reacts as if he were carrying out individual treatment in public he will soon become aware that he is working against the group and that the patient is working with it. If he has the strength of mind to avoid this pitfall, he will observe that the exasperation, at first sight so reasonable, of the patient whose pressing personal difficulty is being ignored, is dictated, not so much by the frustration of a legitimate aim, as by the exposure of difficulties the patient has not come to discuss, and in particular his characteristics as a group member, the characteristics of group membership, basic assumptions, and the rest of it. Thus a woman who starts off with a personal difficulty that she feels the psychiatrist could relieve, if he would respond by analysing her associations, finds, if the psychiatrist does not do this, that a totally unexpected situation has developed, and it will be surprising if the psychiatrist is not then

able to demonstrate difficulties of the group, which will include difficulties of the patient in question, that the patient may think quite unimportant, but that turn out in the end not to be so. This of course is quite common in psychoanalysis – the topics discussed are not the ones the patient came to discuss. Nevertheless it is important to realize that the psychoanalyst can easily make a blunder in a group that he would never make in a psychoanalysis, by treating the group as if the procedure were psychoanalysis in public. The psychiatrist should be suspicious if he feels that he is dealing with the problem that the patient or the group thinks he should deal with. This point is critical; if the psychiatrist can manage boldly to use the group instead of spending his time more or less unconsciously apologizing for its presence, he will find that the immediate difficulties produced are more than neutralized by the advantages of a proper use of his medium.

In the dependent group, flight is confined to the group, fight to the psychiatrist; the impulse of the group is away from the hostile object; of the psychiatrist towards it. Apart from this, group emotions seem to be associated only with transitions from the dependent-group state of mind to one of the other two basic groups. The characteristics of this group are immaturity in individual relationships and inefficiency, except in the basic group, in group relationships – both conditions being countered to the best of the individual's ability by painstaking conscious communication. To grasp the full significance of these points it would be necessary to compare this state of affairs with the corresponding conditions in the other kinds of group.

Except in the leader, fearfulness becomes the supreme virtue of the individual in this kind of group. Participation in this emotional field means a heightened capacity, as soon as any member of the group experiences fear, for instantaneous flight. Such a state of affairs is very disagreeable to the individual, who, after all, retains full consciousness of his desires as a fully grown adult.

The group often structures itself as a dependent group in order to avoid emotional experiences peculiar to the pairing and fight–flight groups. In some respects the dependent group lends itself very well to do this, because, as I have suggested, the group can restrict itself to the experience of flight, leaving the analyst to experience, if he will, what it means to address himself to the problems from which the group is running away. This symbiotic relationship between the group and myself – the psychiatrist – serves to protect members of the

group from experiencing certain aspects of group life for which they do not feel prepared. They are thus left free to make exercises in the development of sophisticated relationships with myself. I say 'with myself' because early experiences of the dependent group at any rate indicate that there is a marked inability on the part of the individuals in the group to believe that they can possibly learn anything of value from each other.

From what I have said it should be clear that members of a group in a dependent state of mind are finding that their experiences are unsatisfying. Anyhow, their mood contrasts with that which they experience when, having thrown all their cares on the leader, they sit back and wait for him to solve all their problems. Thanks to interpretations I have been able to give, they are not able to ascribe their immediate disillusionment merely to my failure to do what a leader of this kind of group is supposed to do. In fact, if the group harboured any such idea, it could only be because I was failing completely to elucidate what was taking place. The point is that this basic assumption, and the emotional field which is its concomitant, produces its characteristic frustrations, some more apparent to one patient, some to another.

When investigation of the dependent group has developed, it becomes possible to observe the emergence of certain characteristics that now demand attention. The group always make it clear that they expect me to act with authority as the leader of the group, and this responsibility I accept, though not in the way the group expect. In the early stages it seems sensible to think that this authority is based on the idea that I am a doctor and they are patients, but there are features in the behaviour of the group whose emergence in the course of time shows that the situation is more complex. The insistence of the group that no one but myself has any right to command attention is matched by a firm sense of disappointment in what I do; an unshakable belief that they are justified in thinking I am qualified by training and experience to lead the group is matched by an almost equally unshakable indifference to everything I say.[1]

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[1]It has been erroneously said that my technique is based on the leaderless group technique used in the selection, in wartime, of candidates for training as officers for the British Army. This is not so; a memorandum I wrote in 1940 was the stimulus for an experiment, carried out by Dr John Rickman at Wharncliffe Emergency Hospital, which subsequently became known as the Wharncliffe

If I take account of the emotional atmosphere of the group – and it would require a considerable capacity for denial not to do so – it is clear that the group is not concerned to understand the point of what I say, but rather to make use only of such parts of my contribution as they can conveniently weld into what appears to be an already well-established corpus of belief. Gestures, tone of voice, manner, and appearance; and on occasions even the subject matter of what I say; none of it comes amiss, if it can be fitted into this system. The group is combining to establish a firm portrait of the object on which it can depend.

At first it is not easy to recognize the features of this portrait, but even so it is clear that they are not the features of a doctor. The same fate befalls any other member of the group who is exalted in my place, with the result that individuals in the group, without exception, find that they influence the group in a manner capricious and only obscurely related to the thoughts that they strive to express. The endeavour that I myself make is to illuminate the obscurities of the situation in the group by clear thinking clearly expressed; it is at the best of times a considerable ambition, but in time it becomes clear that amongst other factors that go to make this a difficult aim to achieve is the hostility of the group to the aim, as an aim. The nature of this hostility can be best apprehended if it is considered as a hostility to all scientific method and therefore as hostility to any activity that might appear to be approaching this ideal. Complaints will be heard that my remarks are theoretical; that they are mere intellectualizations; that my manner lacks warmth; that I am too abstract. Study of the group over a period will show that, although there is no need to doubt the capacity of the individuals in the group for doing hard work, the group, as a group, is quite opposed to the idea that they are meeting for the purpose of doing work, and indeed react as if some important principle would be infringed if they were to work. I shall not enter into more detail on this point but perhaps, if the reader will turn back to some of my previous descriptions of behaviour in the group, he will

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Experiment. The experience he gained there was used by him and myself as the starting-point for a further experiment at Northfield Military Hospital. The fame, or notoriety, achieved by this experiment gave currency to the name 'Northfield Experiment'. This name has since achieved respectability by being appropriated to activities more in keeping with the sober traditions of discipline and patriotism for which the British Army is justly famous.

recognize in the descriptions some of the traits I am describing (in particular, p. 128 and pp. 138–140). I shall now suggest that all facets of behaviour in the dependent group can be recognized as related if we suppose that in this group power is believed to flow not from science but from magic. One of the characteristics demanded of the leader of the group, then, is that he should either be a magician or behave like one. Silences in a dependent group are accordingly either expressions of determination to deny to the leader the material he requires for scientific investigation, and thereby to prevent developments that would appear to undermine the illusion of security derived from care at the hands of a magician, or expressions of worshipful devotion to the leader, as magician – an interpretation will often be followed by a silence that is far more a tribute of awe than a pause for thought.

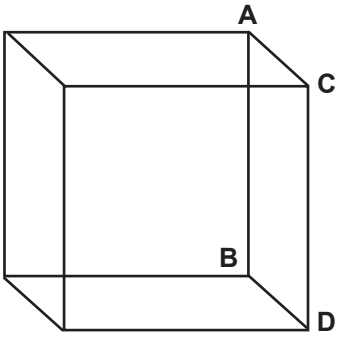
When the group has reached this stage of development, the psychiatrist may think that he is dealing with 'resistances' in the ordinary sense of that term, but I believe that it is more fruitful to consider the group as a community that felt that a hostile attack was being made upon its religious beliefs. Indeed, it is quite common to find at this stage that references to religion are frequent. Sometimes the individual identifies himself with the investigator, sometimes with the investigated. If he identifies himself with the investigator, it is noticeable that he assumes a somewhat artificially self-assured air, as if to indicate either that he were investigating an interesting survival of the past or one of the well-known religions of the world, such as Buddhism or Christianity. This air is assumed in order to avoid realizing that he is investigating on the spot an emotionally vital 'religion', whose devotees surround him and are waiting to fall upon him. If the psychiatrist presses on vigorously with his investigation, he should have a lively sense of the hostility of the group and an emotional realization of the vitality of the phenomena with which he has to deal. He must be aware also that he should consider not only the dogmata of the cult, but all related phenomena, such as the demands it makes upon the lives of its devotees. Some of these can be witnessed in the group itself: the stifling of independent thought, the heresy-hunting, the rebellion this in its turn produces, the attempts to justify the imposed limitations by appeals to reason, or, at any rate, rationalization, and so forth. Other manifestations, however, become clear in the report that individuals give of their everyday life. For the 'devotees' of the group 'religion', rebellious or otherwise, remain

'devotees' also in their everyday life, and it is possible to show that some of their daily conflicts are arising from their attempt to reconcile the demands of everyday thinking and the demands of their membership of the group as a 'religious' community. The implications of this view of the group are great, and the more I see of this aspect of the dependent group, the more I am convinced that patients produce material in a steady stream to support the view that their membership of the dependent group, as a 'religious' sect, exerts a widespread influence on their mental lives when the group disperses as well as in the short period when they meet as a group.

I shall turn now to another problem.

The hatred of learning by experience

If the group has to work constantly at maintaining a sophisticated structure, there must be a pull in the opposite direction towards one of the three basic structures, and it is important to view the group from that angle. Before doing so I will refer briefly to the need for employing a technique of constantly changing points of view. The psychiatrist must see the reverse as well as the obverse of every situation, if he can. He must employ a kind of psychological shift best illustrated by the analogy of this well-known diagram.



The observer can look at it so that he sees it as a box with the corner A B nearest to him; or he can view it as a box with the corner C D nearest to him. The total of lines observed remains the same, but a quite different view of the box is obtained. Similarly, in a group, the total of what is taking place remains the same, but a change of

perspective can bring out quite different phenomena. The psychiatrist must not always wait for changes in the group before he describes what he sees. There are many times when he needs to point out that what he has just described has already been experienced by the group on some previous occasion, but then it was more easily observed in other terms, when, for example (to take the case of an individual), a patient had complained of considerable anxiety about 'fainting off'. Sometimes he had described the same phenomenon as 'becoming unconscious'. At a later group he was somewhat boastfully saying that, when things happened in the group which he did not like, he simply ignored them. It was possible to show him that he was describing exactly the same situation, this time in a mood of confidence, as he had on another occasion described with anxiety as 'fainting off'. His attitude to events in the group had altered with an alteration in the basic assumption of the group.

Neither analogy of obverse and reverse, nor yet the analogy of shift in perspective, really serves to cover the technique a psychiatrist should employ, so, to make my meaning clear, I shall use the analogy afforded by the principles of duality in mathematics. By these, a theorem that proves the relationship in space of points, lines, and planes appears equally to prove the relationship of its dual in terms of planes, lines, and points. In the group the psychiatrist should consider from time to time what is the 'dual' of any given emotional situation that he has observed. He should consider also whether the 'dual' of the situation he has just described has not already been experienced and described at some previous session.

Let us apply this now to the observation of the group: it will be remembered that I have described that after groups have assembled, but before they have become used to the technique, there is a pause while everybody 'waits for the group to begin'. It is quite common for someone to ask when the group begins. Now from one point of view the perfectly simple answer is that the group begins at 10.30, or whatever the hour is that has been appointed for the meeting, but a shift of point of view, admittedly of some magnitude, on my part, means that I am viewing group phenomena that do not 'begin'; the matters with which I am concerned continue, and evolve, but they do not 'begin'. In the work I do in the group, therefore, this question is not answered, although it can be seen that, if the group cares to invest me with leadership of a different kind from that which I propose to

exercise, it can readily assume that it is my business to know when the group begins, or, for that matter, when it ends. There is no reason why one should not give the reply that is expected, so long as one is aware that the point is of some importance and involves a considerable change of role, though this point may not be apparent just now.

If, in a group, I have succeeded in demonstrating the struggle to maintain the sophisticated structure, I must also have succeeded in demonstrating its 'dual'. What follows is a description of the 'dual', though at first sight it may be difficult to realize its affinity with the attempt to preserve a sophisticated structure.

In every group it will be common at some time or another to find patients complaining that treatment is long; that they always forget what happened in the previous group; that they do not seem to have learnt anything; and that they do not see, not only what the interpretations have to do with their case, but what the emotional experiences to which I am trying to draw attention can matter to them. They also show, as in psychoanalysis, that they do not have much belief in their capacity for learning by experience – 'What we learn from history is that we do not learn from history'.

Now all this, and more like it, really boils down to the hatred of a process of development. Even the complaint about time, which seems reasonable enough, is only to complain of one of the essentials of the process of development. There is a hatred of having to learn by experience at all, and lack of faith in the worth of such a kind of learning. A little experience of groups soon shows that this is not simply a negative attitude; the process of development is really being compared with some other state, the nature of which is not immediately apparent. The belief in this other state often shows itself in everyday life, perhaps most clearly in the schoolboy belief in the hero who never does any work and yet is always top of the form – the opposite of the 'swot', in fact.

In the group it becomes very clear that this longed-for alternative to the group procedure is really something like arriving fully equipped as an adult fitted by instinct to know without training or development exactly how to live and move and have his being in a group.

There is only one kind of group and one kind of man that approximates to this dream, and that is the basic group – the group dominated by one of the three basic assumptions, dependence, pairing,

and flight or fight – and the man who is able to sink his identity in the herd.

I do not suggest for a moment that this ideal corresponds to reality, for, of course, the whole group-therapeutic experience shows that the group and the individuals in it are hopelessly committed to a developmental procedure, no matter what might have been the case with our remote ancestors.

My experience of groups, indeed, indicates that man is hopelessly committed to both states of affairs. In any group there can be seen the man who tries to identify himself wholeheartedly with the basic assumption, or wholeheartedly with the sophisticated outlook. If he identifies himself wholeheartedly with the basic assumption – with the herd, as it were – he feels persecuted by what he feels to be the arid intellectualism of the group and, in particular, of the interpretations. If he identifies himself, as far as he possibly can, with the purely intellectual outlook, he finds himself persecuted by internal objects, which, I suspect, are really a form of awareness of intimations of the emotional movements of the group of which he is a member; certainly some explanation of this kind would help to throw light on the individual's feeling that he was being persecuted by the group, both internally and externally.

In the group the patient feels he must try to co-operate. He discovers that his capacity for co-operation is emotionally most vital in the basic group, and that, in the pursuit of objectives that do not easily lend themselves to the techniques of the basic group, his ability to co-operate is dependent on a kind of give and take that is achieved with great difficulty compared with the swift emotional response that comes of acquiescence in the emotions of the basic group.

In the group the individual becomes aware of capacities that are only potential so long as he is in comparative isolation. The group, therefore, is more than the aggregate of individuals, because an individual in a group is more than an individual in isolation. Furthermore, the individual in a group is aware that the additional potentialities that then become activated by membership of the group are, many of them, best adapted for function in the basic group, that is to say, the group come together to act on the basic assumptions.

One of the problems of group therapy, then, lies in the fact that the group is often used to achieve a sense of vitality by total submergence in the group, or a sense of individual independence by total

repudiation of the group, and that part of the individual's mental life, which is being incessantly stimulated and activated by his group, is his inalienable inheritance as a group animal.

It is this feature of group membership that gives rise to a feeling in the individual that he can never catch up with a course of events to which he is always, at any given moment, already committed. There is a matrix of thought which lies within the confines of the basic group, but not within the confines of the individual. There is also the individual's desire to feel that he is master of his fate, and to concentrate upon those aspects of his mental life which he can feel are most truly his own and originate within him. It is this desire that tends to make him more willing to observe phenomena that are related to that kind of group about which he can reasonably say that it 'begins', rather than to the kind of group in which the concept of 'beginning' has no place.

If the desire for security were all that influenced the individual, then the dependent group might suffice, but the individual needs more than security for himself and therefore needs other kinds of group. If the individual were prepared to suffer the pains of development, and all that that implies in efforts to learn, he might grow out of the dependent group. But the fact that he wishes, even with the impulses that are not satisfied in the dependent group, for a state in which, without undergoing the pains of growth, he could be fully equipped for group life, results in a pull towards a group structured for pairing or for fight–flight.

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The emotional state proper to a basic assumption is not wholly pleasurable. As with the analyst in psychoanalysis, so with the group. In my technique with the group, the individual, supported by the group, tries to keep the goodness of the group isolated from its badness, and will maintain either that he feels 'bad' because of the group or that he feels 'good' because of it, but will not easily admit that certain agreeable emotional states called 'feeling better' are derived from the group of which he complains nor yet that certain unpleasant emotional experiences called 'feeling worse' are inseparable from membership of the group in whose goodness he would prefer for the moment to believe. In addition to the reasons commonly discoverable in psychoanalysis for this kind of behaviour, the individual in the group has reasons that derive directly from peculiarities of the emotional states associated with the basic assumptions, and it is these peculiarities that I shall now discuss. The investigation is provoked by the fact that the emotions associated with any basic assumption appear to be experienced by the individual in their entirety. My original description of a group acting on a basis assumption did not do justice to some features of the group behaviour that are now relevant. It might have been thought that the group makes a common assumption and that all else, including the emotional state associated with it, springs from this. This does not reflect my belief. On the contrary, I consider the emotional state to be in existence and the basic assumption to be deducible from it. As far as the group is concerned, the basic assumption is essentially a tacit assumption. Individuals behave as if they were aware of the assumption, and it is for this reason that the interpretation of the basic assumption carries conviction. It is a statement that gives meaning to the behaviour of the group as a whole,

yet the assumption is not overtly expressed even when it is being acted on. We thus have a situation in which the individuals behave as if they were conscious, as individuals, of the basic assumption, but unconscious of it as members of the group. This is as it should be: the group has not a conscious; and it is not articulate; it is left to the individual to be both.

It is possible to talk of a feeling of security as existing in each of the emotional states associated with the three basic-assumption groups. Yet it is clear that the feeling of security experienced in the dependent group is really a feeling held in an indissoluble combination with the remaining feelings and ideas that compose the basic assumption of the dependent group, and it is therefore different from the feeling of security in both the fight–flight and pairing groups, which are similarly held in indissoluble combination with the remaining emotions and ideas proper to their respective groups. Thus the feeling of security derived from the dependent group is indissolubly linked with feelings of inadequacy and frustration, and is dependent on the attribution of omnipotence and omniscience to one member of the group. Since the psychiatrist cannot usually be manipulated into giving substance to beliefs in his omnipotence and omniscience, individuals will also show that their sense of security is qualified by the pressure of the group's demand on its individuals to be omniscient. Similarly in the fight–flight group, security is tempered by the demand of the group for courage and self-sacrifice; in short, the important thing is not so much any given feeling – for example, security – but the combination in which that feeling is held. Various feelings, not in themselves unpleasant, indeed greatly desired by the individual, cannot be experienced except fixed in combination with other less desired and often strongly disliked feelings, so the individual has to resort to splitting to isolate himself from the group and from his own essential 'groupishness' – his inalienable quality as a herd animal. The complaint that the individual cannot think in the group is often heard. He will try to feel secure in his membership of the group but will endeavour to split off the disliked feelings that are in combination with this desirable security; he will attribute the origin of these to some cause other than that very security he exacts – to some cause such as membership of a less important group, or some ephemeral external event, or to neurosis. Thus a deal of time has to be devoted to elucidation of the basic assumption from which

emotional reinforcement is being derived, and then to the proof that the emotional experiences that patients often introduce into the discussion as symptoms are really derived from their being at one with other members of the emotionally reinforced group, and their conflict both with themselves and the group. The point that I wish to make is that participation in a basic assumption is not only unavoidable but involves a sharing of emotions which are, as far as psychological investigation can reveal them, discrete and separate one from another, but in fact only apparently so, and then only at that point in their history when they are manifest as psychological phenomena. The result is that to the psychologist there are not available any observations that can explain why, when one basic assumption is being acted on, the feelings associated with it are always linked with each other with the tenacity and exclusiveness, not more or less, that one would associate with chemical combinations.

It does not follow, of course, that this will always be so: it is conceivable that group technique might develop to a point where phenomena which are at present unrecognized will become perceptible. In the meantime, I wish to emphasize that it follows from what I have been saying that the individual's distress is idiopathic to the basic assumption that is being acted upon, that is to say, it arises from his conflict with the emotional state of the group and that part of himself which is concerned with participation in the group task of maintaining it.

The emotional state associated with each basic assumption excludes the emotional states proper to the other two basic assumptions, but it does not exclude the emotions proper to the sophisticated group. Hitherto I have said little about the sophisticated group, being content to describe the conflicts in a group as being between the individual and the basic group, and between the individual and himself as an upholder of, and participant in, the basic group. There is, however, a conflict between the group that is formed through cooperation between individuals at a sophisticated level – the sophisticated group – and the basic group, and in this respect the relationship between sophisticated and basic group differs from the relationship that obtains between the emotional states associated with the three basic assumptions. There is no direct conflict between basic assumptions, but only changes from one state to another, which are either smooth transitions or brought about through intervention of

the sophisticated group. They do not conflict, they alternate; conflict arises only at the junction between the basic group and the sophisticated group.

Nevertheless, although the basic-assumption groups seem rather to alternate than to conflict with each other, the intervention of the sophisticated group, through interference with the alternation of the basic groups, seems to produce some of the appearances and effects of conflict. In particular, the emotional combinations associated with the basic assumptions that are not actively influencing the group's mental life lie dormant, sometimes perhaps for considerable periods. Thus when a group is pervaded by the emotions of the dependent group the emotional states of the fight–flight group and pairing group are in abeyance. They are not manifest in the sense that the emotions of the dependent group are manifest. In this respect there is a conflict between the sophisticated group, suffused by emotion from one basic assumption, and the other two basic assumptions. In this context it is necessary to recognize that interpretations given by myself, if accepted, are themselves interpretations by the sophisticated group. This immediately gives rise to certain speculations. What is the difference between the form of intervention that an interpretation represents and the other interventions of the sophisticated group? If interventions by the sophisticated group seem to produce some of the effects or appearance of conflict between one basic assumption and the others, does an interpretation also produce conflict? If the interpretation does not produce conflict, what does it do? For the time being I propose to ignore these questions and to pass on to consider the fate of the potential emotional states represented by the basic assumptions that are not at any given moment being acted upon, and their relationship to the sophisticated group.

The interventions of the sophisticated group are diverse, but they all have this in common: they are expressions of a recognition for the need to develop rather than to rely upon the efficacy of magic; they are intended to cope with the basic assumptions, and they mobilize the emotions of one basic assumption in the attempt to cope with the emotions and phenomena of another basic assumption. It is this that gives the appearance of conflict between basic assumptions that I have already mentioned. One result of this operation of the sophisticated group is that the more sophisticated a group becomes and the more it manages to maintain a sophisticated level of behaviour, the

more it does so by the suppression of one pattern of linked emotions by another. Thus the pattern of linked emotions associated with the dependent group can be used to render difficult or impossible the obtrusion of the patterns of emotion linked as they are in the fight–flight and pairing groups.

The work group

In some groups that I have taken, what I have been calling the 'sophisticated group' has been spontaneously called the 'work group'. The name is short, and expresses well an important aspect of the phenomena I wish to describe, so that in future I shall use it instead of 'sophisticated group'. When a group meets, it meets for a specific task, and in most human activities today co-operation has to be achieved by sophisticated means. As I have already pointed out, rules of procedure are adopted; there is usually an established administrative machinery operated by officials who are recognizable as such by the rest of the group, and so on. The capacity for co-operation on this level is great, as anybody's experience of groups will show. But it is different in kind from the capacity for co-operation which is evidence on the basic-assumption level. In my experience the psychological structure of the work group is very powerful, and it is noteworthy that it survives with a vitality that would suggest that fears that the work group will be swamped by the emotional states proper to the basic assumptions are quite out of proportion.

I said earlier that the group from the first struggled hard to maintain a sophisticated structure, and that the effort put into this indicated the strength of the emotions associated with the basic assumptions. I still think this is so, but also believe that fears for the structure of the work group are expressions of ignorance of the forces with which the work group has to contend. The therapeutic group should have its attention constantly drawn to the fear of the basic-assumption group, and be shown that the object of the fear depends a great deal on the state of mind that is uppermost in the groups. Thus, if the dependent group is most in evidence – indeed, in evidence to the point at which the group appears to be identified with the dependent group – then fear is of the work group. Just as the emotions in the basic-assumption group appear to be linked together, so the mental phenomena of the

work group appear to be linked together. Certain ideas play a prominent part in the work group: not only is the idea of 'development' rather than 'full equipment by instinct' an integral part of it, but so is the idea of the value of a rational or scientific approach to a problem. So also, as an inevitable concomitant of the idea of 'development', is accepted the validity of learning by experience. If, however, the group is identified with the dependent basic assumption, then all these ideas are feared, not of course simply as ideas but as activities at work within the group. The dependent group soon shows that an integral part of its structure is a belief in the omniscience and omnipotence of some one member of the group. Any investigation of the nature of this belief arouses reactions which are reminiscent, to put it no higher, of the controversies of religion versus science. Indeed, investigation of this point is, as I suggested earlier, a scientific investigation of the religion of the group. Activities of the work group that would seem to involve investigation of the nature of the group deity – usually the psychiatrist – are met with a great variety of response, but, if one takes the response as a whole, one might imagine that Gibbon's description of the homoousian controversy[1] was really a report on a therapeutic group session with the dependent basic assumption in action. Perhaps it was. Indeed, it may be helpful for any psychiatrist who has a taste for trying my methods in a group to remember that few things in history have aroused a group's feelings more powerfully than controversy about the characteristics of the deity whose cult is at the time flourishing. I should perhaps add that by flourishing I mean negatively as well as positively, that is, when the group is atheistic as well as when it is theistic. It is essential that the psychiatrist should be firm in drawing attention to the reality of the group's claims upon him, no matter how fantastic their elucidation makes those claims appear to be, and then to the reality of the hostility which is aroused by his elucidation. It is on occasions such as this that one can see both the strength of the emotions associated with the basic assumption and the vigour and vitality which can be mobilized by the work group. It is almost as if human beings were aware of the painful and often fatal consequences of having to act without an adequate grasp of reality, and therefore were aware of the need for truth as a criterion in the evaluation of their findings.

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[1]Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, p. 373..

We must now consider some aspects of the part played by the work group in combination with one basic assumption in suppressing the overt activity of the other two basic assumptions. What is the fate of the two basic assumptions that are not operative? I propose to link this question with the question I left unanswered earlier about the nature and origin of the combination in which emotions were held in their association with any basic assumption. I said then that there were no observations at present available to the psychiatrist to explain why emotions associated with a basic assumption were held in combination with each other with such tenacity and exclusiveness. In order to explain this linkage and at the same time to explain the fate of the inoperative basic assumptions, I propose to postulate the existence of 'proto-mental' phenomena. I cannot represent my view adequately without proposing a concept that transcends experience. Clinically, I make a psychological approach, and therefore note phenomena only when they present themselves as psychological manifestations. Nevertheless, it is convenient to me to consider that the emotional state precedes the basic assumption and follows certain proto-mental phenomena of which it is an expression. Even this statement is objectionable because it establishes a more rigid order of cause and effect than I wish to subscribe to, for clinically it is useful to consider these events as links in a circular series; sometimes it is convenient to think that the basic assumption has been activated by consciously expressed thoughts, at others in strongly stirred emotions, the outcome of proto-mental activity. There is no harm in commencing the series where we choose if it throws light on what takes place. Starting, then, at the level of proto-mental events we may say that the group develops until its emotions become expressible in psychological terms. It is at this point that I say the group behaves 'as if' it were acting on a basic assumption.

In the proto-mental system there exist prototypes of the three basic assumptions, each of which exists as a function of the individual's membership of the group, each existing as a whole in which no part can be separated from the rest. Only at a different level, at a level where the events emerge as psychological phenomena, does there appear to be possible a differentiation of the components of each basic assumption, and on this level we can talk about feelings of fear or security or depression or sex, or other such.

The proto-mental system I visualize as one in which physical and psychological or mental are undifferentiated. It is a matrix from which spring the phenomena which at first appear – on a psychological level and in the light of psychological investigation – to be discrete feelings only loosely associated with one another. It is from this matrix that emotions proper to the basic assumption flow to reinforce, pervade, and, on occasion, to dominate the mental life of the group. Since it is a level in which physical and mental are undifferentiated, it stands to reason that, when distress from this source manifests itself, it can manifest itself just as well in physical forms as in psychological. The inoperative basic assumptions are confined within the proto-mental system; that is to say that if the sophisticated group is suffused with the emotions associated with the dependent basic assumption then the flight-fight and pair basic assumptions are confined within the limitations of the proto-mental phase. They are the victims of a conspiracy between the sophisticated group and the operating basic assumption. It is only the proto-mental stage of the dependent group that has been free to develop into the differentiated state where the psychiatrist can discern its operation as a basic assumption.

It is these proto-mental levels that provide the matrix of group diseases. These diseases manifest themselves in the individual but they have characteristics that make it clear that it is the group rather than the individual that is stricken, in much the same way, only in the opposite sense, as in the flight-fight group it always appears that it is the group rather than the individual that is being preserved. Briefly, what all this amounts to is that in any given group the matrix for the dis-eases that are present must be sought in two places – one is in the individual's relationship with the basic-assumption group and with himself as a participant in the maintenance of that group: the other is in the proto-mental stages of the other two basic assumptions.

To make my meaning still clearer I shall take an analogy from physical medicine, which, if it is remembered that I use it only as an analogy, may serve to make my meaning clear. Let us assume the case of the patient who is suffering from anxiety symptoms. In the course of the examination it appears that in addition to various psychological difficulties the patient has a fine tremor of the hands; let us assume that further examination shows signs of a thyrotoxicosis sufficiently serious to make a physical approach the method of choice

in deciding treatment. In ordinary parlance it would be said that the disease had a physical origin. I would prefer to say that the matrix of the disease lay in the sphere of proto-mental events and that if the patient were seen so early that by average present-day standards no signs of disease cognizable by techniques either of physical medicine or of psychiatry were present, then the patient was presenting a very good example, *in petto*,[1] of what I mean by the stage of proto-mental events in which physical and psychological are as yet undifferentiated and from which, in certain circumstances, group diseases, with physical and psychological components, have their origin. Where my analogy breaks down in expressing my view is in presenting the sphere of proto-mental events as bounded by the individual; in my opinion the sphere of proto-mental events cannot be understood by reference to the individual alone, and the intelligible field of study for the dynamics of proto-mental events is the individuals meeting together in a group. The proto-mental stage in the individual is only a part of the proto-mental system, for proto-mental phenomena are a function of the group and must therefore be studied in the group.

In advancing the concept of a proto-mental system I set out to account for the solidity with which all the emotions of one basic assumption seemed to be welded together, and at the same time to provide a concept that would account for the whereabouts of inoperative basic assumptions that were obviously felt by a group to be potentially active, and must therefore be considered to be 'somewhere'. But I have often found it useful after a postulation of this kind to see what happens if I try to use the new theory for purposes for which it was not, in origination, intended. For this purpose I find an indulgence in speculation as good a test field as any other, and I hope by this that I may come nearer to deciding whether to regard the idea of a proto-mental system as only a theory to draw together my observations, a hypothesis to stimulate further investigation, or a clinically observable fact.

My first speculation must concern what constitutes an intelligible field of study. The small therapeutic group cannot do so as long as my technique is no further developed than it is at present, and even if it were developed further, or if I were to improve my powers of observation, it would still remain a matter of doubt whether it were

[1][Undisclosed. *Ed.*]

not wiser to seek a solution in some other field. Before Freud, the attempts to advance the study of neurosis were largely sterile because the individual was considered to be an intelligible field of study, but it was when Freud began to seek a solution in the relationship between two people, the study of the transference, that he found what was the intelligible field of study for at least some of the problems that the neurotic patient poses, and problems that had hitherto defied all attempts at solution began to have a meaning. The investigation then commenced has continued to spread in depth and width. The small therapeutic group is an attempt to see whether any further results could be yielded by changing the field of study. It will be necessary at some time to consider the use that the group itself makes of manipulations of the field of study, but for the moment I wish to consider the possibilities of changing the field again in order to see if it is possible by doing so to get new light on the small therapeutic group. The small therapeutic group does not produce evidence about physical disease fast enough for my purpose and does not produce enough of it. I prefer, therefore, to base my speculations on what might be found in a group large enough for statistical evidence of disease to be available (see Toynbee, 1935,[1] Vol. 1, pp. 12, 17). I should like to have evidence about such diseases as tuberculosis, venereal diseases, diabetes, and others, particularly with regard to such aspects of fluctuations in numbers of cases, virulence, and distribution as were not readily explicable in terms of anatomy, physiology, and other disciplines that are normally the stock-in-trade of Public Health investigations. Furthermore it would be necessary to have statistics that were valid at the significant moment.

In what follows I propose to use the letters *ba* to indicate the basic assumption and its associated emotional state. The basic assumption of dependence will be indicated by the letters *baD*, of pairing by *baP*, and of flight-fight by *baF*. For the proto-mental system I propose to use the letters *pm*; thus *pmDP* would mean that I referred to a state in which the basic assumptions of dependence and pairing were no longer cognizable as psychiatric phenomena, but were confined in some sort of latent phase, at present unelucidated, in the proto-mental

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[1]Toynbee's discussion of what constitutes an intelligible field of study in history can be taken to apply equally well to the study of the psychology of the group. [Included in end-of-chapter references in the original. *Ed.*]

system where physical and mental are undifferentiated. Similarly with *pmPF*, or *pmDF*. For the sophisticated or work group I shall use *W*.

(a) Suppose that a disease *X* springs from the proto-mental stage of dependent and pairing groups when suppressed by basically expressed *baF*. In my theory the disease *X* will be affiliated with *D* and *P* groups and, therefore, when it becomes overt, will have psychological affiliations with the emotions of *baP* and *baD*. Further, it will have a matrix which in this instance will be *pmD* and *pmP*. It will also have a psychological cause which will lie in *baP*. This does not mean that I consider that all diseases have a psychological cause, which is equal in importance with other causes, but I do consider that for the sake of completeness a disease should be so classified that we know not only the facts ordinarily described in medicine but also (i) its matrix, that is to say, in the example that I have given, *pmD* and *pmP*, (ii) its psychological affiliations, in my imaginary case, *baD* and *baP*, and (iii) its psychological cause, in this example, *baF*.

Similarly, I would add that we need to know the affiliation of the physical disease with other physical diseases, other than the already well-known affiliations arrived at from a study of anatomy and physiology, and that we must seek these other affiliated physical diseases by considering what other physical diseases can be classified, in the example I have given, as:

Matrix	*pmD* and *pmP*
Affiliation	*baD* and *baP*
Cause	*baF*

This should give us the affiliations of one physical disease with another, which are functions, not of anatomy, physiology, and bacteriology – nor yet of psychopathology – but of the individual's membership of a group.

(b) Since my thesis depends on the argument that there is a stage in which physical and mental are undifferentiated, it follows that, when disease manifests itself physically, say, as tuberculosis, there is a psychological counterpart or reciprocal, the exact nature of which is yet to be investigated, but which we may in this discussion assume to be *baD*. This reciprocal cannot be either cause or effect, for, if it is either one or the other, it must derive from an entirely different series

of proto-mental events, or else from the operative basic assumption. The mental events to which tuberculosis is affiliated are necessarily, in my definition, neither cause nor effect; they are derivatives and developments from the same proto-mental phenomena as those from which tuberculosis itself arises. Tuberculosis is known to be very sensitive to developments in the psychology of a group, numbers fluctuating in what appears to be some kind of sympathy with the changes in mentality of the group. The disease demands prolonged care and nursing and the diet has reminiscences of man's earliest gastronomic experiences. It should be and is associated with many of the characteristics of *baD*, individuals reacting to their disorder and the limitations it imposes on them very much in the way that individuals with a similar personality react to *baD*. The existence of these facts has led often, before a tubercular lesion was demonstrated, to suggestion that the patient was malingering (Wittkower, 1949)[1], or to use my terminology, that *baD* is the teleological cause of the patient's disorder, but for reasons I have given I cannot regard *baD* as a cause of any kind; it is the mental state with which tuberculosis is affiliated, and is therefore neither cause nor effect. To find the cause of the complaint – I refer, of course, to the cause as it is to be understood as a part of the scheme I am elaborating, and not to the perfectly well-known and well-established causes with which medicine is familiar – it would be necessary to correlate the fluctuations in the incidence of the disease with the *ba* prevalent in the group at the various times at which the figures for the disease were obtained. Let us assume that the highest figures corresponded always with *baF*. We should then classify tuberculosis as having, besides the already established characteristics,

Cause	*baF*
Affiliation	*baD*
Matrix	*pmDP*

Any attempt to make this sort of classification would clearly depend on opinion at best, wild guesswork at worst; but I think the attempt will need to be made: the attempt to be scientific must be adjusted to

[1]This study provides plenty of material on which to form tentative judgements about the validity of my theories of the psychological affiliations of disease. [Included in end-of-chapter references in the original. *Ed.*]

the state of immaturity of the study and this applies particularly to evaluation of the *ba* at any given moment.

So far I have been arguing that the concept of a proto-mental system, together with the theories of basic assumptions, might be used to provide a fresh slant on physical disease and particularly those diseases which have been called psychosomatic or have been considered as a part of psycho-social medicine and sociodynamics (see Halliday, 1948, pp. 142 et seq.). But if we can widen the field of study of physical disease to include the study of basic assumptions, proto-mental system, and the rest, in order to arrive at a fuller understanding of physical disorder, we can equally well use the same widened field to carry out the process in reverse. For it must be remembered that, if, as far as psychological disorder is concerned, the system is postulated as proto-mental, it is equally, from the point of view of physical disease, proto-physical. Nevertheless, it may be possible more easily to find a technique for investigating the proto-mental system as the matrix for physical disorder by an investigation making a physical approach. If, by using a physical approach, we can investigate the physical aspect of the proto-mental system, we may find a way of sampling what the proto-mental system of a group contains at any given time, and from that make the further step that would consist in elaborating a technique for observing the proto-mental counterparts of mental events. Any developments of this nature would make it possible to estimate what the psychological state of a group would be likely to become, because we could investigate it long before it emerged as a basic assumption basically expressed. To me this is important, for one characteristic that differentiates the patient group from other groups is the tendency of the patient group to act on basic assumptions basically.

Thanks to the British National Health Service, patients are able to feel that they have effectually dealt with all problems that arise from the financial element in the relationships with each other and with the doctor. Even so, there are occasions when financial problems are mentioned, usually as if they were affairs of domestic concern to the individual but none the less susceptible of interpretation as material expressing indirectly some aspect of the mental life of the group and of the individual in it. I propose, therefore, to continue in the sphere of money my speculations on the proto-mental system by seeing if I can use this concept, in a manner parallel to that in which I have already employed it, in the sphere of physical disease.

It has been said that 'The medium of exchange may be almost anything provided that it is generally acceptable' (Clay, 1916,[1] p. 164). It is not only a medium of exchange but also the standard of value. Recent work on primitive money has shown that it did not arise as a development of barter, nor yet even as a part of trade. On the contrary, trade, in its search for a medium that was generally acceptable and had an established value, adopted for its use currency, which was primarily an invention to facilitate the transactions of *wergild* and bride-price. 'It would be extravagant to claim that "bride-price" and *wergild* brought currency into existence, but they certainly established standards of value and regularized certain media of exchange . . .' (Hingston Quiggin, 1949, pp. 7 et seq.). Einzig, discussing this matter, says that possibly objects were chosen for currency because they were generally desired as an article of consumption or ornament but adds that the high degree of acceptability may have been due to non-commercial considerations such as the fact that an object could be used for religious sacrifices, for political payments (fines, tribute, blood-money), or for bride-money (Einzig, 1949,[2] pp. 353 et seq.).

Both *wergild* and bride-price can be regarded as compensations to a group for loss of one of its members, and, looked at in this light, they reflect the supremacy of the group over the individual as in *baF*. Equally, wergild may be regarded as an expression of the value the community sets upon the individual, so that it could be interpreted on some occasions as an aspect of *baF* and on others as an expression of *baD*; similarly, bride-price can be regarded as an expression of *baP*. I am not, however, concerned at the moment to ascribe either institution to a particular *ba* – that would be the task of clinical observation – but to suggest the possibility that, just as in the discussion of physical disease, there may be grounds for enlisting my theories as a means of adding knowledge and understanding of disease to the knowledge already obtainable through the discipline of physical

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[1]A good short account of money from the standpoint of the economist. [Included in end-of-chapter references in the original. *Ed*.]

[2]Einzig is more cautious than Hingston Quiggin, and, though he reaches substantially the same conclusion, he draws attention to the many sources on which money can depend for its value: it is a wholesome corrective to any facile generalization. I am inclined to think that the concept of the basic assumptions might throw light on a subject the complexity of which is better displayed by Einzig than by Hingston Quiggin. [Included in end-of-chapter references in original. *Ed*.]

medicine, so there may be grounds for using my theories to add knowledge of disease of mechanisms of exchange to the knowledge already obtainable through the discipline of economics. For if the source of value of money lies not only in intrinsic value, and other sources discussed by Einzig, of the objects used for money but also in the bas, then we should expect that the psychological value might be different in *baF* from its value in *baP* or *baD* and so on. Furthermore, we might expect that the value of any currency might fluctuate, through fluctuations in value at the source from which money derives its psychological value – the basic assumptions. If we could determine clinically the nature of the value of money in *baF*, *baD*, and *baP* we might be able to trace the source of one of the causes of fluctuations in value of money as used in trade.

Now, one of the advantages of studying money, in the big group, is that it may be susceptible of statistical approach; whether the statistics available are any less open to criticism, on the grounds of lack of sensitivity, than the statistics of disease is doubtful, but yet a start must be made, and by someone who has statistical training and ability. But the real value of establishing some kind of correlation between fluctuations in value of money and changes in *ba* would arise if it were found that there was some correlation between patterns in the statistics of disease and statistics showing fluctuations in the value of money in the group. Obviously, any attempt to isolate fluctuations in value due to changes in value at the psychological source of monetary value, namely, its source in wergild and bride purchase from other sources from which money derived its value may prove to be very ambitious unless, as I suspect, value of currency reposes to a far greater extent than has been imagined on psychological foundations, and in particular on the dominant basic assumption and the *pm*. If such correlations were proved to exist, then one might reasonably feel that some evidence was being provided for taking the basic assumptions to be clinical entities, and this in turn might lead to some clarification of ideas about the nature of the proto-mental system.

In discussing the linkage of emotion in a *ba* I suggested that it was necessary to regard any feeling, such as anxiety, as differing according to the *ba* of which it was a part: similarly we must consider that the value of money in, say, *baD* differs from the value of money in *baF*, and by this I mean that its value differs in respect of quality as well as quantity. What I mean by this may be seen if we consider the attitude

to money and the value that is set on it in a religious group where *W* is sufficiently strong to call *baD* into full activity and compare this value with the value that is set on money in a nation at war when *baF* is in full activity. In the latter the value of money is linked with its convertibility into munitions of war, in the former with its value in offsetting feelings of guilt for dependence beyond reasonable time-limits, and on parents more than human by the purchase of feelings of virtue. In *baP* it would appear to lie in its ability to facilitate, by bride-purchase or dowry, the acquisition of a mate.

My speculations appear to suggest that the concepts of basic assumptions and proto-mental systems hold promise of facilitating inquiry in areas other than those from which they were derived, but, before acting on the assumption that a case for further investigation is established, it may be as well to check our speculations by bringing them into closer relationship with fact. The glaring difficulty is to state what basic assumption is operative in a large group; for example, are we to say that the *ba* in a nation at war is *baF*? And if so, is it true that this would hold for all parts of the nation – for example, the agricultural community? If we assume that a nation at war exemplifies *baF*, are we to assume that the nation in question provides an intelligible field of study for the phenomena associated with that basic assumption? Where shall we seek statistical evidence of fluctuations in disease? What statistical material will reveal fluctuations in the value of currency and where, in time, would we expect to find those fluctuations in the value of currency, or the incidence of disease, that we would expect to be correlated, if correlated they are, with the basic assumption of, say, August, 1939?

Though it may seem a far cry from a study of the small patient group, it may be worth while trying to relate these theories to the recent history of the large group, to see if they stand the test of practicable application to actual events, before attempting a more ambitious project involved in making them the subject of statistical research.

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In this article I would discuss one or two points about the small therapeutic group; let us consider the vicissitudes of an interpretation. If a psychoanalyst were to conduct a group by my method he would soon be impressed by the apparent futility of it; it seems impossible to achieve precision by interpretation, for even when the formulation of the interpretation is satisfying there seems small reason to suppose it reaches its destination. At first, in an attempt to counteract what I thought was some sort of resistance which patients were achieving through use of the group, I used to be beguiled into giving individual interpretations as in psychoanalysis. In doing this I was doing what patients often do – trying to get to individual treatment. True, I was trying to get to it as a doctor, but in fact this can be stated in terms of an attempt to get rid of the 'badness' of the group and, for the doctor, the 'badness' of the group is its apparent unsuitability as a therapeutic instrument – which is, as we have already seen, the complaint also of the patient. Ignoring those inherent qualities of the group which appear to give substance to the complaint, and choosing instead to regard this unsuitability as a function of the failure of the doctor or patient to use the group in a therapeutic way, we can see that the failure, at the moment when the analyst gives in to his impulse to make individual interpretations, lies in being influenced by *baD* instead of interpreting it, for, as soon as I start to give supposedly psychoanalytic interpretations to an individual, I reinforce the assumption that the group consists of patients dependent on the doctor, which is the *baD*.

We can now see what it is that gives rise to the feeling of imprecision when making interpretations; it is the realization that the group is influenced by that aspect of the doctor's contribution which falls

in with the basic assumption and hardly at all by the part of it that consists of interpretation of the behaviour of the group. In trying to achieve precision of aim I was really suffering, as all members of the group suffer, through dislike of the emotional quality in myself and in the group that is inherent in membership of the human group. This quality is a kind of capacity for co-operation with the group, but I propose from now on to reserve the word 'co-operation' for conscious or unconscious working with the rest of the group in work, whereas for the capacity for spontaneous instinctive co-operation in the basic assumptions, one example of which is what we have just been discussing, I shall use the word 'valency'.

Valency

I mean to indicate, by its use, the individual's readiness to enter into combination with the group in making and acting on the basic assumptions; if his capacity for combination is great, I shall speak of a high valency, if small, of a low valency; he can have, in my view, no valency only by ceasing to be, as far as mental function is concerned, human. Although I use this word to describe phenomena that are visible as, or deducible from, psychological events, yet I wish also to use it to indicate a readiness to combine on levels that can hardly be called mental at all but are characterized by behaviour in the human being that is more analogous to tropism in plants than to purposive behaviour such as is implicit in a word like 'assumption'. In short, I wish to use it for events in the *pm* system should need arise.

When I gave in to the impulse to give individual interpretations, my leadership of the group was more an expression of distress than an illumination of external reality clearly perceived. My contribution to *W* was diminished, to *baD* increased, and thus the 'patient' component in my contribution as a whole had been increased.

I deal with this situation by assuming that everyone in the group is suffering in the same way and, giving up making supposedly psychoanalytic interpretations, I interpret only that aspect of the individual's contribution which shows that the individual, in attempting, say, to get help for his problem, is leading the group to establish the *baD* or, alternatively, to shift to *baP* or *baF*.

By doing this I have both decreased the 'patient' component in my leadership and drawn the attention of the individuals concerned to the dilemma that results from membership of the group. Consequences flow from both these facts, but for the time being I ignore both in the actual group situation, and, in this description, the consequences that follow on the decrease of the 'patient' component in my behaviour.

The dilemma of the individual

By concentrating on that aspect of the individual's contribution which is a function of his valency, I reduce the group – with a speed that varies in direct proportion to the degree of sophistication that the group has achieved in this kind of therapy – to taking refuge in puerilities and finally in silence.

I shall not spend time describing commonplaces of interpretation, such as those necessary for illustrating feelings of guilt that arise from the idea that interpretations of behaviour are really expressions of disapproval; the point that must be demonstrated is that individuals experiencing this dilemma are intimidated by it and are thus displaying their fear of the basic assumptions and the part they themselves play in their maintenance; this fear is intimately linked with the sense of inadequacy to group life that accompanies increased insight into the hitherto unsuspected complexities of participation in the human group. I demonstrate this dilemma of the individual – with intermissions during the various periods when other group phenomena are presenting with more urgency – throughout the entire course of the group's existence. Although no change takes place in the situation, individuals do gradually become less oppressed by the sense of being impaled on one or other horn of the dilemma and less obstructed in active participation in the group. One interesting result of increasing familiarity of the dilemma of the individual is the demonstration that there is no way in which the individual can, in a group, 'do nothing' – not even by doing nothing. So we have come round once more, though from a different angle, to our suspicion that all members of a group are responsible for the behaviour of the group (see p. 144).

In practice matters do not develop so smoothly as my description suggests, for, as I indicated, for weeks and months at a time other

aspects of the group obtrude and demand attention, if for no other reason, for the reason that they are obtruding and therefore best lend themselves to demonstration. Amongst these other phenomena is the consequence that flows from the diminished 'patient' component in the therapist's contribution, and to this I must now turn.

It will be remembered that groups claim from time to time that I am the patient and suggest sometimes that I have benefited by the group experience. One element that contributes to this expression of their belief is envy that I am apparently better able to turn my experience of the group to good account than others are and become by virtue of this approximated to Aristotle's 'political animal', thereby achieving the growth and development that are the concomitant of being an organism in its proper environment; perhaps I typify the patient who is obtaining more than his fair share of care and it is some such belief that makes the group pick on another member as leader. Be that as it may, the new leader is, in my experience without exception, a thoroughgoing psychiatric case. He is extolled for keeping the group going; for talking freely; for being, in short, a great improvement on myself in a variety of ways. Though there is always substance in these appreciative comments, there has never been any question that the man or woman thrown up by the group is a 'case'.

We have reached this position: the group is engaged in sustaining, placating, soothing, flattering, and deferring to its most ill member, who is now the leader; we must regard this development as the dual of *baD*, and to a further consideration we must accordingly turn.

The dual of baD

The simple aspect of *baD* is presented when all the individuals in the group look to myself as a person with whom each has an exclusive relationship. There is little overt contact between the individuals, and all facts that conflict with the idea that I solve all the individual's problems and have a particular concern for the individual's welfare are denied, not simply verbally but by a kind of mass inertia that precludes stimulation by facts that are not appropriate to the emotions of *baD*. Among such undesired facts are interpretations, whether given by myself or another, that carry the implication that my assumed pre-eminence in experience of groups is itself a matter for scrutiny.

When the group can no longer ignore these interpretations, it sometimes sweeps them into the *baD* system by treating me as a baby that has to be humoured by indulgence in its self-display. This brings into play the state that I have described as the dual of the 'simple' form of *baD* – I do not nourish and sustain the group so they nourish and sustain me. At this point I must explain a difficulty I have in giving the reader an idea of the evidence on which I base my hypothesis. Apart from the need to disguise actual incidents sufficiently to preserve anonymity for the individuals, I am bound so to describe an incident that it bears out my theory. I obviously must produce my hypothesis because I see events in a particular way, and there is no proof that the way I see them is accurate. The description then becomes little more than a repetition of a hypothesis clothed in terms of concrete events. I would find some means by which I could offer the reader something more convincing, and it is to this end that I propose, with what success I do not know, to find descriptions by other hands of situations which appear to me to be illustrations of phenomena that my hypotheses purport to illumine. I shall try to take examples from any time and any place; my first is from Toynbee's *A Study of History* (1935, Vol. 1, pp. 141–144). By reference to this passage the reader can form his own opinion and compare it with events that I propound in the light of my theory. Briefly, Toynbee shows how Egypt was exhausted by the building of the pyramids under Kephron and his successors. Applying my theory, this situation would be described as a group movement to allay the anxiety state of the leader of the group. The nature of that anxiety is not immediately relevant but appears to be centred on the death of the leader and the need to deny its reality.

For my immediate purpose the interesting thing is the subsequent development in the group, namely the extension of the treatment received by the Pharaoh to ever-increasing numbers of members of the group so that, as Toynbee says, quite ordinary people receive the same treatment as the Pharaohs – just as good, but at a much cheaper rate. A change in the technique thus brought all the benefits of the very exclusive psychotherapy of the Pharaohs within the reach of quite moderate purses. It looks as if those of us who seek to find in group therapy a solution of the economic problems posed by psychoanalysis are really following a tradition of very respectable age. This situation, in which a whole people is exhausted to provide for one individual, is what I would describe as the dual of *baD*. We may

see in it the extent to which coping with the *baD* absorbs energies of the group which might have been devoted to the external realities of group security had no technique been available for a more direct management of the *baD*.

We shall have to examine these matters more closely when we come to consider *W* and particularly some specialized forms of work group, but for the present I must leave these aside to consider the complication that has been introduced by the close connection in *baD* between the leadership of the group and the most psychiatrically disordered member of the group. I do not wish to attempt any solution of the problem of why the group, when left to spontaneous behaviour, chooses as its leader, in *baD*, its most ill member. It has always been well recognized that this is so; so much so in fact that the great religious leader – and the religious group for obvious reasons is a group in which *baD* is active and vital – is commonly assumed to be mad or possessed of a devil, exactly as if members of a group with *baD* in the ascendant felt that if they were not led by a madman, then they ought to be. Indeed one could say that, just as they reject all facts that run counter to the belief that they are all individually looked after by the person or deity on whom they depend, so they reject all facts that might indicate that the leader or deity was sane. The belief in the holiness of idiots, the belief that genius is akin to madness, all indicate this same tendency of the group to choose, when left unstructured, its most ill member as its leader. Perhaps it is an unconscious recognition that the baby, if only we had not become accustomed to associating its behaviour with its physical development, is really insane, and in the *baD* it is as necessary to have someone who is dependent as it is to have someone on whom to depend.

Anxiety of the work group

The immediate point, to which I shall return later when I come to deal in detail with *W*, is that the group that has most experience of dealing with *baD*, namely the religious group or priesthood, always deals with this problem of the leader in *baD* as if it were handling dynamite. The attempt is constantly and increasingly made to ensure that the leader in *baD* is not a concrete person – the commonest way in which this is done is of course by making a god the leader; and when that,

for a variety of reasons, turns out still to be not sufficiently immaterial, by striving to make him God, a spirit. The essence of the attempt, in my opinion, is to prevent the group from doing either one of two things: (i) making a choice of an actual man; (ii) allowing the choice to be made by 'unconstitutional' means, that is to say, by a spontaneous act of choice in which the emotions are not cooled by the discipline involved in, for example, election by ballot. The priesthood, which, as I say, is the *W* group most experienced in dealing with the *baD*, strives, with very rare exceptions, to avoid both these points while making some concession to the group demand for an actual concrete person. Even the exceptions suggest that the priesthood is well aware, if unconsciously, of the danger; the prophet Samuel disapproved of the clamour to end the Israelitish theocracy and, when he had to give in, ensured that the leader would be chosen by methods that violate both canons. It was a subtle and successful revenge, and the results were all that could be desired by way of picking a psychiatric winner.

The cause of anxiety

But against what danger is the priesthood striving to protect the group? It is not, I submit, merely the danger inherent in incompetent leadership; for one thing, leadership by the mentally disordered is by no means always incompetent – far from it. But apart from that I hope to show that there are far more weighty reasons why the priesthood should fear the spontaneous development of leadership in *baD*. To demonstrate this I must return again to experiences in the small therapeutic group.

In its search for a leader the group finds a paranoid schizophrenic or malignant hysteric if possible; failing either of these, a psychopathic personality with delinquent trends will do; failing a psychopathic personality it will pick on the verbally facile high-grade defective. I have at no time experienced a group of more than five people that could not provide a good specimen of one of these.

Once the leader is discovered the group treats him or her with some deference, and the occasional spicing of flattery – 'Mr So-and-so always keeps the discussion going so well' – serves to reinforce his position as leader. There is usually some tendency to test me for signs of jealousy, but this phase quickly passes. A comment that is often

heard is that the group 'could not do without' Miss X or Mr Y, as the case might be. This comment is also made about myself. Though it appears to be insignificant enough, it is a matter to which we shall have to pay considerable attention later.

When the leadership of the individual concerned is well established in the eyes of all members of the group, difficulties arise. King Saul, the frogs, in Aesop, who would have a stork for king, the Pharaohs, all in varying degrees illustrate aspects of the group in its new situation. As I showed before, the group turns to myself. It is of course not only the priesthood that is alarmed at this situation. Whenever a state exists that is likely to activate, or itself to have been activated by, the *baD*, there is a fear of dictatorship – a recent example is the often expressed fear that the Welfare State will lead to a tyrannical interference with liberty – the seizure of power by Communists, bureaucrats, etc. One of the most common calls in this situation is for a return to a belief in God, and indeed it will be surprising if in the small therapeutic group some member does not make this very plea. It expresses the desire to avoid the concrete embodiment of leadership in an actual member of the group. If I leave things to develop, many remedies will be proposed; revolt against the chosen leader, a claim that treatment should be available for all and that one person should not monopolize, and so on. In effect practically all the solutions adumbrated are recognizable as closely similar to procedures tried throughout history. What is not so easy to describe is what it is against which the group is seeking to protect itself.

Emotional oscillation in a group

My conclusion is that the situation derives from the stimulus produced by having, on the *W* level of the therapeutic group, leader and psychiatrist in one. The group is compelled to recognize that the spontaneously chosen leader is seriously disordered – as I mentioned earlier, it seems to be essential that in *baD* the leader should be 'mad'; or – a description the group finds more flattering to itself and the individual concerned – a 'genius'. At the same time it is compelled to believe that he is the dependable leader. Now, this can only be done by a series of oscillations from one view to the other. If I refuse to intervene, and I have tested this situation several times by

letting it go very far, even too far for safety, the oscillations become very rapid. And when, as in this situation, the distance separating the two beliefs is great – for it is hard to imagine two views more widely separated than a belief that the leader is mad and the belief that he is the dependable person on whom you rely for your welfare – then the oscillations have to be both rapid in time and large in excursion. The result is that the group can no longer contain the emotional situation, which thereupon spreads with explosive violence to other groups until enough groups have been drawn in to absorb the reaction. In practice in the small group this means impulsion to complain to outside authority, e.g. write to the press, or to a Member of Parliament, or to the authorities of the Clinic. The object of this drawing in of other groups is not, as I at first supposed it to be, revenge on the psychiatrist for discomfort – though that may be there, and damage to the psychiatrist or group may be the result – but to bring in so much inert material in the way of outsiders from the group, who do not share the emotional situation, that the new and much larger group ceases to vibrate. There is no longer the violent and disagreeable mass oscillation.

Obviously much depends on the speed with which the other groups or single groups, or even part of another group, can be brought in to absorb the oscillations. If they come in too slowly or in too small amounts, then the oscillations spread to the hitherto inert and the situation is more disagreeable than ever.

Clearly it is not desirable that such an explosion should take place and, in fact, except for reasons of research, it is not justifiable to let a reaction reach a point at which the group cannot contain its emotions. What is necessary is that the psychiatrist should find interpretations that give the group insight into what is going on; to bring the *ba* and *W* into contact.

Interpretations which expose, in detail and in the course of their development, the phenomena that I have here described in general terms seem to me to do this. The reader may find it entertaining to see if he can detect any situations that correspond to the description I have given of the *baD* and its dual in the reports of group activities, such as that which I have just used, not only in historical works but in contemporary reports such as newspaper accounts. In this country at any rate press comments on the Welfare State, so-called, seem to me often to betray an anxiety that the *baD* in either simple or dual form is

being stimulated or is alternatively the source from which desires for a Welfare State spring. I should add, however, that it is much easier to believe one can see these phenomena in groups from which one is detached than in a small group in which one is actively participating. It is this latter experience which is the important one.

7

In the preceding section I described one cause of oscillation in a group. I wish now to consider a phenomenon that may lead either to such oscillation or else to schism. In my fifth article I said that 'development' was an important function of the *W* group. It is also one of the respects in which the *W* group differs from the basic-assumption group. The *W* group is necessarily concerned with reality and, therefore, might be said to have some of the characteristics Freud attributes to the ego in his discussion of the individual. Since the *W* group is concerned with reality, its techniques tend ultimately to be scientific. The point now is the resistance that is set up when development is demanded of the group or of the individuals composing it.

Schism

According to his personality, the individual adheres to one of two sub-groups. One sub-group opposes further advance, and in doing so appeals to loyalty to the dependent leader, or to the group bible, which, as we have seen, is a substitute for the dependent leader. The adherents of this sub-group appeal to tradition, 'the word of (the group) god', or to somebody who has been made into the group god in order to resist change. Members of this sub-group manipulate the dependent leader or substitutes they claim to support in such a way that adherence to the group will not demand any painful sacrifices and will therefore be popular. Mental activity thus becomes stabilized on a level that is platitudinous, dogmatic, and painless. Development is arrested and the resultant stagnation is widespread.

The reciprocal sub-group is composed of those ostensibly supporting the new idea and this sub-group sets out to achieve the same end as the first sub-group, but in a rather different manner; it becomes so exacting in its demands that it ceases to recruit itself. In this way there is none of the painful bringing together of initiated and uninitiated, primitive and sophisticated, that is the essence of the developmental conflict. Both sub-groups thus achieve the same end; the conflict is brought to an end. To exaggerate for the sake of clarity, I would say that the one sub-group has large numbers of primitive unsophisticated individuals who constantly add to their number, but who do not develop; the other sub-group develops, but on such a narrow front and with such few recruits that it also avoids the painful bringing together of the new idea and the primitive state. The mechanism equalizes the degree of sophistication in individuals in the community and also prevents the conflict between development and instinct in the individual. I am reminded of allegations that a society breeds copiously from its less cultured or less educated members, while the 'best' people remain obstinately sterile.

Schism, as I have described it in an extreme form here, should be contrasted with what takes place when the group tries to end oscillation by absorption of external groups (Chapter 6, p. 193): the schismatic group attempts to solve its problem by internal war, the other by external war.

Some other views of groups

It may help if I now bring together the main themes of the foregoing and make a comparison with some of the many other views that have been put forward about groups.

The problem of the individual's relationship with others and with his group has been discussed from very early times. Plato emphasized the individual function in the group, that is to say, the need for the shoemaker to stick to his last for the harmonious life of the group. This view seems naïve when set by the side of the complexities of present-day psychology; but it can be forgotten that there is substance in this statement. It presupposes that individuals are rational people and that the governing consideration is the limitation imposed by

reality. If the individual sticks to his task, if he co-operates with other individuals in letting them fulfil their tasks, then all will be well. In my terminology this would be the equivalent of saying that if the *W* group were the only component in the mental life of the group, then there would be no difficulty. But the point that I have made throughout these articles is that the *W* group is constantly perturbed by influences which come from other group mental phenomena.

That this was so became obvious at an early date, and the Platonic theory was felt to be unsatisfactory because it did not stand up to the test of experience. Notably it was criticized by Aristotle. But for our purposes I do not think that we need to consider any developments until St. Augustine produced *The City of God*. It is significant that the capture of Rome by Alaric should have produced so intense a reaction, and that the effect upon St. Augustine was to make him reconsider the whole question of human relationships within the state. What he does is to postulate a heavenly city in which the relationships between individuals become harmonized through each individual's relationship with God. Now this view is very different from that of Plato. St. Augustine has introduced a new dimension. His postulates imply that the Platonic description of what I call the *W* group is not a sufficient view of the group; what is needed is something very close to what I mean by the *baD*. I have already described how in *baD* individuals do not have a relationship with each other but each has it with the dependent leader. Since St. Augustine there has never been any real return to the classical view, although in some respects Hobbes comes near to ignoring the class of phenomena with which St. Augustine attempted to deal. Liberal thinkers of recent times have been disposed to argue that emotion and reason are easily harmonized, that is to say, in my terminology, that the operations of the *W* group can easily be harmonized with the operations of the basic-assumption group. Nietzsche appears to react against this view, seeming to suggest that a group achieves vitality only by the release of aggressive impulses. In my terminology this would mean a feeling of vitality could only be achieved by the dominance of the basic assumption, notably the *baF*. In my experience of groups all these views appear in one form or another to be expressed and even to gain a temporary ascendancy in action. But from what I have already said in these articles, it will be realized that I do not consider that any of

them in practice provides any lasting solution. In any event, as I hope to be able to show, the group reactions are infinitely more complex than the foregoing theories, even in their full deployment, suggest. Freud expressly disavowed any but a superficial study of the group problem (*Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 1921c), basing his observations largely on a criticism, derived from psychoanalysis, of the work done by others (*Totem and Taboo*, 1912–13, p. 75, fn. 1).

In his *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud opens his discussion by pointing out that individual and group psychology cannot be absolutely differentiated because the psychology of the individual is itself a function of the individual's relationship to another person or object. He objects (p. 70) that it is difficult to attribute to the factor of number a significance so great as to make it capable by itself of moving in over mental life a new instinct that is otherwise not brought into play. In my view no new instinct is brought into play – it is always in play. The only point about collecting a group of people is that it enables us to see just how the 'political' characteristics of the human body operate. I have already said I do not consider it necessary for a number of people to be brought together – the individual cannot help being a member of a group even if his membership of it consists in behaving in such a way as to give reality to the idea that he does not belong to a group at all. In this respect the psychoanalytic situation is not 'individual psychology' but 'pair'. The individual is a group animal at war, not simply with the group, but with himself for being a group animal and with those aspects of his personality that constitute his 'groupishness'.

It is necessary for a group to meet in a room because the conditions for study can be provided only in that way. Freud and others whom he quotes, such as McDougall (1920) and Le Bon (1895), seem to me to consider that group psychology is something which comes into being when there are a number of people collected together in the same place and at the same time, and in this respect I agree with Freud's protest that too much significance is thereby attributed to number; I think he is mistaken in saying that a solution must only be sought in one or other of the two alternatives:

i. the possibility that the social instinct is not primitive, or
ii. that its development begins in a manner such as that of the family.

There is a third. I would say that the importance of the actual group is similar to the importance of analyst and analysed. it is necessary for an analysand to come to a psychoanalyst in order that the transference relationship should be rendered demonstrable. In the same way it is important that the group should come together so that the characteristics of the group and the individual in it should be demonstrable. I attach no intrinsic importance to the coming together of the group. It is important that the group should come together sufficiently closely for me to be able to give an interpretation without having to shout it. This means that the number must be limited. The degree of dispersion of the group must similarly be limited because I wish all individuals to have an opportunity of witnessing the evidence on which I base my interpretation. For the same reason the individuals must all collect at the same time. Now this congregation of the group in a particular place at a particular time is obviously very important for the purely mechanical reasons I have just given, but it has no significance whatsoever in the production of group phenomena. The idea that it has springs from the erroneous impression that a thing must necessarily commence at the moment when its existence becomes demonstrable. The point that I would make is that no individual, however isolated in time and space, can be regarded as outside a group or lacking in active manifestations of group psychology, although conditions do not exist which would make it possible to demonstrate it. Acceptance of the idea that the human being is a group animal would solve the difficulties that are felt to exist in the seeming paradox that a group is more than the sum of its members. The explanation of certain phenomena must be sought in the matrix of the group and not in the individuals that go to make up the group. Time-keeping is no function of any part, in isolation, of the mechanism of a clock, yet time-keeping is a function of the clock and of the various parts of the clock when held in combination with each other.

There is no more need to be confused by the impression that a group is more than the sum of its members than it would be to be confused by the idea that a clock is more than a collection of the parts that are necessary to make a clock.

To sum up, there are characteristics in the individual whose real significance cannot be understood unless it is realized that they are part of his equipment as a herd animal and their operation cannot be seen unless it is looked for in the intelligible field of study – which

in this instance is the group. You cannot understand a recluse living in isolation unless you inform yourself about the group of which he is a member. To argue that in such a case one is not dealing with a group is merely to prove oneself naïvely imperceptive. For this reason I dislike the nomenclature used by Rickman of two-body, three-body, relationships. I think that such terms are liable to too naïve interpretation. The recluse is not, in my view, made more comprehensible by being viewed as part of a two-body situation, simply because he and the observer appear to be geographically alone together. I would want to know whether the recluse and observer were members of the same group and if not of what groups the two were members. Nor would I be in the least bit impressed by the fact that no other 'bodies' were visible. It may make my position still clearer if I say that this argument contributes to my objections to the psychoanalytic study of historical characters. The effects of any errors that may exist in psychoanalysis through disregard of group phenomena are likely to be moderated by the fact that analyst and analysand have many group tensions in common. An analyst today, even if he is aware of the importance of the knowledge of the circumstances of the person he is studying, cannot possibly have the feel of the situation in which an historical character lived and moved in the way the analyst can have a feeling for the situation in which his patient lives.

It appears to me that Freud is in some ways failing to realize, in his discussion of groups, the nature of the revolution he himself produced when he looked for an explanation of neurotic symptoms, not in the individual, but in the individual's relationship with objects. The whole point about looking at a group is that it changes the field of study to include phenomena that cannot be studied outside the group. Outside the group as a field of study, their activity is not manifest. The group, in the sense of a collection of people in a room, adds nothing to the individual or the aggregate of individuals – it merely reveals something that is not otherwise visible.

In other words the apparent difference between group psychology and individual psychology is an illusion produced by the fact that the group provides an intelligible field of study for certain aspects of individual psychology, and in so doing brings into prominence phenomena that appear alien to an observer unaccustomed to using the group. Freud does not appear to me to state anywhere that his views of the group are derived from a study of animism; he states that his

contribution is visible only in his selection both of material and opinions (presumably from the standard works he cites, *Totem and Taboo* [1912–13], p. 75, fn. 1). Explanations of group behaviour appear to be derived by deductions from the psychoanalytic situation. It is possibly for this reason that Freud's description of the group, and still more that of Le Bon, whom Freud quotes with some approval, read somewhat strangely to me when I compare them with my actual experiences in a group. For example, when Freud quotes Le Bon as saying 'Groups have never thirsted after truth. They demand illusions and cannot do without them' (Freud, 1921c, p. 80), I do not feel able to agree with that description. As I have pointed out at the commencement of this section, I attribute great force and influence to the work group, which through its concern with reality is compelled to employ the methods of science in no matter how rudimentary a form. I think one of the striking things about a group is that, despite the influence of the basic assumptions, it is the *W* group that triumphs in the long run. Freud himself appears to consider – notably when he discusses the part that the group plays in the production of language, folk song, folklore, etc. – that Le Bon's description is unfair to the group. When Freud criticizes McDougall's views on the highly organized group, he points out that McDougall considers that the conditions of organization remove 'the psychological disadvantages of group formation'. This comes very near to my view of the specialized work group as having as its function the manipulation of the basic assumption to prevent its obstruction of the work group. Freud prefers to describe the problem as consisting in procuring for the group 'precisely those features which were characteristic of the individual and which are extinguished in him by the formation of the group'. He postulates an individual outside the primitive group, who possessed his own continuity, his self-consciousness, his traditions and customs, his own particular functions and position. He says that owing to his entry into an 'unorganized' group, the individual had lost his distinctiveness for a time. In my view the struggle of the individual to preserve his distinctiveness assumes different characteristics according to the state of mind of the group at any given moment. Group organization should give stability and permanence to the work group, which is felt to be much more easily submerged by the basic assumptions if the group is unorganized. Individual distinctiveness is no part of life in

a group acting on the basic assumptions. Organization and structure are weapons of the *W* group. They are the product of co-operation between members of the group, and their effect once established in the group is to demand still further co-operation from the individuals in the group. In this respect McDougall's organized group is always a work group and never a basic-assumption group. A group acting on a basic assumption needs no organization or co-operation. The counterpart of co-operation in the basic-assumption group is what I have called valency – a spontaneous, unconscious function of the gregarious quality in the personality of man. It is only when a group begins to act on a basic assumption that difficulties arise. Action inevitably means contact with reality, and contact with reality compels regard for truth and therefore imposes scientific method, and hence the evocation of the work group.

We may return to consider further the specialized work group. As I have suggested, Freud was handicapped by having to deduce group situations from his study of the transference. For reasons I have given, the transference is likely to be coloured by group characteristics deriving from *baP*; that is to say, if we consider group phenomena that are likely to be activated by the stimulus of the pair situation actually existing in psychoanalysis. Indeed, it is in the group situation that we can most easily find the source both of the prominence of sexual elements in psychoanalysis and of the suspicions and accusations of the opponents of Freud that psychoanalysis was 'sexual'. The immediate consequences for his discussion of groups is that he was able to deduce from psychoanalysis some of the characteristics of two specialized work groups, Army and Church, but was not led on to a discussion of the specialized work group most likely to have to deal with *baP*. The sub-group in a society that is most likely to have to deal with manifestations of *baP* is the sub-group which attaches most importance to breeding, namely the aristocracy. If work-group characteristics were to play a dominant role, they would be manifested by some activity such as subsidy of genetics research. As it is, we cannot regard the interest shown in breeding as having the scientific aura which should be pathognomic of the work group. The reason, of course, is that it is not dealing simply with the work-group problem. It is a specialized sub-group split off to deal with the *baP* in much the same way as the Army and the Church have to deal with

baF and *BaD*, respectively. For this reason, the relationship of this sub-group with the main group is not likely to be determined by the scientific accuracy with which it conducts its love affairs on strictly genetic principles, but rather on the efficiency with which it satisfies the group demand that the *baP* should be so dealt with that it does not obstruct the *W* functions of the group as a whole.

Now I have already said that in *baP* anxiety derives from the feeling that both group and individual are subservient to the unborn genius. The function of the aristocracy is sometimes to find an outlet for activity based on the assumption of the pairing group without outraging the reality sense of the group; sometimes to prevent the reality sense of the group from undermining the institutions on the preservation of which the group depends for provision of a harmless vehicle for an expression of *baP*.

RE-VIEW

Group dynamics

Using his psychoanalytic experience Freud[1] attempted to illuminate some of the obscurities revealed by Le Bon, McDougall, and others in their studies of the human group. I propose to discuss the bearing of modern developments of psychoanalysis, in particular those associated with the work of Melanie Klein, on the same problems. Her work shows that at the start of life itself the individual is in contact with the breast and, by rapid extension of primitive awareness, with the family group; furthermore she has shown that the nature of this contact displays qualities peculiar to itself, which are of profound significance both in the development of the individual and for a fuller understanding of the mechanisms already demonstrated by the intuitive genius of Freud.

I hope to show that in his contact with the complexities of life in a group the adult resorts, in what may be a massive regression, to mechanisms described by Melanie Klein (1931, 1946) as typical of the earliest phases of mental life. The adult must establish contact with the emotional life of the group in which he lives; this task would appear to be as formidable to the adult as the relationship with the breast appears to be to the infant, and the failure to meet the demands of this task is revealed in his regression. The belief that a group exists, as distinct from an aggregate of individuals, is an essential part of this regression, as are also the characteristics with which the supposed group is endowed by the individual. Substance is given to the phantasy that the group exists by the fact that the regression involves the individual in a loss of his 'individual distinctiveness' (Freud,

[1]Notably in *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13) and *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921c).

1921c, p. 92), indistinguishable from depersonalization, and therefore obscures observation that the aggregation is of individuals. It follows that if the observer judges a group to be in existence, the individuals composing it must have experienced this regression. Conversely, should the individuals composing a 'group' (using that word to mean an aggregation of individuals all in the same state of regression) for some reason or other becomes threatened by awareness of their individual distinctiveness, then the group is in the emotional state known as panic. This does not mean that the group is disintegrating, and it will be seen later that I do not agree that in panic the group has lost its cohesiveness.

In this paper I shall summarize certain theories at which I have arrived by applying in groups the intuitions developed by present-day psychoanalytic training. These theories differ from many others, in merits and defects alike, in being educed in the situations of emotional stress that they are intended to describe. I introduce some concepts new to psychoanalysis, partly because I deal with different subject matter, partly because I wanted to see if a start disencumbered by previous theories might lead to a point at which my views of the group and psychoanalytic views of the individual could be compared, and thereby judged to be either complementary or divergent.

There are times when I think that the group has an attitude to me, and that I can state in words what the attitude is; there are times when another individual acts as if he also thought the group had an attitude to him, and I believe I can deduce what his belief is; there are times when I think that the group has an attitude to an individual, and that I can say what it is. These occasions provide the raw material on which interpretations are based, but the interpretation itself is an attempt to translate into precise speech what I suppose to be the attitude of the group to me or to some other individual, and of the individual to the group. Only some of these occasions are used by me; I judge the occasion to be ripe for an interpretation when the interpretation would seem to be both obvious and unobserved.

The groups in which I have attempted to fill this role pass through a series of complex emotional episodes that permit the deduction of theories of group dynamics that I have found useful both in the illumination of what is taking place and in the exposure of nuclei of further developments. What follows is a summary of these theories.

The work group

In any group there may be discerned trends of mental activity. Every group, however casual, meets to 'do' something; in this activity, according to the capacities of the individuals, they co-operate. This co-operation is voluntary and depends on some degree of sophisticated skill in the individual. Participation in this activity is possible only to individuals with years of training and a capacity for experience that has permitted them to develop mentally. Since this activity is geared to a task, it is related to reality, its methods are rational, and, therefore, in however embryonic a form, scientific. Its characteristics are similar to those attributed by Freud (1911b) to the ego. This facet of mental activity in a group I have called the Work Group. The term embraces only mental activity of a particular kind, not the people who indulge in it.

When patients meet for a group-therapy session it can always be seen that some mental activity is directed to the solution of the problems for which the individuals seek help. Here is an example of a passing phase in such a group:

Six patients and I are seated round a small room. Miss A suggests that it would be a good idea if members agreed to call each other by their Christian names.[1] There is some relief that a topic has been broached, glances are exchanged, and a flicker of synthetic animation is momentarily visible. Mr B ventures that it is a good idea, and Mr C says it would 'make things more friendly'. Miss A is encouraged to divulge her name but is forestalled by Miss D who says she does not like her Christian name and would rather it were not known. Mr E suggests pseudonyms; Miss F examines her fingernails. Within a few minutes of Miss A's suggestion, the discussion has languished, and its place has been taken by furtive glances, an increasing number of which are directed towards me. Mr B rouses himself to say that we must call each other something. The mood is now a compound of anxiety and increasing frustration. Long before I am mentioned it is clear that my name has become a preoccupation of the group. Left to its own devices the group promises to pass into apathy and silence.

For my present purposes I shall display such aspects of the episode as illustrate my use of the term work group. In the group itself

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[1]See also the discussion of taboo on names in *Totem and Taboo* (Freud, 1912–13, p. 54).

I might well do the same, but that would depend on my assessment of the significance of the episode in the context of the group mental life, as far as it had then emerged.

First, it is clear that if seven people are to talk together it would help the discussion if names were available. In so far as the discussion has arisen through awareness of that fact it is a product of work-group activity. But the group has gone further than to propose a step that would be helpful in any group no matter what its task might be. The proposal has been made that Christian names should be used because that would make for friendliness. In the group of which I am speaking it would have been accurate to say that the production of friendliness was regarded as strictly relevant to therapeutic need. At the point in its history from which the example is taken, it would also be true to say that both Miss D's objection and Mr E's proposed solution would be regarded as dictated by therapeutic need; and in fact I pointed out that the suggestions fitted in with a theory, not yet explicitly stated, that our diseases would be cured if the group could be conducted in such a way that only pleasant emotions were experienced. It will be seen that the demonstration of work-group function must include: the development of thought designed for translation into action; the theory, in this instance the need for friendliness, on which it is based; the belief in environmental change as in itself sufficient for cure without any corresponding change in the individual; and finally a demonstration of the kind of fact that is believed to be 'real'.

It so happened, in the instance I have given, that I was subsequently able to demonstrate that work-group function, though I did not call it that, based on the idea that cure could be obtained from a group in which pleasant feelings only were experienced, did not appear to have produced the hoped-for cure; and indeed was being obstructed by some sort of difficulty in achieving a limited translation into the apparently simple act of assigning names. Before passing to the discussion of the nature of the obstructions to work-group activity, I would mention here a difficulty, which must already be evident, in the exposition of my theories. For me to describe a group episode, such as the one I have been discussing, and then to attempt the deduction of theories from it, is only to say that I have a theory that such-and-such took place and that I can say it again only in different language. The only way in which the reader can deliver himself from

the dilemma is to recall to himself the memory of some committee or other gathering in which he has participated and consider to what extent he can recall evidence that could point to the existence of what I call work-group function, not forgetting the actual administrative structure, chairman and so forth, as material to be included in his review.

The basic assumptions

The interpretations in terms of work-group activity leave much unsaid; is the suggested use of pseudonyms motivated only with a view to meeting the demands of reality? The furtive glances, the preoccupation with the correct mode for addressing the analyst, which became quite overt subsequently, cannot profitably be interpreted as related to work-group function.

Work-group activity is obstructed, diverted, and on occasion assisted, by certain other mental activities that have in common the attribute of powerful emotional drives. These activities, at first sight chaotic, are given a certain cohesion if it is assumed that they spring from basic assumptions common to all the group. In the example I have given it was easy to recognize that one assumption common to all the group was that they were meeting together to receive some form of treatment from me. But exploration of this idea as part of work-group function showed that ideas existed invested with reality by force of the emotion attached to them, that were not in conformity even with the somewhat naïve expectation consciously entertained by the less sophisticated members. Furthermore, even sophisticated individuals, one member for example being a graduate in science, showed by their behaviour that they shared these ideas.

The first assumption is that the group is meeting in order to be sustained by a leader on whom it depends for nourishment, material and spiritual, and protection. Stated thus, my first basic assumption might be regarded as a repetition of my remark, above, that the group assumed that 'they were meeting together to receive some form of treatment from me', only differing from it in being couched in metaphorical terms. But the essential point is that the basic assumption can only be understood if the words in which I have stated it are taken as literal and not metaphorical.

Here is a description of a therapeutic group in which the dependent assumption, as I shall call it, is active.

> Three women and two men were present. The group had on a previous occasion shown signs of work-group function directed towards curing the disability of its members; on this occasion they might be supposed to have reacted from this with despair, placing all their reliance on me to sort out their difficulties while they contented themselves with individually posing questions to which I was to provide the answers. One woman had brought some chocolate, which she diffidently invited her right-hand neighbour, another woman, to share. One man was eating a sandwich. A graduate in philosophy, who had in earlier sessions told the group he had no belief in God, and no religion, sat silent, as indeed he often did, until one of the women with a touch of acerbity in her tone, remarked that he had asked no questions. He replied, 'I do not need to talk because I know that I only have to come here long enough and all my questions will be answered without my having to do anything.'
>
> I then said that I had become a kind of group deity; that the questions were directed to me as one who knew the answers without need to resort to work, that the eating was part of a manipulation of the group to give substance to a belief they wished to preserve about me, and that the philosopher's reply indicated a disbelief in the efficacy of prayer but seemed otherwise to belie earlier statements he had made about his disbelief in God. When I began my interpretation I was not only convinced of its truth but felt no doubt that I could convince the others by confrontation with the mass of material – only some of which I can convey in this printed account. By the time I had finished speaking I felt I had committed some kind of gaffe; I was surrounded by blank looks; the evidence had disappeared. After a time, the man, who had finished his sandwich and placed the carefully folded paper in his pocket, looked round the room, eyebrows slightly raised, interrogation in his glance. A woman looked tensely at me, another with hands folded gazed meditatively at the floor. In me a conviction began to harden that I had been guilty of blasphemy in a group of true believers. The second man, with elbow draped over the back of

> his chair, played with his fingers. The woman who was eating, hurriedly swallowed the last of her chocolate. I now interpreted that I had become a very bad person, casting doubts on the group deity, but that this had been followed by an increase of anxiety and guilt as the group had failed to dissociate itself from the impiety.

In this account I have dwelt on my own reactions in the group for a reason which I hope may become more apparent later. It can be justly argued that interpretations for which the strongest evidence lies, not in the observed facts in the group but in the subjective reactions of the analyst, are more likely to find their explanation in the psychopathology of the analyst than in the dynamics of the group. It is a just criticism, and one which will have to be met by years of careful work by more than one analyst, but for that very reason I shall leave it on one side and pass on to state now a contention that I shall support throughout this paper. It is that in group treatment many interpretations, and amongst them the most important, have to be made on the strength of the analyst's own emotional reactions. It is my belief that these reactions are dependent on the fact that the analyst in the group is at the receiving end of what Melanie Klein (1946) has called projective identification, and that this mechanism plays a very important role in groups. Now the experience of counter-transference appears to me to have quite a distinct quality that should enable the analyst to differentiate the occasion when he is the object of a projective identification from the occasion when he is not. The analyst feels he is being manipulated so as to be playing a part, no matter how difficult to recognize, in somebody else's phantasy – or he would do if it were not for what in recollection I can only call a temporary loss of insight, a sense of experiencing strong feelings and at the same time a belief that their existence is quite adequately justified by the objective situation without recourse to recondite explanation of their causation. From the analyst's point of view, the experience consists of two closely related phases: in the first there is a feeling that whatever else one has done, one has certainly not given a correct interpretation; in the second there is a sense of being a particular kind of person in a particular emotional situation. I believe ability to shake oneself out of the numbing feeling of reality that is a concomitant of this state is the prime requisite of the analyst in the group: if he can do this he is in a position to give what I believe is the correct interpretation, and

thereby to see its connection with the previous interpretation, the validity of which he has been caused to doubt.

I must return to consider the second basic assumption. Like the first, this also concerns the purpose for which the group has met. My attention was first aroused by a session in which the conversation was monopolized by a man and woman who appeared more or less to ignore the rest of the group. The occasional exchange of glances amongst the others seemed to suggest the view, not very seriously entertained, that the relationship was amatory, although one would hardly say that the overt content of the conversation was very different from other interchanges in the group. I was, however, impressed with the fact that individuals, who were usually sensitive to any exclusion from supposedly therapeutic activity, which at that time had come to mean talking and obtaining an 'interpretation' from me or some other member of the group, seemed not to mind leaving the stage entirely to this pair. Later it became clear that the sex of the pair was of no particular consequence to the assumption that pairing was taking place. There was a peculiar air of hopefulness and expectation about these sessions which made them rather different from the usual run of hours of boredom and frustration. It must not be supposed that the elements to which I would draw attention, under the title of pairing group, are exclusively or even predominantly in evidence. In fact there is plenty of evidence of states of mind of the kind we are familiar with in psychoanalysis; it would indeed be extraordinary, to take one example, if one did not see in individuals evidence of reaction to a group situation that could approximate to an acting out of the primal scene. But, in my opinion, to allow one's attention to be absorbed by these reactions is to make difficult any observation of what is peculiar to the group; furthermore I think such concentration at worst can lead to a debased psychoanalysis rather than an exploration of the therapeutic possibilities of the group. The reader must, then, assume that in this, as in other situations, there will always be a plethora of material familiar in a psychoanalysis, but still awaiting its evaluation in the situation of the group; this material I propose for the present to ignore, and I shall now turn to a consideration of the air of hopeful expectation that I have mentioned as a characteristic of the pairing group. It usually finds expression verbally in ideas that marriage would put an end to neurotic disabilities; that group therapy would revolutionize society when it had spread sufficiently;

that the coming season, spring, summer, autumn, or winter, as the case may be, will be more agreeable; that some new kind of community – an improved group – should be developed, and so on. These expressions tend to divert attention to some supposedly future event, but for the analyst the crux is not a future event but the immediate present – the feeling of hope itself. This feeling is characteristic of the pairing group and must be taken by itself as evidence that the pairing group is in existence, even when other evidence appears to be lacking. It is itself both a precursor of sexuality and a part of it. The optimistic ideas that are verbally expressed are rationalizations intended to effect a displacement in time and a compromise with feelings of guilt – the enjoyment of the feeling is justified by appeal to an outcome supposedly morally unexceptionable. The feelings thus associated in the pairing group are at the opposite pole to feelings of hatred, destructiveness, and despair. For the feelings of hope to be sustained it is essential that the 'leader' of the group, unlike the leader of the dependent group and of the fight–flight group, should be unborn. It is a person or idea that will save the group – in fact from feelings of hatred, destructiveness, and despair, of its own or of another group – but in order to do this, obviously, the Messianic hope must never be fulfilled. Only by remaining a hope does hope persist. The difficulty is that, thanks to the rationalization of the dawning sexuality of the group, the premonition of sex which obtrudes as hope, there is a tendency for the work group to be influenced in the direction of producing a Messiah, be it person, idea, or Utopia. In so far as it succeeds, hope is weakened; for obviously nothing is then to hope for, and, since destructiveness, hatred, and despair have in no way been radically influenced, their existence again makes itself felt. This in turn accelerates a further weakening of hope. If, for purposes of discussion, we accept the idea that the group should be manipulated in order to compass hopefulness in the group, then it is necessary that those who concern themselves with such a task, either in their capacity as members of a specialized work group such as I shall describe shortly, or as individuals, should see to it that Messianic hopes do not materialize. The danger, of course, is that such specialized work groups will either suffer through excess of zeal and thereby interfere with innocent, creative work-group function or alternatively allow themselves to be forestalled and so put to the troublesome necessity of liquidating the Messiah and then recreating the Messianic hope. In

the therapeutic group the problem is to enable the group to be consciously aware of the feelings of hope, and its affiliations, and at the same time tolerant of them. That it is tolerant of them in the pairing group is a function of the basic assumption and cannot be regarded as a sign of individual development.

The third basic assumption is that the group has met to fight something or to run away from it. It is prepared to do either indifferently. I call this state of mind the fight–flight group; the accepted leader of a group in this state is one whose demands on the group are felt to afford opportunity for flight or aggression and if he makes demands that do not do so, he is ignored. In a therapeutic group the analyst is the work-group leader. The emotional backing that he can command is subject to fluctuation according to the active basic assumption and the extent to which his activities are felt to fit in with what is required of a leader in these differing states of mind. In the fight–flight group the analyst finds that attempts to illuminate what is taking place are obstructed by the ease with which emotional support is obtained for such proposals as express either hatred of all psychological difficulty or alternatively the means by which it can be evaded. In this context I would remark that the proposal to use Christian names, in the first example I gave, might well have been interpreted as an expression of the desire for flight in a fight–flight group though, in fact, for reasons connected with the stage of development that the group had reached, I interpreted it in terms of work-group function.

Characteristics common to all basic assumption groups

Participation in basic-assumption activity requires no training, experience, or mental development. It is instantaneous, inevitable, and instinctive: I have not felt the need to postulate the existence of a herd instinct to account for such phenomena as I have witnessed in the group.[1] In contrast with work-group function basic-assumption activity makes no demands on the individual for a capacity to co-operate but depends on the individual's possession of what I call valency – a

[1] In contrast with W. Trotter (1916) but in agreement with Freud (1921c, p. 117) .

term I borrow from the physicists to express a capacity for instantaneous involuntary combination of one individual with another for sharing and acting on a basic assumption.

Work-group function is always in evidence with one, and only one, basic assumption. Though the work-group function may remain unaltered, the contemporary basic assumption that pervades its activities can be changing frequently; there may be two or three changes in an hour or the same basic assumption may be dominant for months on end. To account for the fate of the inactive basic assumptions I have postulated the existence of a proto-mental system in which physical and mental activity is undifferentiated, and which lies outside the field ordinarily considered profitable for psychological investigations. It must be borne in mind that the question whether a field is suitable for psychological investigation depends on other factors besides the nature of the field to be investigated, one being the potency of the investigating psychological technique. The recognition of a field of psychosomatic medicine illustrates the difficulty that attends any attempt at determination of the line that separates psychological from physical phenomena. I propose therefore to leave indeterminate the limits that separate the active basic assumption from those I have relegated to the hypothetical proto-mental system.

Many techniques are in daily use for the investigation of work-group function. For the investigation of basic-assumption phenomena, I consider psychoanalysis, or some extension of technique derived directly from it, to be essential. But since work-group functions are always pervaded by basic-assumption phenomena it is clear that techniques that ignore the latter will give misleading impressions of the former.

Emotions associated with basic assumptions may be described by the usual terms, anxiety, fear, hate, love, and the like. But the emotions common to any basic assumption are subtly affected by each other as if they were held in a combination peculiar to the active basic assumption. That is to say, anxiety in the dependent group has a different quality from anxiety evident in the pairing group, and so on with other feelings.

All basic assumptions include the existence of a leader, although in the pairing group, as I have said, the leader is 'non-existent', i.e. unborn. This leader need not be identified with any individual in the group; it need not be a person at all but may be identified with

an idea or an inanimate object. In the dependent group the place of leader may be filled by the history of the group. A group, complaining of an inability to remember what took place on a previous occasion, sets about making a record of its meetings. This record then becomes a 'bible' to which appeal is made, if, for example, the individual whom the group has invested with leadership proves to be refractory material for moulding into the likeness proper to the dependent leader. The group resorts to bible-making when threatened with an idea the acceptance of which would entail development on the part of the individuals comprising the group. Such ideas derive emotional force, and excite emotional opposition, from their association with characteristics appropriate to the pairing-group leader. When the dependent group or the fight–flight group is active, a struggle takes place to suppress the new idea because it is felt that the emergence of the new idea threatens the status quo. In war, the new idea – be it a tank or a new method for selecting officers – is felt to be 'new-fangled', i.e. opposed to the military bible. In the dependent group it is felt to threaten the dependent leader, be that leader 'bible' or person. But the same is true of the pairing-group, for here the new idea or person, being equated with the unborn genius or Messiah, must, as I have said before, remain unborn if it, or he, is to fulfil the pairing-group function.

Aberrant forms of change from one basic assumption to another

Change in the mentality of the group need not be due to the displacement of one basic assumption by another and can take certain aberrant forms which depend on what basic assumption is active when tension increases. These aberrant forms always involve an extraneous group. If the dependent group is active, and is threatened by pressure of the pairing-group leader, particularly perhaps in the form of an idea which is suffused with Messianic hope, then if methods such as a resort to bible-making prove inadequate, the threat is countered by provoking the influx of another group. If the fight–flight group is active, the tendency is to absorb another group. If the pairing group is active, the tendency is to schism. This last reaction may appear anomalous unless it is remembered that in the pairing group the Messianic

hope, be it person or idea, must remain unrealized. The crux of the matter lies in the threat of the new idea to demand development and the inability of the basic-assumption groups to tolerate development. The reasons for this I shall educe later.

The specialized work group

There are certain specialized work groups, to which Freud (1921c, p. 93) has drawn attention though not under this name, whose task is peculiarly prone to stimulate the activity of a particular basic assumption. Typical groups of this nature are provided by a Church or an Army. A Church is liable to interference from dependent-group phenomena, and the Army suffers a similar liability from fight–flight group phenomena. But another possibility has to be considered, namely that these groups are budded off by the main group of which they form a part, for the specific purpose of neutralizing dependent group and fight–flight group respectively and thus preventing their obstruction of the work-group function of the main group. If we adopt the latter hypothesis, it must be regarded as a failure in the specialized work group if dependent or fight–flight group activity either ceases to manifest itself within the specialized work groups or else grows to overwhelming strength. In either case the result is the same – the main group has to take over the functions proper to the specialized work group, and yet fulfil its work-group functions. If the specialized work group cannot, or does not, cope with the basic-assumption phenomena that are its province, then the work-group functions of the main group are vitiated by the pressure of these basic assumptions. As work-group function consists essentially of the translation of thoughts and feelings into behaviour which is adapted to reality, it is ill-adapted to give expression to basic assumptions. For basic assumptions become dangerous in proportion as the attempt is made to translate them into action. Indeed, the specialized work group has tended to recognize this and shows it by the attempt to carry out the reverse process, namely to translate action into terms of basic-assumption mentality – a much safer proceeding. Thus, a Church, when presented with some notable achievement of work-group function, will adjure the group to give thanks to its deity and not to its capacity for realistic hard work, '*non nobis, Domine*'. The

prosperous and successful Church, from the point of view of easing work-group function, must combine fortification of religious belief with the insistence that it must never be acted on; the successful fighting service must encourage the belief that anything can be done by force provided always it is never used. In both cases it comes to this – basic-assumption mentality does not lend itself to translation into action, since action requires work-group function to maintain contact with reality.

In the small therapeutic group, the tendency, when the dependent group is active, is to produce a sub-group which then takes on the function of interpreting the dependent-group leader – usually located in the analyst – to the group. In the fight–flight group a similar sub-group fulfils a similar function. If the analyst proves obdurate material, he is liable to evoke reactions which I have already described as associated with the threat of the new idea.

I have mentioned above (p. 204) that an aristocracy may constitute the specialized work group that fulfils for the pairing group functions similar to those which Church or Army fulfil for the dependent and fight–flight groups respectively. The function of this sub-group is to provide an outlet for feelings centred on ideas of breeding and birth, that is to say for Messianic hope, which I have already suggested is a precursor to sexual desire, without ever arousing the fear that such feelings will give rise to an event that will demand development. The aristocracy must inspire Messianic hope but at the same time confidence that the pairing-group leader, if he materializes, will be born in a palace but be just like ourselves – 'democratic' is probably the modern cant term for the desired quality. In the therapeutic group the 'aristocratic' sub-group usually helps the group to understand that the new idea is one with which they are already quite familiar.

Basic assumption, time, and development

There are two characteristics of basic-assumption mentality to which I would draw attention. Time plays no part in it; it is a dimension of mental function that is not recognized; consequently all activities that require an awareness of time are imperfectly comprehended and tend to arouse feelings of persecution. Interpretations of activity on

the level of the basic assumptions lay bare a disturbed relationship to time. The second characteristic, which I mentioned earlier, is the absence of any process of development as a part of basic assumption mentality; stimuli to development meet with a hostile response. It will be appreciated that this is a matter of importance in any group that purports, by the study of the group, to promote a therapeutic development of insight. Hostility thus engendered tends to determine that the reaction to the emergence of the Messianic person or idea will take an aberrant form rather than spend itself in the cyclic change from one basic assumption to another. For, if a group wishes to prevent development, the simplest way to do so is to allow itself to be overwhelmed by basic-assumption mentality and thus become approximated to the one kind of mental life in which a capacity for development is not required. The main compensation for such a shift appears to be an increase in a pleasurable feeling of vitality.

The defence that schism affords against the development-threatening idea can be seen in the operation of the schismatic groups, ostensibly opposed but in fact promoting the same end. One group adheres to the dependent group, often in the form of the group 'bible'. This group popularizes the established ideas by denuding them of any quality that might demand painful effort and thereby secures a numerous adherence of those who oppose the pains of development. Thought thus becomes stabilized on a level that is platitudinous and dogmatic. The reciprocal group, supposedly supporting the new idea, becomes so exacting in its demands that it ceases to recruit itself. Thus both groups avoid the painful bringing together of the primitive and the sophisticated that is the essence of the developmental conflict. The superficial but numerous schismatics are thus opposed by the profound but numerically negligible schismatics. The result reminds one of the fear expressed sometimes that a society breeds copiously from its least cultural members while the 'best' people remain obdurately sterile.

Relation of one basic assumption to another

We may now reconsider the three basic-assumption groups and the work group to see if they are not capable of resolution into something more fundamental. Granting that the postulate of basic assumptions

helps to give form and meaning to the complex and chaotic emotional state that the group unfolds to the investigating participant, there is yet no reasonable explanation of why such assumptions should exist. It is clear that no one of the three basic assumptions about the group satisfactorily allays fear of the group and its emotions, otherwise there would be none of the shifts and changes from one to another and no need for the formation, which I have sketched out, of the corresponding specialized work groups. All three basic assumptions contain the idea of a leader. The fight–flight group shows a total absence of recognition of understanding as a technique. All are opposed to development, which is itself dependent on understanding. The work group, on the other hand, recognizes a need both to understand and to develop. If we consider the specialized work groups, all three are concerned with matters that appear to lie outside the province of the basic assumption with which they appear primarily to be concerned. Thus the specialized work group of the dependent basic assumption is not free from preoccupation with Messianic ideas that appear to be more in the sphere of pairing-group activity than of the dependent group. Effort here seems to be devoted to a Messiah born, out of wedlock, in a bed of bulrushes or a manger, with one exalted parent, Pharaoh's daughter or the Deity, and one less exalted. In the pairing group the aristocratic sub-group allows exalted parents, wedlock, and a palatial crib, but the child is notable only in being one with the rest of us. A scrutiny of the facts seems to lead to a central difficulty in bringing together sexual love, equal parents, an infant like ourselves, the Messianic hope which I consider to be an essential component of the sexual love, and a compulsion to develop that in itself necessitates a capacity for understanding. The fight–flight group expresses a sense of incapacity for understanding and the love without which understanding cannot exist. But the leader of the fight–flight group brings back into view one of the feared components, an approximation either to the dreaded father or the infant.

Furthermore, the three basic-assumption groups seem each in turn to be aggregates of individuals sharing out between them the characteristics of one character in the Oedipal situation, which are depending on whichever basic assumption is active. The parallel with the characters in the Oedipal situation is however marked by important divergences. The relationship appears to be between the individual and the group. But the group is felt as one fragmented individual

with another, hidden, in attendance. The hidden individual is the leader, and although this appears to contradict the constantly reiterated statement that the analyst is the leader, the contradiction is resolved if it is remembered that in the therapeutic group the analyst is the work-group leader, and if attention is paid to the many indications that he is suspected of leading, but apparently only rarely perceived to be leading. It is quite common, in my experience, to be told I am not taking any part in the group or ever giving the group a chance to know what my views are, although the probability is that I am doing more talking than anyone else. The essential point here, as always in a group, is the feeling with which the idea expressed is accompanied, and the point I would emphasize again is that I am suspected of, but not perceived to be, leading the group.

On the emotional plane, where basic assumptions are dominant, Oedipal figures, as I have indicated, can be discerned in the material just as they are in a psychoanalysis. But they include one component of the Oedipal myth of which little has been said, and that is the sphinx. In so far as I am felt to be leader of work-group function, and recognition of that fact is seldom absent, I, and the work-group function with which I am identified, am invested with feelings that would be quite appropriate to the enigmatic, brooding, and questioning sphinx from whom disaster emanates. In fact terms are sometimes employed, on occasions when my intervention has provoked more than usual anxiety, which hardly require interpretation to enable the group to grasp the similarity. I know of no experience that demonstrates more clearly than the group experience the dread with which a questioning attitude is regarded. This anxiety is not directed only towards the questioner but also to the object of the inquiry and is, I suspect, secondary to the latter. For the group, as being the object of inquiry, itself arouses fears of an extremely primitive kind. My impression is that the group approximates too closely, in the minds of the individuals composing it, to very primitive phantasies about the contents of the mother's body.[1] The attempt to make a rational investigation of the dynamics of the group is therefore perturbed by fears, and mechanisms for dealing with them, that are characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position. The investigation cannot be carried out without the stimulation and activation of these levels.

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[1]Melanie Klein.

We are now in a better position to consider whether the basic assumptions are capable of resolution into something more fundamental. I have drawn attention already to the fact that these three states of mind have resemblances to each other that would lead me to suppose that they may not be fundamental phenomena, but rather expressions of, or reactions against, some state more worthy of being regarded as primary. In fact, although I have found the hypothesis of basic assumptions a valuable aid in producing order out of the chaos of material in a group session, it is soon clear that further investigation demands fresh hypotheses. The need, and the way to the hypothesis that might satisfy it, became apparent to me in considering what could precipitate the change from one basic assumption to another. I include in this discussion the aberrant forms I have already described.

In brief, no matter what basic assumption is active, investigation discloses that the elements in the emotional situation are so closely allied to phantasies of the earlier anxieties that the group is compelled, whenever the pressure of anxiety becomes too great, to take defensive action. Approached from this primitive level, the basic assumptions take on a different aspect from that which they present in the descriptions I have already given. The impulse to pair may now be seen to possess a component derived from psychotic anxiety associated with primitive Oedipal conflicts working on a foundation of part-object relationships. This anxiety compels individuals to seek allies. This derivation of the impulse to pair is cloaked by the apparently rational explanation in the pairing group that the motive is sexual and the object reproduction.

But if the pairing group is active, again we find that many of its components are too close to primitive part objects to escape identification with them so that it is only a matter of time before psychotic anxiety is aroused with such force that new defence must be found. Let us suppose that it takes the form of the fight–flight group, that is to say the release of hate which finds an outlet either in destructive attacks on a supposed enemy or flight from the hated object. The indifference of the group to the individual, and still more the inability of the group to escape by this means from the primitive primal scene, again leads to release of anxiety and the need for another change of basic assumption.

It will be seen from this description that the basic assumptions now emerge as formations secondary to an extremely early primal

scene worked out on a level of part objects, and associated with psychotic anxiety and mechanisms of splitting and projective identification such as Melanie Klein has described as characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. Introjection and projection of the group,[1] which is now the feared investigator, now the feared object of investigation, form an essential part of the picture and help to add confusion to the scene unless recognized as being very active.

The classical view of the primal scene does not go far enough to deal with the dynamics of the group. I must stress the point that I consider it essential to work out very thoroughly the primitive primal scene as it discloses itself in the group. This differs markedly from the primal scene in its classical description in that it is much more bizarre and seems to assume that a part of one parent, the breast or the mother's body, contains amongst other objects a part of the father. In her paper on early stages of the Oedipus conflict, Melanie Klein (1928; also 1945) gives a description of these phantasies as she discovered them in the process of individual analysis (see Paula Heimann, 1952b). The group experience seems to me to give ample material to support the view that these phantasies are of paramount importance for the group.[2]

The more disturbed the group, the more easily discernible are these primitive phantasies and mechanisms; the more stable the group, the more it corresponds with Freud's description of the group as a repetition of family group patterns and neurotic mechanisms. But even in the 'stable' group the deep psychotic levels should be demonstrated, though it may involve temporarily an apparent increase in the 'illness' of the group.

Summary

Before turning to discuss psychoanalytic views of the group, I think it is necessary to sum up the theories I have described so far. It will be remembered that I attempted deliberately, in so far as it is possible

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[1]How this appears in psychoanalysis is described by Paula Heimann (1952a).

[2]It is worth noting that Melanie Klein's description of the psychotic reaction to external objects in her paper on 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928) is markedly similar to the group's reaction to ideas. Bible-making is one form of defence against them.

to a psychoanalyst admittedly proposing to investigate the group through psychoanalytically developed intuitions, to divest myself of any earlier psychoanalytic theories of the group in order to achieve an unprejudiced view. In the result I have arrived at a theory of the group as giving evidence of work-group functions together with behaviour, often strongly emotionally coloured, which suggested that groups were reacting emotionally to one of three basic assumptions. The idea that such basic assumptions are made involuntarily, automatically, inevitably has seemed useful in illuminating the behaviour of the group. Nevertheless, there is much to suggest that these supposed 'basic assumptions' cannot be regarded as distinct states of mind. By that I do not mean to claim that they are 'basic' explanations which between them explain all conduct in the group – that would indeed be extravagant nonsense – but that each state, even when it is possible to differentiate it with reasonable certainty from the other two, has about it a quality that suggests it may in some way be the dual, or reciprocal of one of the other two, or perhaps simply another view of what one had thought to be a different basic assumption. For example, the Messianic hope of the pairing group has some similarity to the group deity of the dependent group. It may be difficult to see because the presenting emotional tone is so different. Anxiety, fear, hate, love, all, as I have said, exist in each basic-assumption group. The modification that feelings suffer in combination in the respective basic-assumption group may arise because the 'cement' so to speak, that joined them to each other is guilt and depression in the dependent group, Messianic hope in the pairing group, anger and hate in the fight–flight group. Be that as it may, the result is that the thought content of the discussion may appear as a result to be deceptively different in the three groups. It is possible at times to feel that the unborn genius of the pairing group is very similar to the god of the dependent group; certainly on those occasions when the dependent group appeals to the authority of a 'past' leader it comes very close to the pairing group, which appeals to a 'future' leader. In both the leader does not exist; there is a difference of tense and a difference in emotion.

I reiterate these points to show that the hypothesis of the basic assumptions that I have put forward cannot be regarded as a rigid formulation.

The psychoanalytic view

Freud's theories of the group derive from his study of the transference. Since the pair relationship of psychoanalysis can be regarded as a part of the larger group situation, the transference relationship could be expected, for the reasons I have already given, to be coloured by the characteristics associated with the pairing group. If analysis is regarded as part of the total group situation, we should expect to find sexual elements prominent in the material there presented, and the suspicions and hostilities of psychoanalysis as a sexual activity active in that part of the group which is in fact excluded from the analysis.

From his experience of analysis Freud was able to deduce the significance of two of what I have called specialized work groups, Army and Church, but did not discuss the specialized work group that attaches most importance to breeding, and is therefore most likely to have to deal with pairing-group phenomena, namely the aristocracy. If the aristocracy were concerned simply with the external reality, its activity would far more closely resemble the work of a genetics department in a university than it does. But the interest shown in breeding has not the scientific aura we should associate with mental activity directed to external reality: it is a specialized work group split off to deal with pairing-group phenomena in much the same way as the army has to deal with fight–flight phenomena and the Church with dependent-group phenomena. Therefore, the relationship of this sub-group with the main group will not be determined by the degree of fidelity to the strict genetic principles with which it conducts its affairs but rather by the efficiency with which it satisfies the main-group demand that pairing-group phenomena are dealt with so that work-group functions of the total group are not obstructed by emotional drives from that source. Although he expressly disavowed any but a superficial study of the group problem (1912–13, p. xiii), and made his observations in the course of a discussion of the views of Le Bon, McDougall, and Wilfred Trotter, Freud (1921c, *passim*) in fact had ample experience of the group and what it means to be an individual caught up in its emotional stresses – as I have indicated by my picture of the position psychoanalysis is likely to occupy in a group in which it stimulates a pairing group.

Freud (1930a, pp. 140ff) says individual and group psychology cannot be absolutely differentiated because the psychology of the

individual is itself a function of the relationship between one person and another. He objects that it is difficult to attribute to number a significance so great as to make it capable by itself of arousing in our mental life a new instinct that is otherwise not brought into play. In this view I think Freud right; I have not at any time met with any phenomena that require explanation by a postulation of a herd instinct. The individual is, and always has been, a member of a group, even if his membership of it consists of behaving in such a way that reality is given to an idea that he does not belong to a group at all. The individual is a group animal at war, both with the group and with those aspects of his personality that constitute his 'groupishness'. Freud (1921c, p. 85) limits this war to a struggle with 'culture' but I hope to show that this requires further expansion.

McDougall and Le Bon seem to speak as if group psychology comes into being only when a number of people are collected together in one place at one time, and Freud does not disavow this. For my part this is not necessary except to make study possible: the aggregation of individuals is only necessary in the way that it is necessary for analyst and analysed to come together for the transference relationship to be demonstrable. Only by coming together are adequate conditions provided for the demonstration of the characteristics of the group; only if individuals come sufficiently close to each other is it possible to give an interpretation without shouting it; equally, it is necessary for all members of the group to be able to witness the evidence on which interpretations are based. For these reasons the numbers of the group, and the degree of dispersion, must be limited. The congregation of the group in a particular place at a particular time is, for these mechanical reasons, important, but it has no significance for the production of group phenomena; the idea that it has springs from the impression that a thing must commence at the moment when its existence becomes demonstrable. In fact no individual, however isolated in time and space, should be regarded as outside a group or lacking in active manifestations of group psychology. Nevertheless, the existence of group behaviour is, as I say, clearly more easy to demonstrate, and even to observe, if the group is brought together; and I think it is this increased case of observation and demonstration that is responsible for the idea of a herd instinct, such as Trotter postulates, or of the various other theories I have already mentioned which amount in the end to the idea that a group is more than the

sum of its members. My experience convinces me that Freud was right to reject any such concept as, on present evidence, unnecessary. The apparent difference between group psychology and individual psychology is an illusion produced by the fact that the group brings into prominence phenomena that appear alien to an observer unaccustomed to using the group.[1]

I attribute great force and influence to the work group, which, through its concern with reality, is compelled to employ the methods of science in no matter how rudimentary a form; despite the influence of the basic assumptions, and sometimes in harmony with them, it is the work group that triumphs in the long run. Le Bon said that the group never thirsts after the truth. I agree with Freud's opinion – given particularly in discussing the part played by the group in the production of language,[2] folk-song, folk-lore, etc. – that in saying this Le Bon is unfair to the group. When McDougall says that conditions in the highly organized group remove 'the psychological disadvantages of group formation' he approximates to my view that the function of the specialized work group is to manipulate the basic assumption so as to prevent obstruction of the work group. Freud describes the problem as one of procuring for the group 'precisely those features that were characteristic of the individual and are extinguished in him by the formation of the group'. He postulates an individual outside the primitive group who possessed his own continuity, his self-consciousness, his traditions and customs, his own particular functions and position. He says that, owing to his entry into an 'unorganized' group, the individual had lost his distinctiveness for a time. I think the struggle of the individual to preserve his distinctiveness assumes different characteristics according to the state of mind of the group at any given moment. Group organization gives stability and permanence to the work group, which is felt to be more easily submerged by the basic assumptions if the group is unorganized. Individual distinctiveness is no part of life in a group that is acting on the basic assumptions. Organization and structure

[1]See discussion of these points on pp. 199 et seq. It is also a matter of historical development; there are aspects of group behaviour which appear strange unless there is some understanding of Melanie Klein's work on the psychoses. See particularly papers on symbol formation and schizoid mechanisms. I develop this point later.

[2]Later in this paper I discuss one aspect of the development of language.

are weapons of the work group. They are the product of cooperation between members of the group, and their effect, once established in the group, is to demand still further cooperation from the individuals in the group. In this respect McDougall's organized group is always a work group and never a basic-assumption group. A group acting on basic assumption would need neither organization nor a capacity for co-operation. The counterpart of co-operation in the basic-assumption group is valency – a spontaneous, unconscious function of the gregarious quality in the personality of man. It is only when a group begins to act on a basic assumption that difficulties arise. Action inevitably means contact with reality, and contact with reality compels regard for truth; scientific method is imposed, and the evocation of the work group follows. Le Bon described the leader as one under whom a collection of human beings instinctively place themselves, accepting his authority as their chief; the leader must fit in with the group in his personal qualities and must himself be held by a strong faith in order to awaken the group's faith. His view of the leader as one who must fit in with the group in his personal qualities is compatible with my view that any leader is ignored by the group when his behaviour or characteristics fall outside the limits set by the prevalent basic assumption. Further, the leader must be held by the same 'faith' that holds the group – not in order to awaken the group's faith but because the attitude of group and leader alike are functions of the active basic assumption.

McDougall's (1920, p. 45) distinction between the simple 'unorganized' group and the 'organized' group seems to me to apply, not to two different groups but to two states of mind that can be observed to co-exist in the same group. The 'organized' group, for reasons I have already given, is likely to display the characteristic features of the work group; the 'unorganized' of the basic-assumption group. Freud discusses McDougall's views, quoting his description of the 'unorganized' group. With regard to the suggestibility of the group, I think it depends what the suggestion is. If it falls within the terms of the active basic assumption, the group will follow it, if it does not, the group will ignore it. This characteristic seems to me to come out very clearly in panic, to which I refer later.

McDougall, discussed by Freud in the above-mentioned passage, draws up certain conditions for raising the level of collective mental life. 'The first of these conditions', he says (1921c, p. 86), 'which is the

basis of all the rest, is some degree of continuity of existence of the group.' This convinces me that in the organized group McDougall is describing what I call the work group. Meyer Fortes (1949), discussing Radcliffe Brown's views on social structure, particularly the distinction between 'structure as an actually existing concrete reality' and 'structural form' says that the distinction is associated with the continuity of social structure through time. In my view the continuity of social structure through time is a function of the work group. Meyer Fortes states that the time factor in social structure is by no means uniform in its incidence and adds that all corporate groups, by definition, must have continuity. As with McDougall's distinction between organized and unorganized groups, so with the incidence of the time factor, I do not believe that we are dealing with two different kinds of group, in the sense of two different aggregates of individuals, but rather with two different categories of mental activity co-existing in the same group of individuals. In work-group activity time is intrinsic: in basic assumption activity it has no place. Basic-assumption group functions are active before ever a group comes together in a room, and continue after the group has dispersed. There is neither development nor decay in basic-assumption functions, and in this respect they differ totally from those of the work group. It is therefore to be expected that observation of the group's continuity in time will produce anomalous and contradictory results if it has not been recognized that two different kinds of mental functioning operate within the group at the same time. The man who asks, 'When does the group meet again?' is referring, in so far as he is talking about mental phenomena, to work group. The basic-assumption group does not disperse or meet, and references to time have no meaning in the basic-assumption group. I have known a group of intelligent men, to whom the hours of the sessions were perfectly well known, express anger because the session had ended, and to be quite unable for an appreciable time to grasp a fact that could not be a matter of doubt in work-group mentality. What is ordinarily called impatience must therefore, in the basic-assumption group, be considered as an expression of the anxiety which is aroused by phenomena intrinsically co-mingled with a dimension of which basic-assumption mentality knows nothing. It is as if a blind man were made aware of phenomena that could be understood only by one to whom the properties of light were familiar.

I would describe McDougall's principles for raising collective mental life to a higher level as an expression of the attempt to prevent obstruction of work group by basic-assumption group. His second condition stresses the need for the individual to have a clear view of the aims of the work group. His fourth point desiderates the existence of a body of traditions and customs and habits in the minds of the members of the group that will determine their relations to one another and to the group as a whole; this approximates to Plato's view that group harmony must be based on individual function and the firmness with which the individual is restricted to it. But it also has affinities with St. Augustine's view, in the 19th Book of *The City of God*, that a right relation with his fellows can only be achieved by a man who has first regulated his relationship with God. This may seem to contradict my statement that McDougall is concerned in his description of the organized group primarily with work-group phenomena. The difference between the two writers would seem to be this: McDougall is concerned to cope with basic assumptions by strengthening the work group's capacity to retain contact with external reality, while St. Augustine is elaborating a technique by which a specialized work group is formed with the specific function of maintaining contact with the basic assumption – in particular with the dependent basic assumption. It is worth remembering that he was concerned to defend Christianity against the charge of having so undermined morale that Rome had been unable to resist the onslaught of Alaric. Put in other terms, a body or group had arisen that was under suspicion of having dealt with basic assumptions in a manner less efficient than that of their pagan predecessors. St. Augustine is uneasily concerned to refute this. It is a predicament with which those who purport to lead both public and group are not unfamiliar: the stimulation, and manipulation, of basic assumption, especially when done, as in some sort it must always be done, without anything like adequate knowledge, or even awareness, must lead to untoward results and sometimes even to the dock.

I shall now consider that part of Freud's discussion which turns on the statement that in a group an individual's emotions become extraordinarily intensified, while his intellectual ability becomes markedly reduced. About this I shall have something to say later when considering the group from the point of view of the individual, but I wish for the present to approach the matter, as Freud (1921c,

pp. 100 ff.) does, as a group phenomenon. In the groups I have studied it has been natural for the group to expect me to take the lead in organizing its activities. As I take advantage of the position thus accorded me to lead the group in the direction of demonstrating group dynamics, the 'organization' of the group does not do what McDougall says the organization of the group is intended to do. The desire for an 'organized' group, in McDougall's sense, is frustrated. Fear of the basic assumptions, which cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by structure and organization, therefore expresses itself in the suppression of emotion, emotion being an essential part of the basic assumptions. The tension thus produced appears to the individual as an intensification of emotion; the lack of structure promotes the obtrusion of the basic-assumption group, and since in such a group the intellectual activity is, as I have already said, of an extremely limited kind, the individual, conforming with the behaviour imposed by participation in the basic-assumption group, feels as if his intellectual capacity were being reduced. The belief that this really is so is reinforced because the individual tends to ignore all intellectual activity that does not fit in with the basic assumption. In fact I do not in the least believe that there is a reduction of intellectual ability in the group, nor yet that 'great decisions in the realm of thought and momentous discoveries and solutions of problems are only possible to an individual working in solitude' (McDougall, 1920); although the belief that this is so is commonly expressed in the group discussion, and all sorts of plans are elaborated for circumventing the supposedly pernicious influence of the emotions of the group. Indeed I give interpretations because I believe that intellectual activity of a high order is possible in a group together with an awareness (and not an evasion) of the emotions of the basic-assumption groups. If group therapy is found to have a value, I believe it will be in the conscious experiencing of the group activity of this kind.

Freud turns to discussion of something that crops up under a variety of names, such as 'suggestion', 'imitation', 'prestige of leaders', 'contagion'. I have used 'valency' partly because I would avoid the meanings that already adhere to the terms I have listed, partly because the term 'valency', as used in physics to denote the power of combination of atoms, carries with it the greatest penumbra of suggestiveness useful for my purpose. By it I mean the capacity of the individual for instantaneous combination with other individuals

in an established pattern of behaviour – the basic assumptions. Later I shall consider in greater detail what meaning we should attribute to this term when I am dealing with the psychoanalytic view of the individual's contribution.

I shall not follow Freud's discussion in detail, but will pass on to his use of the term 'libido' which he takes from his study of the psycho-neuroses (Freud, 1921c, pp. 130 ff., 141 ff.). He thus approaches the group by way of psychoanalysis, and psychoanalysis, in the light of my experience of groups, can be regarded as a work group likely to stimulate the basic assumption of pairing; that being so, psychoanalytic investigation, as itself a part of pairing group, is likely to reveal sexuality in a central position. Further, it is likely to be attacked as itself a sexual activity since, according to my view of the pairing group, the group must assume that if two people come together, they can only do so for sexual purposes. It is therefore natural that Freud should see the nature of the bond between individuals in a group as libidinous. In the group, the libidinous component in the bond is characteristic of the pairing group, but I think it has a different complexion in the dependent group and the fight–flight group Freud describes the commander-in-chief of the Church as Christ, but I would say that it is the Deity. Christ, or the Messiah, is the leader, not of the dependent group but of the pairing group. In psychoanalysis, regarded as a part of the pairing group, the Messiah, or Messianic idea, occupies a central position, and the bond between individuals is libidinous. The Messianic idea betrays itself in the supposition that the individual patient is worth the analyst's very considerable devotion; as also in the view, sometimes openly expressed, that as a result of psychoanalytic work a technique will be perfected that will, ultimately, save mankind. In short, I regard Freud's use of the term libido as correct only for one phase, though an important one, and feel the need for some more neutral term that will describe the tie on all basic-assumption levels. The tie in the work group, which I regard as being a sophisticated nature, is more aptly described by the word co-operation.

Freud's notion of the leader as one on whom the group depends, and from whose personality it derives its qualities, seems to me to derive from his view of identification as almost entirely a process of introjection by the ego; to me the leader is as much the creature of the basic assumption as any other member of the group, and this, I think, is to be expected if we envisage identification of the individual with

the leader as depending not on introjection alone but on a simultaneous process of projective identification (Melanie Klein, 1946) as well. The leader, on the basic-assumption level, does not create the group by virtue of his fanatical adherence to an idea, but is rather an individual whose personality renders him peculiarly susceptible to the obliteration of individuality by the basic-assumption group's leadership requirements. The 'loss of individual distinctiveness' applies to the leader of the group as much as to anyone else – a fact that probably accounts for some of the posturing to which leading figures are prone. Thus the leader in the fight–flight group, for example, appears to have a distinctive personality because his personality is of a kind that lends itself to exploitation by the group demand for a leader who requires of it only a capacity for fighting or for flight; the leader has no greater freedom to be himself than any other member of the group. It will be appreciated that this differs from Le Bon's idea that the leader must possess a strong and imposing will, and with Freud's idea that he corresponds to a hypnotist. Such power as he has derives from the fact that he has become, in common with every other member of the group, what Le Bon describes as 'an automaton who has ceased to be guided by his will'. In short, he is leader by virtue of his capacity for instantaneous, involuntary (maybe voluntary too) combination with every other member of his group, and only differs from them in that, whatever his function in the work group, he is the incarnation of the basic-assumption-group leader.

Freud's view seems not to make explicit the dangerous possibilities that exist in the phenomenon of leadership. His view of the leader, and indeed all other views of which I am aware, is not easily reconciled with my experience of leadership as it emerges in practice. The leader of the work group at least has the merit of possessing contact with external reality, but no such qualification is required of the leader of the basic-assumption group. The usual description of the leader seems to be a mixture embodying various group phenomena, the characteristics of the work-group leader predominating. For reasons I have given, the work-group leader is either harmless through lack of influence with the group, or else a man whose grasp of reality is such that it carries authority. It is likely therefore that discussions of leadership coloured mostly by views of work-group-leader qualities will be optimistically tinged. My view of the basic-assumption-group leader does not rule out the possibility of

identity with the work-group leader, but it allows for the existence of a leader apparently evoking the enthusiastic allegiance of the group, but devoid of contact with any reality other than the reality of the basic-assumption-group demands. When it is realized that this can mean that the group is being led by an individual whose qualification for the job is that his personality has been obliterated, an automaton, 'an individual who has lost his distinctiveness', but who yet is so suffused by the emotions of the basic-assumption group that he carries all the prestige one would like to believe was the especial perquisite of the work-group leader, it becomes possible to explain some of the disasters into which groups have been led by leaders whose qualifications for the post seem, when the emotions prevalent at their prime have died down, to be devoid of substance.

Freud (1921c, p. 96) says that panic is best studied in military groups. I have experienced panic with troops in action on two occasions, and have on several other occasions in small civilian groups had reason to think that the emotional experience bore a sufficiently close resemblance to my military experience to deserve the name panic. I think Freud is discussing the same phenomenon, though these experiences do not appear in all respects to bear out Freud's theories. McDougall's description of panic refers to an experience which I think is similar, in essentials, to my own and I am confirmed in this when he says, 'Other of the cruder, primary emotions may spread through a crowd in very similar fashion though the process is rarely so rapid and intense as in the case of fear' (McDougall, 1920, p. 24), and then describes in a footnote an instance he witnessed in Borneo of the almost instantaneous spread of anger through a crowd (p. 26). McDougall has thus brought very close together, though without making the connection, anger and fear, and thus supports my view that panic is an aspect of the fight–flight group. It is my contention that panic, flight, and uncontrolled attack are really the same. I am not acquainted with Nestroy's parody, quoted by Freud (1921c, p. 97), but taking the story as he gives it, I would agree that it could be taken as typifying panic, but I would say this: there can be no more absolute a way of leaving a battle than by dying. There is nothing in the story of panic flight following the death of the general, that we may regard as incompatible with fidelity to the fight–flight leader; he is followed even when dead, for his death is an act of leadership.

Panic does not arise in any situation unless it is one that might as

easily have given rise to rage. The rage or fear are offered no readily available outlet: frustration, which is thus inescapable, cannot be tolerated because frustration requires awareness of the passage of time, and time is not a dimension of basic-assumption phenomena. Flight offers an immediately available opportunity for expression of the emotion in the fight–flight group and therefore meets the demand for instantaneous satisfaction – therefore the group will fly. Alternatively, attack offers a similarly immediate outlet – then the group will fight. The fight–flight group will follow any leader (and, contrary to views hitherto expressed, retains its coherence in doing so) who will give such orders as license instantaneous flight or instantaneous attack. Provided that an individual in the group conforms to the limitations of the fight–flight leader, he will have no difficulty in turning a group from headlong flight to attack or from headlong attack to panic.

The stimulus for panic, or the rage that I consider to be interchangeable, must always be an event that falls outside the work-group functions of the group involved. That is to say, the degree of organization of the group is not a factor in panic unless the organization (which is, as I have said, a part of work-group function) has been evolved for coping with the specific external event responsible for the panic. In Freud's (1921c, p. 96) example of a fire in a theatre or place of amusement, the work group is devoted to the watching of play but not to the witnessing of a conflagration, still less to the extinguishing of it. The essential point about organization is that it should be suitable both to the external aim of the group and to the manipulation of the basic assumption that such a pursuit is most calculated to evoke. Panic in an army is not produced by a military danger, though military danger is, in the nature of things, very likely to be present. It is not likely to be produced by any situation in which attack or flight are appropriate expressions of work group. If it appears to arise in such a situation it is because the actual cause is not observed.

It is clear that between the theories advanced by Freud and those I have sketched out here there is a gap. It may appear to be more considerable than it is because of my deliberate use of a new terminology with which to clothe the apparatus of mechanisms that I think I have detected. It will be necessary to test this by looking at the group more from the standpoint of the individual. But, before I do this, I shall sum up by saying that Freud sees the group as a repetition of part-object relationships. It follows from this that groups would, in Freud's view,

approximate to neurotic patterns of behaviour, whereas in my view they would approximate to the patterns of psychotic behaviour.

The society or group that is healthy shows its resemblance to the family group as Freud describes it. The more disturbed the group, the less it is likely to be understood on the basis of family patterns or neurotic behaviour as we know it in the individual.

This does not mean that I consider my descriptions apply only to sick groups. On the contrary, I very much doubt if any real therapy could result unless these psychotic patterns were laid bare, with no matter what group. In some groups their existence is early discernible; in others, work has to be done before they become manifest. These groups resemble the analytic patient who appears much more ill after many months of analysis than he did before he had had any analysis at all.

The individual who attends a group for treatment is entitled to believe that he is going to experience something that will lead to his cure. Almost without exception – and the exceptions have themselves to be demonstrated as more apparent than real – patients are convinced that the group is no good and cannot cure them. It is something of a shock to them to find, at any rate when I am a member of the group, that what takes place is not something that allays these anxieties, but appears rather to be a detailed and painstaking demonstration that their vague and ill-formulated suspicions and resentments about the group are based, as often as not, on only too substantial group attitudes towards them and their troubles. Their suspicions are well grounded; they are anchored, at one end at any rate, in what seems to be a perfectly genuine indifference to them, or worse still, hatred of them. For example: A woman is talking in a group consisting, on this occasion, of six people and myself. She complains of a difficulty about food, her fear of choking if she eats at a restaurant, and of her embarrassment at the presence, during a recent meal, of an attractive woman at her table. 'I don't feel like that', says Mr A, and his remark is met by a murmur of sound from one or two others which could indicate that they were at one with him; could indicate it and does indicate it, but at the same time leaves them free to say, for this group had now become wily, if need arose, that they 'hadn't said anything'. The remainder looked as if the matter were of no interest or concern to them. If a patient spoke in analysis as the woman had spoken, it is clear that according to the state of her analysis the analyst would

not expect to have any great difficulty in seeing that a number of interpretations were possible. I cannot see how any of these interpretations, which are based on years of psychoanalytic study of the pair, can possibly be regarded as appropriate to the group; either that, or we have to revise our ideas of what constitutes the analytic situation. In fact the interpretations I gave were concerned almost entirely with pointing out that the material that followed the woman's confidence to the group indicated the group's anxiety to repudiate that the woman's difficulty, whatever it was, was theirs, and furthermore that they were, in that respect, superior to the woman. I was then able to show that the reception the group had given to the woman's candour had now made it very difficult for any of the remainder of the group to speak, individually, of those other respects in which, in a burst of frankness, they were prepared to admit that they were 'inferior'. In short, it was not difficult to show that if a patient did go so far as to come to the group for help with a difficulty, what she got was an increase of feelings of inferiority, and a reinforcement of feelings of loneliness and lack of worth.

Now, this situation is not similar to that which obtains in an analysis when the analyst has succeeded in making overt unconscious fears and anxieties. In the instance that I have given, no interpretation was made that would elucidate for the woman the significance of her anxieties when eating in the presence of 'an attractive woman'. The series of interpretations that I gave could, in so far as they were successful, have made clear to her the disagreeable emotions associated with being the receptor in a group which is resorting freely to projective identification. I could have made clear to her that her 'meal' in the session was causing her embarrassment, and to some extent this was implicit in the interpretations I was giving to the group as a whole. But it seems fair to say that, from an analytic point of view, the woman is not getting a satisfactory interpretation, and is suffering an experience the discomfort of which is not intrinsic to her disability, but inheres in the fact that group treatment is the wrong treatment. There is, however, another possibility, and it is this: when this woman was speaking, although I had no reason to suppose and still do not suppose that she was anything but a case of psycho-neurosis, the whole manner in which she expressed herself reminded me strongly of the candour and coherence of unconscious expression that so often contrasts, in the psychotic, with the confusion that attends his

attempts at rational communication. I can make my point clearer by saying that I believe that if this patient had spoken when in analysis with me as she did in the group, her intonation and manner would never have led me to doubt that the correct interpretation would be one appropriate to a neurotic disability; in the group I felt that manner and intonation alike indicated that her behaviour would be more accurately assessed if it were regarded as akin to the formulations of the psychotic. Regarded in this light I would say that she felt that there was a single object, called the group, that had been split up into pieces (the individual members of the group) by her eating, and that the belief that this was so reinforced guilty feelings that the emotions associated with being the receptor of projective identifications were the fault of her behaviour. These feelings of guilt again made it difficult for her to understand the part played in her emotions by the actions of the other members of the group.

So far I have considered the 'badness of the group' as it touches the patient trying to get treatment; we may now turn to consider this from the point of view of the members of the group who have been trying to achieve 'cure' by the splitting and projective mechanisms described by Melanie Klein (1946). Not only have they divested themselves of any of the troubles of the woman patient, but, if this mechanism is to be effective, they have laid themselves open to the necessity for getting rid of any sense of responsibility towards the woman. This they do by splitting off good parts of their personality and placing them in the analyst. In this way the 'treatment' that these individuals receive from the group is the achievement of a state of mind recognizably akin to the 'loss of individual distinctiveness', spoken of by Freud, on the one hand, and the depersonalization that we meet with in psychotics, on the other. At this point the group is in the state I have described as having the basic assumption of dependence dominant.

I shall not go further with the description of subsequent development in this group, except to mention one peculiarity of its subsequent behaviour very common to all kinds of group situations; subsequent communications were in terms of short interjections, long silences, sighs of boredom, movements of discomfort. This state of affairs in a group deserves close attention. The group appears to be capable of enduring almost endless periods of such conversation, or none at all. There are protests, but endurance of this monotony appears to be a

lesser evil than action to end it. It is impossible to give all my reasons for thinking this phase of group behaviour to be significant. I shall content myself with saying that it is closely linked with the splitting and depersonalization mentioned above. I also believe it to be linked with feelings of depression probably in much the same way as maintenance of the schizoid position serves to suppress the depressive position (Klein, 1946).

Verbal communication

In this state, when interpretations are made, they are disregarded. This disregard may be, as in psychoanalysis, more apparent than real; it may be that the interpretations are faulty and on that account inefficacious; or it may be that the basic assumptions are so dominant that any lead is ignored that does not fall within the limitations of those states. But even allowing for these possibilities, there is an unexplained residue. I have been forced to the conclusion that verbal exchange is a function of the work group. The more the group corresponds with the basic-assumption group the less it makes any rational use of verbal communication. Words serve as a vehicle for the communication of sound. Melanie Klein (1930b) has stressed the importance of symbol formation in the development of the individual, and her discussion of the breakdown of a capacity for symbol formation appears to me to be relevant to the group state I am describing. The work group understands that particular use of symbols which is involved in communication; the basic-assumption group does not. I have heard it suggested that the 'language' of the basic-assumption group is primitive. I do not believe this to be true. It seems to me to be debased rather than primitive. Instead of developing language as a method of thought, the group uses an existing language as a mode of action. This 'simplified' method of communication has none of the vitality of primitive or early language. Its simplicity is degenerate and debased. Contrast to this state of affairs is provided by the occasions when a group, aware of the inadequacies of its vocabulary, tries to discuss and agree upon terms which they want to use in the group. In this instance, one might say one sees the evolution of a 'primitive' scientific method as a part of work-group function, but there is nothing debased about it. The 'language' of the basic-assumption group

lacks the precision and scope that is conferred by a capacity for the formation and use of symbols: this aid to development is therefore missing, and stimuli that would ordinarily promote development have no effect. But one might well claim for the methods of communication that the group employs the title of Universal Linguistic, which Croce conferred on aesthetics. Every human group instantaneously understands every other human group, no matter how diverse its culture, language, and tradition, on the level of the basic assumptions.

As an exercise in the application of some of the theories I have been putting forward, I will instance the biblical account of the building of the Tower of Babel.[1] The myth brings together – rather in the way that a psychoanalytic patient's associations bring together – the following components: a universal language; the building by the group of a tower which is felt by the Deity to be a menace to his position; a confounding of the universal language and a scattering abroad of the people on the face of the earth. What kind of event is embedded in this myth? I shall use my theories to interpret the myth as embodying an account of the development of language in a group with the dependent basic assumption dominant. The new development – it is worth remembering that Freud chose the development of language as an instance of group activity of high mental order – in itself demands further development in the group; this I take to be implicit in the symbolism of the tower, the building of which menaces the supremacy of the Deity. The idea that the tower would reach to Heaven introduces the element of Messianic hope which I regard as intrinsic to the pairing group. But a Messianic hope that is fulfilled violates the canon of the pairing basic assumption, and the group dissolves in schisms.

Melanie Klein (1930b) has shown that the inability to form symbols is characteristic of certain individuals, I would extend this to include all individuals in their functions as members of the basic-assumption group.

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[1]Genesis xi, 1–9. This account is a part of the so-called Jahvistic code and could therefore be regarded as an example of recording by a group with dependent basic assumption dominant when threatened by the emergence of the basic assumption of pairing.

Summary

Freud's view of the dynamics of the group seem to me to require supplementation rather than correction. There are many occasions when the apposite interpretation is one that draws attention to behaviour in the group that would be appropriate if it were a reaction to a family situation. In other words there is ample evidence for Freud's idea that the family group provides the basic pattern for all groups. If I have not stressed the evidence for this, it is because that view does not seem to me to go far enough. I doubt whether any attempt to establish a group therapeutic procedure can be successful if it is limited to an investigation of mechanisms deriving from this source. I would go further; I think that the central position in group dynamics is occupied by the more primitive mechanisms that Melanie Klein has described as peculiar to the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. In other words I feel, but would not like to be challenged with my limited experience to prove, that it is not simply a matter of the incompleteness of the illumination provided by Freud's discovery of the family group as the prototype of all groups, but the fact that this incompleteness leaves out the source of the main emotional drives in the group.

It may be, of course, that this is an artefact produced by the frustration of the individual's desire to be alone with me in the group. I do not wish to minimize the importance of this, but in fact I do not believe that the phenomena I have witnessed are peculiar to a therapeutic group. All groups stimulate and at the same time frustrate the individuals composing them; for the individual is impelled to seek the satisfaction of his needs in his group and is at the same time inhibited in this aim by the primitive fears that the group arouses.

To recapitulate: any group of individuals meeting together for work shows work-group activity, that is, mental functioning designed to further the task in hand. Investigation shows that these aims are sometimes hindered, occasionally furthered, by emotional drives of obscure origin. A certain cohesion is given to these anomalous mental activities if it is assumed that emotionally the group acts as if it had certain basic assumptions about its aims. These basic assumptions, which appear to be fairly adequately adumbrated by three formulations, dependence, pairing, and fighting or flight, are, on further investigation, seen to displace each other, as if in response to some

unexplained impulse. They appear, furthermore, to have some common link, or, perhaps, even to be different aspects of each other. Further investigation shows that each basic assumption contains features that correspond so closely with extremely primitive part objects that sooner or later psychotic anxiety, appertaining to these primitive relationships, is released. These anxieties, and the mechanisms peculiar to them, have been already displayed in psychoanalysis by Melanie Klein, and her descriptions tally well with the emotional states that find an outlet in mass action of the group in behaviour that seems to have coherence if it is considered to be the outcome of a basic assumption. Approached from the angle of sophisticated work-group activity, the basic assumptions appear to be the source of emotional drives to aims far different either from the overt task of the group or even from the tasks that would appear to be appropriate to Freud's view of the group as based on the family group. But approached from the angle of psychotic anxiety associated with phantasies of primitive part-object relationships, described by Melanie Klein and her co-workers, the basic-assumption phenomena appear far more to have the characteristics of defensive reactions to psychotic anxiety, and to be not so much at variance with Freud's views as supplementary to them. In my view, it is necessary to work through both the stresses that appertain to family patterns and the still more primitive anxieties of part-object relationships. In fact I consider the latter to contain the ultimate sources of all group behaviour.

If it is felt that the attempt to establish a group therapeutic procedure as a method for treating the individual is worthwhile, psychoanalysts would be well advised to find a new name for it. I cannot see that there is any scientific justification for describing work of the kind I have attempted as psychoanalysis – I have already given my reasons for this (p. 235). In addition to this there is the fact, of which we are all aware, that 'bitter experience has taught us that resistance against the unconscious can be so subtle that it may distort the analytical findings and reinterpret them in support of some personal defence' (Jones, 1952) and therefore the term psychoanalysis should continue to be applied, in so far as we can control the situation, to the fundamental principles of psychoanalysis. There remains the question of what therapeutic value is to be attached to the procedure I have tried to describe. I do not think that the time has come to give a

definite opinion, and I believe that there may be room for fully qualified psychoanalysts to carry on research into its value, possibly with groups composed of individuals who themselves are having or have had a psychoanalysis.

As a description of group dynamics, each individual is in a position to decide for himself whether the theories I have adumbrated give meaning to the phenomena which he, in the course of his daily life as a member of a group, can witness.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

1962

Learning from Experience was published in 1962 by William Heinemann Medical Books, London, and reprinted in 1984, with the permission of Francesca Bion, by Karnac Books, London. It was included in *Seven Servants*, published in 1977 by Jason Aronson, New York.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Although *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers* was the most popular of Bion's books, *Learning from Experience* is the most clinically concise and influential of his 24 published works. The recent 50th anniversary of its publication seems a timely occasion on which to revisit it, to assess its significance, and to appreciate its distinctive qualities, beginning with its basic structure. It is a short work – a hundred or so pages – designed skilfully by its author to be read straight through without halting at parts that are at first obscure. Reading it in this way can produce experiences that reproduce something of the essential character of the concepts being discussed. Bion stated his aim as being, "to give some idea of the world that is revealed by the attempt to understand our understanding".

Bion's overall project, as stated so concisely by his elder daughter, Parthenope (Bion Talamo, 1981), was to make the emotions that permeate the abstract formulations of psychoanalytic theories come alive for the reader or the listener.

In *Learning from Experience*, Bion begins with some notes on how he intends to make use of particular terms; a comment about how the book has been designed to be read; and a characteristic remark about the use of models known to be inadequate but nevertheless to be made use of until something better can be found. Next he introduces a co-ordinated set of abstractions – later to be matched with some clinical observations – to 'catch the drift' of mental processes underlying thinking and disorders of thought. Bion's recommendation to read without excessive strain, and to forego back-tracking and checking that one has understood each sentence or paragraph, is hard to do, in much the same way as evenly suspended attention is difficult in practice. But in reading the book in the way recommended, something is enabled that

could not have been gained otherwise, and which could not have been anticipated beforehand. Bion advised that his book should be read and then forgotten, allowed to rest in the background, only to be stirred by events experienced in the immediacy of the analytic situation, an attitude consistent with Freud's recommendation on evenly suspended attention (Freud, 1912e). (See also Bion's comment in *Cogitations*: Volume XI, pp. 249–251.)

Has *Learning from Experience* stood the test of time – is it still relevant today? Which ideas from it have retained their freshness, which have been left by the wayside of clinical practice, and which have become blunted through being 'understood' too well?

It is hardly possible to attend a psychoanalytic conference these days without hearing the word 'containment'. Bion tended not to use the word – he preferred the less elegant *container–contained*, which he shortened to ♀♂.[1] Those who have read the book will know that the container–contained model involves other interrelated concepts, such as Ps ⇌ D,[2] selected fact, α and β elements, contact barrier, and β screen, as well as Bion's expanded form of Klein's 1946 projective identification concept. Bion's first use of the term 'container' in relation to Klein's concept of projective identification was in his 1958 paper, 'On Hallucination'.[3] Concerning the patient's fear of his impulses harming or killing his analyst, Bion wrote:

> I was able to show him that he was splitting off painful feelings, mostly envy and revenge, of which he hoped to rid himself by forcing them into me. There the session ended. Melanie Klein has described how this mechanism produces problems for the patient by engendering fear of the analyst who now is a container of a bad part of himself. [Volume VI, p. 114]

In 1961, while he was engaged in writing *Learning from Experience*, Bion wrote a paper[4] called 'The Conception of Man'. He stated there his intention to make an expanded use of Melanie Klein's concept of projective identification, as an essential and normal factor in the inception of communication and mental development in the infant, aided by the essential and irreplaceable helper, the mother.

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[1]The shorter term risks confusion with Winnicott's concept of holding.

[2]Bion's extension of Klein's two positions, putting emphasis on pain, oscillation and structure of immediate emotional experience.

[3]Reprinted in *Second Thoughts*: see Volume VI.

[4]Unpublished: see Volume XV.

> The theory of projective identification and those derived from it explain more than what their propounder intended; they satisfy the criterion that requires the theory to show itself capable of coherent and uncontradictory development when used in scientific investigation. I shall use the theory of projective identification as a model for early development of the processes that have later come to be known as thinking.
>
> The model supposes the existence of a couple; I use it to represent an internal apparatus in the individual. What originally represented a relationship between mother and infant, or breast and mouth, now represents these objects internalized. The representation of these internalized objects is used as a model for the mental mechanisms involved in thinking. The signs ♀ and ♂ can be used to represent the internal apparatus by the sign ♀♂.

In making this step, Bion was following Freud's early, pre-psychoanalytic thinking about the infant's first experiences of pleasure, pain and satisfaction (Freud, 1950 [1895], p. 318).

Two years earlier, in 'Attacks on Linking' (1959; see Volume VI), in an important section called, 'Denial of normal degrees of projective identification', Bion had made a crucial clinical observation about the impact on a patient of his analyst's failure adequately to take in the patient's communications. This enabled Bion to consider the consequences in analysis, and earlier, in infancy, of the denial by the primary object of normal and necessary degrees of projective identification. This was the beginning of Bion's use of what we now know as his container–contained (♀♂) model.[1] It is worth reproducing here because of its importance in showing the clinical foundation for his work in *Learning from Experience*:

> When the patient strove to rid himself of fears of death which were felt to be too powerful for his personality to contain, he split off his fears and put them into me, the idea apparently being that if they were allowed to repose there long enough they would undergo modification by my psyche and could then be safely reintrojected. On the occasion I have in mind the patient had felt, probably for reasons similar to those I give in my fifth illustration (the probability clouds), that I evacuated them so quickly that the feelings were not modified, but had become more painful.
>
> Associations from a period in the analysis earlier than that from which these illustrations have been drawn, showed an increasing intensity of emotions in the patient. This originated in what he felt

[1]Bion was making use of terminology that he had retained from reading a paper on marriage by Carl Jung (1925) – see Volume VI, p. 22.

was my refusal to accept parts of his personality. Consequently he strove to force them into me with increased desperation and violence. His behaviour, isolated from the context of the analysis, might have appeared to be an expression of primary aggression: the more violent his phantasies of projective identification, the more frightened he became of me. There were sessions in which such behaviour expressed unprovoked aggression, but I quote this series because it shows the patient in a different light – his violence a reaction to what he felt was my hostile defensiveness. The analytic situation built up in my mind a sense of witnessing an extremely early scene. I felt that the patient had experienced in infancy a mother who dutifully responded to the infant's emotional displays. The dutiful response had in it an element of impatient, "I don't know what's the matter with the child." My deduction was that, in order to understand what the child wanted, the mother should have treated the infant's *cry* as more than a demand for her presence. From the infant's point of view she should have taken into her, and thus experienced, the fear that the child was dying. It was this fear that the child could not contain. He strove to split it off together with the part of the personality in which it lay and project it into the mother. An understanding mother is able to experience the feeling of dread, that this baby was striving to deal with by projective identification, and yet retain a balanced outlook. This patient had had to deal with a mother who could not tolerate experiencing such feelings and reacted either by denying them ingress, or alternatively by becoming a prey to the anxiety which resulted from introjection of the infant's feelings. [Volume VI, pp. 147–148]

In *Learning from Experience*, Bion extended this model further, developing a conceptual apparatus that is descriptively powerful and analytically useful, one that has remained alive and relevant today among those clinicians who have incorporated the ideas into their basic technique. A sign of life in the ideas is the fact they can be developed further and not remain static, or stagnate into 'received wisdom'. Britton (2010a, 2010b), for example, has taken the operation of Ps ⇌ D further, in his idea of the post-depressive Ps position [Ps(n+1)]:

> In order to hold fast to any sense of security whilst in the position I have called Ps(n+1), a belief in probability is necessary: you could call it faith. Faith in what, you might ask? I think it is faith that an answer exists that will sooner or later be found. In physics it is a belief in science; in psychoanalysis it is a belief in psychoanalysis; fundamentally it is a belief that continued inquiry leads towards it and that things ultimately make sense, though that sense is unknown. [Britton, 2010b, p. 19]

Britton's expansion of Bion's Ps ⇌ D opens up a valuable area of exploration into the tolerance of probability in mental life. Another example of the concepts from *Learning from Experience* being taken further in recent years is Britton and Steiner's work on distinguishing between 'selected facts' and 'over-valued ideas' (Britton & Steiner, 1994). This is an important contribution because it alerts us to the way in which the latter may resemble and substitute for the former, because there is a similarity between the emergence of an underlying pattern from a selected fact and the 'crystallization of delusional certainty from an overvalued idea'. Britton and Steiner describe the serious risks to the patient of imposing on them an overvalued idea hardened into an interpretation.

Edna O'Shaughnessy, in her paper 'Relating to the Superego' (1999), has described how the consequences of such an imposition can lead to the analysis deteriorating into a relationship between two mad superegos, or one in which the analyst may actually give way to looking down on or crushing the patient's ego. One important development of Bion's use of the selected-fact concept, and of Britton and Steiner's application of it to the formation of interpretations, is the attention that nowadays is given to following up – in the moment-by-moment progression of the analytic session – the subtle consequences of the analyst's interventions. This is strongly represented in the work of Betty Joseph and Michael Feldman.

The modern version of projective identification informing the clinical thinking of many analysts in the UK is Bion's expanded one – which brings it closer to his earlier explanation for countertransference (see p. 213, this volume) and Klein's emphasis on transference of total situations. Different forms of projective identification have been identified too, categorized according to whether the principal aim appears to be communicative, acquisitive, evacuative and so on, or whether it appears to have been carried out with the potential for reversibility (Steiner, 1993).

The status given by Bion in this book to the domain of K (approximations in knowledge) has been influential, and it links intimately with Klein's emphasis on the drive towards curiosity. Especially useful in analysing those suffering conditions in which a terrifying superego is prominent is Bion's description of what came to be called (although not in this book) the ego-destructive superego. Identifying a 'superior object asserting its superiority by finding fault with everything', and

relating it to the operation of envy and a reversal of the processes described earlier in the book, has proved of enormous clinical value in work with those silently or openly tormented by such a mad and maddening part of the mind.

Bion refers in the book to this powerfully damaging, ego-destructive structure in the following chilling, and instantly recognizable, terms:

> It is a super-ego that has hardly any of the characteristics of the super-ego as understood in psychoanalysis: it is "super" ego. It is an envious assertion of moral superiority without any morals. In short it is the resultant of an envious stripping or denudation of all good and is itself destined to continue the process of stripping described in 5, as existing, in its origin, between two personalities. The process of denudation continues till –♀–♂ represent hardly more than an empty superiority-inferiority that in turn degenerates to nullity.
>
> In so far as its resemblance to the super-ego is concerned –(♀♂) shows itself as a superior object asserting its superiority by finding fault with everything. The most important characteristic is its hatred of any new development in the personality as if the new development were a rival to be destroyed. The emergence therefore of any tendency to search for the truth, to establish contact with reality and in short to be scientific in no matter how rudimentary a fashion, is met by destructive attacks on the tendency and the reassertion of the "moral" superiority. This implies an assertion of what in sophisticated terms would be called a moral law and a moral system as superior to scientific law and a scientific system. [p. 363]

The clinical significance of this insight is of the greatest importance for the daily practice of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy. At another level, it also holds implications for considering group and political life, including the relationships between us in our psychoanalytic societies and organizations.

The description in *Learning from Experience* of *excessive* projective identification reminds us of Klein's use of the term, making it available in this extended version of projective identification and bringing out the clinical usefulness of keeping an awareness of what can be tolerated by the patient – and by the analyst – at any specific moment. Bion was conscious of the important link to Strachey's famous 1934 paper on mutative interpretation. The latter was one of the underpinnings of Bion's theory of countertransference in the 1950s.

Bion's central preoccupation in this book on the distinction between measures intended to evade reality and measures designed

to modify it relates to the question of what makes mental pain more or less bearable. Bion was to state in his Tavistock Seminars that the problem with analysts is that they too often seem more interested in psychoanalysis than in mental pain. Bion felt that the analyst's capacity to bear pain, helplessness and confusion, before any understanding was possible, was a necessary part of the job of being an analyst – much more important than sounding like one. Ruth Malcolm in her book *On Bearing Unbearable States of Mind* (1999) has discussed this aspect of Bion's work in depth.

Related to this, and one of the most important contributions to theory and analytic technique, is Bion's discussion in this book of the dire consequences for mental development of the infant's experience of an object felt to refuse entry to its projected distress. (It is one of the factors that may be instrumental in the formation of an ego-hating superego.) Such an object is liable to be experienced as wishing unalleviated distress on the infant, which at some level can be felt as a desire for the infant to suffer, or even to die. Following Bion, we can make use of this work in trying to trace the consequences for patients of our failures both to really take in the impact of what they are saying and doing to us and to be willing to explore with them what they feel we are intending when we speak, or do not.

Which concepts in the book have fallen by the wayside? The further development of the abstractions explored in *Learning from Experience*, particularly towards the end of it (see Chapter 27), eventuated in Bion's creation of a Grid, a matrix of eight rows and six columns, the purpose of which was to aid clinical thinking between sessions. He developed these ideas in 'The Grid' (1963) and *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* (1963).[1] It was because the essentials of the Grid were already foreshadowed in the pages of *Learning from Experience* that an illustration of the Grid was included from the 1984 version onwards, and it was also used as the cover illustration of the 2004 edition. The two axes are used by some analysts to explore their clinical work, but it is fair to say that after Bion's own disowning of it – and his invitation to clinicians to form their own structures for 'mental exercise' – the Grid idea has not really produced new shoots. There are those who have found it of value, and continue to do so, but Bion became dissatisfied with it as he realized its shortcomings.

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[1]Both are in Volume V.

Another concept in the book, reverie,[1] which has connections to dream-thoughts, is still discussed occasionally, but it has not received much attention in comparison with other aspects of the container–contained model. It goes beyond Freud's recommendations concerning the state of attention required for analytic work and involves the role of love and dream-work, but these ideas have not been substantially developed yet by others.

Few practicing analysts have followed Bion into mathematizing aspects of psychoanalysis – and his attempts to do so have tended to be misunderstood. Britton is an exception, both in understanding Bion's attempts and in making some successful attempts of his own. His Ps(n+1) formulation (Britton, 2001, 2010a, 2010b) takes Bion's operation of Ps ⇌ D a step further, applying it to probabilistic thinking, and is clinically applicable.[2]

On the negative side, it is true that in some places the ideas have become acceptable only through slicing them away from their connection to those formulations of Klein that underpin them (of envy and phantasy in particular); this can lead to both misunderstanding and misuse. Second, a similar reduction of their usefulness has come from the tendency in some quarters to split Bion's contributions from those of his colleagues – Hanna Segal and Herbert Rosenfeld in particular. Many of their clinical and theoretical contributions have a direct bearing on Bion's ideas. Third, there has been the tendency to *reify* Bion's concepts. He gave many warnings in his work about this, but it remains a problem. He did not intend his readers to believe that there actually were 'things' in the world corresponding with his theoretical abstractions (see Volume V, p. 23). A discussion of this important issue is beyond the scope

[1]In *Cogitations* (see Volume XI), Bion writes that this term is what Freud referred to as 'free floating attention'. In *Learning from Experience* Bion makes clear that it is an expression of the mother's willing attentive love for her child, and is a response to the child's urgent need for understanding. The roots of this are to be found in Freud's 'Project for a Scientific Psychology' (1950 [1895]), in the discussion of pleasure and pain.

[2]Parthenope Bion Talamo (1981) has described the emotions associated with the operation of the Ps ⇌ D oscillation as a sense of persecution and frustration, followed by a moment of comprehension and a "coagulation of depression". It is the coagulation of depressive feelings which is hypothesized to create something of a persecution, creating a new problem on another level for repeated cycles of the Ps ⇌ D process.

of this Introduction. A fourth obstacle to the continued development of Bion's ideas is that we 'know' them. James Grotstein (1981, p. 507), with some generosity, has shared such a moment from his analysis with Bion:

> During another moment in analysis, he gave me a series of interpretations which, unusually, caused me to say, "I think I follow you." His reply to that was an ironic, "Yes, I was afraid of that!"

A fifth set of problems affecting the fate of Bion's concepts has arisen through idealization of Bion and mystification of his work. As well as his formidable intellect, Bion's own mode of exposition in later writings may have contributed something to this, especially his way of writing about the relations between mystics and the official establishments surrounding them, but it is also true that sometimes the most effective way to destroy or to limit the growth potential of ideas is to idealize them. As Bion put it, "even apparent friendliness is deadly. . . . His epitaph might be: 'He was loaded with honours and sank without a trace'."[1]

Learning from Experience has not sunk without a trace, even though some of the later work may be in the process of doing so. Over fifty years on, this brilliant but, more to the point, *useful* book manages – even when highly abstract – to remind us of real patients, real experiences. It continues to provide ideas that, after having been forgotten, themselves function as the kinds of selected facts discussed by Bion, elements that, to quote Bion's eldest child, Parthenope, "the thinking individual recognizes as unexpectedly harmonizing all the other scattered facts – it is one of them, but it allows the thinker to 'see' the meaning which had previously not been visible" (Bion Talamo, 1981).

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[1]In his review (see Volume VI) of Eissler's *Medical Orthodoxy and the Future of Psycho-Analysis*.

Learning from Experience

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Some of those to whom I am indebted I know, and to them I can acknowledge my debt. I am aware of others, notably patients, on whose cooperation I have always to depend, but who must remain anonymous. Dr Elliott Jaques, Mr R. Money-Kyrle and Dr H. Segal have helped by reading and criticizing my manuscript. Just what generosity of time and effort this means for practising psychoanalysts can only be appreciated by another practising analyst.

Finally, as always, there is my debt to my wife without whose support I could not attempt to write at all.

Introduction

1. As the problems raised in this book are fundamental to learning they have a long history of investigation and discussion. In psychoanalytic practice, particularly with patients displaying symptoms of disorders of thought, it becomes clear that psychoanalysis has added a dimension to the problems if not to their solution.

2. This book deals with emotional experiences that are directly related both to theories of knowledge and to clinical psychoanalysis, and that in the most practical manner. The man trained in philosophical method does not usually have the analyst's intimate experience of disturbed thought processes, and even psychoanalysts rarely undertake such cases. I have been fortunate in this respect, but lack the philosopher's training. I have however had the advantage of having undergone an analysis first with John Rickman and then with Melanie Klein.

3. I have experience to record, but how to communicate this experience to others I am in doubt; this book explains why. For a time I thought of concentrating on analysis of trainees. I am confident that psychoanalysts are right in thinking that this is the only really effective method of passing on analytic experience that we have at present; but to limit one's energies to this activity smacks of the esoteric cult. On the other hand, publication of a book, such as this, may seem premature. Nevertheless I believe it may be possible to give some idea of the world that is revealed by the attempt to understand our understanding. If the reader is tempted to go further the object of the book is achieved.

4. I have kept notes and references down to the minimum; they are essential to thinking the thought through rather than merely

reading the book. The book is designed to be read straight through once without checking at parts that might be obscure at first. Some obscurities are due to the impossibility of writing without pre-supposing familiarity with some aspect of a problem that is only worked on later. If the reader will read straight through, these points will become clearer as he proceeds. Unfortunately obscurities also exist because of my inability to make them clearer. The reader may find the effort to clarify these for himself is rewarding and not simply work that has been forced on him because I have not done it myself.

5. It may seem that I am mis-using words with an established meaning, as in my use of the terms 'function' and 'factors'. A critic has pointed out to me that the terms are used ambiguously and the sophisticated reader may be misled by the association of both words with mathematics and philosophy. I have deliberately used them because of the association, and I wish the ambiguity to remain. I want the reader to be reminded of mathematics, philosophy and common usage, because a characteristic of the human mind I am discussing may develop in such a way that it is seen at a later stage to be classifiable under those headings – and others. Nevertheless I am not discussing whatever it is that the function may become; my use of the term is intended to indicate that whether the person observed is performing a mathematical calculation, a walk with a peculiar gait, or an envious act all are for me functions of the personality. If I concern myself with the accuracy of his mathematics it is not because I am interested in his mathematics but because his mathematics and the accuracy of his performance are functions of his personality, and I want to know what the factors are.

6. If the reader will consider the previous paragraph 5 again, he will see that by claiming the use of the term function and wishing it to retain its penumbra of associations I leave it to be supposed that the term will be used by me in accordance with the rules and conventions by which mathematicians and philosophers regulate its use. If I fulfil this expectation I may be thought to use the term "properly". But if I disappoint the expectation (aroused by the penumbra of associations of which I do not divest it) I may reasonably be said to mis-use the term. It is then open to me, if I agree with the criticism, either explicitly to divest the term of its penumbra of associations, or to accept the conventions of use implied by its associations.

7. In fact I wish to follow neither course. Suppose I see the man walking. I may say that his walk is a function of his personality and that I find, after investigation, that the factors of this function are his love for a girl and his envy of her friend. Or that the factors in this function are his love for the girl and his envy of her friend. After further investigation I may decide that to his love for the girl is added envy of her friend; or F (his gait) = L + E. (F = function, L = love, E = envy). But I may feel that my observations approximate to the Kleinian theory of projective identification and that I can express my opinion of the facts best by saying the function walking is a sign that the patient feels he has taken into him a loved girl with whom he is identified and a rival of whom he is envious but with whom he has also identified himself, and that both objects are controlled by being enclosed in his legs. I shall spare the reader a geometrical figure, expressing this last idea "mathematically", but will ask him to consider whether in Chapter I the terms "function" and "factor" are *mis*-used. I understand that the use can confuse but cannot agree that it can be decisively declared to be mis-use. In a later chapter I claim that the use of ideas, and the symbols representing them, is less advanced than the process by which ideas are evolved. For this reason I am prepared to believe I am mis-using an idea, or its symbol, or both, but I am not prepared to agree that there is yet a definitive criterion by which the matter can be decided. In psychoanalytic methodology the criterion cannot be whether a particular usage is right or wrong, meaningful or verifiable, but whether it does or does not promote development.

8. I do not suggest that promotion of development provides a criterion without reservation; psychoanalytic theory and practice, in cases where thought shows serious disturbance, indicate the need for a reformulation of ideas about the origin and nature of thoughts and a parallel reformulation of ideas about the mechanisms by which "thinking" thoughts is achieved. But if it is necessary to change our views about thoughts and the mechanisms of thinking, it is likely that the change of views, if it is as significant as I think, will require modification of the way in which we produce "thoughts" and the methods we employ in using them. My method of producing "factor" and "function" (and their fitness to represent a realization) is not necessarily wrong because it is different from methods ordinarily

accepted as conformable with the proper production, nature and use of concepts, but my method is not therefore exempted by the critical scrutiny to which I consider all thinking needs to be subjected in the light of psychoanalytic experience.

9. The methods in this book are not definitive. Even when I have been aware that they are inadequate I have often not been able to better them. I have found myself in a similar position to the scientist who continues to employ a theory that he knows to be faulty because a better one has not been discovered to replace it.

Summary of contents

The following plan of the book may serve as a rough guide:

Chapter 1 embodies a preliminary explanation of two terms.

Chapter 2 is a demarcation of area in which I wish to use the terms as part of my equipment of inquiry.

Chapter 3 commences a stylized description of emotional experiences, realizations, in which I have participated, that form the stimulus for the whole of this book. By "stylized" I mean that it is consciously sophisticated because the falsification that is introduced by such a method of presentation is immeasurably less than the falsification produced by any others, including so called mechanical recordings. These last have the truth that pertains to a photograph, but the making of such a record, despite a superficial accuracy of result, has forced the falsification further back – that is into the session itself. The photograph of the fountain of truth may be well enough, but it is of the fountain after it has been muddied by the photographer and his apparatus; in any case the problem of interpreting the photograph remains. The falsification by the recording is the greater because it gives verisimilitude to what has already been falsified.

Chapter 4 is a brief statement of some of the ideas that are discussed throughout this book.

Chapters 5–11 are a summary description of clinical phenomena related to the subject matter of the book; these are familiar to analysts but couched in terms that are probably more meaningful to analysts trained in Kleinian theories. The description indicates the use to which I put the term alpha-function and contact-barrier, and at the

end of Chapter 11 I draw attention to the importance of the choice between modifying frustration and evading it.

Chapter 12 commences with a discussion of projective identification and its bearing on the genesis of thought. The subject leads on to the part played by oral and alimentary experience in providing a model for thinking. I draw attention to the serious consequences for development of a mother incapable of reverie.

Chapter 13 deals with problems of recording sessions and the theories used by the analyst, and discusses possibilities that offer an approach to a method of scientific notation in Chapter 14.

Chapters 14–16 introduce the signs L, H, and K, for use in the discussion of the matter of this book.

Chapters 17–18 return to the use of the abstraction "alpha-function" for discussing the genesis of thoughts. The problems of abstraction or generalization and concretization or particularization are then discussed.

Chapter 19 starts the discussion of the use of psychoanalytic models.

Chapter 20 is an investigation of abstraction in which an attempt is made at using abstract signs to elucidate some of the problems of abstraction as they present themselves in analysis.

Chapter 21 introduces the Kleinian theory of interchange between depressive and paranoid-schizoid positions: its relationship to learning and the emotional experience associated with the terms employed in theories of causation is explored.

Chapters 22–23 discuss model making and abstraction in the context of analytical practice.

Chapters 24–27 continue the explanation with particular reference to learning (K link). Chapter 28 is an elaboration of the same theme in minus K (–K).

1

1. To call an action by the name of the person of whom it is thought to be typical, to talk, for example, of a Spoonerism as if it were a function of the personality of an individual called Spooner, is quite usual in conversation. I take advantage of this usage to derive a theory of functions that will stand up to more rigorous use than that for which the conversational phrase is employed. I shall suppose that there are factors in the personality that combine to produce stable entities which I call functions of the personality. The meaning that I attach to the terms "factors" and "functions" and the use to which I put them will presently appear, but some preliminary explanation may not be amiss.

2. The statement, "A factor in X's personality of which we shall have to take account is his envy of his associates", is one any layman might make and may mean little or much; its value depends on our estimate of the person who makes it and of the weight he attaches to his own words. The force of the statement is affected if I attach to the term "envy" the weight and meaning with which it has been invested by Mrs Klein.

3. Suppose now another statement: "X's relationship with his associates is typical of a personality in which envy is a factor." This statement expresses the observation of a function, the factors in which are transference and envy. What is observed is not the transference or envy, but something that is a function of transference and envy. It is necessary, as a psychoanalysis proceeds, to deduce new factors from the changes observed in the function and to distinguish different functions.

4. "Function" is the name for the mental activity proper to a number of factors operating in consort. "Factor" is the name for

a mental activity operating in consort with other mental activities to constitute a function. Factors are deducible from observation of the functions of which they, in consort with each other, are a part. They can be theories or the realities the theories represent. They may appear to be commonplaces of ordinary insight; they are not because the word used to name the factor is employed scientifically and therefore more rigorously than is usual in conversational English. Factors are deduced not directly but by observation of functions.

5. The theory of functions makes it easier to match the realization[1] with the deductive system[2] that represents it. Moreover, its use gives flexibility to an analytical theory, that may have to be used in a wide variety of analytical situations, without impairing the permanence and stability of the structure of which it is a part. Furthermore, by virtue of the theory of functions deductive systems possessing a high degree of generalization can be seen to represent observations in the analysis of a particular patient. Since psychoanalytic theory has to be applied to the changes occurring in the personality of the patient this is important. If the analyst observes functions and deduces the related factors from them, the gap between theory and observation can be bridged without the elaboration of new and possibly misguided theories.

6. The function I am about to discuss for its intrinsic importance also serves to illustrate the use to which a theory of functions can be put. I call this function an alpha-function so that I may talk about it without being restricted, as I would be if I used a more meaningful term, by an existing penumbra of associations. By contrast, the meaning of theories that appear as factors must be preserved and employed as rigorously as possible. I assume that the meaning has been made sufficiently clear by the authors and others who have discussed the theories with critical sympathy. The freedom implicit in

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[1]The term "realization" is used in the sense that it has if it is said that Euclidean geometry of three dimensions has the structure of ordinary space as one of its realizations. The expression is used in an easily comprehensible way in *Algebraic Projective Geometry*, Semple & Kneebone (Oxford University Press, 1956), Chapter 1, where the concept of geometry is discussed.

[2]The term "deductive system", or "scientific deductive system", is used to cover any approximation to, or projected approximation to, the logical systems described in R. B. Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation* (Cambridge University Press, 1955), Chapter 2 and onwards.

the use of the term alpha-function and the concentration of precision of expression and employment into all that pertains to the factors, confers flexibility without impairing structure. The use I make of an existing theory may seem to distort the author's meaning; if I think so I have acknowledged it, but otherwise it is to be assumed that I believe I am interpreting the author's theory correctly.

7. The term alpha-function is, intentionally, devoid of meaning. Before I indicate the area of investigation in which I propose to employ it, I must discuss one of the problems incidental to this investigation. Since the object of this meaningless term is to provide psychoanalytic investigation with a counterpart of the mathematicians variable, an unknown that can be invested with a value when its use has helped to determine what that value is, it is important that it should not be prematurely used to convey meanings, for the premature meanings may be precisely those that it is essential to exclude. Yet the mere fact that the term alpha-function is to be employed in a particular investigation inevitably leads to its reinvestment with meanings derived from the investigations that have already been carried out in that field.[1] Constant vigilance must therefore be exerted to prevent this development, or the value of the instrument is impaired at the outset. The area of investigation is approximately that covered by the writings described in my next chapter.

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[1]Compare: K. R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (Hutchinson, 1959), p. 35, note 2, where the difficulty is admirably illustrated.

2

1. Describing the institution of the reality principle Freud said, "The increased significance of external reality heightened the significance also of the sense-organs directed towards that outer world, and of the consciousness attached to them; the latter now learned to comprehend the qualities of sense in addition to the qualities of pleasure and pain which hitherto had alone been of interest to it." I emphasize, "the latter now learned to comprehend"; by "the latter" Freud presumably means "the consciousness attached to the sense impressions".[1] The attribution of comprehension to consciousness I discuss later. Of immediate concern is the function of comprehension itself; comprehension of the sense impressions and comprehension of the qualities of pleasure and pain are both investigated in this discussion. I treat sense impressions, pleasure and pain as alike real, thereby discarding the distinction that Freud makes between the "outer-world" and pleasure and pain, as irrelevant to the theme of comprehension. I shall, however, discuss the bearing of the Pleasure principle and the Reality principle on the choice that a patient can be seen to make between modifying frustration and evading it.

2. The attribution of comprehension to consciousness leads to contradictions which are avoided by accepting, for purposes of the theory I wish to propound, Freud's later conceptualization, "but what part is there left to be played in our scheme of consciousness,

[1] 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911b), in *Standard Edition, 12*. The quotations and references in this chapter, being intended to indicate the limits of the area in which I wish to use the concept of alpha-function are not selected with the rigour that I consider necessary if the selection is made for use in a scientific theory or as a factor for use with the theory of functions.

which was once so omnipotent and hid all else from view? *Only that of a sense-organ for the perception of psychical qualities*"[1] (Freud's italics).

3. Continuing the quotation from Freud's 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning', "A special function was instituted which had periodically to search the other world in order that its data might be already familiar if an urgent inner need should arise; this function was attention. Its activity meets the sense impressions half-way instead of awaiting their appearance."[2] Freud did not carry his investigation of attention far, but the term, as he uses it, has a meaning I would investigate as a factor in alpha-function.

4. Freud continues, "At the same time there was probably introduced a system of notation, whose task was to deposit the results of this periodical activity of consciousness – a part of that which we call memory." Notation and the deposition of the results of attention are also phenomena to be investigated by the aid of the theory of alpha-function.

5. Certain theories of Melanie Klein and her co-workers will be considered; I list them here. They are: splitting and projective identification;[3] the transition from the paranoid-schizoid to the depressive position and vice-versa;[4] symbol formation[5] and some of my previous work on the development of verbal thought.[6] I shall not discuss them except as factors modified by combination with each other in a function. So much for previous work; I now give an example of the employment of this Theory of Functions in a psychoanalytic investigation of the field covered by the work referred to in this chapter.

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[1]S. Freud (1900a). *The Interpretation of Dreams. Standard Edition, 4.*

[2]S. Freud (1911b), p. 220**.**

[3]M. Klein (1946), 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms', in *Developments in Psycho-Analysis*, p. 300.

[4]M. Klein, ibid., p. 293.

[5]'The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego' (1930b), in M. Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921–1945*, p. 219.

[6]W. R. Bion, 'Differentiation of Psychotic from the Non-Psychotic Personalities', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 38* (1957): 266–275 [in *Second Thoughts*, in Volume VI].

3

1. An emotional experience occurring in sleep, which I choose for reasons that will presently appear, does not differ from the emotional experience occurring during waking life in that the perceptions of the emotional experience have in both instances to be worked upon by alpha-function before they can be used for dream thoughts.

2. Alpha-function operates on the sense impressions, whatever they are, and the emotions, whatever they are, of which the patient is aware. In so far as alpha-function is successful, alpha elements are produced and these elements are suited to storage and the requirements of dream thoughts. If alpha-function is disturbed, and therefore inoperative, the sense impressions of which the patient is aware and the emotions which he is experiencing remain unchanged. I shall call them beta-elements.[1] In contrast with the alpha-elements the beta-elements are not felt to be phenomena,[2] but things-in-themselves. The emotions likewise are objects of sense. We are thus presented with a state of mind precisely contrasting with that of the scientist who knows he is concerned with phenomena but has not the same certitude that the phenomena have a counterpart of things in themselves.

3. Beta-elements are not amenable to use in dream thoughts but are suited for use in projective identification. They are influential in producing acting out. They are objects that can be evacuated or used for a kind of thinking that depends on manipulation of what are felt to be things in themselves as if to substitute such manipulation for

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[1][Bion's first use of the term 'beta-element'. *Ed.*]

[2]And I use the term "phenomena" to cover what Kant called secondary and primary qualities. The term "things-in-themselves" I hold with Kant to refer to objects that are unknowable to mankind.

words or ideas. For example a man may murder his parents and so feel free to love because the anti-sexual internal parents are supposed by this act to have been evacuated. Such an act is intended "to rid the psyche of accretions of stimuli". Beta-elements are stored but differ from alpha-elements in that they are not so much memories as undigested facts, whereas the alpha-elements have been digested by alpha-function and thus made available for thought. It is important to distinguish between memories and undigested facts – beta-elements. (The use of the terms "digested" and "undigested" will be investigated later.)

4. If the patient cannot transform his emotional experience into alpha-elements, he cannot dream. Alpha-function transforms sense impressions into alpha-elements which resemble, and may in fact be identical with, the visual images with which we are familiar in dreams, namely, the elements that Freud regards as yielding their latent content when the analyst has interpreted them. Freud showed that one of the functions of a dream is to preserve sleep. Failure of alpha-function means the patient cannot dream and therefore cannot sleep. As alpha-function makes the sense impressions of the emotional experience available for conscious and dream-thought, the patient who cannot dream cannot go to sleep and cannot wake up. Hence the peculiar condition seen clinically when the psychotic patient behaves as if he is in precisely this state.

4

1. The emotional experience must now be considered generally and not only as it occurs in sleep. I shall emphasize what I have said so far by re-writing a popular theory of the nightmare. It used once to be said that a man had a nightmare because he had indigestion and that is why he woke up in a panic. My version is: The sleeping patient is panicked; because he cannot have a nightmare he cannot wake up or go to sleep; he has had mental indigestion ever since.

2. The more general statement of the theory is this: To learn from experience alpha-function must operate on the awareness of the emotional experience; alpha-elements are produced from the impressions of the experience; these are thus made storeable and available for dream thoughts and for unconscious waking thinking. A child having the emotional experience called learning to walk is able by virtue of alpha-function to store this experience. Thoughts that had originally to be conscious become unconscious and so the child can do all the thinking needed for walking without any longer being conscious of any of it. Alpha-function is needed for conscious thinking and reasoning and for the relegation of thinking to the unconscious when it is necessary to disencumber consciousness of the burden of thought by learning a skill.

3. If there are only beta-elements, which cannot be made unconscious, there can be no repression, suppression, or learning. This creates the impression that the patient is incapable of discrimination. He cannot be unaware of any single sensory stimulus, yet such hypersensitivity is not contact with reality.

4. Attacks on alpha-function, stimulated by hate or envy, destroy the possibility of the patient's conscious contact either with himself or another as live objects. Accordingly we hear of inanimate objects, and

even of places, when we would normally expect to hear of people. These, though described verbally, are felt by the patient to be present materially and not merely to be represented by their names. This state contrasts with animism in that live objects are endowed with the qualities of death.

5

1. We must now examine enforced splitting associated with a disturbed relationship with the breast or its substitutes. The infant receives milk and other creature comforts from the breast; also love, understanding, solace. Suppose his initiative is obstructed by fear of aggression, his own or another's. If the emotion is strong enough it inhibits the infant's impulse to obtain sustenance.

Love in infant or mother, or both, increases rather than decreases the obstruction partly because love is inseparable from envy[1] of the object so loved, partly because it is felt to arouse envy and jealousy in a third object that is excluded. The part played by love may escape notice because envy, rivalry and hate obscure it, although hate would not exist if love were not present. Violence of emotion compels reinforcement of the obstruction because violence is not distinguished from destructiveness and subsequent guilt and depression. Fear of death through starvation of essentials compels resumption of sucking. A split between material and psychic satisfaction develops.

2. Fear, hate and envy are so feared that steps are taken to destroy awareness of all feelings, although that is indistinguishable from taking life itself.[2] If a sense of reality, too great to be swamped by emotions, forces the infant to resume feeding, intolerance of envy and hate in a situation which stimulates love and gratitude leads to a splitting that differs from splitting carried out to prevent depression. It differs from splitting impelled by sadistic impulses in that its object and effect is to enable the infant to obtain what later in life would be

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[1]The term 'envy' is here used to describe generally the phenomena described in detail by Melanie Klein in 'Envy and Gratitude' (1957).

[2]See Chapter 4:4.

called material comforts without acknowledging the existence of a live object on which these benefits depend. Envy aroused by a breast that provides love, understanding, experience and wisdom, poses a problem that is solved by destruction of alpha-function. This makes breast and infant appear inanimate with consequent guiltiness, fear of suicide and fear of murder, past, present and impending. The need for love, understanding and mental development is now deflected, since it cannot be satisfied, into the search for material comforts. Since the desires for material comforts are reinforced the craving for love remains unsatisfied and turns into overweening and misdirected greed.

3. This split, enforced by starvation and fear of death through starvation on the one hand, and by love and the fear of associated murderous envy and hate on the other, produces a mental state in which the patient greedily pursues every form of material comfort; he is at once insatiable and implacable in his pursuit of satiation. Since this state originates in a need to be rid of the emotional complications of awareness of life, and a relationship with live objects, the patient appears to be incapable of gratitude or concern either for himself or others. This state involves destruction of his concern for truth. Since these mechanisms fail to rid the patient of his pains, which he feels to be due to lack of something, his pursuit of a cure takes the form of a search for a lost object and ends in increased dependence on material comfort; quantity must be the governing consideration, not quality. He feels surrounded by bizarre objects,[1] so that even the material comforts are bad and unable to satisfy his needs. But he lacks the apparatus, alpha-function, by which he might understand his predicament. The patient greedily and fearfully takes one beta-element after another apparently unable to conceive of any activity other than introjection of more beta-elements. To observe this taking place in analysis is to feel that the patient will never abandon his pursuit of a course of action which one would think he could not possibly fail to know was futile. He thinks the interpretations are without exception bad, yet he must have more and more of them. The patient however does not feel he is having interpretations for that would involve an ability to establish with the analyst the counterpart of an infant's

[1]W. R. Bion, 'Differentiation of Psychotic from the Non-psychotic Personalities' [in *Second Thoughts*, in Volume VI].

relationship with a breast that provides material wisdom and love. But he feels able only to establish the counterpart of a relationship in which such sustenance can be had as inanimate objects can provide; he can have analytic interpretations that he feels to be either flatus or contributions remarkable for what they are not rather than for what they are. The fact that the patient uses an equipment suited for contact with the inanimate to establish contact with himself helps to explain the confusion produced by the patient's awareness that he is in fact alive.[1] Although he feels there are no redeeming features in his environment, including in his environment the analyst's interpretations and his own lack of equipment to learn anything from his experience, the patient does ultimately grasp some of the meaning of what is said to him.

[1]See Chapter 6:2.

6

1. The patient's reactions to material comfort are shown by his reactions to the material comforts, the couch or other amenities, of the consulting room. Why must he have more and more of such "comforts"? Part of the answer lies in the splitting that was intended, by effecting a separation of material from psychic comforts, as an escape from fear of envy, either his own or another's.

2. The attempt to evade the experience of contact with live objects by destroying alpha-function leaves the personality unable to have a relationship with any aspect of itself that does not resemble an automaton. Only beta-elements are available for whatever activity takes the place of thinking and beta-elements are suitable for evacuation only – perhaps through the agency of projective identification. These beta-elements are dealt with by an evacuatory procedure similar to the movements of musculature, changes of mien, etc. which Freud described as intended to disencumber the personality of accretions of stimuli and not to effect changes in the environment; a muscular movement, for example, a smile, must have a different interpretation from the smile of the non-psychotic personality. The phenomena present in analysis are not identical with Freud's description of the personality acting, during the phase of dominance of the pleasure principle, to disencumber itself of accretions of stimuli. That personality is, within limits, normal; the personality I am describing is highly abnormal. Activity taking place, under the dominance of the pleasure principle, to disencumber the personality of accretions of stimuli becomes replaced, in the phase of dominance by the reality principle, by ejection of unwanted beta-elements. A smile or a verbal statement must be interpreted as an evacuatory muscular movement and not as a communication of feeling.

The scientist whose investigations include the stuff of life itself finds himself in a situation that has a parallel in that of the patients I am describing. The breakdown in the patient's equipment for thinking leads to dominance by a mental life in which his universe is populated by inanimate objects. The inability of even the most advanced human beings to make use of their thoughts, because the capacity to think is rudimentary in all of us, means that the field for investigation, all investigation being ultimately scientific, is limited, by human inadequacy, to those phenomena that have the characteristics of the inanimate. We assume that the psychotic limitation is due to an illness but that that of the scientist is not. Investigation of the assumption illuminates disease on the one hand and scientific method on the other. It appears that our rudimentary equipment for "thinking" thoughts is adequate when the problems are associated with the inanimate, but not when the object for investigation is the phenomenon of life itself. Confronted with the complexities of the human mind the analyst must be circumspect in following even accepted scientific method; its weakness may be closer to the weakness of psychotic thinking than superficial scrutiny would admit.

7

1. If a man has an emotional experience when asleep or awake and is able to convert it into alpha-elements, he can either remain unconscious of that emotional experience or become conscious of it. The sleeping man has an emotional experience, converts it into alpha-elements and so becomes capable of dream thoughts. Thus he is free to become conscious (that is wake up) and describe the emotional experience by a narrative usually known as a dream.

2. A man talking to a friend converts the sense impressions of this emotional experience into alpha-elements, thus becoming capable of dream thoughts and therefore of undisturbed consciousness of the facts whether the facts are the events in which he participates or his feelings about those events or both. He is able to remain "asleep" or unconscious of certain elements that cannot penetrate the barrier presented by his "dream". Thanks to the "dream" he can continue uninterruptedly to be awake, that is, awake to the fact that he is talking to his friend, but asleep to elements which, if they could penetrate the barrier of his "dreams", would lead to domination of his mind by what are ordinarily unconscious ideas and emotions.

The dream makes a barrier against mental phenomena which might overwhelm the patient's awareness that he is talking to a friend, and at the same time makes it impossible for awareness that he is talking to a friend to overwhelm his phantasies. The psychotic's attempt to discriminate one from the other leads to rational thought characterized by a peculiar lack of "resonance". What he says clearly and in articulated speech is one dimensional. It has no overtones or undertones of meaning. It makes the listener inclined to say "so what?" It has no capacity to evoke a train of thought.

3. The "dream" has many of the functions of censorship and resistance. These functions are not the product of the unconscious but instruments by which the "dream" creates and differentiates consciousness from unconsciousness.

To sum up: the "dream", together with the alpha-function which makes dream possible, is central to the operation of consciousness and unconsciousness, on which ordered thought depends. Alpha-function theory of the "dream" has the elements of the view represented by classical psychoanalytic dream theory, that is to say, censorship and resistance are represented in it. But in alpha-function theory the powers of censorship and resistance are essential to differentiation of conscious and unconscious and help to maintain the discrimination between the two. This discrimination derives from the operation of the "dream", which is a combination in narrative form of dream thoughts, which thoughts in turn derive from combinations of alpha-elements. In this theory the ability to "dream" preserves the personality from what is virtually a psychotic state. It therefore helps to explain the tenacity with which the dream, as represented in classical theory, defends itself against the attempt to make the unconscious conscious. Such an attempt must appear indistinguishable from destruction of the capacity to dream in so far as that capacity is related to differentiating conscious from unconscious[1] and maintaining the difference so established.

[1]"Differentiating conscious from unconscious." This use of terms is typical of the difficulty of using ambiguous terms when no more precise terms are available. I do not mean "the" conscious or "the" unconscious because that would imply that an observer would be required to differentiate two objects. Yet I do not wish to exclude that shade of meaning because when elements have been differentiated, some becoming conscious and some unconscious, it is reasonable to say there is an unconscious if such a concept is valuable.

8

1. I Shall now transfer all that I have said about the establishment of conscious and unconscious and a barrier between them to a supposed entity, that I designate a "contact-barrier"; Freud used this term to describe the neuro-physiological entity subsequently known as a synapse. In conformity with this my statement that the man has to "dream" a current emotional experience whether it occurs in sleep or in waking life is re-formulated thus: The man's alpha-function, whether in sleeping or waking, transforms the sense-impressions related to an emotional experience into alpha-elements, which cohere as they proliferate to form the contact-barrier. This contact-barrier, thus continuously in process of formation, marks the point of contact and separation between conscious and unconscious elements and originates the distinction between them. The nature of the contact-barrier will depend on the nature of the supply of alpha-elements and on the manner of their relationship to each other. They may cohere. They may be agglomerated. They may be ordered sequentially to give the appearance of narrative (at least in the form in which the contact-barrier may reveal itself in a dream). They may be ordered logically. They may be ordered geometrically.

2. The term "contact-barrier" emphasizes the establishment of contact between conscious and unconscious and the selective passage of elements from one to the other. On the nature of the contact-barrier will depend the change of elements from conscious to unconscious and vice versa. In so far as dreams give us direct access to its study they retain the central position in psychoanalysis that Freud assigned to them. The nature of the transition from conscious to unconscious and vice versa, and therefore the nature of the contact-barrier and its

component alpha-elements, affect memory and the characteristics of any given memory.

3. In practice the theory of functions and the theory of an alpha-function make possible interpretations showing precisely how the patient feels that he has feelings, but cannot learn from them, and sensations, some of which are extremely faint, but cannot learn from them either. A determination not to experience anything can be shown to co-exist with an inability to reject or ignore any stimulus. Sense-impressions can be seen to have some meaning but the patient feels incapable of knowing what the meaning is.

4. Interpretations derived from these theories appear to effect changes in the patient's capacity for thinking and therefore of understanding. Such a response is itself sufficiently peculiar, in view of the phenomenon being investigated, to require explanation. In the first place the nature of the difficulties, if indeed they are being accurately described, would seem to rule out the possibility that the patient could grasp the description. Such a difficulty may be surmounted by an elucidation of different degrees of disability. From the point of view of technique it would be agreeable if the response to interpretations based on a use of a theory of functions, alpha-function and contact-barrier carried some element of confirmation that a realization approximated to these theoretical concepts. Scientifically, validation of the theory would then be supported by a correlation between evidence that capacity for thinking had been increased by analysis, and evidence of the existence of a realization that corresponded to the abstract theoretical construct. There is in fact an "echo" effect when an interpretation is given that lends support to the idea that the theoretical concept of contact-barrier has a corresponding realization. Discussion of this is outside the scope of this subject and I leave it for another occasion.

In Chapters 3–8 I have used the concept of alpha-function to fill gaps in my knowledge of a state of mind which is met with in analytic practice and that I want to describe. I have thus been able to proceed with the communication without having to wait for discovery of the missing facts and without making statements that might appear to suggest that the facts were already known.

I must now show how the theory of functions is used as a tool in the analytic work. I give examples of the background of emotional experiences (realizations) from which the theory was abstracted and

pass on to give examples of realizations, unknown when the theory was abstracted, that were subsequently found to approximate to the theory. The material unfortunately does not lend itself to such logical exposition without producing misleading distortion of the facts. In the next chapter emphasis is on the background of emotional experience from which the theory is abstracted. The description is of elements from which the abstraction was made but these are mixed with so many others that it is impossible to claim for it qualities that are ordinarily regarded as essential to a scientific production.

9

1. A small number of patients with whom I have had to deal have presented prominently symptoms of disordered capacity for thought. In the course of their treatment opportunities for orthodox transference interpretations occurred and were taken, but the patient often learned nothing from them. The stream of disjointed associations continued. Interpretations based on theories of anal erotism in its various forms, theories of the patient's need to improvise a personality out of elements he felt were worthless and which he could therefore afford to lose, theories of splitting, projective identification, defence against assault and so on had only slight effect. There were signs of confusion that I had learned to associate with projective identification. I therefore assumed that I was the repository of a part of his personality such as his sanity, or the non-psychotic part of his personality. Before long I decided that further interpretations based on these theories were not likely to achieve any useful purpose. I tested the supposition that I contained the non-psychotic part of his personality, and then began to be aware that I was supposed to be conscious of what was going on while he was not. I was (contained) his "conscious". Sometimes I could visualize the situation, unfolding in the analysis, as one in which the patient was a foetus to whom the mother's emotions were communicated but to whom the stimulus for the emotions, and their source, was unknown (see "model making", Chapter 22). At other times he seemed to have a rudimentary idea of what was going on, but no idea how he felt. I shall not here describe the variations on this theme, as they were not substantially different from those described by Klein, Rosenfeld and others. The problem which awaited solution, and which I am now discussing, was to determine what this part was. The theory of functions offered a prospect of solving this problem

by assuming that I contained unknown functions of his personality and from this to scrutinize the sessional experience for clues of what these might be. I assumed that I was "consciousness." Freud's theory that consciousness is the sense-organ of psychic quality, allowed an assumption that a separation was being effected between consciousness and psychic quality. This assumption proved fruitful, but only for a session or two and then I found myself in the same situation as before, or nearly so. I was still thinking of the problem as one that could be solved in terms of transference theory and projective identification, that is to say, that I could assume that patients felt under scrutiny by me and the parts of their personality I was supposed to contain. In the light of theories of transference and projective identifications the material poured out could be seen as the link between patient and analyst and I could interpret in the way described in 'Attacks on Linking'. Interpretations had some success, but I did not feel that changes necessarily related to illumination received from interpretations. It then occurred to me that he was doing what I earlier described as "dreaming" the immediate events in the analysis – that is to say, translating sense impressions into alpha-elements. This idea seemed to be illuminating sometimes, but became dynamic only when I related it to *defective* alpha-function, that is to say, when it occurred to me that I was witnessing an inability to dream through lack of alpha-elements and therefore an inability to sleep or wake, to be either conscious or unconscious.

2. This could explain why I was a 'conscious' incapable of the functions of consciousness and he an "unconscious" incapable of the functions of unconsciousness. (For the sake of simplicity I am supposing that this division of functions remained stationary, but in fact it was not so; roles were interchangeable.)

3. This situation does not correspond to the theoretical framework I have suggested, namely, the theory of a contact-barrier owing its existence to the proliferation of alpha-elements by alpha-function and serving the function of a membrane which, by the nature of its composition and permeability separates mental phenomena into two groups one of which performs the functions of consciousness and the other the functions of unconsciousness.

4. In the new situation there is a division of sorts, suspended between analyst and patient as it were, but offering no resistance to the passage of elements from the one zone to the other. It is unsuited

to the establishment of conscious and unconscious, and therefore conducive to defective or anomalous developments of a capacity for memory and repression. The difference in the two states derives from the differences between a contact-barrier composed of alpha-elements and one composed, if that is the right word, of beta-elements. These last, it will be remembered, appear to lack a capacity for linkage with each other. Clinically this screen of beta-elements presents itself to casual observation as indistinguishable from a confused state and in particular from any one of that class of confused states which resemble dreams, namely: (1) An outpouring of disjointed phrases and images which, if the patient were asleep, we would certainly believe to be evidence that the patient was dreaming. (2) A similar outpouring but expressed in a manner that suggests that the patient is feigning dream. (3) A confused outpouring that seems to be evidence of hallucination. (4) Similar to (3) but suggestive of an hallucination of a dream; I have not had occasion to suppose that the patient was having a dream that he was hallucinated. All four states are related to a fear lest the depressive position should precipitate a murderous superego and therefore to the need to have the emotional experience in which this might occur in the presence of the analyst. Clinically the screen of beta-elements to which I am referring bears a strong superficial resemblance to any one of these four classes and might be supposed to be identical with them.

5. Comparison of the beta-element screen with the confused states resembling dream shows the beta-element screen to be coherent and purposive. An interpretation that the patient was pouring out a stream of material intended to destroy the analyst's psychoanalytic potency would not seem out of place. Equally apt would be an interpretation that the patient was concerned to withhold rather than to impart information. One peculiarity of the situation is the plethora of interpretations that would occur to anyone with any common sense. Yet they do not occur to the patient. These common-sense interpretations have a common characteristic in that all are accusatory, or, alternatively, laudatory as if far-fetched with intent to reassure the patient of his goodness in the teeth of the evidence. This is not fortuitous; it would be difficult in face of the evidence to maintain that it was. One is forced to a conclusion that is unexpected and surprising, namely, that the beta-element screen – I shall call it beta-screen for short in

future – has a quality enabling it to evoke the kind of response the patient desires, or alternatively, a response from the analyst which is heavily charged with counter-transference. Both possibilities require examination for their implications.

10

1. Thanks to the beta-screen the psychotic patient has a capacity for evoking emotions in the analyst; his associations are the elements of the beta-screen intended to evoke interpretations or other responses which are less related to his need for psychoanalytic interpretation than to his need to produce an emotional involvement. [This suggests a capacity for intuition that seems incompatible with ordinary ideas of insanity. In so far as it is purposive conduct the purpose must be controlled and dictated by the non-psychotic part of the personality. The evocation peculiar to the beta-screen, if successful, means that the patient is starved of genuine therapeutic material, namely truth, and therefore those of his impulses that are directed to survival are overworked attempting to extract cure from therapeutically poor material.][1]

The theory of counter-transferences offers only partly satisfactory explanation because it is concerned with the manifestation as a symptom of the analyst's unconscious motives and therefore leaves the patient's contribution unexplained. First the patient for which these theories are intended is not employing articulate speech; he is demonstrating with evident sincerity an inability to understand his own state of mind even when it is pointed out to him. His use of words is much closer to action intended to "unburden the psyche of accretions of stimuli" than to speech. Second, he does not set to work to manipulate the analyst in the same way as the neurotic. There is a consistency in the characteristics of beta-elements. The language

[1][The sentences in brackets appeared as an endnote in the original. All further instances of sentences that have similarly been integrated into the text from original endnotes are also indicated by brackets. *Ed.*].

I must use to describe a dynamic situation produces a distortion because it is the language of a scientific method designed for the study of the inanimate. This distortion affects my claim that certain characteristics of the beta-screen are consistent. It would be more true to say that a dynamic situation evolves and that its evolution is betrayed by the emergence of a particular characteristic as one that pervades a growing number of elements and gives them consistency. The replacement of a contact-barrier by a beta-screen is a living process. The observations of the analyst, for reasons connected with the nature of the change from paranoid-schizoid to depressive position, and vice versa contribute to the analytic situation an element which makes its development appear to be a transition from a series of discrete particles or elements to a synthesis of these same elements. One replaces the other in a manner analogous to the replacement of one judgement by another when we examine a figure illustrating reversible perspective.

2. The analysand contributes changes which are associated with the replacement of alpha-function by what may be described as a reversal of direction of the function. [The reversal of direction is compatible with the treatment of thoughts by evacuation; that is to say that if the personality lacks the apparatus that would enable it to "think" thoughts but is capable of attempting to rid the psyche of thoughts in much the same way as it rids itself of accretions of stimuli, then reversal of alpha-function may be the method employed.] Instead of sense impressions being changed into alpha-elements for use in dream thoughts and unconscious waking thinking, the development of the contact-barrier is replaced by its destruction. This is effected by the reversal of alpha-function so that the contact-barrier and the dream thoughts and unconscious waking thinking which are the texture of the contact-barrier are turned into alpha-elements, divested of all characteristics that separate them from beta-elements and are then projected thus forming the beta-screen. [The stripping of alpha-elements of the characteristics that differentiate them from beta-elements is important. A model is provided by the theory of the word as the name of a scientific deductive system, e.g. "Dada". The scientific deductive system consists of a series of hypotheses. The system is a statement that certain elements are constantly conjoined. The conjunction and the elements conjoined depend upon the preconception (*a priori* knowledge of the individual) and the realizations

that have been found by the individual successively to approximate to the preconception and transform it into a conception. The conception in turn becomes an abstraction, or model, to which still more realizations are believed or found to approximate. It is these associations, now stated by the scientific deductive system to be conjoined constantly, (and by the fact of that statement *are* constantly conjoined in the mind of the individual) that are stripped from the word that is the name of the scientific deductive system so that finally only the name "Dada" remains. I am not considering the social value of the name "Dada" nor yet the social version of the scientific deductive system called by that name. The aspect I am discussing is that which exists before publication and is therefore private to the individual. It is that aspect of a phenomenon that would, in Kant's terms, be called secondary quality unless there was evidence, through publication, of the universality that Kant attributes to the primary qualities.]

3. Reversal of alpha-function means the dispersal of the contact-barrier and is quite compatible with the establishment of objects with the characteristics I once ascribed to bizarre objects. The compatibility would be much increased if, despite my warning that contact-barrier (a function) and ego (a structure) should not be regarded as interchangeable terms referring to the same thing, we could consider that the reversal of alpha-function did in fact affect the ego and therefore did not produce a simple return to beta-elements, but objects which differ in important respects from the original beta-elements which had no tincture of the personality adhering to them. The beta-element differs from the bizarre object in that the bizarre object is beta-element plus ego and superego traces. The reversal of alpha-function does violence to the structure associated with alpha-function.

4. To review the terms I have used so far: (1) The ego is a structure that, as Freud describes it, is a specialized development from the id having the function of establishing contact between psychic and external reality. (2) Alpha-function is the name given to an abstraction used by the analyst to describe a function, of which he does not know the nature, until such time he feels in position to replace it by factors for which he feels he has obtained evidence in the course of the investigation in which he is employing alpha-function. It corresponds to that function of a number of factors, including the function of the ego, that transforms sense data into alpha-elements. Alpha-elements comprise visual images, auditory patterns, olfactory patterns, and

are suitable for employment in dream thoughts, unconscious waking thinking, dreams, contact-barrier, memory. Clinically the bizarre object which is suffused with superego characteristics comes nearest to providing a realization to correspond with the concept of beta-elements. But the concept of beta-element includes only sense-impressions, the sense-impression as if it were a part of the personality experiencing the sense impression, and the sense-impression as if it were the thing-in-itself to which the sense-impression corresponds.

It is to be noted that the alpha-function may be regarded as a structure, a piece of mental apparatus producing the contact-barrier. In turn the contact-barrier may be regarded, as the name I have given it suggests, as having the characteristics of a structure. This is a repetition of the problem implicit in the differentiation from each other of ego, consciousness and alpha-function, and it is worth considering the implications of this peculiarity of psychoanalytic investigation, namely the use of concepts relating to objects which we need sometimes to consider as if they were related to machines, that is to say as if they were inanimate, and sometimes as if they were functions, which, since we are dealing with human beings and not machines, are certain to be suffused with the characteristics of life. In the case of alpha-function used as an unknown to correspond with a realization which is changing from unknown to known the name given these objects should make it clear whether we are to observe the object in its character as a function or as a structure or as an abstraction.

The contact-barrier may be expected to manifest itself clinically – if indeed it is manifest at all – as something that resembles dreams. As we have seen, the contact-barrier permits a relationship and preservation of belief in it as an event in actuality, subject to the laws of nature, without having that view submerged by emotions and phantasies originating endo-psychically. Reciprocally it preserves emotions with endo-psychic origin from being overwhelmed by the realistic view. The contact-barrier is therefore responsible for the preservation of the distinction between conscious and unconscious and for its inception. The unconscious is thus preserved. It is being recruited by alpha-function with alpha-elements that need to be stored, but inhibited from intrusion into consciousness on occasions when their impingement on the man's grasp of the situation of external reality would be felt as an irrelevance or a dislocation of ordered thought.

11

1. The theory of functions, and the theory of alpha-function in particular, makes possible further contributions to an understanding of thought processes. I shall consider the nature and function of thinking in any situation that seems to mirror an early age in the life of man, or his current primitive depths, where it would be possible to detect the qualities we associate with thought. In his paper, 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning', Freud says, "Restraint of motor discharge (of action) had now become necessary and was provided by means of the process of thought, which was developed from ideation. Thought was endowed with qualities which made it possible for the mental apparatus to support increased tension during a delay in the process of discharge. It is essentially an experimental way of acting, accompanied by displacement of smaller quantities of cathexis together with less expenditure (discharge) of them." He continues, "For this purpose conversion of free cathexis into 'bound' cathexis was imperative, and this was brought about by means of raising the level of the whole cathectic process." He continues further, "It is probable that thinking was originally unconscious, in so far as it rose above mere ideation and turned to the relations between the object-impressions, and that it became endowed with further qualities which were perceptible to consciousness only through its connection with the memory traces of words." Implicit in Freud's statement is the part played by intolerance of frustration in producing tension, and then its relief, by the employment of thought to fill the interval between the need to unburden the psyche of accretions of stimuli and the actual unburdening. The link between intolerance of frustration and the development of thought is central to an understanding of thought and its disturbances. Freud's statement suggests that the

reality principle is sequent to the pleasure principle; it needs modification to make both principles co-exist. Though I shall not immediately discuss it I make a reservation that intolerance of frustration may be excessive, a quantitative change which almost becomes one of kind. Let us now suppose intolerance of frustration allied to hunger: suppose further that satisfaction of hunger is made impossible by other factors in the personality such as fear, greed, or envy that cannot allow the breast or its equivalent any success in satisfying the envious person. In such a situation greed would be intensified and so would the intolerance of frustration; the effect would be much the same as if the personality were endowed with an excessive intolerance of frustration. Does it matter if intolerance of frustration, or any other dynamic characteristic is primary or secondary? The distinction indicates the limitation of any treatment effecting changes in the personality to secondary factors, for primary factors will not be altered.

It is likely from clinical evidence of the infant's need for material and psychological support that no distinction between material and psychological can be made by the infant. In analysis, however, it is possible to deduce whether the deficiency was one of physical or psychic quality. No matter how early such a deficiency might be, nor what it might be due to, it would be felt to be real and would demand a real solution, that is, one that appeared to remove the disease. The choice that matters to the psychoanalyst is one that lies between procedures designed to evade frustration and those designed to modify it. That is the critical decision.

There are other ways in which the procedure adopted may be classified, as, for example, those that are ultimately destined to reveal themselves as belonging to the class of muscular actions (physical movement generally) and those that are destined to develop so that they are ultimately classified as pertaining to the realms of thought. The fact that the decision is related to such an ultimate classification is significant but for the present I wish to focus attention on phenomena genetically related to the co-existence in the personality of feelings of frustration, intolerance of feelings of frustration, related emotions and the decision that emerges from such a concatenation of elements.

12

1. The activity we know as "thinking" was in origin a procedure for unburdening the psyche of accretions of stimuli: the mechanism is that which has been described by Melanie Klein as projective identification. The broad outline of this theory is that there exists an omnipotent phantasy that it is possible to split off temporarily undesired, though sometimes valued, parts of the personality and put them into an object. In practice it is possible, and desirable in the interests of beneficial therapy, to observe and interpret the evidence that supports this theory and which this theory explains in a way that no other theory does.

2. It is also possible, and in fact essential, to observe evidence which shows that a patient in whom the operation of this omnipotent phantasy can be deduced is capable of behaviour which is related to a counterpart in reality of this phantasy. The patient, even at the outset of life, has contact with reality sufficient to enable him to act in a way that engenders in the mother feelings that he does not want, or which he wants the mother to have. To make theory correspond to these clinical findings I have suggested an emended version of Freud's pleasure principle theory so that the reality principle should be considered to operate co-existentially with the pleasure principle. An instance of an attempt to make the omnipotent phantasy a reality can be seen in the patient who has the impulse to force others to feel that he is capable of murdering the sexual parents so that he may feel capable of a loving sexual relationship free from the fear that he would murder his partner and himself if, as he would be bound to do, he observed himself and his partner displaying evidence of mutual sexual passion. I have suggested that in an extreme form this

may even lead to murder as a method of giving effect, in the world of reality, to the omnipotent phantasy of projective identification which, without such action, would remain only an omnipotent phantasy.

3. There are instances far less dramatic and therefore demanding some perspicacity in the analyst to discern them. It is of importance that the analyst should observe them. That is to say, he should observe and interpret the operation of the phantasy as a mental phenomenon deducible from the evidence and also observe signs that the patient is sufficiently adjusted to reality to be able to manipulate his environment so that the phantasy of projective identification appears to have substance in reality.

4. The more this realistic component is in evidence, and can be made evident to the patient, the more it is possible to judge the extent to which a gravely ill and indeed certifiable patient has contact with reality albeit a reality not always familiar to better developed individuals.

5. The patient's ability to gear his omnipotent phantasy of projective identification to reality is directly related to his capacity for tolerance of frustration. If he cannot tolerate frustration the omnipotent phantasy of projective identification has proportionately less factual counterpart in external reality. This contributes to the state Melanie Klein describes as *excessive* projective identification. The excess however must be scrutinized carefully. It may appear to be excessive because the analyst is forced to be aware of it by the realistic steps which the patient takes to make the analyst in fact experience emotions of a kind the patient does not want to have (Klein). *This* excess must be sharply distinguished from the excessive projective identification which represents a resort to omnipotent phantasy as a flight from reality, and in particular from feelings which are not wanted. But projective identification cannot exist without its reciprocal, namely an introjective activity intended to lead to an accumulation of good internal objects.

6. Let us now suppose that in reality the breast supplies the infant with milk and sensations of security, warmth, well-being, love. Let us suppose further that the infant needs – I deliberately avoid saying "wishes" – to possess itself of the milk itself and the related sensations. We may make a distinction between milk and love by appropriate classification or we may emphasize, if it suits us, the

respects in which they appear similar. Thus we may say that milk is a material substance and is related to alimentation and is presumably dealt with by the digestive tract. Love on the other hand we may regard as immaterial though comparable with milk for the mental welfare[1] of the child. We may place it in one or more of a number of different categories that philosophy, religion and other disciplines place at our disposal. The only reason for limiting our classificatory apparatus to one discipline is the desire to achieve simplicity. Whether we employ philosophical concepts, religious concepts, endocrinological concepts or concepts employed by the neuro-physiologist they will be open to the same objection, namely that they describe states of mind with which we are familiar and shall require them to describe phenomena, or the realities we assume to be the counterpart of those phenomena, with which we are not familiar but believe we have correctly observed and correctly imputed to the infant. Two adults may mean widely different things by the same word "love", yet this word is one I must use to describe part of what I believe to be an infant's experience (I include lack of love). It is clear therefore that there are two major sources of error that immediately present themselves, one being the semantic gap which has to be bridged between adults discussing the problem and the other the scientific propriety of attributing to infant experience a modified yet recognizably similar experience.

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[1]It would be impossible to proceed if I drew the reader's attention to the many instances where I myself am using phrases in which a model is implied rather than explicitly employed. Yet it may help in the elucidation of the problem with which I am concerned if I introduce such an interpretation occasionally as I do here. The term "welfare" itself suggests that mental development like physical development depends on the efficient working of a mental alimentary system. Similarly development may suggest an externalization opposed to envelopment that suggests internalization. One reader may be unconsciously affected by the term welfare, because of the effect of concretization inherent in the implied model, though the theory was not one with which he sympathized. On the other hand he might not be effected at all by the model implicit in "development". Readers of Fowler's *The King's English* (1908) will be familiar with the problem as it presents itself to one concerned with writing good English (see his comments on metaphor in Chapter III). No one would accuse Fowler of treating the writing of good English lightly: yet he discusses this problem under the heading of "Airs and Graces". For the practising psychoanalyst it lies very near the root (or source, or matrix) of the problems of capacity to think and to communicate thought which in turn relate to the possibility or otherwise of achieving any real knowledge.

7. The milk, we may assume with a degree of conviction we cannot feel about love, is received and dealt with by the alimentary canal; what receives and deals with the love? The question may be a formulation based on inadequate thinking, and therefore liable to lead to error, unless we consider what the situation is with the mother. As the infant receives the milk and deals with it by the alimentary system, so the mother provides it by the glandular system, yet milk has been known to fail and the failure has been attributed to emotional upsets. The infant likewise has been supposed to suffer digestive disturbances originating in an emotional upset. It may be useful to suppose that there exists in reality a psychosomatic breast and an infantile psychosomatic alimentary canal corresponding to the breast.[1] This breast is an object the infant needs to supply it with milk and good internal objects. I do not attribute to the infant an awareness of this need; but I do attribute to the infant an awareness of a need not satisfied. We can say the infant feels frustrated if we assume the existence of some apparatus with which frustration can be experienced. Freud's concept of consciousness as that of "a sense-organ for the perception of psychical qualities" provides such an apparatus.

8. As the analyst treating an adult patient I can be conscious of something of which the patient is not conscious. Similarly the mother can discern a state of mind in her infant before the infant can be conscious of it, as, for example, when the baby shows signs of needing food before it is properly aware of it. In this imaginary situation the need for the breast is a feeling and that feeling itself is a bad breast; the infant does not feel it wants a good breast but it does feel it wants to evacuate a bad one.[2]

9. Suppose the infant is fed; the taking in of milk, warmth, love, may be felt as taking in a good breast. Under dominance of the, at first unopposed, bad breast, "taking in" food may be felt as indistinguishable from evacuating a bad breast. Both good and bad breasts are felt as possessing the same degree of concreteness and reality as milk. Sooner or later the "wanted" breast is felt as an "idea of a breast missing" and not as a bad breast present. We

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[1]The term "breast" is used for the concept employed by Melanie Klein.

[2][This idea may be compatible with Freud's statement in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 602) of the primary process. [Endnote included in the original, but not indicated in the text. *Ed*.]

can see that the bad, that is to say wanted but absent, breast is much more likely to become recognized as an idea than the good breast which is associated with what a philosopher would call a thing-in-itself or a thing-in-actuality, in that the sense of a good breast depends on the existence of milk the infant has in fact taken. The good breast and the bad breast, the one being associated with the actual milk that satisfies hunger and the other with the non-existence of that milk, must have a difference in psychic quality. "Thoughts are a nuisance", said one of my patients, "I don't want them." Is a "thought" the same as an absence of a thing? If there is no "thing", is "no thing" a thought and is it by virtue of the fact that there is "no thing" that one recognizes that "it" must be thought? Before considering further how this difference in quality might be established I shall assume another situation. Let us suppose the infant to have fed but to be feeling unloved. Again it is aware of a need for the good breast and again this "need for a good breast" is a "bad breast" that needs to be evacuated. A number of different situations of this kind would pose problems requiring different solutions; in my first example the infant could be supposed to feel that the "need for the breast" bad breast was being evacuated if it passed a motion while taking milk; in that case it would associate a physical act with a result that we would call a change in its state of mind from dissatisfaction to satisfaction. If it is correct to suppose that the central question rests on discrimination of psychic quality and if consciousness is legitimately regarded as the sense-organ of psychic quality, it is difficult to see how consciousness comes into existence. It clearly will not do to say that the infant is conscious of psychic quality and transforms this emotional experience into alpha-elements, for I have already said the existence of consciousness and unconsciousness depends on the prior production of alpha-elements by alpha-function. We must assume that the good breast and the bad breast are emotional experiences. The physical component, milk, discomfort of satiation or the opposite, can be immediately apparent to the sense and we can therefore accord a chronological priority to beta-elements over alpha-elements. Intolerance of frustration could be so pronounced that alpha-function would be forestalled by immediate evacuation of the beta-elements. The mental component, love, security,

anxiety, as distinct from the somatic requires a process analogous to digestion. What this might be is concealed by use of the concept of alpha-function but a value may be found for this by psychoanalytic investigations. For example, when the mother loves the infant what does she do it with? Leaving aside the physical channels of communication my impression is that her love is expressed by reverie.

10. Though the difficulties of penetrating the adult mind in analysis are great they are less so than attempting to penetrate the infant's by speculative hypothesis; investigation of reverie in the adult may afford us an entry into this problem. We may deduce from reverie, as the psychological source of supply of the infant's needs for love and understanding, what kind of psychological receptor organ is required if the infant is to be able to profit from reverie as it is able, thanks to the digestive capacities of the alimentary canal, to profit from the breast and the milk it supplies. Put in another way, assuming alpha-function as that which makes available to the infant what would otherwise remain unavailable for any purpose other than evacuation as beta-elements, what are the *factors* of this function that relate directly to the mother's capacity for reverie?

11. The mother's capacity for reverie is here considered as inseparable from the content for clearly one depends on the other. If the feeding mother cannot allow reverie or if the reverie is allowed but is not associated with love for the child or its father, this fact will be communicated to the infant even though incomprehensible to the infant. Psychic quality will be imparted to the channels of communication, the links with the child. What happens will depend on the nature of these maternal psychic qualities and their impact on the psychic qualities of the infant, for the impact of the one upon the other is an emotional experience subject, from the point of view of the development of the couple and the individuals composing it, to transformation by alpha-function. The term reverie may be applied to almost any content. I wish to reserve it only for such content as is suffused with love or hate. Using it in this restricted sense reverie is that state of mind which is open to the reception of any "objects" from the loved object and is therefore capable of reception of the infant's projective identifications whether they are felt by the infant to be good or bad. In short, reverie is a factor of the mother's alpha-function.

12. Returning now to the infant containing[1] a "need for the breast" which I have said is a feeling that is equated with a "bad breast".[2] This bad breast has to be exchanged for a good breast.

[If I am asked what I mean by "bad breast" I can only say I mean what the baby means. If I am asked what that is I can say that in the course of the empirical experience of analysis a patient shows certain feelings that I believe he has successfully communicated to me. I must, for reasons connected with the practice of analysis, say what those feelings are. To do so I can fall back on certain material, the source of which I describe later, to make a model. I compare this model with what is taking place in the room and I make my interpretation that amongst things the patient feels that he contains is a "bad breast". I can present the view, as I see it, of infant and analyst thus: A. I think the baby is having an unpleasant emotional experience. B. I think the baby thinks it contains a bad breast. A. I think the painful emotional experience is associated with the coming together of a pre-conception and a beta-element. B. Depending on the personality of the baby I think the baby can: (1) eject the beta-element and lay the foundation for incapacity to think (2) accept the beta-element with juxtaposition with the pre-conception, tolerate the intrinsic frustration, and thus be in process of alpha-function and the production of alpha-elements. I deal with the problem of pre-conceptions in my chapter on definitory hypotheses. In the practice of analysis of patients with disorders of thought the analyst requires, if possible, to establish a methodological framework for himself but, and this is the crux of the matter, he must also try to form some idea of what the infant thinks a feeling is. For in disorders of thought it is obvious that some problem of this kind

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[1] "Containing." I accept the implied model of a container in this and other passages in which it is necessary to use terms such as "internal" or "external" objects. The model is one I employ with reluctance as I think it is more appropriate to immature than mature scientific thinking. Yet the nature of this work and the lack of a language adequate for a scientific approach to it compels the employment of models sometimes known and more often suspected to be inappropriate, but unavoidable because there is none better.

[2] "Bad breast." One of the problems of methodology with which I am attempting to deal is illustrated here, and instances of the same kind are plentiful in these pages: I shall not however mark them, leaving the reader to use his indulgence to remedy the faults in exposition.

has arisen in the infant's life and has not been solved. Yet it is but a short step from this point to the absurdity of attributing to the infant ideas, thoughts, concepts about what the grown up calls a "feeling" that would do credit to a Kant. Perhaps the answer is that only a Kant has such problems and can solve them. Those who are not Kant either (a) do not have these problems or (b) have these problems and develop disorders of thought.[1]]

An infant capable of tolerating frustration can permit itself to have a sense of reality, to be dominated by the reality principle. If its intolerance of frustration reaches beyond a certain degree omnipotent mechanisms come into operation, notably projective identification. This might still be regarded as realistic, in that it suggests awareness of the value of a capacity for thought as a means of softening frustration when the reality principle is dominant. But it depends for its efficacy on the existence of the mother's capacity for reverie. If the mother fails then a further burden is thrown on the infant's capacity for toleration of frustration, for now its capacity for toleration of frustration of thought itself is tested. I am here supposing that projective identification is an early form of that which later is called a capacity for thinking. An infant endowed with marked capacity for toleration of frustration might survive the ordeal of a mother incapable of reverie and therefore incapable of supplying its mental needs. At the other extreme an infant markedly incapable of tolerating frustration cannot survive without breakdown even the experience of projective identification with a mother capable of reverie; nothing less than unceasing breast feeding would serve and that is not possible through lack of appetite if for no other reason. We have thus approached a mental life unmapped by the theories elaborated for the understanding of neurosis. I do not propose to pursue this investigation now, except in so far as it bears on alpha-function.

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[1][This paragraph appeared originally as the second part of the endnote text now appearing as fn 1 on p. 304. *Ed.*].

13

1. For effective use it is necessary to be able to regard alpha-function as constant by virtue of its status as an unknown. In so far as it is flexible its flexibility derives from the use of variables as factors that can be replaced, as I explained earlier, by theories and concepts of fixed value. The values given to the variables (the factors) must be genuinely constant so that once their value has been fixed the meaning of alpha-function is fixed. In practice even an approximation to precision is only possible in the sense that the factor must be clearly described or, in the instance of a theory, correctly quoted.[1]

2. As an example of an attempt at precise formulation I take alpha-function and two factors; excessive projective identification and excess of bad objects. Suppose that in the course of the analysis these two factors are obtrusive to the exclusion of other factors that the analyst has observed. If psychoanalytic theory were rationally organized it should be possible to refer to both these factors by symbols which were part of a system of reference that was applied uniformly and universally. The Kleinian theory of projective identification would be referred to by initials and a page and paragraph reference. Similarly, Freud's view of attention would be replaced by a reference. This can in fact be done, though clumsily, by reference to page and line of a standard edition even now. Such a statement could lend itself to mere manipulation, more or less ingenious, of symbols according to apparently arbitrary rules. Provided that the analyst

[1]What this means in practice is dealt with in the discussion of the anthology of theories. Some idea of the magnitude of the problem can be gained by a study of J. O. Wisdom's 1961 paper, "A Methodological Approach to the Problem of Hysteria" (given to the Dutch Society for Psycho-Analysis, Amsterdam, 16 December 1957).

preserves a sense of the factual background to which such a formulation refers, there are advantages in the exercise in precision and rigour of thought that is exacted by an attempt to concentrate actual clinical experience so that it may be expressed in such abstract notation. Further the analyst can see from an inspection of his formalizations which theories he is using and which he neglects. From evidence of neglect he could deduce either that his psychoanalytic armoury was becoming impoverished or that certain psychoanalytic theories were not in his experience standing up well to the test of clinical usefulness. In either case this would be a valuable insight. The formula provides a shorthand summary of sessions over a period. It should be possible to see what links one summary has with another thence to predict by reference to the theoretical deductive systems in which these factors appear as hypotheses or premises analytical situations that may develop. Alpha-function may be a major pre-occupation of the analyst in a particular analysis, but it does not follow that it will continue to be so, or that, being so, it will have the same value in subsequent weeks. In the next group of sessions it may become clear that a belief that a bad object exists is being expressed as an expression of envious disparagement of a good object. In that case the formulation will reflect the change of factors. By the next week alpha-function may no longer be of central importance; other factors and some other function may have taken its place. The principle of applying the Theory of Functions remains the same whatever the function and whatever the factors of which it is the function.

3. As a method of making something clear to himself the analyst needs his own book of psychoanalytic theories that he personally frequently uses together with page and paragraph numbers that make their identification certain.

4. The capacity to remember what the patient has said needs to be allied to a capacity for forgetting so that the fact that any session is a new session and therefore an unknown situation that must be psychoanalytically investigated is not obscured by an already overplentiful fund of pre-and misconception. Yet the analyst needs all the knowledge of the patient and the discoveries and work of his predecessor in the field that he can muster. This reinforces the need for a firm structure, a theoretical framework of psychoanalysis which is yet capable of flexibility in action. If the rigidity of the theoretical structure is weakened by departure from theory such departures

become easier to detect. For example, if reference to transference is made by specific quotation it can be seen that the writer is claiming to use the term with meanings already established. If conscious anxiety about the analyst is said to be a factor in the transference it would be apparent that the writer had in mind some phenomenon not the same as that described by Freud in the passage to which reference is made. Flexibility is conferred by working with functions that are variables whose value only becomes constant when, for the variables of which it is the function, there are substituted factors which are constants. At present the nearest to a constant in psychoanalysis is the use of a page and line reference to the theory that is being employed as a factor.

5. With the deterioration in the analyst's theoretical and analytical equipment I need not concern myself here; it is sufficient that a method of formulation would help to make it manifest, and enable the analyst to take such steps as he thought necessary. Diminished use of a psychoanalytic theory might show that it was not surviving the test of analytical practice.

6. A record of sessions that showed succinctly the progress of the analysis by representing the theories employed would thus serve a purpose that was more than an aid to the analyst's memory. Its value as a record of work done, and indirectly of the analyst's method of working, would be great, but the central problem concerns the need for a system of notation that is valuable both for recording analytic problems and working on them.

7. The system of notation must make it possible for the analyst to provide a record that he himself can understand, after a lapse of time, and that can be communicated to others without serious loss of meaning. Difficult as it may be to fulfil this ambition its achievement would not be enough. For development of psychoanalysis a notation must be found that records psychoanalytic work, as mathematical notation records facts, but just as mathematical notation records facts and provides a means for calculation as well, so the ideal psychoanalytic notation must provide a means for working on the problem that the notation has enabled the analyst to record.

14

1. A central part is played by alpha-function in transforming an emotional experience into alpha-elements because a sense of reality matters to the individual in the way that food, drink, air and excretion of waste products matter. Failure to eat, drink or breathe properly has disastrous consequences for life itself. Failure to use the emotional experience produces a comparable disaster in the development of the personality; I include amongst these disasters degrees of psychotic deterioration that could be described as death of the personality. As always, the use of a model, as I am using the model of the digestive system here, is open to the dangers I discuss on pp. 345 ff. To moderate these dangers and make discussion scientific, a notation to represent emotional experience is required. If the individual analyst built up for himself an anthology of working psychoanalytic theory on a foundation of a few good basic theories well understood and capable, individually and in combination, of covering a great many of the situations he might expect to meet, it might help the creation of a notation. What follows is a sketch to indicate the lines along which progress could be made and which I have found helpful.

2. The feelings we know by the names "love" and "hate" would seem to be obvious choices if the criterion is basic emotion. Envy and Gratitude, Depression, Guilt, Anxiety, all occupy a dominant place in psychoanalytic theory and would seem, with Sex, to be choices to place with love and hate. In fact I prefer three factors I regard as intrinsic to the link between objects considered to be in relationship with each other. An emotional experience cannot be conceived of in isolation from a relationship. The basic relationships that I postulate are (1) X loves Y; (2) X hates Y; and (3) X knows Y. These links will be expressed by the signs L, H and K. What realization may exist to

which these abstract links, L, H and K, correspond? Suppose an imaginary situation of a type with which an analyst is familiar; the patient Smith is talking freely and is co-operative and friendly; in the course of his associations he mentions that he knows a certain psychotherapist, Jones, who is a very stupid man and knows virtually nothing about psychoanalysis. The patient knows him well and has good reason, he says, to dislike him. He once treated a friend of his, Mr May, with shocking results. His friend's marriage, which had always been harmonious until his friend took up treatment. . . . etc. Obviously this is a complex communication. There is a link between the patient and the analyst; there are various links between the patient and the psychotherapist, between patient and his friend, between the patient and his friend's analyst. For the link between the patient and analyst there is direct evidence. With regard to the patient's report of the other links the evidence is mostly indirect although the direct evidence which the session affords could be used, if thought desirable, to supplement the patient's own statements. The patient says he knows Jones. Is this to be recorded as Smith K Jones? He says he dislikes Jones. Should it be Smith H Jones? The patient says "his friend" Mr May. Should this then be Smith L May? Or is there some previous material in the analysis, or some manner or intonation that suggests a link, Smith L Mrs May? But perhaps there is some material that suggests there is a homosexual relationship between Smith and Mr May? There need be no end to the questions stimulated by an imaginary episode or limit to the number of answers for each question. But it is hardly less true to say just that about a real session. Yet on the answers to the questions, which the analyst begins to entertain, will depend his interpretation of the direct evidence of the nature of the transference. It may seem, since the analytic situation is complex, that there can be no merit in recording it by one of three simple signs. Admitting that the sign is to express only one part of the emotional experience, the link, does not the imaginary episode show that either the signs, L, H and K, conceal a complex link which may have endless varieties under a sign of misleading simplicity, or, that they define a link with a degree of rigidity which makes their applications to a real analytical situation a hopeless falsification?

3. There is no reason for either of these alternatives to be true; the signs can be related to fact in a way that saves them from becoming meaningless symbols and can at the same time be sufficiently

abstract to ensure that they are generally and not merely accidentally applicable to real emotional situations.

4. The analyst must allow himself to appreciate the complexity of the emotional experience he is required to illuminate and yet restrict his choice to these three links. He decides what the linked objects are and which of these three represents with most accuracy the actual link between them.

If the patient is friendly the link can be represented by L. It is not an adequate representation because it is necessary to record the state of the transference. I save the trouble of saying what I mean by that by recording transference in accordance with the system I suggested earlier (p. 308, para. 6).

It will be seen that the use of HKL, to force the analyst to establish the 'key' of the session is not the same as using it to record an emotional experience; that is to say it is a usage that provides a less than full account of what is known to have happened. But it introduces an element that must be an essential part of any recording system before that system can be regarded as satisfactory, namely the working tool. To sum up an emotional episode as K is to produce an imperfect record but a good starting point for the analyst's speculative meditation. In this respect the system I have sketched out, despite its crudity and naïvety, possesses the rudiments of the essentials of a system of notation – record of fact and working tool.

15

1. The aim in making the choice L, H or K is to make one statement that is to the best of the analyst's belief true. It need not be a statement that accurately represents a realization of which it is the counterpart; the statement must seem to the analyst to be a true reflection of his feelings and one on which he can rely for a particularly important purpose, namely to act as a standard to which he can refer all the other statements that he proposes to make. If L is chosen then L expresses a quality with which he compares other qualities. L also expresses quantity and by this quantity the analyst will measure all the other quantities he expresses. That is to say, if he means by L that the two objects are linked by strong feelings of love he will not then use K for a casual tie such as might be expressed by an impatient "Yes, I know". The choice of L or H or K is not determined by a need to represent fact but by the need to provide a key to the value of the other elements that are combined in the formalized statement. In psychoanalysis where a statement depends on other statements for its value the need for the recognition of such a key statement is pressing. It must be made clear that the analyst is basing the values of all the elements in his statement on the one statement. Theoretically I see no reason why he should not choose any element he likes for this purpose, but in practice much is to be said for choosing an element that has importance derived from other aspects of its position in the total statement. Obviously an element which has already such importance is more likely to support the burden that it must carry than one that has not. The L, H or K link is just such an element. When the analyst chooses his sign it must feel right and, it stands to reason, he must keep it constant. If by reference to it other elements seem to make the

statement incompatible with itself, the other elements and relationships must be brought into harmony and the L, H or K left unaltered unless it becomes clear that it has been wrongly chosen or that the analysand has changed; in that case the whole statement will have to be abandoned and a fresh start made. It will be seen that I attach great importance to the choice of L, H or K; that I have a preference for choosing the sign representing the link as the element best suited to carry the load I wish it to bear, but have no difficult in conceiving that there might be good reasons why an analyst should prefer to make his "true" statement one based on some different element; I do not think the choice presents any unreasonable degree of difficulty to a trained and practising analyst.

2. L, H or K have to be decided in such a way that the analyst *feels* he has established a point of reference. By doing so the danger of producing a system of abstractions, devoid of background and subject only to ingenious and arbitrary manipulation, is made less.

16

THE K LINK

1. I shall ignore L and H, and discuss K as it is important for the analyst and is the link that is germane to learning by experience. In the course of discussing it I hope also to take up further points which are relevant to linking but with which I have not so far been able to deal. My first point is that L or H may be relevant to K but that neither is by itself conducive to K. x K y, the analyst K the analysand, I K Smith; these are statements that represent an emotional experience. Like L and H, K represents an active link and has about it a suggestion that if x K y, then x does something to y; it represents a psychoanalytic relationship. As I propose to use it, it does not convey a sense of finality, a meaning that x is in possession of a piece of knowledge called y, but rather that x is in the state of getting to know y, and y is in a state of getting to be known by x. The statement x K y, in so far as it means that x has a piece of knowledge called y, falls in the category of a relationship between the person making the statement and also the person to whom it is made and a relationship with x and y about whom it is made.

2. In so far as it is a statement meaning that x is concerning himself to know the truth about y, it corresponds to statements of relationship that are said to be informed by a scientific outlook. The techniques employed by those who have a scientific outlook have achieved most success when y is an inanimate object. The conviction that a scientific outlook prevails in the relationship x K y is more easily maintained if y is inanimate and if x can be made to seem to approximate to the inanimate, for example x uses a machine. Truth value is felt to inhere in the record presented by a smoked drum or

the record of the human voice in a way that is not felt to be the case in the report of human judgement. The simplicity of this view is exposed on occasions when it is believed that a photographic record cannot yield the evidence available to direct observation.

3. Doubts about human capacity to know anything underlie the inquiries of the philosopher of science; these doubts today spring from an inescapable awareness that in the situation represented by these abstract terms, x K y is identical with x L y or x H y, in that an animate element exists intrinsically. That is to say, that in proportion as inanimate machinery is introduced to displace the living element, L, H or K have ceased to exist. The problem with which philosophers of science have become associated has been given added significance by psychoanalysis and this for two main sets of reasons: x has the strength and is shown in detail to have the weakness of which he has always been suspected when he embarks on an investigation of y that is related to y's capacity for contact with reality. I do not propose to spend time on the philosophical problems involved as they can be found dealt with in Kant, Hume and their successors. I wish to emphasize that all that has been said about the problems of knowledge applies with particular force to psychoanalysis, and that psychoanalysis applies with particular force to those problems.

4. The question "How can x know anything?" expresses a feeling; it appears to be painful and to inhere in the emotional experience that I represent by x K y. An emotional experience that is felt to be painful may initiate an attempt either to evade or to modify the pain according to the capacity of the personality to tolerate frustration. Evasion or modification, in accordance with the view expressed by Freud in his paper, 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911b), are intended to remove the pain. Modification is attempted by using the relationship x K y so that it will lead to a relationship in which x is possessed of a piece of knowledge called y – the meaning for x K y repudiated by me on p. 314. Evasion on the other hand is attempted by substitution of the meaning "x is possessed of a piece of knowledge called y", so that x K y no longer represents the painful emotional experience but the supposedly painless one.

5. Such a manoeuvre is intended not to affirm but to deny reality, not to represent an emotional experience but to misrepresent it to make it appear to be a fulfilment rather than a striving for fulfilment. The difference between the aim of the lie and the aim of truth

can thus be expressed as a change of sense in x K y and to relate to intolerance of the pain associated with feelings of frustration. The problem of translating private "knowledge" into public is the same for misrepresenting an emotional experience as it is for representing it. In the psychoanalysis of certain patients we have to concern ourselves with their failure to misrepresent emotional experiences even to themselves; it is possible to increase understanding of the insane by considering his failure to substitute a misrepresentation of the facts for the representation that corresponds to, and therefore illuminates, reality. The motive is likely to be explained in Freud's statement that "hallucination was abandoned only in consequence of the absence of the expected gratification". It will be necessary to approach the problem as if with two distinct aims; one concerned with knowing a person or thing, K in fact, and the other concerned with evasion of K and the emotional experience it represents. The procedure I am proposing, as part of K for the purpose of knowing "x K y" and what it represents, therefore, involves identification with a person that comes for analysis. It also involves abstraction from the realization to produce a formulation that represents the realization and might therefore correspond with and so represent realizations at present unknown.

17

1. In the K activity on which I am engaged, namely that of knowing, I have to be conscious of my emotional experience and able to abstract from it a statement that will represent this experience adequately. This abstraction engenders confidence if it then represents other experiences unknown when the abstraction is made. The sense of confidence is similar to that produced if a belief seems supported by common sense. Confidence is a concomitant of knowing that there is correlation between the senses (pp. 318, 320) or that more than one person in a group entertains what appears to be the same statement of the same representation of an emotional experience. Confidence in a representation is associated with (1) a belief that the representation is supported by common sense and (2) that it not only represents the emotional experience from which it is abstracted, but represents other realizations, unknown when the abstraction was accomplished. Thus an abstract formalization, employing the signs L, H and K used for the evaluation of one emotional experience, may itself be evaluated if it can be seen to serve as an abstract representation of a different emotional experience.

2. Abstraction, then, can be seen as a step in publication which facilitates correlation by comparison of the representation that has been abstracted with a number of different realizations none of which is the realization from which the representation was originally abstracted. The concretization, by contrast, can be seen as a form of publication which facilitates correlation by common sense; that is, by stating something so that it is recognized as an object of one sense that can yet be tested as an object of another sense. The criterion for the statement must be its value in facilitating testing by more than one sense or by the senses of more than one person. (In astronomy

correlations are achieved although only the sense of sight and its data are available because the individual discoverer has been able to make his private experience public for testing by other observers contemporary or posthumous. The weakness incidental to an inability to employ the evidence of more than one sense has been compensated for by the ability to abstract a statement of an original emotional experience in terms of such rigour that realizations of the representation could be sought for, found, or accidentally recognized many years afterwards. The intuition of heliocentricity of Aristarchus could be confirmed hundreds of years later by Kepler.) Mathematical formulation is not yet available to the psychoanalyst though there are suggestive possibilities.

3. The reasons for making an abstract statement are these: (1) the analyst is impelled to formulate his basic hypothesis; (2) the analyst is able to detect from the record that such abstraction makes available any tendency for the theoretical armoury on which he relies to become jejune; (3) the analyst is preserved from losing sight of the provenance of his theoretical equipment in the history of his scientific discipline; (4) the analytic practitioners will be able more readily to see that certain theories hitherto regarded as established have in fact become redundant or discredited by the test of experience itself, and (5) correlation of the abstract statement with realizations from which it was *not* derived becomes possible; (6) it helps to establish a standard to which all other statements can be referred. Examples will be seen in the later pages.

The process of abstraction to which I have made conscious resort is essential to the x K y emotional experience. It is not an incidental procedure which can be discarded at will.

4. Once we have given priority to the link and agreed to limit its representation to the three signs L, H and K, it is possible to approach the problem of representation by considering what steps would be needed to establish a successful method of *mis*representation. Since the process of abstraction is not incidental and one to be discarded at will, positive steps have to be taken for an individual to achieve the state of mind, seen in some psychotics, in which the capacity for abstraction is destroyed. The value, for example, of the word dog which does not refer to a specific animal but to a class, as a method of achieving abstraction and generalization, is destroyed so that it can no longer be used as the name of a thing but is the thing-in-itself,

"words are things". In a formalized system, designed to represent the K link it is necessary to introduce elements that will represent mis-representation. This can be done quite simply by borrowing from algebraic geometry the procedure by which a change of sign, say for a line AB, represents a change in sense of the line. K represents the link I have adumbrated: –K represents the link constituted by NOT understanding, i.e. mis-understanding. The implications of this can best be grasped by noting that –L is not the same as H, nor –H the same as L.

5. For the present, factors must be represented by a page and line reference to that part of the literature that gives the best definition of the factor to which reference is being made. The search for signs to represent factors thus following the procedure I have adopted with L, H and K, is premature because substitution of a sign for an ordinarily accepted term produces a formalized system so divorced from its background that it becomes meaningless whereas by keeping to a system of page and line reference the background of realization from which the theories are derived is never wholly lost to sight. Formalization and abstraction on the other hand have the effect, by removing the concrete and particular, of eliminating aspects that obscure the importance of the relationship of one element with another. The employment of specific terms notable for their concreteness, though retaining the background from which they are derived, obscures the fact that concrete terms are variables dependent for their value on the context in which they are placed. This means that the essential thing is to find a set of signs that will adequately represent a realization and also make it possible to display the relationship of one sign with another – its context.

18

1. In the work done here (K activity) I have resorted to abstraction, in contrast to that reverse process of concretization by which words cease to be abstract signs but become things themselves. To demonstrate relationship adequately, abstraction and formalization are essential.

2. The problem is not merely the use of words already invested with a penumbra of associations to describe an unprecedented situation; it is that this penumbra of associations has been acquired in pursuit of the establishment of a mental relationship with concrete objects. This pursuit, in the development of the individual, is far less exacting than the attempt to establish a mental relationship with a personality either the individual's own or that of another person. The senses present the personality with material on which work has to be done to produce what Freud calls the "conscious awareness attached to them", that is to the sense data. But it is hard to believe that sense data, as ordinarily understood, could bring much material of value when the object of the senses is an emotional experience of a personality (to whomever it may belong). The senses may be able in a state of fear or rage to contribute data concerning the heart-beat, and similar events peripheral, as we see it, to an emotional state. But there are no sense-data directly related to psychic quality, as there are sense-data directly related to concrete objects. Hypochondriacal symptoms may therefore be signs of an attempt to establish contact with psychic quality by substituting physical sensation for the missing sense data of psychic quality. It seems possible that it was in response to his awareness of this difficulty that Freud felt disposed to postulate consciousness as the sense-organ of psychic quality. I have

no doubt whatever of the need for something in the personality to make contact with psychic quality.

3. For personalities that seem to be incapable of true dreaming, the border-line psychotic and psychotic parts of the personality, the theory of consciousness as the sense-organ of psychic quality is not satisfactory; by the standards of clinical practice contradictions become apparent which are resolved if the problems are approached with a different theory. The weakness of this theory of consciousness is manifest in the situation for which I have proposed the theory that alpha-function, by proliferating alpha-elements, is producing the contact-barrier, an entity that separates elements so that those on one side are, and form, the conscious and on the other side are, and form, the unconscious. The theory of consciousness is weak, not false, because by amending it to state that the conscious and the unconscious thus constantly produced do function together as if they were binocular and therefore capable of correlation and self-regard. Because of the manner of its genesis, impartial register of psychic quality of the self is precluded: the "view" of one part by the other is, as it were, "monocular". For these reasons, and others arising from clinical experience of psychoanalysis of that class of patient in whom the psychotic part of the personality is obtrusive, I find the theory of primary and secondary processes unsatisfactory. This theory is weak in the need to postulate two systems at the point where, in my theory of an alpha-function, an emotional experience is transformed into alpha-elements,[1] to make dream thought, unconscious waking thinking and storage in the mind (memory) possible. I attribute the appearance of beta-elements, the closely associated bizarre objects and the serious disturbances ordinarily associated with excessive obtrusion of the psychotic elements of the personality, to the failure of alpha-function.

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[1]It is important to distinguish between the natures of the two theories. The theory of alpha-function is introduced to make it possible for the analyst to work without proposing a new theory prematurely: Freud's theory of consciousness as a sense organ for psychic quality is a part of recognized psychoanalytic theory. See Chapter 12.

19

1. Attribution of a value to the term alpha-function is a task of psychoanalysis and can be achieved in no other way. Its status, as I discuss it here, is that of an unknown variable to be used to satisfy the need for a system of abstraction adequate to the requirements of psychoanalysis. This and related problems are objects of the enquiry; they are also instruments by which the enquiry is conducted.[1] A distinction must be made between the concept of alpha-function and the realization which is felt to approximate sufficiently closely to the theory in which this concept is employed to warrant appropriation of the term alpha-function as a name, however temporary, for the realization.

2. The genesis of all abstraction is to be supposed, for purposes of analytic investigation, to be a factor in alpha-function. Such an hypothesis is compatible with the association of breakdown in alpha-function with predominance of beta-elements which are remarkable for their concreteness to a point where some patients

[1]The process that the analyst is activating is, in the cases in which he is investigating disorders of thought, designed to investigate the same process in the patient. What psychoanalysts call phantasies are, in some cases at least, the present day survivals of what were once models that the patient formed to match his emotional experiences. In this respect the Oedipus myth is the survival of a model designed to match an infant emotional experience. If the case exhibits a disorder of thought it will be found that this model was never properly formed. As a result the oedipal situation will appear to be imperfectly developed or non-existent. Analysis of such a patient will reveal attempts, if the analysis is progressing, to formulate such a model. See also Frege, *Grundgesetze* (1952), p. 154, in which he discusses the concept that is, as it were, unsaturated.

regard words not as the names of things but as things-in-themselves. The hypothesis must be matched against emotional experiences that are a part of the clinical problem of establishing a value for alpha-function itself. First we need to know what is the counterpart of a sense impression in the relationship of a person with an emotional experience. The sense-organs, the awareness belonging to them and their realizations derive from the sensuous experience of concrete objects. What deals with the counterparts of a sense impression of an emotional experience? How are these counterparts of a sense impression then transformed into alpha-elements? It is helpful to postulate[1] sense impressions of an emotional experience analogous to sense impressions of concrete objects. If there are such impressions we shall have to consider whether the alpha-elements into which alpha-function transforms the sense impressions of an emotional experience differ from the alpha-elements into which alpha-function transforms the sense-data of a concrete object, and if so in what the difference consists. Freud suggested that the model for primary and secondary processes was the reflex apparatus; the application of the theory of functions requires that the model is formed first, and then inspected to see if it can be represented by the theoretical abstraction I have called a link, and if it can represent (and if so how), the realization that has stimulated the production of the model. Alpha-function represents something that exists when certain factors operate in consort. It is assumed that there are factors which operate in such consort or alternatively that if for

[1]To postulate such objects is open to the objection expressed by Frege (1884) against postulating Logical Objects (*Grundlagen der Arithmetik*, pp. 55, 56). The psychoanalyst must rely on the emotional experience of the analysis to reveal elements that he regards as factors of alpha-function. If he thinks that some of these factors merit description as analogues of sense impressions of concrete objects, it will be time to formulate the appropriate definitory hypotheses or to assign to them already existing terms that appear to be the names of such definitory hypotheses. The analyst is therefore in the position of one, who, thanks to the power of "binocular" perception and consequent correlation that possession of a capacity for conscious and unconscious thought confers, is able to form models and abstractions that serve in elucidating the patient's inability to do the same. More detailed description of this belongs to a description of clinical psychoanalysis into which I cannot enter here except in so far as it is incidental to illustrating my theme, namely the analyst's problem of method in learning by experience.

some reason they do not (that is to say that if the available factors have no alpha-function), then the personality is incapable of producing alpha-elements and therefore incapable of dream thoughts, consciousness or unconsciousness, repression, or learning from experience. This failure is serious because in addition to the obvious penalties that follow from an inability to learn from experience there is a need for awareness of an emotional experience, similar to the need for an awareness of concrete objects that is achieved through the sense impressions, because lack of such awareness implies a deprivation of truth and truth seems to be essential for psychic health. The effect on the personality of such deprivation is analogous to the effect of physical starvation on the physique.

3. By resorting to abstraction and its products, alpha-function and its factors, I have been able to discuss psychoanalytic unknowns. I continue by concretization, that is, by using terms approximating to those used on a level of empirically verifiable data, to speculate on what part of the early psychic apparatus it is that is deflected to the provision of the apparatus needed for thought. Freud, describing thought as providing a method of restraint for motor discharge which had become necessary, simply says it developed from ideation. In his discussion of dream interpretation he was impressed by the value of reflex apparatus as a model for the psychic apparatus involved in dreaming and evolved his theory of primary and secondary systems in the light of this model.[1] I suggest that thinking is something forced on an apparatus, not suited for the purpose, by the demands of reality, and is contemporary with, as Freud said, the dominance of the reality principle. A modern analogy is provided by the fact that the demands of reality not only forced the discovery of psychoanalysis, but have led to the deflection of verbal thought from its original function of providing restraint for motor discharge to the tasks of self-knowledge for which it is ill-suited and for the purpose of which it has to undergo drastic changes.

4. It will be seen that I ignore the nature of alpha-function and leave it as an abstraction for use as an unknown that is given a value only in the course of an analytic investigation.[2] I am therefore tackling

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[1] S. Freud (1900a), *Interpretation of Dreams*, *Standard Edition, 4*, chapter VIIB.

[2] A process similar to that whereby pre-conception and experience of a realization are matched to stimulate the genesis of a conception.

a different problem from that which Freud investigated with his theories of ideation and his model of the reflex arc. I am assuming that an apparatus existed and had to undergo, still has to undergo, adaptation to the new tasks involved in meeting the demands of reality by developing a capacity for thought. The apparatus that has to undergo this adaptation is that which dealt originally with sense impressions relating to the alimentary canal.

In this system, as far as I can make out and as far as I am able to render what I have deduced in words, what takes place is this; the infant is aware of a very bad breast inside it, a breast that is "not there" and by not being there gives it painful feelings. This object is felt to be "evacuated" by the respiratory system or by the process of "swallowing" a satisfying breast. This breast that is swallowed is indistinguishable from a "thought" but the "thought" is dependent on the existence of an object that is actually put into the mouth. In certain conditions, dependent on factors of the personality, the sucking process and its attendant sensations are equated with evacuation of the bad breast. The breast, the thing-in-itself, is indistinguishable from an idea in the mind. The idea of a breast in the mind is, reciprocally, indistinguishable from the thing itself in the mouth. Keeping for the present to two situations only, one of which is an actual breast, indistinguishable from an emotional experience which in turn is thing-in-itself and thought, but in an undifferentiated state, and the other the bad "need-of-a-breast" bad breast which is equally an object compounded of emotional experience and thing-in-itself the two being as yet undifferentiated, it is clear that we have arrived at an object very closely resembling a beta-element. The realization and the representation of it in the mind have not been differentiated. The characteristics of this condition may be made clearer if I educe some manifestations of it. Thus an infant containing a "need-of-a-breast" bad breast may evacuate it by sucking at the breast. This obviously requires a topographically close relationship with an actual breast. It may evacuate it by the respiratory system; there need be no tactile sensation for this. It may evacuate it by seeing the actual breast; for this an actual breast needs to be in sight, that is to say it is in a position in which being in sight is the same as being in the mind's eye and both are the same as being in the mouth. When all these events are evacuations of the "need-of-a-breast" bad breast it is clear that if no breast is then in fact available the "no breast" will be felt to be not

only bad in itself but made worse because it, as it were, is concrete evidence that this bad breast has been successfully evacuated. This situation corresponds to one in which a "bizarre object" rather than a "beta-element" would be the correct descriptive term for the object felt by the infant to exist.

20

1. When evacuation of a bad breast is felt to lead to its presence externally, if the evacuation is achieved, apparently by sucking at a real breast, the aftermath of the evacuation is not painful as in the respiratory and other methods. This stimulates interaction between the reality and pleasure-pain principles. We may follow up (1) the process of differentiation of the representation from the corresponding realization, the process by which the thing-in-itself is distinguishable from the idea (Bradley, 1.148) or (2) the effects of the correspondence between alimentation and thinking. The first course leads directly to a discussion of the importance of abstraction, which may, in this context, be regarded as an aspect of the transformation, by alpha-function, of an emotional experience into alpha-elements.

2. The Kleinian theory that the infant feels it has evacuated its bad object into the breast, combined with the theory that satisfaction of a need can be felt as evacuation of a need (the need itself being a bad breast – to employ concrete terms – or what I have called a beta-element – to employ an abstraction) represents an infant's feeling that the breast in actuality is an evacuated object and therefore indistinguishable from a beta-element. Something must happen now if the child is to continue feeding. It is implied in the process I have described that the situation cannot be recognized as objective. If there is a good breast, a sweet object, it is because it has been evacuated, produced; and the same with the bad breast, the needed breast, the bitter breast, etc. It cannot be seen as objective and it cannot be seen as subjective. From these sweet, bitter, sour objects, sweetness, bitterness, sourness, are abstracted. Once abstracted they can be reapplied the abstraction made can be used in situations where a realization, not the original realization from which it was abstracted, approximates to

it. For example an emotional experience is associated with the breast, in which the infant feels that there is an object existing independently of itself on which it can depend for satisfaction of its feelings of hunger; assuming a capacity for abstraction, the infant can feel that from the total experience he can detach an element which is a belief that an object exists that can satisfy his needs. The concrete statement might be: a breast exists that can be depended on to satisfy his hunger for food. Abstraction from this might be: there is a something that can and does give him what he wants when he wants it.

3. Almost any number of statements can be made to represent what the infant feels when, in the view of a reputedly impartial observer, it has been fed at the breast. From that emotional experience and the statement that represents it, and all the other statements that could equally reasonably be felt to represent it, there can be abstracted a series of further statements. Since an enormous number can be made, the significance of this for scientific procedure, with particular reference to this preceding passage, will be discussed later. Presumably the infant also "can make a number of statements" and that it is with the nature of these "statements" that the analyst has ultimately to concern himself. The first level of statements are particular, derived from an actual episode, and concrete; the abstractions become further and further removed from the concrete and specific until their origin is lost to sight. The abstractions that are thus produced may then be reapplied to a realization when a realization is found that appears to approximate to the abstraction.

4. Situations met with in analysis are: (1) a patient, incapable of abstraction, strives to exist with a mental apparatus engaged in introjection and projection of beta-elements; (2) a patient capable of abstraction produces theoretical systems far removed from the background of realizations from which they have been abstracted, but proliferates these systems according to rules that make the abstractions in any system consistent with each other; (3) a patient capable of producing abstractions proliferates systems that seem to obey no ascertainable system of rules. Though the original realization is unknown (in this respect resembling (2) above) and likewise the system of rules under which the abstractions have been manipulated, he may yet find realizations that approximate to his abstract statements; (4) a patient capable of abstraction and formation of systems in accordance with rules that ensure that the system is not incompatible

with itself and yet unable to find a realization to which the abstract systems apply; (5) a patient capable of abstraction and of combining these abstractions into systems according to rules (whose nature can be demonstrated) that ensure that the systems are not incompatible with themselves. It may be possible to deduce what the original realization was from which the abstraction was derived. Further realizations can be seen to approximate to the deductive systems although the latter realizations may not have been known to exist when the abstraction that can be seen to represent them was first adumbrated.

5. I shall ignore (1) as it is a statement whose derived abstract systems form representations of realizations that are usually felt to be of a different kind from the realizations corresponding with (2), (4), (5). (3) represents a realization which we shall have to consider further. It is peculiar in that realizations approximating to this representation bear a superficial resemblance to the realizations approximating to (1) and other realizations approximating to the representations derived from (1).

6. Throughout discussion of (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5), abstraction may be usefully investigated as a factor in alpha-function. There are two tasks on which it is now necessary to embark. The first is the elucidation of original realizations of the abstraction. The second task is to elucidate the relationship of the model (as Freud uses the term in the passage in which he refers to the reflex apparatus as being the model for the apparatus involved in dreaming) to the realization from which the abstraction and the theoretical deductive systems have been derived. To what extent and in what circumstances can this original realization be seen to be, or used as, a model for the abstraction derived from it? It can easily be used as such a model unwittingly. For example, I have spoken of certain locutions as being evidence not for memory but for "undigested facts" (Chapter 3:3). Implicit in this statement is the use of the alimentary system as a model for the processes of thought. There is reason to believe that the emotional experiences associated with alimentation are those from which individuals have abstracted and then integrated elements to form theoretical deductive systems that are used as representations of realizations of thought. There is reason for using the alimentary system as a model for demonstrating and comprehending the processes involved in thought. No objection, except on grounds of inefficacy, can be raised against the procedure as one by which the

original realization and the emotional experience to which it gave rise is transformed to provide representations for realizations that seem to approximate to them. Moreover the concrete image of the original realization can be used as a model for a subsequent realization. The distinction between the representation, formed from alpha-elements combined to produce an abstract theoretical deductive system, and a model formed from concrete images combined according to what were conceived to be the relationships between the components of the original realization, is important and must be preserved to avoid confusion. But what is to be said for using our knowledge of the alimentary system to form a model, not for the processes involved in thought but for the processes involved in thought about thought?

7. Problems associated with disturbance of thought compel us to think about thought and this raises a question of technique – *how* are we to think about thought – what is the correct method? It is clear that we can use our knowledge of the alimentary canal unwittingly when we are concerned to elucidate disorders of thought and therefore phenomena that are related to the patient's attitude to, and his capacity for, thinking about thought. The importance of this question lies in the fact that certain patients are influenced by the belief that they digest thoughts and that the consequences of doing so are similar to the digestion of food. That is to say that if they attempt what might ordinarily be regarded as meditating on an idea, they believe that the thoughts so treated suffer a change analogous to that undergone by food that is turned into faeces: some ideas, or their verbal representations, survive and if expressed emerge not as evidence of the possession of an idea, but as evidence, embedded in a matrix of gibberish, that their thoughts have been destroyed and denuded of meaning in the way that faeces and its undigested particles can be regarded as food that has been destroyed and denuded of its value as food.[1] Interpretations addressed to such a patient need to be couched

[1]The significance of this phenomenon alters with the emotion accompanying the experience. The patient may believe his activity is an evacuation but the nature of the belief depends on whether he is feeling aggressive, depressed or persecuted. If his activity is what the analyst regards as a normal verbal communication the patient does not know "what he is feeling". Superficially the patient's behaviour closely resembles a dream state such as I have described in 9.4. It is in fact a *β*-screen and cannot effect separation of thoughts into conscious and unconscious.

in terms that avoid words in which the model of the alimentary system is implicit. In practice, if the difficulty is recognized by the analyst steps can be taken to prevent making the confusion worse confounded. But the problem stimulates the thought that unconscious employment of this model may be creating difficulties not only for the psychotic but also for the philosopher of science who is engaged on problems of methods of clear thinking. The term "clear thinking" that I have just employed is itself evidence of the extent to which the vocabulary of philosophy and of psychoanalysis, which may be regarded as having a relationship to philosophy analogous to the relationship of mathematics to applied mathematics, is saturated with models derived from sense impressions of material objects. We may thus resort unaware to the same methods of understanding, and that includes representing realizations in the realms of thought by the models employed in the original realization. It is true that the model with which present knowledge of the alimentary canal provides us will be very different from the model with which the infant's knowledge of the alimentary system provides him. A similar difference applies to the systems built on the alpha-elements that are derived as part of the process of abstraction; the infant's abstractions are not those of the adult.

If it were true dream the clinical situation would afford evidence of separation of conscious from unconscious such as exists when the patient is identified with unconscious and the analyst with conscious or vice versa.

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1. The use of a model has a value in restoring a sense of the concrete to an investigation which may have lost contact with its background through abstraction and the theoretical deductive systems associated with it. Its merit in this respect is matched by its merit as a primitive approach to abstraction in that a whole experience, say feeding, is being used as a model for a later problem. The defect of the model as an instrument adds force to the need to produce abstractions.

2. A model has also qualities which enable it to fulfil some of the functions of an abstraction. It enables the investigator to use an emotional experience by applying it as a totality to a subsequent experience or to some aspect of it. These merits carry in themselves the elements that finally make the model outdated. No experience exactly matches a past experience; the scientific deductive system and its abstractions, or the model and its associated images, can only be an approximation to the realization and vice versa.

3. I distinguish between the model and the abstraction by reserving the term model for a construction in which concrete images are combined with each other; the link between concrete images often gives the effect of a narrative implying that some elements in the narrative are the causes of others. It is constructed with elements from the individual's past, whereas the abstraction is, as it were, impregnated with preconceptions of the individual's future.[1] Its similarity with the model lies in its origin in an emotional experience and its application to a fresh emotional experience; its dissimilarity lies in the gain in flexibility and applicability which is obtained by loss of particular concrete images; the elements in the abstraction are not combined

[1]See Chapter 22.8.

by narrative but by a method intended to reveal the relationship rather than the objects related. The deductive system abstracts from an emotional experience those qualities that display the relationship between the elements in that emotional experience. The actual elements related are of lesser consequence. The model stresses the actual elements, the visual images, but the manner in which they are strung together is of subordinate significance.

4. The fact that any realization only approximates to the representation, be it abstraction or model, is the stimulus for further abstraction and further model making.

If the learner is intolerant of the essential frustration of learning he indulges phantasies of omniscience and a belief in a state where things are known. Knowing something consists in "having" some "piece of" knowledge and not in what I have called K.

The description of model making and abstraction in Chapters 20 and 21 is itself an example of model making and abstraction employed in K (or "knowing" in the sense of "getting to know" something). If the model making and abstraction imply a capacity for alpha-function they are compatible with all the states of mind mentioned on p. 328 except (1). If there is evidence of (1) the incompatibility of (1) with the others means that (1) and (2), (3), (4), etc. co-exist but are split off from each other.

22

1. The writing of this book is a realization of K. The difficulties of the patient suffering from a "disorder of thought" are similar to those that beset scientists, and others concerned with the establishment of facts, in that they arise through failure to ascertain facts and so involve investigation of the nature of the failure. The failure of patients suffering from disorders of thought is patently within the personality. Psychoanalysis of that failure is impossible without understanding the problem of the philosopher of science and conversely his problem is incompletely stated without the aid of psychoanalytic experience of disorders of thought.[1] Investigation of abstraction as a part of the psychoanalytic armoury will be by this two-fold approach. I shall first discuss abstraction as a factor of alpha-function in a K-link.

2. Let us suppose the infant repeats an emotional experience in which the following elements are constantly conjoined; the sight of a man, a sense of being loved by the man, a sense of wanting the man, an awareness of the repetition of mother's phrase, "That's Daddy." "Da, da, da" says the child. "That's right; Daddy" says the mother. From the emotional experience the infant abstracts certain elements. What they are depends partly upon the infant. These abstracted elements are given a name – "Daddy" – in other situations in which the same elements appear to be conjoined; thus a vocabulary is established. This is not a description of fact; I give it the status of a model from which I abstract a theory, and expect to find that it is a representation to which

[1]See R. E. Money-Kyrle (1961), *Man's Picture of His World*, Chapter IV. The problem discussed in his book is essentially the same as that discussed here in the restricted field of psychoanalytic method. Money-Kyrle shows that it confronts everyman in the tasks he faces throughout his life.

some realization corresponds. The theory I abstract is: Daddy is the name of an hypothesis.[1] The hypothesis called "Daddy" is a statement that certain elements are constantly conjoined.

3. The infant now meets another who also says, "Da-da-da", but in circumstances that do not appear to correspond with the circumstances with which Da-da-da is associated. There is a man, but it is the wrong one. Yet elements in this new situation correspond with elements in situations that the infant regards as realizations corresponding to the hypothesis of which the name is Daddy. The hypothesis must be revised to represent the realizations. It may be abandoned for another or it may become a system of hypothesis, a scientific deductive system. The experiences continue and the scientific deductive system named Daddy becomes progressively more complex. Using the model to abstract a theory, the individual must be capable of abstracting from an emotional experience elements that appear to be constantly conjoined including one element which is at one and the same time the name of the theory or hypothesis or scientific deductive system; it is also the name of the realization that is believed to approximate to the theory. Thus, "chair" is: (1) the name given to a thing-in-itself, as it is supposed to exist in actuality; this, following Kant, cannot be known to us.[2] (2) the name given to the selected fact. (3) the name given to a selection of feelings, impressions, etc., that are felt, by virtue of the selected fact, to be related and coherent. (4) the name of the definitory hypothesis that states that these elements are constantly conjoined. (3) and (4) correspond to Kant's secondary and primary qualities. These distinctions of the nature of the content of the term "chair" are of practical importance to psychoanalysts who face the necessity for, and difficulty of, communication within the group. So far I have used only two words, Daddy and chair, as examples of names of hypotheses i.e. of elements abstracted from an emotional situation and given coherence by the name.

4. The use of the term 'hypothesis' as a name for the object that would more often be described as a concept is an expression of the

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[1]See H. Rosenfeld, 'On Drug Addiction', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 41* (1960), p. 472, for an illuminating instance of the problem I have illustrated by the model of the infant use of "Dada". Although it is reported as occurring in a dream it is typical of an attitude of mind not restricted to sleep.

[2]Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by N. Kemp Smith, B XXVII–XXVIII, Preface to Second Edition.

problem presented by (3) as it emerges when investigated psychoanalytically. The problem presented by the psychoanalytic experience is the lack of any adequate terminology to describe it, and in this respect it resembles the problem that Aristotle solved by supposing that mathematics dealt with mathematical objects. It is convenient to suppose that psychoanalysis deals with psychoanalytic objects and that it is with the detection and observation of these objects that the psychoanalyst must concern himself in the conduct of an analysis. (3) describes an aspect of these objects. I employ the term 'hypothesis' provisionally because the meaning associated with the scientific use of this term has aspects that are shared by the psychoanalytic object. The identification of such an object depends on (a) the possibility of finding a means by which the nature of the object can be communicated. This involves the employment of the very methods that are the object of this investigation, and (b) the mental equipment that the observer can bring to bear. Both (a) and (b) are therefore adumbrations of problems on which these investigations must converge.

5. From all the elements in a realization only some have their corresponding sense data linked with each other as being constantly conjoined. These elements, and their corresponding sense data may therefore be regarded as abstracted from the totality of elements in the realization. A further abstraction takes place when the elements are given a name that is perceived to be different from the realization it represents. The abstraction must be capable of fulfilling the function of a pre-conception. The generalization must therefore be capable of particularization; the abstraction must be capable of concretization. Implicit in the term concretization is the model from which it is derived. The model supplies a background of meaning that can preserve my statement from being so far divorced from reality as to become unsuited for mating with its realization. But the implication that is its strength becomes a weakness when it is employed by a participant in a relationship in which the link is minus K. (Henceforward I shall write this "–K"; it is discussed in detail in Chapter 28). This weakness and its exploitation in –K becomes apparent in analysis of the patient who appears to be unable to abstract, the patient to whom words are things – *the* things which the word is supposed to represent, but which are for him indistinguishable from their name and vice versa.

6. The problems associated with abstraction may be illuminated if regarded in reverse as problems of movement from the general to the particular, the abstract to the concrete. When I speak of concretization I employ, and hope to be understood to employ, a metaphor. This class of patient would not understand that. For him the word would be a lump of concrete.[1] This would equally be true if he tried as I am trying, to make my meaning clear by employing the term concretization. I can be aware of failing to make my meaning clear but I do not think my difficulty lies in passing lumps of concrete when what I want is to talk.

7. The theory that the concept is a statement that certain elements are constantly conjoined and that the word is the name of that statement, can be used as a model to formulate a more abstract and widely embracing theory. The realization of every emotional situation is an approximation to a theoretical deductive system that represents it, even though that scientific deductive system or representation has not been discovered.

8. It is now possible to formulate the nature of a psychoanalytic object more easily. Suppose ψ represents a constant (ξ), an unsaturated element that determines the value of the constant once it has been identified. We may use the unknown constant ψ to represent an inborn pre-conception. Employing a model to give temporary meaning to the term "inborn pre-conception" I shall suppose that an infant has an inborn pre-conception that a breast that satisfies its own incomplete nature exists. The realization of the breast provides an emotional experience. This experience corresponds to Kant's secondary and primary qualities of a phenomenon. The secondary qualities determine the value of the unsaturated element (ξ) and therefore the value of ψ (ξ). This sign now represents a conception. The previously unsaturated element (ξ) together with the unknown constant ψ share a component, that is the inborn character of the personality. Let that be represented by ($\mathcal{M}$). The psychoanalytic object may then be represented by ψ (ξ) ($\mathcal{M}$). The value of ($\mathcal{M}$), as of (ξ), is determined by the emotional experience stimulated by the realization, that is, in the

[1]H. Segal, 'Notes on Symbol Formation', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* (1957). With regard to concretization and abstraction, see her comments on symbolic equation.

model I have put forward, by the contact with the breast. The value of the psychoanalytic object ψ (ξ) ($\mathcal{M}$) is then determined by the identification of (ξ) ($\mathcal{M}$) that is precipitated by a realization.

9. This is not all. The extension of the concept of a psychoanalytic object, like the extensions of all biological concepts, includes phenomena related to growth. Growth may be regarded as positive or negative. I shall represent it by (±Y). The plus and minus signs are employed to give sense or direction to the element they precede in a manner analogous to their mode of employment in coordinate geometry. To indicate this aspect of its extension I shall represent the psychoanalytic object by {(±Y) ψ ($\mathcal{M}$) (ξ)}. Whether (Y) is preceded by plus or minus sign will be determined only by contact with a realization. Abstraction from the psychoanalytic object will be related to the resolution of the conflicting claims of narcissism and social-ism. If the trend is social (+Y) abstraction will be related to the isolation of primary qualities. If the trend is narcissistic (–Y) abstraction will be replaced by activity appropriate to –K, which I have not yet discussed.

10. K, to which the analyst is restricted, involves abstraction from the psychoanalytic object represented by {(Y)ψ (ξ) ($\mathcal{M}$)}. The abstraction must be capable of serving as the constant so that it can fulfil the function of an unknown and yet, by virtue of the analytic object from which it derives, have the attributes of a preconception that has, unlike the inborn pre-conception, a penumbra of meaning. It remains an unknown, but the range of values which can be conferred upon it by the identification of (ξ) is restricted. "A priori knowledge" can only apply to psychoanalytic objects where ψ is an unknown whose value can be determined by identification of (ξ) without restriction.

It is necessary and should be possible to find hypotheses that may be used in scientific deductive systems as either premises or as derived hypotheses. These scientific deductive systems, abstracted from emotional experiences, may then be found to represent other emotional experiences from which they have not been derived, but which can be seen to approximate to the representative scientific deductive system in question. The scientific deductive system may then be further abstracted to yield the equivalent of an algebraic calculus which would represent it.

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1. Poincaré[1] describes the process of creation of a mathematical formulation thus:

> If a new result is to have any value, it must unite elements long since known, but till then scattered and seemingly foreign to each other, and suddenly introduce order where the appearance of disorder reigned. Then it enables us to see at a glance each of these elements in the place it occupies in the whole. Not only is the new fact valuable on its own account, but it alone gives a value to the old facts it unites. Our mind is frail as our senses are; it would lose itself in the complexity of the world if that complexity were not harmonious; like the short-sighted, it would only see the details, and would be obliged to forget each of these details before examining the next, because it would be incapable of taking in the whole. The only facts worthy of our attention are those which introduce order into this complexity and so make it accessible to us.

2. This description closely resembles the psychoanalytic theory of paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions adumbrated by Klein. I have used the term "selected fact" to describe that which the psychoanalyst must experience in the process of synthesis. The name of one element is used to particularize the selected fact, that is to say the name of that element in the realization that appears to link together elements not hitherto seen to be connected. The representations of the selected facts may then be seen to have a similar coherence if the appropriate representation for a number of selected facts can be found. The selected facts, together with the selected fact that

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[1]H. Poincaré, *Science and Method* (Dover Publications), 1914.

appears to give coherence to a number of selected facts, emerge from a psychoanalytic object or series of such objects, but cannot be formulated in accordance with the principles governing a scientific deductive system. Before such a system can be created the selected facts have to be worked upon by conscious rational processes. Only then can the representation be formulated that will bring together the elements of coherent selected facts in a scientific deductive system. In the scientific deductive system the hypotheses of the system should be held together by rules, but these do not correspond with that which, in the realization, appears to link together the elements whose relationship seems to be revealed by the selected fact. The rules that hold together the hypotheses in the system of hypotheses, namely the scientific deductive system, are the rules of logic. The relationship amongst the hypotheses of a scientific deductive system, namely the logical connection between them that has been brought into prominence by the deductive system, is characteristic of conscious rational thought, but not of the relationship between the elements in a realization of which the phenomena appear to cohere as a result of the discovery of a selected fact. The selected fact is the name of an emotional experience, the emotional experience of a sense of discovery of coherence; its significance is therefore epistemological and the relationship of selected facts must not be assumed to be logical. The elements thought to be related have a counterpart in actuality of things-in-themselves. Are we to assume that the selected fact represents a thing-in-itself and similarly that the relationship, namely the logical relationship, between the elements in the deductive system has also a counterpart in actuality, a thing-in-itself that approximates to deductive logic? In fact the mathematical formulation has some of the characteristics of an attempt to formulate a system of relationships between mathematical objects to which some realization of relationships might approximate. In other words there is no reason why the rules governing the logical manipulation of the elements in a scientific deductive system should have any corresponding realization. It follows that the elements in an analytic object may be related to each other in a manner entirely different from the manner in which their representations are linked in a scientific deductive system. Progress in elucidation of the field of relatedness will probably depend on illumination by K of –K and the psychoanalytic objects peculiar to that.

3. The network of relationships discernible in the scientific deductive system or its corresponding calculus may not have any realization. Successful investigations have been associated with inanimate objects which the animate object shares with the inanimate. In such cases the logical structure of the scientific deductive system, and the algebraic calculus representing it, appears to have a corresponding realization probably because it is abstracted from a similar realization. That is to say there is a realization that seems to correspond approximately to the actual network of relationships that is internal to the scientific deductive system itself. Investigation of elements that are essentially animate does not yield such a correspondence. The form of association between elements bound together by narrative is distinct from the form of association discerned through transition from paranoid-schizoid to depressive position.

4. The narrative form is associated with the theory of causation and the other with the depressive positions and the selected fact. There may be no realization that corresponds with these two theories.

5. Any experience may be used as a "model" for some future experience. This aspect of learning by experience is related to, and may be identical with, the function Freud attributes to attention when he says it has "periodically to search the outer world in order that its data might be already familiar if an urgent inner need should arise". The value of a model is that its familiar data are available to meet urgent inner or outer need. The selected fact precipitates the model. The coherence of the elements in the model that is identified with the realization is then felt to pertain to the elements of the realization.

6. Before an emotional experience can be used for a model its sense data have to be transformed into alpha-elements to be stored and made available for abstraction. (In –K the meaning is abstracted leaving a denuded representation.) Model making during the experience relates to the model needed for that experience; alpha-function during the experience provides the elements needed for model making in a subsequent experience; the model is precipitated during the experience for which the model is needed. Elements are removed from mental storage to provide a model that is an approximation to the event it is to illuminate. The personality abstracts from experience the elements expected to recur and forms from these elements the model that will preserve something of the original experience

but with enough flexibility to permit adaptation to new but supposedly similar experiences. He abstracts elements to construct either a model or an abstraction or both. I shall use the term model where the construct is forged to meet an "urgent need" for concreteness. (Construct, forged, concreteness: all three words carry implications of the models from which the words have been abstracted. I have left the passage as an example of the latent, though in this case noticeable, influence of the model.) If the need is for a model those elements will be abstracted from the store of alpha-elements that have, like visual images, a reminiscence of the emotional experience during which the alpha-element was formed. The more such elements are employed the more rigid the model becomes and the more restricted its application; the restriction is modified if the model formed from a combination of these elements is then submitted to further abstraction. The abstractions need then to be combined in accordance with the rules of logic. This system of abstractions is the scientific deductive system.

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1. Suppose that the patient has produced a number of associations and other material. The analyst has available:

1. observations of the patient's material;
2. various emotional experiences of his own;
3. a knowledge of one or more versions of the myth of Oedipus[1];
4. one or more versions of psychoanalytic theory of the Oedipus complex;
5. other fundamental psychoanalytic theories.

Some aspects of the session will appear familiar; they will remind him of past experiences, analytical and otherwise. Others will seem to bear a resemblance to the oedipal situation. From these sources the analyst can form a model; the problem is to decide whether the analyst is confronted by a realization of Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex. The Oedipus theory does not correspond closely to what a physicist would call a scientific deductive system but can be formulated to qualify for inclusion in such a category. Its weakness as a member of this class is likely to be its lack of abstraction and the peculiar structure by which its elements are related to each other. In part this is due to the fact that the more concrete the elements the less they lend themselves to variation of combination.

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[1]See J. O. Wisdom, 'A Methodological Approach to Problem of Hysteria', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 42* (1961). Also 'Comparison and Development of the Psycho-Analytical Theories of Melancholia' (Wisdom, 1962).

2. In addition two factors: the actual nature of the network of relationships in which the elements are held, and the derivation of the elements from a myth, contrast with the elements in a scientific deductive system as used by a physicist. The latter purports to derive from one realization and to be able to represent another, whereas the psychoanalytic formulation is derived from and expressed by the emotional experience of a folk narrative and is said to represent a realization encountered in psychoanalysis. Freud derived his theory from the emotional experience of psychoanalytic inquiry, but his description could not be comparable with the formulations usually supposed to represent scientific discovery. I wish to discuss only two methodological weaknesses in the Oedipus theory.

Firstly, the theory as it stands is so concrete that it cannot be matched with its realization; that is to say no realization can be found to approximate to a theory whose elements, concrete in themselves, are combined in a narrative network of relationships that is intrinsic and essential. Without the narrative the elements lose their value.

Secondly, and conversely, if the elements are generalized the theory becomes an ingenious manipulation of elements according to arbitrary rules – the commonest formulation of this suspicion of the theory is the criticism that analyst and analysand indulge a taste for jargon.

3. A theoretical formulation that appears to be too concrete and yet too abstract requires to be generalized in such a way that its realizations are more easily detected, without the attendant weakness, most often seen in mathematics, of appearing to be an arbitrary manipulation of symbols. Can it retain its concrete elements without losing flexibility so essential in psychoanalytic application? It can be made more abstract though we may not find an algebraic calculus to represent the scientific deductive system. I shall say more about this possibility later.

4. I am convinced of the strength of the scientific position of psychoanalytic practice. I believe that the practice of psychoanalysts in making psychoanalysis an essential training experience deals with the fundamental difficulties for the time being because it makes conscious and unconscious available for correlation; but I do not consider less pressing the need to investigate the weaknesses that spring from faulty theory construction, lack of notation and failure of methodical care and maintenance of psychoanalytic equipment. (“Care”, “maintenance”, “equipment – again the implicit model.)

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1. The model may be regarded as an abstraction from an emotional experience or as a concretization of an abstraction. The latter has affinities with the transformation of an hypothesis into terms of empirically verifiable data. In the group the myth has some claim to be regarded as filling the same role in the society as the model has in scientific work of the individual.

2. As an example of a model I take the imaginary story of the infant learning the word Daddy. This story does not purport to be a fact. It is derived from experience of patients in analysis, observation of children, desultory reading, some of it philosophical, and other sources; in short it is derived from experience – my experience. It is an artefact composed of elements that have been selected by me from my store of experience. But it has been formed for a specific purpose; the selection and combination of elements is not fortuitous but is made to "explain" or illuminate the problem of abstraction. It has, therefore, no value as evidence; its value lies in the ease with which it can be communicated and compared with facts. By contrast the account of the patient who feels that words are things is not a model but an example; what I describe purports to be a realization. The model was made to illuminate the experience I had with a particular patient and is used for comparison with the realization. Potentially, every realization approximates to an abstraction or scientific deductive system even if one to which it corresponds has not yet been discovered (Chapter 20:4). When I compare model and realization it may result in my receiving the illumination I desire; or it may prove so unrewarding that I assume the model is worthless and discard it. Models are ephemeral and differ from theories in this respect; I have no compunction in discarding a model as soon as it has served or

failed to serve my purpose. If a model proves useful on a number of different occasions the time has come to consider its transformation into a theory.

3. A psychoanalyst may make as many models as he chooses out of any material available to him. It is important not to confound these ephemeral structures with realizations on the one hand or theories on the other. The model has a valuable function provided always that it is recognized for what it is. If the analyst believes he is describing an actual event he should make this clear and should not allow the distinction between an event, for the authenticity of which there is supporting evidence, and a model to become blurred. The same applies to the distinction between a model and a theory. I shall deal with the peculiar difficulties that beset the psychoanalyst in avoiding confusion in making the distinction between theory and model and between a model and the particular form of theory known as a psychoanalytic interpretation.

4. The process of abstraction from a realization may proceed directly from realization to scientific deductive system through the intervening phase of model making. Elements are selected from the model and used as elements in the scientific deductive system. The need for this procedure becomes apparent when a model is used to illuminate a realization that is thought to approximate to the model and the model is then found to be insufficiently similar to clarify the problem for which a solution is sought. I ignore the contingency that arises when the realization is mistakenly matched with the model; that failure is dealt with by the creation of a new model. An important failure is that which arises when the model is seen to be the nearest possible approximation to the realization, but nevertheless fails to mirror developments in the realization by the movement in its own internal structure. This failure can occur whenever model making is used; but there must be heightened risk of its occurrence when, as in psychoanalysis, we are concerned with growth and speak of "mental mechanisms". To talk of "mechanism" suggests that, whatever the phenomenon that is thus described, it is likely that the implied model is more suitable to the inanimate machine than to a living organism. It is likely to emphasize those aspects of the living organism which it shares with the inanimate. This defect is serious because we require models when the problem is most complex, that is when the characteristics of growth are central; and that is most of the time. The term

mechanism implies the model of a machine which is precisely what the realization is not. The dangers of too great abstraction do not admit of an easy solution by discarding the use of models. Psychoanalysts are therefore certain to become familiar with the situation in which the model used to avoid the dangers of theorizing, in which I include interpretation, suffers from the complementary defect of being so close to the realization from which it is derived that it is correspondingly intractable when required to represent a realization from which it is separated by its very concreteness. This defect resembles the defect of the beta-element as an element in thinking. The transformation which the model has to undergo to permit of its employment as a generalization is analogous to the process by which sense data are transformed into alpha-elements. The alternative to finding or making a new model is to resort to further abstraction. The model is then replaced by the Scientific Deductive System. As an example of the issues involved I shall take the scientific approach to the problems of the K relationships.

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1. The terms Love, Hate and Knowing had precedent models. Link (See Chapter 14:2) can imply a model or an abstraction. The failure of the patient to solve his problems may in some cases depend on the fact that he employs models wrongly. In making his own model the analyst needs in such cases to be aware of and to lay bare the model used by the patient. The analyst's model must be such that it enables him to arrive at an interpretation of the facts that present themselves for scrutiny. If the analyst supposes that the patient's thinking is at fault and is at the source of his troubles he will need a model and a theory of thinking of his own; he will need a model for the patient's mode of thinking and he will need to deduce from that what the patient's model for thinking is. He may then compare his model and abstraction with the patient's. The patient who thinks words are things-in-themselves does not feel he is doing the same thing as we think he is doing when we say he is thinking. To compare the ordinary view of thinking with such a patient's it is necessary to find a suitable model and theory. One model has, as we have seen, a widespread distribution, the model derived from the emotional experience of the digestive system. There is ordinarily no need to discard this model though its failings are obvious – it can still help to be able to speak of "undigested facts". But for a psychoanalytic investigation of thinking it is inadequate and some different model is needed. This need has become obvious in the psychoanalytic investigation of disorders of thought. Investigation of mental development shows that some individuals behave as if their model of thinking was not that of a healthy digestive system or perhaps of a digestive system at all. It is therefore necessary to discover what their model is.

2. Freud said thought provided a means for the restraint of motor discharge;[1] it was no longer concerned with unburdening the mental apparatus of accretions of stimuli but was now employed in the appropriate alteration of reality. According to this, thought is a substitute for motor discharge although he does not say that motor discharge ceases to function as a method of disburdening the psyche of accretions of stimuli. But through projective identification thought itself takes on the function previously entrusted to motor discharge – namely ridding the psyche of accretions of stimuli; like "action" it may be directed to altering the environment, depending on whether the personality is directed to evasion of frustration or modification of it. "Thinking" can be regarded as the name given to a model or abstraction derived from a realization; with an actual patient the problem is to determine what he represents by the term thinking. An individual may mean that thoughts are being used and a thought is a not good breast, a "need for a breast" breast. The problem then would be to see how he uses this "object", particularly if the patient feels unable to evacuate it – to disburden himself of these accretions of internal stimuli.

3. The problem is simplified if "thoughts" are regarded as epistemologically prior to thinking and that thinking has to be developed as a method or apparatus for dealing with "thoughts". If this is the case then much will depend on whether the "thoughts" are to be evaded or modified or used as part of an attempt to evade or modify something else. If they are felt to be accretions of stimuli then they may be similar to or identical with beta-elements and as such would lend themselves to treatment by motor discharge and the operation of the musculature to effect the discharge. Talking therefore must be considered as potentially two different activities, one as a mode of communicating thoughts and the other as an employment of the musculature to disencumber the personality of thoughts.

4. An apparatus has to be produced to make it possible to think the already existing thought. As a "model" of thought I take a sensation of hunger that is associated with a visual image of a breast that does not satisfy but is of a kind that is needed. This needed object is a bad object; all objects that are needed are bad objects because they

[1] 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911b).

tantalize. They are needed because they are not possessed in fact; if they were possessed there would be no lack. As they do not exist they are peculiar objects different from those that exist. Thoughts then, or these primitive elements that are proto-thoughts, are bad, needed objects to be got rid of because they are bad. They can be got rid of either by evasion or modification. The problem is solved by evacuation if the personality is dominated by the impulse to evade frustration, and by thinking the objects if the personality is dominated by the impulse to modify the frustration. In analytic practice confusion and complication are produced for the analyst because both types of personality employ the same name for objects that are essentially dissimilar. The dissimilarity can be emphasized by comparison: if evasion dominates, the name denotes a beta-element, that is a thing-in-itself and not the name that represents it; the thing-in-itself is non-existent and therefore tantalizing – it is dealt with by divestment (evacuation). If *modification* dominates, the name denotes an alpha-element; that is, the name is the name of the representation of a thing-in-itself that exists and is therefore potentially available for use in achieving fulfilment. Further complication is produced because a patient is unlikely to be consistent and does not make clear what objects are being denoted by the names he is using.

5. If the patient cannot "think" with his thoughts (that is to say that he has thoughts but lacks the apparatus of "thinking" which enables him to use his thoughts, to think them as it were), the first result is an intensification of frustration because thought that should make it "possible for the mental apparatus to support increased tension during a delay in the process of discharge", is lacking. The steps taken by the patient to rid himself of the objects, the proto-thoughts or thoughts which to him are inseparable from frustration, have then led him to precisely the pass that he wished to avoid, namely to tension and frustration unalleviated by the capacity for thought. The lack of a capacity for thought therefore implies a twofold failure: it is due to absence of alpha-elements *and* lack of apparatus to use alpha-elements if they exist. The double failure becomes significant in the psychoanalysis of the psychotic when the patient re-establishes alpha-function, and therefore his capacity for dreaming, and yet remains unable to think. He therefore resorts to projective identification as a mechanism for dealing with "thoughts". But if

alpha-function has been developed there is a corresponding increase in dominance of reality principle and a corresponding change in projective identification which loses some of its quality of omnipotent phantasy and gains through the patient's ability to give it substance.

6. Clinically this shows itself in an increase in the patient of a sense of loss when he is speaking. The sense of loss appears to originate in an awareness that the thoughts being lost are good or valuable thoughts differing in this respect from beta-elements. The analyst likewise becomes aware of a change in the impact on himself of the patient's manipulations.

7. "Thinking", in the sense of engaging in that activity which is concerned with the use of thoughts, is embryonic even in the adult and has yet to be developed fully by the race. Quite conscious attempts are directed to this end. The problem is more accurately apprehended and investigated if it is seen to depend on (1) "thoughts" and (2) "thinking" which developed in response to the challenge presented by the existence of "thoughts". In the psychoanalysis of "disorders of thought", psychoanalytic investigation must be directed towards the development and nature of the "thoughts", alpha- and beta-elements, and then to the nature of the apparatus used for dealing with "thoughts". Only then can the investigation be devoted to what content or other factor contributed to the breakdown. The division into two classes and the attribution of priority to "thoughts" is subject to the limitations peculiar to the relationship existing in all scientific work between the realization and the representative theory to which it is believed to approximate. The division and priority are epistemologically and logically necessary, that is to say the theory that thought is prior to thinking is itself prior, in the hierarchy of hypotheses in the scientific deductive system, to the hypothesis of thinking. A corresponding priority is epistemologically necessary in the realization corresponding to the theory of thinking I have adumbrated here.

8. The scientific deductive system is called for because the model made during the emotional experience which it is intended to illuminate is not sufficiently abstract. Its elements are derived from previous emotional experiences through the operation, concurrently with the emotional experience, of alpha-function. The model is formed by the exercise of a capacity similar to that which is in evidence when the two eyes operate in binocular vision to correlate two views of the

same object. The use in psychoanalysis of conscious and unconscious in viewing a psychoanalytic object is analogous to the use of the two eyes in ocular observation of an object sensible to sight. Freud attributed this function, the sense organ of psychic quality, to consciousness alone. The scientific deductive system is elaborated away from the emotional experience and is a conscious act of construction in the course of which signs are chosen and rules for their manipulation formulated. Can such a procedure be profitably adapted to the psychoanalytic investigation of the development of thoughts and the apparatus that employs them? I shall answer the question by making the attempt in my last chapter and incidentally summarizing this book.

9. The first requisite for the use of a theory is proper conditions for observation. The most important of these is psychoanalysis of the observer to ensure that he has reduced to a minimum his own inner tensions and resistances which otherwise obstruct his view of facts by making correlation by conscious and unconscious impossible. The next step is for the analyst to bring his attention to bear. Darwin pointed out that judgement obstructs observation; the psychoanalyst, however, must intervene with interpretations and this involves the exercise of judgement. A state of reverie conducive to alpha-function, obtrusion of the selected fact and model-making together with an armoury limited to a few essential theories, ensure that a harsh break in observation of the kind Darwin had in mind becomes less likely; interpretations can occur to the analyst with the minimum disturbance of observation.

10. The "selected fact", that is to say the element that gives coherence to the objects of the paranoid-schizoid position and so initiates the depressive position, does so by virtue of its membership of a number of different deductive systems at their point of intersection. Obtrusion of the selected fact is accompanied by an emotion such as is experienced in regarding the object in reversible perspective. The total process depends on relaxed attention; this is the matrix for abstraction and identification of the selected fact. From the model thus made and its matching with the realization a special theory (the psychoanalytic interpretation), must be abstracted. This abstraction involves the difference between a theory associated with a scientific deductive system and a psycho-

analytic interpretation. The analyst has to concern himself with two models, one that he is called upon to make and the other implicit in the material produced by the patient.

11. I shall first consider the model that has to be made by the analyst. The model is produced by the analyst as a part of theory construction and is not itself an interpretation, except in the conversational sense of the term, of what is taking place. The relevant theory may be the Oedipus theory. The analyst must determine from the patient's material why he is producing it and what the correct interpretation should be. The model plays its part in the determination by enabling the analyst to match what the patient is actually saying, with the theory or theories known to psychoanalysis as the Oedipus complex. The model throws into relief two sets of ideas, those that relate to the patient's material and those that relate to the body of psychoanalytic theory.

12. Model making makes it possible to retain the structure of psychoanalytic theory without loss of the flexibility necessary to meet the moment to moment needs of psychoanalytic practice. On the one hand the theory may become too set because of its concreteness and on the other open to endless proliferation because analysts, finding themselves in an impasse, may prefer to produce a new theory ad hoc rather than undergo the ardours of using existing theory properly. The advantage of the theory of functions and of the development of model making as an essential part of it, is that the analyst has plenty of scope for really satisfying himself, and therefore his patient, that it is the patient as a real man or woman whose affairs are under scrutiny, and not just the supposed mental mechanisms of a dummy. At the same time the particularization necessary for this does not involve proliferating theories. The model makes it possible to find the correspondence between the patient's thinking and the main body of psychoanalytic theory by interpretations that are related closely both to theory and the statements and conduct of the patient. Model making thus increases the number of contingencies that can be met and decreases the number of psychoanalytic theories that the psychoanalyst needs as his working equipment. If every analyst set himself the task of producing a handbook of psychoanalytic theories to provide a foundation of the minimum number of premises from which a wide range of subsidiary theories could be deduced, I believe

it would be possible with less than six major theories. Psychoanalytic virtue lies not in the number of theories the analyst can command, but the minimum number with which he can meet any likely contingency. The range of such theoretical equipment depends on the method of application and that on the procedure of model making. There will be less disposition to put forward new theories when none is called for if the distinction between model and theory is kept clear. The danger lies in being cramped by a theoretical system that is frustrating not because it is inadequate but because it is not being properly used.

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This chapter will be taken up with the construction of some theories that I have found serviceable. It is intended also to serve as an example of the use of the theory of functions and other ideas I have put forward, and thus to take the place of a summary of the main items in the book.

THE K LINK

1. The theory of functions and alpha-function are not a part of psychoanalytic theory. They are working tools for the practising psychoanalyst to ease problems of thinking about something that is unknown.

2. The term "function", used in the sense of a function of the personality, does not have the meaning it possesses for the mathematician or the mathematical logician, though it has features partaking of the meaning of both. I propose it as a term for use in the practice of psychoanalysis; its full designation, if there is any doubt, is "psychoanalytic function of the personality" but otherwise it should be designated simply "function" and given the sign ψ. Alpha-function is a factor of ψ.

3. The term "factor" is the name of an element of any function. It may be represented by the unsaturated element (ξ) in $\psi(\xi)$ and there must be a realization approximating to it. What the realization is that satisfies it, in the mathematical sense of satisfying the terms

of an equation, is a matter to be determined by the psychoanalytic investigation itself.

4. The theory of functions, and alpha-function in particular, does not diminish or increase existing psychoanalytic theories. In this it differs from the arguments that follow.

5. Melanie Klein has described an aspect of projective identification concerned with the modification of infantile fears; the infant projects a part of its psyche, namely its bad feelings, into a good breast. Thence in due course they are removed and re-introjected. During their sojourn in the good breast they are felt to have been modified in such a way that the object that is re-introjected has become tolerable to the infant's psyche.

6. From the above theory I shall abstract for use as a model the idea of a container into which an object is projected and the object that can be projected into the container: the latter I shall designate by the term 'contained'. The unsatisfactory nature of both terms points to the need for further abstraction.

7. Container and contained are susceptible of conjunction and permeation by emotion. Thus conjoined or permeated, or both, they change in a manner usually described as growth. When disjoined or denuded of emotion they diminish in vitality, that is, approximate to inanimate objects. Both container and contained are models of abstract representations of psychoanalytic realizations.

8. The next step in abstraction is dictated by the need for designation. I shall use the sign ♀ for the abstraction representing the container and ♂ for the contained.

9. These signs both denote and represent. They are variables or unknown in that they are replaceable. They are constants in that they are only replaceable by constants. For syntactical purposes they are functors.

10. Reconsidering K in the light of previous discussion, although K is essentially a function of two objects it can be considered as a function of one.

The earliest and most primitive manifestation of K occurs in the relationship between mother and infant. As a part object relationship it may be stated as a relationship between mouth and breast. In abstract terms it is between ♂ and ♀ (as I have proposed the use of these signs).

In K (L and H being factors and therefore subordinate), ♂ is projected into ♀ and abstraction, of a type that I shall use the term commensal to describe, follows. By commensal I mean ♂ and ♀ are dependent on each other for mutual benefit and without harm to either. In terms of a model the mother derives benefit and achieves mental growth from the experience: the infant likewise abstracts benefit and achieves growth.

11. The activity that I have here described as shared by two individuals becomes introjected by the infant so that the ♀♂ apparatus becomes installed in the infant as part of the apparatus of alpha-function. A model is provided by the idea of the infant who explores an object by putting it into his mouth. What talking was originally done by the mother, possibly a rudimentary designatory function, is replaced by the infant's own baby talk.

12. Using 11 above as a model from which to abstract a theory to represent the realization of the development of thoughts, I propose the following terms: (a) Pre-conception. This term represents a state of expectation. The term is the counterpart of a variable in mathematical logic or an unknown in mathematics. It has the quality that Kant ascribes to an empty thought in that it can be thought but cannot be known.

(b) Conception. Conception is that which results when a pre-conception mates with the appropriate sense impressions. I have used a phrase in which the implied model is obvious. The abstraction from the relationship of preconception to sense impressions is ♀ to ♂ (NOT ♂ to ♀).

13. To summarize. The relationship between mother and infant described by Melanie Klein as projective identification is internalized to form an apparatus for regulation of a preconception with the sense data of the appropriate realization. This apparatus is represented by a model: the mating of pre-conception with sense-impressions to produce a conception. The model is in turn represented by ♀♂.

14. The repetition of mating of pre-conception and sense data, that results in commensal abstraction, promotes growth in ♂ and ♀. That is to say the capacity for taking in sense impressions develops together with the capacity for awareness of sense data. Growth of ♂ and ♀ can be represented pictorially by models described in 16 and 17 below.

15. For the model for the growth of ♀ I shall borrow Elliott Jaques's concept of the reticulum.[1] (In doing so I do not propose alterations in his concept or claim that my use is justified by the intrinsic qualities of the concept. The relationship of his concept to my use of it as a model must be determined in the course of the development of psychoanalysis.) The model I propose is as follows:

♀ develops by accretion to produce a series of sleeves that are conjoined. The result is a reticulum in which the gaps are the sleeves and the threads forming the meshes of the reticulum are emotions. Borrowing from Tarski (*Introduction to Logic*: Oxford 1941) his simile of the questionnaire with blanks that have to be filled in, the sleeves can be likened to the blanks in the questionnaire. The structure of the questionnaire has as its counterpart the connecting threads of the reticulum.

16. The model for the growth of ♂ is a medium in which lie suspended the "contents". The "contents" must be conceived of as protruding from a base which is unknown. A two-dimensional image is provided by the parabola. The medium in a commensal relationship of ♂ and ♀ is tolerated doubt. That is to say that the developing ♂ can be visualized as being similar to the elements of the paranoid-schizoid position but without the sense of persecution. It is the state described by Poincaré, and quoted by me, as one in which elements are not seen to cohere.

17. Stating 15 & 16 above abstractly we have on the one hand (♀ ≠ ♀ + ♀ . . .) and on the other (♂. ♂. ♂ . . .) where the + signs represent variables replaceable by signs representing emotions and the . signs represent a constant representing doubt.

18. Growing ♀♂ provides the basis of an apparatus for learning by experience. Reconsideration of paragraphs 5 to 17 shows that from thoughts and the development of thoughts there arises the apparatus for thinking the thoughts. I shall now consider the nature and operation of that apparatus. It cannot have the rigid clear-cut structure this

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[1]Elliott Jaques, 'Disturbances in the Capacity to Work', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 41* (1960). It seems to me that the process of lysis and scanning, as Elliott Jaques describes it, depends on the existence of a system of preconceptions that can be brought to bear on the incoherent elements of the paranoid-schizoid position. Highly developed scientific investigation appears to me to employ theories, or scientific deductive systems, as the tool through which the counterpart of scanning is effected.

attempt at exposition implies partly because the attempt is a clarification and partly because I have to use for something animate terms such as apparatus and structure. I shall denote the growing ♀♂ by using the signs $♀^n$ and $♂^n$. The signs have no logical significance but are intended merely to save time.

19. Learning depends on the capacity for $♀^n$ to remain integrated and yet lose rigidity.[1] This is the foundation of the state of mind of the individual who can retain his knowledge and experience and yet be prepared to reconstrue past experiences in a manner that enables him to be receptive of a new idea. Using this last statement as a model from which to abstract, the elements (♀) of $♀^n$ must be held by a constant + that is capable of replacement, in other words it must function as a variable. Only then can it represent an apparatus capable of changing emotion. On the replacement of one emotion, represented by +, by another emotion, also represented by +, does the capacity for re-formation, and therefore receptivity, of $♀^n$ depend. Similarly the penetrability of ♂ elements in $♂^n$ depends on the value of "**.**". The value of "+" and "**.**" is determined by the same factor, namely emotion and the emotion is a function of the personality.

20. Hitherto I have been describing a type of abstraction I have named commensal in which the link between objects is commensal. K has depended on that type of link between objects through all the phases of mental activity and growth. Since "+" and "**.**" represent emotions it is evident that we need to know what emotions are compatible with a commensal relationship and therefore with K. The problem will receive some illumination in my next chapter in which I discuss –K.

21. The pattern ♀♂ represents an emotional realization associated with learning that becomes progressively more complex as it constantly recurs throughout mental development. This growing and recurring event, represented by $♀^n ♂^n$, I shall attempt to clarify by depicting one of its aspects, in its more developed and sophisticated stages, by a more sophisticated description.

$♀^n$ represents a late stage in a series of stages that commences with a few relatively simple undifferentiated preconceptions probably related to feeding, breathing and excretion.

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[1]Ibid.

22. The abstractions from the commensal mating of with ♂ include the formation of words that are names for various hypotheses stating that certain sense data are constantly conjoined. From such relatively simple beginnings the $♀^{n}♂^{n}$ abstracts successively more complex hypotheses and finally whole systems of hypotheses which are known as scientific deductive systems. These extremely complex systems though hardly recognizable in their origins nevertheless retain the receptive qualities denoted by ♀. The phenomena related to realizations multiply as the realizations, though limited to the progress in experience of one man, are yet multiplied enough to reveal an expanding universe to which presumably an expanding realization corresponds. $♂^{n}$ must therefore have a phenomenological counterpart represented by the concept of infinity.

The elements of the many scientific deductive systems must be capable of recombination – the use of an hypothesis from one deductive system as premise in a different deductive system is a familiar example. On the theory put forward here the freedom necessary for these recombinations depends on emotions suffusing the psyche because these emotions are the connective in which the scientific deductive systems and the elements of $♂^{n}$ are embedded. Tolerance of doubt and tolerance of a sense of infinity are the essential connective in $♂^{n}$ if K is to be possible.

28

–K

1. Some patients who are concerned to prove their superiority to the analyst by defeating his attempts at interpretation can be shown that they are mis-understanding the interpretations to demonstrate that an ability to mis-understand is superior to an ability to understand. Interpretations based on this insight can lead to further development of the analysis. If the patient suffers from a disorder of thought, interpretations of mis-understanding lead to some illumination, but do not appear to carry matters much further. For this problem a more inclusive concept is necessary.

2. Using the procedures adumbrated here I first resort to the abstraction represented by the sign K and then reverse the sign to –K. Assuming that the signs of all factors in K are also reversed, I use the theories that represent factors in K as preconceptions to aid in my search for factors in –K. Those factors, now employed as preconceptions are employed, can be represented in their new employment by ♀. It may make my meaning clearer if I say that I am in a state of receptive observation as opposed to a state in which I pass judgement on what I observe. I can further describe it approximately by saying I become absorbed in my task of observation or that I am absorbed in the facts. In short there are many ways in which I can attempt to describe my mental activity; all of them may contribute to an understanding of what I am engaged on, but none of them does so with the precision that I think necessary for communicating psychoanalytic procedure. The advantage of employing a sign ♀ to designate the new role of factors in K is that it at least indicates that the reader's comprehension of my meaning should contain an element that will

remain unsatisfied until he meets the appropriate realization, an element that can be represented by the sign $\psi(\xi)$, (ξ) being itself the sign for an unsaturated element.

3. The sections that follow are an attempt to describe the results of observation in which preconceptions are harnessed to the task of discovery and not treated as predilections to be eliminated if possible – for that is in any case not possible.

4. Inevitably one wonders at various points in the investigation why such a phenomenon as that represented by –K should exist. The answer to that question must be sought in psychoanalytic work with individual patients. I shall consider one factor only, Envy. By this term I mean the phenomenon described by Melanie Klein in 'Envy and Gratitude'.

5. I have described the role of projective identification in K as a commensal relationship between ♀ and ♂. In –K, as exemplified in a patient represented by the sign $\psi(\xi)$ in whom preliminary investigation reveals Envy as likely to be one of the factors needed to satisfy (ξ), the relationship of ♀ to ♂ is represented by ♀ + ♂ where + can be replaced by Envy. Using this formulation to represent infant and breast (to resort to less abstract signs) and using as a model an emotional situation in which the infant feels fear that it is dying, the model I construct is as follows: the infant splits off and projects its feelings of fear into the breast together with envy and hate of the undisturbed breast. Envy precludes a commensal relationship. The breast in K would moderate the fear component in the fear of dying that had been projected into it and the infant in due course would reintroject a now tolerable and consequently growth-stimulating part of its personality. In –K the breast is felt enviously to remove the good or valuable element in the fear of dying and force the worthless residue back into the infant. The infant who started with a fear he was dying ends up by containing a nameless dread.

6. The violence of emotion that is associated with Envy, and can be one of the factors in the personality in which –K is in evidence, affects the projective processes so that far more than the fear of dying is projected. Indeed it is as if virtually the whole personality was evacuated by the infant. The process of denudation described in 5 is therefore more serious, because more extensive, than is implied in the simple example of the projection of a fear of dying. The seriousness is

best conveyed by saying that the will to live, that is necessary before there can be a fear of dying, is a part of the goodness that the envious breast has removed.

7. Since the projection by the infant is also impelled by envy the projection is felt as an envious denudation of the psyche from which, in K, only the fear of dying would have been removed. There is therefore hardly any infant to re-introject or into whom the denuded fear of dying can be forced. In K, ♀♂ can find a habitat because the infant can re-introject the related pair. But –♀ and –♂ are returned to an object that covers them with little more than the semblance of a psyche.

8. The object that I described as being re-introjected as ♀♂ in K was one in which the relationship of the elements ♀ and ♂ was commensal. In –K it is envious and therefore it is necessary to consider –♀ and –♂ and –(♀♂) in more detail. There are a number of peculiar features that are difficult to reconcile in a coherent theory. I shall accordingly describe them first without any attempt at explanation.

9. In the first place its predominant characteristic I can only describe as "without-ness". It is an internal object without an exterior. It is an alimentary canal without a body. It is a super-ego that has hardly any of the characteristics of the super-ego as understood in psychoanalysis: it is "super" ego. It is an envious assertion of moral superiority without any morals. In short it is the resultant of an envious stripping or denudation of all good and is itself destined to continue the process of stripping described in 5, as existing, in its origin, between two personalities. The process of denudation continues till –♀ –♂ represent hardly more than an empty superiority-inferiority that in turn degenerates to nullity.

10. In so far as its resemblance to the super-ego is concerned –(♀♂) shows itself as a superior object asserting its superiority by finding fault with everything. The most important characteristic is its hatred of any new development in the personality as if the new development were a rival to be destroyed. The emergence therefore of any tendency to search for the truth, to establish contact with reality and in short to be scientific in no matter how rudimentary a fashion, is met by destructive attacks on the tendency and the reassertion of the "moral" superiority. This implies an assertion of what in sophisticated terms would be called a moral law and a moral system as superior to scientific law and a scientific system.

11. Restating 10 in other terms, it can be seen as implying an attempt to retain a power to arouse guilt as an essential capacity. The power to arouse guilt is essential and appropriate to the operation of projective identification in a relationship between infant and breast. This guilt is peculiar in that its association with primitive projective identification implies that the guilt is meaningless. The –(♀♂) contrasts therefore with conscience in that it does not lend itself to constructive activity.

12. In contrast with the learning (K) function of ♀♂, –(♀♂) is engaged in the collection of meaningful ♂ elements for subjection to –♀ so that these elements are stripped of their meaning and only the worthless residue is retained. The analyst's interpretations are a part of the ♂ elements that are so treated, with the result that they are denuded of meaning. This envious extraction is to be contrasted with the process of abstraction peculiar to ♀♂ in K. The ego-like function of –(♀♂) is unlike ego function in destroying rather than promoting knowledge. This destructive activity is tinged with "moral" qualities derived from the "super"-ego quality of –(♀♂). In other words –(♀♂) asserts the moral superiority and superiority in potency of un-learning.

13. Successful operation of –(♀♂) has as its achievement growth in development and power of –♀ and an ever-increasing accretion of ♂ elements for conversion to –♂ elements. In other words alpha-elements, however obtained, are acquired for conversion to beta-elements. In practice it means that the patient feels surrounded not so much by real objects, things-in-themselves, but, by bizarre objects that are real only in that they are the residue of thoughts and conceptions that have been stripped of their meaning and ejected.

14. The relationship of K to –K can be epitomized by saying that in K particularization and concretization of the abstract and general is possible, but in –K it is not, because the abstract and general, in so far as they exist, are felt to become things-in-themselves. Conversely, in K the particular can be generalized and made abstract, but in –K the particular becomes denuded of any quality it has; denudation not abstraction is the end product.

15. Finally, though I shall not follow it up here, the theories in which I have used the signs K and –K can be seen to represent realization in groups. In K the group increases by the introduction of

new ideas or people. In –K the new idea (or person) is stripped of its value, and the group in turn feels devalued by the new idea. In K the climate is conducive to mental health. In –K neither group nor idea can survive, partly because of the destruction incident to the stripping and partly because of the product of the stripping process.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME V

December 1959
Watercolour painting by WRB

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W. R. BION

VOLUME V

Edited by Chris Mawson

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KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume V): 978–1–78220–233–2

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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*Later changed to 'Inquiry'. See 'The Grid' (1971) (Volume X, p. vii).

ELEMENTS OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

1963

Elements of Psycho-Analysis was first published in 1963 by William Heinemann Medical Books, London, and reprinted in 1984 by Karnac Books, London. It was included in *Seven Servants*, published in 1977 by Jason Aronson, New York.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* Bion describes his theory of mental functions; the terms 'function' and 'factor' were an important part of Bion's thinking and working language, appearing first in his 1952 'Group Dynamics: A Re-View',[1] and receiving a more detailed treatment in the first chapter of *Learning from Experience* (Volume IV).

Elements of Psycho-Analysis contains the first published account of Bion's Grid. This was intended by Bion as a mental exercise for the analyst to subject his or her observations to a systematic categorization, not while with the patient, but *outside* the session – reminding ourselves of Darwin's dictum that judgement obstructs observation. Regarding this, Bion had taken to heart Darwin's remarks, in a letter he (Darwin) wrote to Thomas Henry Farrer on 19 May 1868, concerning an error Darwin had made in relation to a structure observed in an orchid: "It is a fatal fault to reason whilst observing, though so necessary beforehand, and so useful afterwards."

In the session itself the analyst is making use of intuitive observation to consider not only the content of the communications made by the patient, but also the uses to which they are being put, moment by moment. In order to aid thinking *after* the session – the 'home work' – Bion worked out his own system of classification, "to aid in developing capacity for such instinctive decisions and have embodied it in the Grid".[2]

Bion presented his Grid as a device for sharpening his capacity for clinical observation, and for sorting some of its products. He

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[1]Published in *Experiences in Groups* as 'Re-View: Group Dynamics', in a slightly modified form (see Volume IV).

[2]In *Transformations*, Chapter 3 (this volume).

thought others might make use of it, or else create their own. Bion was concerned with the relationship between elements of psychoanalysis – abstractions with dynamic functioning, as Sandler (2005) has put it – and what he called 'psychoanalytic objects'. He had used this term for the first time in *Learning from Experience*:

> The problem presented by the psychoanalytic experience is the lack of any adequate terminology to describe it, and in this respect it resembles the problem that Aristotle solved by supposing that mathematics dealt with mathematical objects. It is convenient to suppose that psychoanalysis deals with psychoanalytic objects and that it is with the detection and observation of these objects that the psychoanalyst must concern himself in the conduct of an analysis.

As Money-Kyrle (1965) noted, "It (the Grid) involves a kind of preliminary sorting out of analytic material into categories, which do not themselves correspond with psychoanalytic theories, but which form what he calls the 'elements' of psychoanalysis. This is achieved by means of two co-ordinates: one representing the degree of sophistication of the thought expressed, the other representing the use to which the thought is put" (p. 385).

Bion was attempting to define and categorize 'psychoanalytic objects', derived from verbalized thoughts, and to consider the uses to which they had been applied by the patient within the session. Bion had already stated the links between objects as L, H and K. Objects so linked were assumed to be capable of affecting one another. He made clear that his idea of links was to bring out the central role of emotion in connecting mental objects. In 'Attacks on Linking' (*Second Thoughts*, Chapter 8: see Volume VI) he had stated that it was the *emotion* present in, and invoked by, psychic links which is so violently attacked in psychosis.

While Bion held enthusiasm for his Grid methodology (which had waned by the mid 1970s),[1] he felt that his categories could be sufficient for all the basic elements and psychoanalytic objects to be encountered in the ordinary practice of psychoanalysis, and so he pursued the project in his next book, *Transformations* (this volume).

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[1]In a talk in New York in 1977 (see Volume VIII), Bion stated: "As soon as I had got the Grid out of my system I could see how inadequate it is . . . a waste of time because it doesn't really correspond with the facts I am likely to meet."

Elements of Psycho-Analysis

1

Because psychoanalytic theories are a compound of observed material and abstraction from it, they have been criticized as unscientific. They are at once too theoretical, that is to say too much a representation of an observation, to be acceptable as an observation and too concrete to have the flexibility that allows an abstraction to be matched with a realization. Consequently a theory, which could be seen to be widely applicable if it were stated abstractly enough, is liable to be condemned because its very concreteness makes it difficult to recognize a realization that it might represent. Conversely, if such a realization is available, the application of the theory to it may seem to involve a distortion of the meaning of the theory.[1] The defect therefore is twofold: on the one hand description of empirical data is unsatisfactory as it is manifestly what is described in conversational English as a 'theory' about what took place rather than a factual account of it,[2] and on the other the theory of what took place cannot satisfy the criteria applied to a theory as that term is employed to describe the systems used in rigorous scientific investigation.[3] The first requirement then is to formulate an abstraction,[4] to represent the realization that existing theories purport to describe. I propose to seek a mode of abstraction that ensures that the theoretical statement retains the minimum of

[1]An instance of this can be seen in J. O. Wisdom's paper on 'An Examination of the Psychoanalytical Theories of Melancholia' [presented to the British Psychoanalytical Society in October 1961; revised version, Wisdom, 1962], where he clearly states the need for an extension of theory, but sees that it involves making a supposition about what M. Klein's view could have been.

[2]In Grid terms, too much D3 instead of D or E3 [see p. vii].

[3]Too much C3 instead of G4.

[4]The concept of abstraction will be discussed at length; its use in the early stages is provisional. Such a formulation would be in G3.

particularization. The loss of comprehensibility that this entails can be made up for by the use of models to supplement the theoretical systems. The defect of the existing psychoanalytic theory is not unlike that of the ideogram as compared with a word formed alphabetically; the ideogram represents one word only but relatively few letters are required for the formation of many thousands of words. Similarly the elements I seek are to be such that relatively few are required to express, by changes in combination, nearly all the theories essential to the working psychoanalyst.[1]

Most analysts have had the experience of feeling that the description given of characteristics of one particular clinical entity might very well fit with the description of some quite different clinical entity. Yet that same description is rarely an adequate representation even of those realizations to which it seems fairly obviously to be intended to correspond. The combination in which certain elements are held[2] is essential to the meaning[3] to be conveyed by those elements. A mechanism supposed to be typical of melancholia can only be typical of melancholia because it is held in a particular combination. The task is to abstract[4] such elements by releasing them from the combination in which they are held and from the particularity that adheres to them from the realization which they were originally designed to represent.

For the purpose for which I want them the elements of psychoanalysis must have the following characteristics: 1. They must be capable of representing a realization that they were originally used to describe. 2. They must be capable of articulation with other similar elements. 3. When so articulated they should form a scientific deductive system capable of representing a realization suppose one existed: other criteria for a psychoanalytic element may be educed later.

I shall represent the first element by ♀♂; as I have discussed it at length in *Learning from Experience*[5] my account here will be brief.

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[1]Compared with the tendency to produce *ad hoc* theories to meet a situation when an existing theory, stated with sufficient generality, would have done. Compare Proclus, quoted by Sir T. L. Heath, on Euclid's Elements (Heath, 1956, *The Thirteen Books of Euclid's Elements*, Chap. 9).

[2]A consequence of Ps ⇌ D. See Chapter 18.

[3]A consequence of ♀♂. See Chapter 18.

[4]See fn. 4 on p. 7.

[5][See Volume IV.]

It represents an element that may be called, though with a loss of accuracy, the essential feature of Melanie Klein's conception of projective identification. It represents an element such that, if it were less it could no longer be related to projective identification at all; if it were more it would carry too great a penumbra of associations for my purpose. It is a representation of an element that could be called a dynamic relationship between container and contained.

The second element I represent Ps ⇌ D. It may be considered as representing approximately (a) the reaction between what Melanie Klein described as the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, and (b) the reaction precipitated by what Poincaré[1] described as the discovery of the Selected Fact.

I have already discussed the signs L, H and K, in *Learning from Experience.* They represent links between psychoanalytic objects. Any objects so linked are to be assumed to be affected by each other. The realizations from which they have been abstracted are usually represented by the terms 'love', 'hate', and 'know'.

Using the notation R derived from the word 'reason' and the realizations it is thought to represent, and *I* derived from the word 'idea' and all realizations it represents including those represented by 'thought'; *I* is to represent psychoanalytic objects composed of *α*-elements, the products of *α*-function. I have described what I mean by this term elsewhere (*Learning from Experience*). By *α*-function I mean that function by which sense impressions are transformed into elements capable of storage for use in dream and other thoughts. R is to represent a function that is intended to serve the passions, whatever they may be, by leading to their dominance in the world of reality. By passions I mean all that is comprised in L, H, K. R is as associated with I in so far as I is used to bridge the gap between an impulse and its fulfilment.[2]

R insures that it is bridged to some purpose other than the modification of frustration during the temporal pause.[3]

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[1]H. Poincaré, *Scientific Method*. Dover Press.

[2]S. Freud, 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911b).

[3]I have not carried through the discussion of R because I do not yet feel in a position to see its implications. I include it because my clinical experience persuades me of the value of such an element and others may be able to use it, incompletely worked out though it is. See Hume: *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Part III, Section 3. Clarendon Press 1896.

2

Psychoanalytic theories suffer from the defect that, in so far as they are clearly stated and comprehensible, their comprehensibility depends on the fact that the elements of which they are composed become invested with fixed value, as constants, through their association with the other elements in the theory. This phenomenon is analogous to the phenomenon of alphabetic script where meaningless letters can be combined to form a meaningful word. The elements in Freud's theory of the Oedipus situation, for example, are combined by their association to form the narrative of the Oedipus myth, and so achieve a contextual meaning that gives them a constant value. As elements in a description of a realization that has been already discovered, this is essential to their usefulness as components of a theory that is to be used in the illumination of realizations yet to be discovered, it is a defect because the constant value impairs the flexibility needed.

The abstractions intended to be elements of psychoanalysis should be capable of combination to represent all psychoanalytic situations and all psychoanalytic theories. For this to be true the chosen elements must be essential in the sense described on p. 12. I propose to devote discussion to this topic before pursuing the problem of abstraction[1] of which the solution is so important if the elements chosen, as the elements of psychoanalysis, are to be capable of use in the construction of theoretical systems. The first step is to consider what phenomena of those present in analytical practice appertain to the elements of psychoanalysis. We may proceed by following three courses:

[1]See Chapter 18.

1. We may search for the elements as their secondary[1] qualities occur and may be recognized in psychoanalytic experience.
2. We may search for the elements as their representations occur and can be isolated in psychoanalytic theory.
3. We may investigate procedures 1 and 2, and combine them as a source from which to abstract elements.

I shall consider first the observability of the chosen elements, although it might be thought, since the elements enter into the composition of all psychoanalytic theories and are essential, that the first need would be to see if these elements can be detected in the theories.

If a patient says he cannot take something in, or the analyst feels he cannot take something in, he implies a container and something to put in it. The statement that something cannot be taken in must not therefore be dismissed as a mere way of speaking. It implies, furthermore, a sense of at least two objects. It might be stated ♀♂ ≥ 2. In certain circumstances, also observable in analysis, the sense of 'two-or-moreness', may become obtrusive. For the present I shall ignore the implication of number, although the element I wish to isolate cannot be correctly described unless it is understood that ♀♂ ≥ 2.

It is obvious that the number of occasions on which it is verbally stated that something is 'in' something also might be innumerable and correspondingly insignificant. The patient is 'in' analysis, or 'in' a family or 'in' the consulting room; or he may say he has a pain 'in' his leg.[2] Judgement of the importance or significance of the emotional event during which such verbalizations appear to be apposite to the emotional experience depends on the recognition that container and contained, ♀♂ is one of the elements of psychoanalysis. We may then judge whether the element ♀♂ is central or merely present as a component of a system of elements that impart meaning to each other by their conjunction.

Considering now whether it is necessary to abstract the idea of container and contained as an element of psychoanalysis I am met with a doubt. Container and contained implies a static condition and this implication is one that must be foreign to our elements; there

[1]Secondary in the sense in which Kant uses the term.

[2]Cf. Ryle, Gilbert: *Conception of Mind*, p. 22, not a category mistake but an expression of unconscious awareness of ♀♂ as the set to which all belong.

must be more of the character imparted by the words 'to contain or to be contained'. 'Container and contained' has a meaning suggesting the latent influence of another element in a system of elements. As the same objection can be levelled against 'to contain or to be contained' I shall assume that both statements are contaminated by the presence of elements of an undeclared system of elements (e.g. the latent effect of the model discussed by me in *Learning from Experience*). I shall therefore close the discussion by assuming there is a central abstraction unknown because unknowable yet revealed in an impure form in statements such as 'container or contained' and that it is to the central abstraction alone that the term 'psychoanalytic element' can be properly applied or the sign ♀♂ allocated. From this definition it is clear that the supposed psychoanalytic element cannot be observed. In this respect it is not unlike Kant's concept of a thing-in-itself – it is not knowable though primary and secondary qualities are. Yet it is different in this respect. The phenomena of container and contained are knowable as secondary qualities. The central abstraction is only a phenomenon in that I as an individual am aware that it is convenient for me to postulate the existence of something that has no existence, as if in fact it were a thing-in-itself. If I postulate the existence of a table as a thing-in-itself, I do so because I believe it exists and that its existence is the explanation of the phenomena that I group together in a set with the name 'table'.

This explanation is necessary because I am anxious to establish the elements of psychoanalysis on a foundation of experience. The element that I hope will be an abstraction of the type given by my example of ♀♂, container and contained, will be a 'central abstraction unknown because unknowable' but adumbrated, in an impure form, by its verbal representation. It will have the same status and quality as the object that we aspire to *represent* by the word 'line' or a line drawn upon paper, has to the word 'line' or a line drawn upon paper.

3

The elements are functions of the personality.[1] Of them all it may be said that each is a function of something else and each has a function. In so far as each *is* a function the term 'function' has a meaning similar to that with which it is associated in mathematics. It is a variable in relation to other variables in terms of which it may be expressed and on the value of which its own value depends. In so far as each function *has* a function the term 'function' is used as the name for a set of actions, physical or mental, governed by or directed to a purpose. Whenever I use the term 'function' I use it to denote something which is and has a function. In so far as it is a function it has factors: in so far as it has a function it has aims.[2]

For the present I propose that the elements of psychoanalysis are all without exception functions using the term in the sense I have just adumbrated. The sign representing an abstraction must therefore represent a function that is unknowable although its primary and secondary qualities (in the Kantian sense) are. As I propose to consider the elements as observable phenomena it must be assumed that I am talking about primary and secondary qualities of elements and not the abstractions or signs by which I represent them. What, of all that can be seen in the course of any analysis, are we to choose as the functions of personality that are also elements of psychoanalysis? The choice is already limited by the criteria I have proposed (Chapter 2, p. 11). We must now limit it further because the element must be

[1]For further discussion of 'function' see *Learning from Experience* [Volume IV].

[2]This point will be clearer when reference can be made to the Grid. See Chapter 6 et seq.

a function in the sense that I have proposed for this term and, furthermore, must be 'seen' in the course of analytic work. But how are the qualities of elements to be pronounced 'seeable' in view of the notorious fact that some analysts purport to be able to see things the very existence of which is denied by others, a disagreement that is common enough between patient and analyst even though they share the 'seen' experience?

As a criterion for what constitutes a sensible experience I propose common sense in the meaning that I have given it elsewhere, namely some 'sense' that is common to more than one sense. I shall consider an object to be sensible to psychoanalytic scrutiny if, and only if, it fulfils conditions analogous to the conditions that are fulfilled when a physical object's presence is confirmed by the evidence of two or more senses. It is evident that it can only be analogous, for, in our present state of knowledge even anxiety, at least in others, is a deduction. The problem is to determine just how far we can go in accepting deductions from sensa as having, in the field of psychoanalysis, the same validity as sensa have in physics or philosophy. I have no doubt that my impression that a man is anxious has the same validity as my impression that a stone, say, is hard. But for my impression to be valid I consider it necessary to feel the stone to satisfy myself of its hardness and at least to look at it to satisfy myself that what I touch is a stone. The correlation thus established entitles one to claim the term 'common sense' to characterize one's view that the given object is a stone: and that the view that it is a stone is common to one's senses and therefore a common sense view, the term 'common sense' being used with more than conversational precision. The problem is to establish some similar usage or convention to define the nature of the sense by which we apprehend a psychoanalytic element and, the counterpart of this, to define the nature of the dimensions of a psychoanalytic element. Implementation of this plan seems, as is so often the case in psychoanalytic investigation, to pre-suppose what we wish to discover. In writing this I have to start somewhere, and this produces difficulties because the start of a discussion tends to impose an appearance of reality on the idea that the matter discussed has a start. Psychoanalytic investigation formulates premises that are as distinct from those of ordinary science as are the premises of philosophy

or theology. Psychoanalytic elements and the objects derived from them have the following dimensions.[1]

1. Extension in the domain of sense.
2. Extension in the domain of myth.
3. Extension in the domain of passion.

An interpretation cannot be regarded as satisfactory unless it illuminates a psychoanalytic object and that object must at the time of interpretation possess these dimensions. In view of the importance I attach to these dimensions I shall discuss each of them in detail.

Extension in the domain of sense need not detain us long. It means that what is interpreted must amongst other qualities be an object of sense. It must, for example, be visible or audible, certainly to the analyst and presumably to the analysand. If the latter presumption turns out not to be the fact, the grounds for the presumption must be such that the failure in correspondence must be regarded as significant in itself. Put in another way, when the analyst gives an interpretation it must be possible for analyst and analysand to see that what he is talking about is something that is either audible, visible, palpable or odoriferous at the time.

It is more difficult to give a satisfactory explanation of what I mean by extension in the domain of myth.[2] I cannot conceive the possibility without it of model making as part of the equipment available to the psychoanalyst. Suppose that a patient is angry. More meaning is given to a statement to that effect if it is added that his anger is like that of a 'child that wanted to hit his nanny because he has been told he is naughty.' The statement in quotation marks is not an expression of a theory in a genetic exposition. It must not be supposed to express a theory that small boys hit their nannies if they are called naughty. It is a statement akin to the type of statement that philosophers contemptuously dismiss as mythologies when they use the term pejoratively to describe bad theories. I require, as part of analytical scientific procedure and equipment, statements of this kind. They are not statements

[1]Discussion of the Grid in Chapter 18, and later, will explain more fully what I mean by these dimensions.

[2]The problem relates to the discussion of row C of the Grid.

of observed fact, or formulations of a theory intended to represent a realization: they are statements of a personal myth. Unless the experience of the psychoanalytic object is accompanied by a formulation by the psychoanalyst of a statement that has this type of component it lacks a necessary dimension. I shall refer to this dimension as the myth or 'as if' component.

I have deliberately chosen the term 'passion' rather than what might appear to be more usual terms for the last dimension, partly because the more usual terms have a meaning that should be left undisturbed. By 'passion' or the lack of it I mean the component derived from L, H and K. I mean the term to represent an emotion experienced with intensity and warmth though without any suggestion of violence the sense of violence is not to be conveyed by the term 'passion' unless it is associated with the term 'greed'.

It may seem that by introducing passion I am repeating what I have said already by including the L, H and K, as elements. This is not so; by passion I mean one of the dimensions which L, H or K must possess if it is to be recognized as an element that is present.[1] Furthermore the evidence that passion is present that may be afforded by the senses is not to be taken as the dimension of passion. That is to say, if the angry tone of the patient is judged to be evidence of hate it must not be assumed that passion has been discerned as a dimension of a psychoanalytic object, H in fact. Evidence may be afforded by the senses, in such an episode, that can be correlated with the evidence, sensuous perhaps but not sensible, of passion. Awareness of passion is not dependent on sense. For senses to be active only one mind is necessary: passion is evidence that two minds are linked and that there cannot possibly be fewer than two minds if passion is present. Passion must be clearly distinguished from counter-transference, the latter being evidence of repression. Further consideration of passion is not relevant to the immediate issue of passion as one of the dimensions of a psychoanalytic object and therefore of a psychoanalytic element.

[1]Cf. Chapter 19 on 'feelings'.

4

In the first chapter I said that the development of psychoanalytic practice was hindered through lack of work on the elements of psychoanalysis and gave examples of what might be objects of a search for such elements. In the second chapter I discussed criteria by which objects proposed as elements might be judged, stressing observability in practice as one essential. In the last chapter I laid down that all elements must be functions of the personality and that they should be conceived of as having dimensions which, in the mind of the analyst, would be sense-impressions, myth and passion.

In this chapter I propose to approach the problem afresh by seeking an answer to the following question considering any psychoanalytic session as an emotional experience, what elements in it must be selected to make it clear that the experience had been a psychoanalysis and could have been nothing else?

Many features of a psychoanalysis may be regarded as typical but they are not exclusively so. Departures from the common rule of meetings between two people may seem insignificant, but the number of such apparently insignificant departures taken together ultimately amounts to a difference that decides the need for a special term. A catalogue of such difference is likely to establish what constitutes an *imitation* of psychoanalysis rather than what is genuine, unless the difference can be stated in elements.

It would seem to avoid the disadvantages of cataloguing differences in detail by trying to focus on the emotional peculiarities of the experience, but difficulty arises because it is common for patients to feel that analysis is coldly unemotional and yet provokes effects appropriate to an intense series of emotions. The surest guide is

experience and to this I shall resort in the hope that it can be described in terms that enable others to compare their experience with it.

The dictum that an analysis must be conducted in an atmosphere of deprivation is usually understood to mean that the analyst must resist any impulse in himself to gratify the desires of his analysands or to crave gratification for his own. To narrow the expression of this statement without contracting the area covered by it; at no time must either analyst or analysand lose the sense of isolation within the intimate relationship of analysis.[1]

No matter how good or bad the co-operation may turn out to be the analyst should not lose, or deprive his patient of, the sense of isolation that belongs to the knowledge that the circumstances that have led to analysis and the consequences that may in future arise from it are a responsibility that can be shared with nobody. Discussions of technical or other matters with colleagues or relatives must never obscure this essential isolation.

Opposed to the establishment of a relationship yielding experiences of a sense of responsibility is the drive to be mean and greedy.[2]

The sense of loneliness seems to relate to a feeling, in the object of scrutiny, that it is being abandoned and, in the scrutinizing subject, that it is cutting itself off from the source or base on which it depends for its existence.

To summarize: Detachment can only be achieved at the cost of painful feelings of loneliness and abandonment experienced (1) by the primitive animal mental inheritance from which detachment is effected and (2) by the aspects of the personality that succeed in detaching themselves from the object of scrutiny which is felt to be indistinguishable from the source of its viability. The apparently abandoned object of scrutiny is the primitive mind and the primitive social capacity of the individual as a political or group animal. The 'detached' personality is in a sense new to its job and has to turn to tasks which differ from those to which its components are more usually adapted, namely scrutiny of the environment excluding the self, part of the price paid is in feelings of insecurity.

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[1]The point is discussed again under premonition, Chapter 16, p. 64.

[2]Terms such as 'greed' are used because I am discussing the elements of psychoanalytic practice. Once such elements are clearly discerned as a part of the emotional experience the analyst can consider in what way they are illuminated by psychoanalytic theories of, for example, anal erotism.

5

The conclusions of the previous chapter suggest that decision requires further discussion; does it involve the translation of thought into action, or some analogous process, for example of thought into a fixed idea, a variable as it were into a constant? Since the analyst is constantly called upon to decide whether to intervene with an interpretation, decision and its components of loneliness and introspection should be regarded as an element of psychoanalysis, at least from the point of view of the analyst and therefore probably from the point of view of both patient and analyst.

Introspection, that any practising analyst can carry out for himself, into what clichés he most commonly uses often suggests that the problem in analysis is to know which of several possible interpretations is at a given time correct; it arises from awareness of the number of ideas expressed in papers on analysis and even more from the variety of human behaviour as it is experienced in ordinary life. In practice the impression is not so formidable: analytic interpretations can be seen to be theories held *by* the analyst about the models and theories the patient has *of* the analyst. It is believed and intended that the analyst's theories, if correct in content and expression, exert a therapeutic effect. Introspection will, I believe, show most analysts that the theories they employ are relatively few in number and may be seen to fall into the following categories:

1. Definition. Roughly such interpretations take the form that the patient is showing by his associations that he is, say, depressed. In so far as it is a definitory hypothesis it is by way of saying 'This, that you, the patient, are now experiencing is what I, and, in my opinion, most people, would call depression.' In so far as it is to define for the patient what the analyst means by definition, there can be no

argument about it because the only valid criticism would be if the statement could be shown to be absurd because self-contradictory.

2. Statements representing the realization in such a way that the analyst's anxiety that the situation is unknown and correspondingly dangerous to him, is denied by an interpretation intended to prove to himself and the patient that this is not so. Any practising analyst appreciates that this state of affairs belongs to the domain of counter-transference and indicates analysis for the analyst. But as even analysts cannot have all the analysis they may consider desirable, the theory used as a barrier against the unknown will remain in the armoury of analyst as well as patient.

3. Statements that are representations of present and past realizations. An example of such a statement would be a brief summary reminding the patient of something that the analyst believes took place on a previous occasion. This corresponds to the function Freud denotes by the term *notation*.[1]

4. Statements representing a scientific deductive system in so far as such a system can be expressed in ordinary conversational English. Such a statement has affinities with 3 above in that it may be regarded as representing a realization from which it has been derived. But essentially its function is similar to that of *attention* as described by Freud.[2] It is the statement one expects to follow an analyst's cliché. 'I would like to draw your attention to . . .'. It is similar to 5 (below), but more passive and receptive, corresponding to reverie. It is a theoretical formulation, expressed with as much scientific rigour as the circumstances of analytical practice permit, whose function is to probe the environment. In this respect it has affinities with the pre-conception. It is essential to discrimination. One of its functions is receptiveness to the Selected Fact. (By Selected Fact I mean that by which coherence and meaning is given to facts already known but whose relatedness has not hitherto been seen.)

5. Similar to 1, 2, 3 and 4 as far as formulation is concerned – all are formulated by an identical representation, or, in other words, the interpretation can be verbally identical in each case – but it is a theory used to investigate the unknown. The most obvious example

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[1]S. Freud, 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911b), p. 220.

[2]Ibid.

of this is the Oedipus myth as Freud has abstracted it to form the psychoanalytic theory. The function of the theoretical formulations in this category are interpretations being used with an intention to illuminate material, that would otherwise remain obscure, in order to help the patient to release still further material. The primary object is to obtain material for satisfaction of the impulses of inquiry in patient and analyst. Note that the probing quality of such interpretations may help to account for differences of reaction in the patient from those he would display to interpretations in category 1 or 4; this component can be distinguished from those derived from the content of the interpretation.

6. In this, the last category that I propose to distinguish, the statement, though still embodied in a representation identical with those employed in all the other statements, is used as an operator.[1] The intention is primarily that the communication will enable the patient to effect solutions of his problems of development. (The patient of course can use it to effect solutions of his problems rather than solutions of his problems of development, that is, he can use the interpretation as advice not interpretation, but it is not here my intention to discuss these and other responses of the patient.) Functions of interpretations that fall in this category, and therefore the interpretations in this one of their aspects, are analogous to *actions* in other forms of human endeavour. For the analyst the transition that comes nearest to that of decision and translation of thought into action is the transition from thought to verbal formulations of category 6. From what I have said in Chapter 4 it is clear that activities of this category are those in which the sense of loneliness and isolation are most likely to be in evidence.

These categories are not exhaustive or exclusive. Experience, it is to be hoped, may lead to substitution by better categories. It is essential to resist an impulse to increase the number of categories unduly partly because that is very easy to do but also because what is needed for my present purpose is the least number of fundamental categories.

I must stress that though in practice interpretations will certainly be embodied in the most diverse formulations, theoretically the same

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[1]See H. Poincaré, *Science and Method* (1914), p. 30, and N. R. Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery* (1958), p. 121.

interpretation formulated in the same terms may easily be used in all of these six, and yet more, ways in the same session. The categories I have drawn up to relate, not to the content of theory or the form in which it is represented, but to the work it is intended to do. I shall anticipate by saying that these categories apply to the use to which 'thoughts' may be put, once they have been represented by patient as well as analyst. This chapter has been taken up with a particular aspect of what may broadly be called thoughts after the thoughts have been represented by words or combinations of words.

It is therefore a categorization of '*I*' (p. 9, Chap. 1) according to uses to which representations of *I* may be put. This treatment of *I* is a schematic exposition and excludes the component of time that is implicit in a genetic or developmental exposition. In view of the importance that *I* must now assume as a candidate for establishment as one of the elements of psychoanalysis I propose to devote the next few pages to a genetic, as opposed to schematic, exposition of *I* although it involves some repetition of ideas I have already put forward in my paper on Thinking.[1]

[1]'The Psychoanalytic Study of Thinking', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 43* (1962): 306–310. Reprinted as Chapter 9, 'A Theory of Thinking', in *Second Thought* [Volume VI].

6

The classification I have suggested for analytic interpretations can be applied to all statements whether made by patient or analyst. But I wish to introduce another mode of classification for the same material and for this I propose to draw on experience with patients suffering from disturbances of thought. In contrast with the scheme I have drawn up in the last chapter this will be framed genetically not systematically. Whether there is a realization approximating to it is a question I leave open for the present.

1. *β*-elements. This term represents the earliest matrix from which thoughts can be supposed to arise. It partakes of the quality of inanimate object and psychic object without any form of distinction between the two. Thoughts are things, things are thoughts; and they have personality.

2. *α*-elements. This term represents the outcome of work done by *α*-function on sense impressions. They are not objects in the world of external reality but are products of work done on the sensa believed to relate to such realities. They make possible the formation and use of dream thoughts.

I do not consider that there is or can be any evidence for the existence of a realization corresponding to *β*-elements, *α*-function, or *α*-elements, other than observed facts that cannot be explained without the aid of such hypothetical elements. For the remaining formulations the position is different. It can be supposed that there is evidence for the existence of dream thoughts, preconceptions and the rest. To continue:

3. Dream thoughts. These depend on the prior existence of *β*- and *α*-elements: otherwise they require no elaboration beyond that which they have received in classical psychoanalytic theory. They

are communicated by the manifest content of the dream but remain latent unless the manifest content is translated into more sophisticated terms.

With dreams one reaches a realm in which there is direct evidence of the phenomena with which one has to deal. At least there is direct evidence when a patient says he had a dream and proceeds to recount it. Unfortunately such assurance evaporates when the subject of investigation is thought itself. The statement that a patient has had a dream is ordinarily sufficient evidence to allow work to proceed, but not if we need to know what has occurred when the patient says he has dreamt. For example, if a patient complains that he had a pain in his leg, are we to suppose, in the appropriate setting, that he *dreamt* that he had a pain in his leg or ought we to consider that sometimes the manifest content of a dream is a series of pains rather than a series of visual images that have been verbalized and linked by narrative?

4. The pre-conception.[1]

This corresponds to a state of expectation. It is a state of mind adapted to receive a restricted range of phenomena. An early occurrence might be an infant's expectation of the breast. The mating of pre-conception and realization brings into being the conception.

5. The conception. The conception may be regarded as a variable that has been replaced by a constant. If we represent the pre-conception by $\psi(\xi)$ with (ξ) as the unsaturated element, then from the realization with which the pre-conception mates there is derived that which replaces (ξ) by a constant. The conception can however then be employed as a preconception in that it can express an expectation. The mating of $\psi(\xi)$ with the realization satisfies the expectation but enlarges the capacity of $\psi(\xi)$ for further saturation.[2]

6. The concept is derived from the conception by a process designed to render it free of those elements that would unfit it to be a tool in the elucidation or expression of truth.

7. The scientific deductive system. In this context the term 'scientific deductive system' means a combination of concepts in hypotheses and systems of hypotheses so that they are logically[3]

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[1]This description of pre-conception is provisional. The concept is elaborated later, notably in Chapter 18 and subsequently.

[2]Compare with what I say in Chapter 18 on the abstraction.

[3]Compare the state of logical relatedness with what I say in Chapter 18 on coherence.

related to each other. The logical relation of one concept with another and of one hypothesis with another enhances the meaning of each concept and hypothesis thus linked and expresses a meaning that the concepts and hypotheses and links do not individually possess. In this respect the meaning of the whole may be said to be greater than the meaning of the sum of its parts.

8. Calculi.[1] The scientific deductive system may be represented by an algebraic calculus. In the algebraic calculus a number of signs are brought together according to certain rules of combination. The signs have no properties other than those conferred on them by the rules of combination. $(a + b)^2 = a^2 + b^2 + 2ab$, is an affirmation of the rules of combination of *a* and *b*. *a* and *b* have no meaning[2] other than that they are replaceable by numbers and must be understood to be capable of manipulation in the manner defined by the statement $(a + b)^2 = a^2 + b^2 + 2ab$. In short, to say that *a* and *b* have properties could only mean that they lend themselves to manipulation in accordance with rules and that the rules to which they conform can be deduced from the statement in that, like the conception, it retains a capacity for saturation.

This completes my genetic exposition. I propose now to combine it with the schematic exposition of Chapter 5. This, it will be remembered, adumbrated a provisional scheme by which the various *uses* to which '*I*' might be put could be categorized, thus contrasting with the scheme of the present chapter in which I suggest a scheme of various *stages* by which '*I*' might have developed. It is necessary to note that in the genetic scheme rows B–H inclusive may all be said to contain unsaturated elements that await a realization before they can be 'satisfied' and become available for further employment as preconceptions. Row A differs from all others in that it has no unsaturated element and is therefore unsuited for use as preconception. Row B, the α-element, I propose for the present to leave undiscussed for a special reason. For the same reason I shall ignore important aspects of row C, the dream thoughts, and dreams themselves, until later. In the Grid (see p. vii) I set out the systematic and genetic expositions along different axes.

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[1]For a full description of the terms scientific deductive system and algebraic calculus as used in rigorous scientific method see R. B. Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation* (1955).

[2]See discussion of coherence and meaning, Chapter 18.

This formal table imparts an air of rigidity that may seem alien to a clinical approach. I hope that subsequent discussion involving its use will dispel any fears on that account – provided it is properly used. I shall indicate what that use is by taking up a few of the implications of the Grid. The reference numbers are to the co-ordinates in the Grid.

A1. This category may be defined as extremely primitive. It shows no clear differentiation of qualities such as we expect to find, say, in a dream as it is recounted by a patient. It shows no differentiation of animate qualities from inanimate, subject from object, moral from scientific. Since it is saturated it is unsuited for use as a preconception. The only sense in which it can be regarded as having a use as a definition is in the sense that to define something may be said to imprison it within certain limits: its meaning is not liberated by verbalization but denied an outlet. It is however suited to projective identification. To use the example I employed in my paper, 'A Theory of Thinking'[1] – to save unnecessary burdening of the reader's memory by a multiplicity of examples I shall use very few and ask him to bear with the boredom of repetition – the infant experiencing a fear that it is dying, in so far as the terminology of adult sophistication can express the experience at all, imprisons it in a *β*-element (now placed in the Grid category A1). This is projected into the container and its subsequent fate depends on a number of contingencies that I shall not anticipate here because I deal with them later.

A2. The indications I have given in A1 show that strictly speaking A2 must be a null class, because A1 is incapable of development. Yet in some sense A1 can be used to fulfil some of the functions of A2 in that the imprisonment implicit in A1 denies any liberation of meaning. But comparison with G2 will show that there is a great difference between A2 and G2 (in so far as A2 can be said to exist by virtue of substitution of A1 and A2) and the implication of this difference must be correspondingly greater.

I shall not take up A3, A4, and A5 in detail, for what I have said about A2 obtains with appropriate modifications. Essentially they are null classes. But A6 is worth brief comment in that the *β*-element, dealt with by projective identification, does lend itself to use as an operator. Its significance is more sharply defined by comparison with D6, E6, F6, G6 and H6, which I have not so far discussed.

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[1][Chapter 9 in *Second Thoughts*: see Volume VI. *Ed.*]

In the situation where the *β*-element, say the fear that it is dying, is projected by the infant and received by the container in such a way that it is 'detoxicated', that is, modified by the container so that the infant may take it back into its own personality in a tolerable form. The operation is analogous to that performed by *α*-function. The infant depends on the Mother to act as its *α*-function.

Stating this in other terms, the fear is modified and the *β*-element thereby made into an *α*-element. Restating this less abstractly still, the *β*-element has had removed from it the excess of emotion that has impelled the growth of the restrictive and expulsive component; therefore a transformation has been effected that enables the infant to take back something, call it an *α*-element for convenience, that is now suitable for use as a definition or preconception. The change that is brought about by the mother who accepts the infant's fears, is one that is brought about later, in personalities whose development is relatively successful, by *α*-function. By the same token *α*-function may be described as concerned with the change I have associated with the conception[1] and the concept (E and F in this chapter) as I have described these entities in my genetic exposition.

[1]See start of Chapter 9 for discussion on dynamics of growth and Chapter 18 et seq.

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I shall represent the table set out in Chapter 6 by the sign *I*.[1] I do not propose to discuss what meaning if any is to be attached to classes represented by co-ordinates such as 5.1. We need not suppose that such elements exist. Nevertheless I do not wish to discard them for the present; I propose to reconsider the axes of the framework in the search for elements. When I use the sign *I*, I mean it to represent either the whole table or any one or more of the compartments I have distinguished by co-ordinates. As an example suppose that in the course of an analysis the material suggests the predominance of *I*. This impression should be gained as a result of relaxed or free-floating attention; this state of mind approximates to that represented by D4 (since I am already disposed by my personality and psychoanalytic training to entertain certain expectations). A state of attention, being receptive to the material the patient is producing, approximates to a pre-conception and therefore the change from attention to preconception is represented by a move from D4 on the Grid to E4. If I seek confirmation from other material that the patient is presenting, E3 and E5 are swept into activity; if I begin to verbalize my impressions F5 is also involved. If it now appears that the time is ripe for an interpretation a further shift takes place, this time towards G6 with a view to a formulation intended to affect the patient.

As aspects of the patient's behaviour relevant to his psychoanalysis belong to the class of phenomena represented by *I*, they will be represented by certain of the tabulated categories. Suppose the patient has said, at the commencement of the session, 'I know that

[1]See Chapter 19 for discussion of feelings.

you do not like me.' From knowledge of the patient I may think he is referring to something in the previous session. It would then be a theory enshrining his view of a past event. In that case the realization may be regarded as approximating to G3. But if the G3 session leads me to think that the material is intended by the patient to support the supposition that I do not like him then I would consider that his remark belonged to the category represented by G1, that is to say that it approximated to a definitory hypothesis.

If the context of the statement leads me to suppose feelings of persecution are operating and that his preconceptions would interpret my behaviour as evidence, then his statement would lie in the category E4 and F4. If, however, I regarded it as intended to evoke a confirmation or refutation I would consider it to be classifiable under G6.

I have been supposing in this example that the significance of the patient's behaviour lay in the domain *I*. So far, however, I have in my example been considering the content of his thought in order to determine the category into which, in a given instance, it would fall. If the context of the analysis showed that the content related to an oedipal rivalry, the categories of *I* to which it belonged would in most cases be of subsidiary importance, namely for determining the nature of the presenting oedipal material. But if *I* itself is in question the importance of content lies in its relevance to determination of the *I* category. All the categories in the table, with the possible exception of the row B sets, may be considered to play a part, sometimes more important, sometimes less, in any psychoanalytic material. The reader can see for himself that there are some categories in the table into which the analyst's thought processes ought not to fall. Except possibly in the writing of papers or in extra-analytic activities it is difficult to imagine how he could need calculi even if they were available: similarly but for different reasons, familiar to any analyst, he should not be employing any of the column 2 categories. The Grid tabulation may help to make explicit features of the analytic situation that should always be watched for as possible disturbances of the analysis.

My immediate concern is with the use of the Grid when the presenting problem is *I* itself. The table sets out to cover comprehensively all phenomena that might be described in ordinary conversation as

'thoughts' though the right of some categories to be so described might be disputed. As I have said elsewhere[1] patients who suffer from disorders of thought seem to owe their disability partly to failures in development of thoughts themselves, exemplified in the table by the *β*-elements, and partly to failures in development of an apparatus for dealing with thoughts. It would be easy to say that the obvious thing to do with thoughts is to think them; it is more difficult to decide what such a statement means in fact.[2] In practice the statement becomes more meaningful when it is possible to contrast what a psychotic personality does with thoughts *instead of* thinking them, and how much discipline and difficulty a measure *of* coherent thinking involves for anyone. I shall ignore any of the uses to which organized thought is put partly because I have already included them as factors in *I*-function and partly because experience in disorders of thought show that their relevance to disorders of thought is chiefly to illuminate them by contrast.

I shall state the theory first in terms of a model, as follows: The infant suffering pangs of hunger and fear that it is dying, wracked by guilt and anxiety, and impelled by greed, messes itself and cries. The mother picks it up, feeds it and comforts it, and eventually the infant sleeps.

Reforming the model to represent the feelings of the infant we have the following version: the infant, filled with painful lumps of faeces, guilt, fears of impending death, chunks of greed, meanness and urine, evacuates these bad objects into the breast that is not there. As it does so the good object turns the no-breast (mouth) into a breast, the faeces and urine into milk, the fears of impending death and anxiety into vitality and confidence, the greed and meanness into feelings of love and generosity and the infant sucks its bad property, now translated into goodness, back again. As an abstraction to match this model I propose an apparatus, for dealing with these primitive categories of *I*, that consists of a container ♀ and the contained ♂. The mechanism is implicit in the theory of projective identification in which Melanie Klein formulated her discoveries of infant mentality.[3]

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[1] *Learning from Experience* [Volume IV].

[2] See Chapter 18 below for mechanisms related to coherence and comprehension.

[3] 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms' (Klein, 1946).

I propose provisionally to represent the apparatus for thinking by the sign ♀♂.[1] The material, so to speak, out of which this apparatus is manufactured is *I*. The material with which this apparatus is designed to deal, is *I*. *I* develops a capacity for any one of its aspects to assume indifferently the function ♂ or ♀ to any other one of its aspects ♀ or ♂. We must now consider *I* in its ♀♂ operation, an operation usually spoken of in ordinary conversation as thinking. From the point of view of meaning, thinking depends on the successful introjection of the good breast that is originally responsible for the performance of *α*-function. On this introjection depends the ability of any part of *I* to be ♂ to the other part's ♀. The relevance of this to explanation and correlation I shall deal with elsewhere;[2] briefly, explanation may be seen as related to the attitude of one part of the mind to another, and correlation as a comparison of content expressed by one aspect of *I* to content expressed by another aspect of *I*.

[1]See Chapter 18 et seq. under coherence and comprehension.
[2]Ibid.

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Certain contradictions and confusions must now be considered even though present knowledge may be inadequate for their resolution. First I propose to review the genetic axis in the light of the aspect of projective identification I have represented by ♀♂. Anticipating what I have to say in Chapter 17, I shall assume that the operation ♀♂ is benign and, as I have suggested, that it is responsible for the developments implied by the genetic ordering of the lettered axis, A to H. (To understand what I mean by the benign operation of ♀♂ see the model on page 33.) Inspection of A to H in the light of ♀♂ shows that the categories have a common relation to each other in that each category depends on changes, in the previous category, that fit it to operate as a preconception as well as a record. Thus E1 depends on mating D1 with a realization that enables the formation of a conception which is in turn capable of leading to F1. Putting this in other terms the element represented by D1 say, is increasing the scope of its function of notation in such a way that its function of attention (the terms 'notation' and 'attention' being employed in the sense used by Freud[1]) is also increased. Using the table to say this again in a different way, D1 develops through the stages represented by D3 and D4 to become E1.

The mechanics of change from one to another of the phases represented by A to H may thus be represented by ♀♂.[2] The link ♀♂ between the phases represented by categories A to H, is mechanical. What of the dynamic link? That is represented by L, H and K. The benignity of the operation ♀♂ will depend on the nature of the dynamic link.

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[1]S. Freud, 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911b).
[2]Further consideration will show that this mechanism is related to growth.

The systematic axis of *I*, the uses to which a formulation may be put, consists of a series of categories that could be extended. Since the formulation is the same, only the use that can be made of it is varied; it is obvious that the link between the various categories of use is the formulation. In fact what has to be sought is the counterpart in the systematic axis of the mechanism that links the categories of the genetic exposition genetically. Such a search would involve investigation of mechanisms of evasion and modification of pleasure and pain into which I cannot enter here. It is probable that the mechanism by which transition from one use of the axis 1–6 is transformed into another, is that used in evasion or modification and the dynamic is pleasure and pain.

Melanie Klein's discoveries of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions required a theory that in certain situations apparently unrelated elements, associated with feelings of persecution, come together as an integrated whole associated with feelings of depression. I shall employ this theory together with the term 'Selected Fact', borrowed from Poincaré.[1] Each 'use' classified under the categories 1–6 of the schematic axis depends on the operation of this mechanism on the elements A–G. Thus the use that consists in the employment of an aspect of the categories A to H to inquire or research has come into being by virtue of this mechanism and itself effective by employment of this mechanism. This mechanism I represent by the sign Ps ⇌ D. The dynamic link, as before, is L, H, or K.

The process of change from one category represented in the Grid to another may be described as disintegration and reintegration, Ps ⇌ D. The benignity or otherwise of change effected by the mechanism ♀♂ depends on the nature of the dynamic link L, H or K.

It will be observed that in the course of the discussion, commenced by making a distinction between thoughts and the apparatus for using them and then according them priority in time so that they could be studied separately from thinking, it has been necessary to reintroduce a primitive mechanics of thinking, or something very like it, to explain the development of the thoughts. In fact it is easier to believe that this spontaneous development in the discussion represents the facts with a greater approximation to the truth than is the case if the accord of priority to thoughts, convenient

[1]H. Poincaré, *Science and Method*, p. 26.

epistemologically, is to be taken as an accurate representation of the reality of thinking. Nevertheless there are grounds for supposing that a primitive 'thinking', active in the development of thought, should be distinguished from the thinking that is required for the use of thoughts.[1] The thinking used in the development of thoughts differs from the thinking required to use the thoughts when developed. The latter is derived from the Ps ⇌ D mechanism that is considered in Chapter 9.[2] When thoughts have to be used under the exigencies of reality, be it psychic reality or external reality, the primitive mechanisms have to be endowed with capacities for precision demanded by the need for survival. We have therefore to consider the part played by the life and death instincts as well as reason, which, in its embryonic form under the dominance of the pleasure principle is designed to serve as the slave of the passions, has forced it to assume a function resembling that of a master of the passions and the parent of logic. The search for satisfaction of incompatible desires would lead to frustration, but successful surmounting of the problem of frustration involves being reasonable, and a phrase such as 'the dictates of reason' may enshrine the expression of primitive emotional reaction to a function intended to satisfy, not frustrate. The axioms of logic therefore have their roots in the experience of a reason that fails in its primary function to satisfy the passions, just as the existence of a powerful reason may reflect a capacity in that function to resist the assaults of its frustrated and outraged masters. These matters will have to be considered in so far as dominance of the reality principle stimulates the development of thought and thinking, reason, and awareness of psychic and environmental reality.

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[1]See growth and the interaction of ♀♂ and Ps ⇌ D in Chapter 18.
[2]And Chapters 18–20.

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The mechanism of projective identification enables the infant to deal with primitive emotion and so contributes to the development of thoughts. The interplay between the depressive and paranoid-schizoid positions is also related to the development of thoughts and thinking. It has been pointed out (by Melanie Klein and Hanna Segal) that symbol formation is related to the depressive position. It is compatible with a connection between a capacity for thinking and the interplay between the two positions. It would seem that there is a connection between Ps ⇌ D and ♀♂ yet the dissimilarity makes it hard to see what form the connection, if there is one, could take.[1] The bringing together of elements that have apparently no connection in fact or in logic in such a way that their connection is displayed and an unsuspected coherence revealed, as in the example from Poincaré,[2] is characteristic of Ps ⇌ D. The operation Ps ⇌ D is responsible for revealing the relationship of 'thoughts' already created by ♀♂. But in fact it seems as if Ps ⇌ D is as much the begetter of thoughts as ♀♂. The development requires examination in some detail.

The earliest observation I have been able to make seemed to suggest that development of thinking through Ps ⇌ D depended on the production of signs. That is to say the individual had to bring together elements to form signs and then bring signs together before he could think. In his case 'writing' preceded not talking only but thinking. His actual speech was incomprehensible if I tried to unravel it by applying my knowledge of ordinary words and grammar. It became more meaningful if I thought of it as a doodling in sound,

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[1]See Chapter 18, in discussion of growth.

[2]H. Poincaré, *Science and Method*, p. 30.

rather like tuneless and aimless whistling; it could not be described as speech, poetic speech, or music. Just as aimless whistling fails to be music because it does not obey any rule or discipline of musical composition, just as doodling fails to be drawing because it does not conform to the discipline of artistic creation, so his speech for lack of obedience to the usages of coherent speech did not qualify as verbal communication. The words employed fall into an undisciplined pattern of sound.[1] This pattern the patient believed he could see, because the words and phrases that he uttered were believed by him to be embodied in the objects in the room. Having uttered actual objects, not phrases, the pattern that they formed supposedly revealed their meaning, and this meaning he expected he could now take back. The resemblance this bears to projective identification will be noted.

The procedure I have just described qualifies as an attempt to establish thought, because although the verbalizations seemed to refer to the objects present, and to depend upon their being present, scrutiny showed that the objects were being used as signs to make thinking possible about objects that were not present. In this respect the objects in the room were being used as a mathematician might employ mathematical notation to solve a problem without having to rely on the physical presence of the objects on which the problem centred. Ordinarily if a man wished to know how many apples there were if four men had three each he would not need to have the men and the apples present because he could employ a mathematical notation and the rules for manipulation of its signs. The patient exhibiting the features I have described would, had he been able to employ the objects in the room successfully, have 'thought about' objects *not* in the room. It is important to note that in this example the objects in the room are not symbols but signs. Insofar as the patient has to wait the appearance of appropriate objects before he can think they are inadequate as signs: in so far as they are not the actual objects about which he is attempting to 'think', they represent an attempt to invent and employ signs. To that extent *this* employment of actual objects represents a degree of liberation from the state of mind compelled to employ actual objects.

Amongst these object-signs, as I shall call them for convenience, there is felt to exist one that will harmonize them all: by virtue of its

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[1]See reference to coherence and meaning.

supposed functions it resembles Poincaré's 'Selected Fact'. It differs from the Selected Fact, as I use the term, in that it is not felt by the patient to be other than a thing in itself, and this *β*-element, unlike the Selected Fact, depends on external fortuitous occurrence.

It is tempting to suppose that the transformation of *β*-element to *α*-element depends on ♀♂ and the operation of Ps ⇌ D depends on the prior operation of ♀♂. Unfortunately this relatively simple solution does not adequately explain events in the consulting room; before ♀♂ can operate, ♀ has to be found and the discovery of ♂ depends on the operation of Ps ⇌ D. It is obvious that to consider which of the two, ♀♂ or Ps ⇌ D, is prior distracts from the main problem. I shall suppose the existence of a mixed state in which the patient is persecuted by feelings of depression and depressed by feelings of persecution. These feelings are indistinguishable from bodily sensations and what might, in the light of later capacity for discrimination, be described as things-in-themselves. In short, *β*-elements are objects compounded of things-in-themselves, feelings of depression–persecution and guilt and therefore aspects of personality linked by a sense of catastrophe[1]: fuller elaboration will have to wait on clinical discovery.

I do not claim the existence of a realization that corresponds to the description that follows; it must be taken as a representation of an hypothesis that is necessary to give coherence to diverse clinical observations.

The *β*-elements are dispersed; this dispersal should be terminated by Ps ⇌ D and a Selected Fact unless the patient seeks a container, ♀, that compels cohesion of the *β*-elements to form the contained, ♂.

The dispersed *β*-elements, in so far as they seek the ♀, may be regarded as an abortive prototype of a container, a container loosely structured like the reticulum[2] of Dr Jaques. They may equally be regarded as the abortive prototype of the contained, a loosely structured ♂ before compression to enter ♀.

This description can be restated in terms of Ps ⇌ D the cohesion of *β*-elements to form ♂ is analogous to the integration characteristic of the depressive position; the dispersal of *β*-elements is analogous

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[1]There is a curious parallel in a description by R. B. Onians (*Origins of European Thought*, p. 369, C.U.P.) of the Greek ideas of the riddle and the sphinx.

[2]E. Jaques (1960). 'Disturbances in the Capacity to Work.' *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 41*: 357–367.

to the splitting and fragmentation characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position.

To restate the above description in more sophisticated terms: the dispersal of *β*-elements has analogies with the preconception that is to be mated with a realization to produce a conception; the expectation of a breast mating with the realization of the breast. Although the compression of *β*-elements to form ♂ and the dispersal to form a loosely knit ♀ (a reticulum in search of ♂) is suggestive of Ps ⇌ D, in fact it cannot be regarded as equivalent because *β*-elements lack the valency necessary for true integration. The interplay between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions belong to a stage when the elements can be integrated and the integration represented by verbal statements composed of articulated words. Such statements represent the realization by the nature of their formulation as well as their content. The concentration of *β*-elements is closer to agglomeration than to integration or coherence: the associated depression and persecution are correspondingly incoherent.

If the dispersed *β*-elements find no container (the model corresponding to ♀ is presumably the breast) the dispersed *β*-elements, functioning as we have seen as a loosely knit reticulum (container in search of a container) become as it were far more actively depressed–persecuted and greedy. The expelling object, the centre of these *β*-elements, already impoverished by the dispersal, is then threatened with annihilation by its evacuated *β*-elements since the dispersed elements are searching for saturation. Developments that follow have been described by Melanie Klein and her co-workers and need not detain us now. My main object is to establish the theoretical relationship between the theory of projective identification and the theory of paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions.

10

In the second paragraph of the last chapter I described behaviour designed to develop thought by the interaction of Ps ⇌ D and objects in external reality that were regarded as *β*-elements. I likened the process to doodling or writing as a method of evacuating objects that could then be scrutinized or dealt with in some way that would cause them to yield a meaning. This process I have described as part of the development of a capacity for thought (the manipulation of *β*-elements by the mechanism Ps ⇌ D) may also be regarded as a stage in the development of self-consciousness, for *β*-elements are felt to contain a part of the personality in their composition. The significance of this will be seen to lie, when we reconsider what the elements of psychoanalysis are, in their supposed possession of characteristics such as greed, love, hate, envy, curiosity. The mechanisms involved in these primitive phenomena can be regarded, at their simplest, as Ps ⇌ D (or fragmentation ↔ integration) and ♀♂ (or expulsion ↔ ingestion). I shall describe these mechanisms now by reformulations in terms of models.

Ps may be regarded as a cloud of particles capable of coming together, D, and D as an object capable of becoming fragmented and dispersed, Ps. Ps, the particles, may be regarded as an uncertainty cloud. These elementary particles may be regarded as closing on to one elementary particle, object, or *β*-elements, a process that is a particular instance of the general movement represented by → D.

D may be regarded variously as an integrated object, as an agglomeration produced by the convergence of elementary particles on to one particle or *β*-element, or as an especial instance of integrated object, namely, either ♀ or ♂. It may even be taken to represent the

universe of dispersed fragmentations or elementary particles Ps. That is to say, if the *field* of fragmentations is the significant feature, then D may represent the whole field of elementary particles.

It will be observed that Ps is capable of functioning as if it were a form of ♀. A realization corresponding to this abstraction may be seen in practice when a patient appears to pour out a series of incoherent, unarticulated and disjointed associations designed to evoke from the analyst a statement that is to fulfil the function of one of the following: (1) a Selected Fact that will give coherence to the whole (an interpretation), (2) meaningful comment from which the meaning will be extracted, (3) meaningful comment on to which the disjointed associations will fasten to destroy the meaning ('So What?' the patient may reply to the response he has evoked from the analyst), (4) a meaningful comment on which the disjointed associations will fasten in order to possess it. (The patient makes apparently no response whatever but subsequently produces the analyst's thought as his own.)

In sum, the two mechanisms can each operate in its characteristic manner or in a manner typical or reminiscent of the manner of operation of the other. The description I have given of Ps operating as if it were a form of ♀ may be thought of as representing a situation in which the mechanism Ps ⇌ D has become arrested at Ps, but, in order to maintain its vital function, assumes the mechanical operative quality of ♀♂ and so retains its dynamic quality. Similarly ♀♂ can assume a quality of operation characteristic of Ps ⇌ D.[1]

In the latter part of Chapter 7 and subsequently I have been concerned with the mechanics of thinking. I proposed that thoughts should be regarded as prior to the apparatus for using thoughts and in the course of the discussion modified this view by suggesting that 'thinking' should be used as a term to describe the processes by which thoughts are produced and the processes by which they are subsequently dealt with. If 'thinking' is to be used as a term covering the manufacture as well as the employment of thoughts it should be differentiated so that the activities of creation and employment can be considered separately. I then considered

[1]In particular ingestion of ♂ by ♀, and penetration of ♀ by ♂ replace some of the functions of the Selected Fact.

Ps ⇌ D and ♀♂ separately as mechanisms concerned with the elaboration and employment of thoughts. Lastly I have tried to show that Ps ⇌ D and ♀♂ are not to be regarded as representing a realization of two separate activities but as mechanisms each of which can at need assume the characteristics of the other. In all of this I have concerned myself with content only in so far as it helped to illustrate the mechanisms. Before I turn to content I must point out a difficulty in the use of the term 'content'. It is clearly appropriate to hypotheses of the kind I have represented by ♀♂. We have already encountered difficulties inherent in the use of terms such as 'mechanism' because of the implied model and its unsuitability to convey a meaning when life is an essential element in the meaning that is to be conveyed. The difficulty involved in the use of the term 'content' is similar. Although I shall speak of the Oedipal situation as if it were the content of thoughts it will be apparent that thoughts and thinking may be regarded as part of the content of the Oedipal situation. The term 'Oedipal situation' may be applied to the (1) realization of relationships between Father, Mother and child, (2) emotional preconception, using the term 'preconception' as I have used it here as that which mates with awareness of a realization to give rise to a conception, (3) a psychological reaction stimulated in an individual by (1) above. I trust the context will make it clear in which of these senses I employ the term.

Freud's use of the Oedipus myth illuminated more than the nature of the sexual facets of the human personality. Thanks to his discoveries it is possible by reviewing the myth to see that it contains elements that were not stressed in the early investigations because they were overshadowed by the sexual component in the drama. The developments of psychoanalysis make it possible to give more weight to other features. First, the myth by virtue of its narrative form binds the various components in the story in a manner analogous to the fixation of the elements of a scientific deductive system by their inclusion in the system: it is similar to the fixation of the elements in the corresponding algebraic calculus where that exists. No element, such as the sexual element, can be comprehended save in its relationship with other elements; for example with the determination with which Oedipus pursues his inquiry into the crime despite the warnings of Tiresias. It is consequently not possible to isolate the sexual component, or any

other, without distortion. Sex, in the Oedipal situation, has a quality[1] that can only be described by the implications conferred on it by its inclusion in the story. If it is removed from the story it loses its quality unless its meaning is preserved by an express reservation that 'sex' is a term used to represent sex as it is experienced in the context of the myth.

The same is true of all other elements that lend themselves to abstraction from the myth.[2] In so far as I am concerned to elucidate the elements of psychoanalysis I shall regard the train of causation, as it is expressed in the myth, as an element as we may think it necessary to abstract, but otherwise to be subordinate to the function of linking all elements to confer upon them a particular psychic quality. In this respect the elements suffer modification analogous to that of letters of an alphabet held in combination to spell a particular word. Combination of the elements in the story is analogous to the combination of hypotheses in a scientific deductive system.

The chain of causation is necessary to express the moral system of which it is an integral part. The riddle traditionally attributed to the Sphinx is an expression of man's curiosity turned upon himself. Self-consciousness or curiosity in the personality about the personality is an essential feature of the story: psychoanalytic investigation thus has origins of respectable antiquity. Curiosity has the same status in the myths of the garden of Eden and the tower of Babel – it is a sin. Ignoring the narrative chain of the story except for its contribution to linking the components with each other I isolate the following elements:

1. The pronouncement of the Delphic Oracle.
2. The warning of Tiresias, blinded for his attack on the serpents whose coupling he had observed.
3. The riddle of the Sphinx.
4. The misconduct of Oedipus in arrogantly pursuing his inquiry and thus being guilty of hubris.

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[1]This point becomes more clear when I discuss the use of ideational content of a statement as a method of expressing feeling. See Chapter 18 et seq.

[2]Particularly curiosity – the K link.

Added to these are a series of disasters:

5. The plague inflicted on the population of Thebes.
6. The suicides of the Sphinx and Jocasta.
7. The blinding and exile of Oedipus.
8. The murder of the King. It is noteworthy that:
9. The original question is posed by a monster, that is, by an object composed of a number of features inappropriate to each other.

This concludes my brief review of the Oedipus myth in the light of psychoanalytic theory. I shall consider next in what respect it is meaningful to regard the Oedipus myth as an important component of the content of the human mind.

11

Discussion of the Oedipus myth as a part of the content of the mind meets with inherent difficulties at the outset. The first is typified by the employment in this context of a locution that implies the model of a container. The second is the peculiar feature of the myth in that the following elements seem to correspond to the numbered axis of the Grid.

1. The pronouncement of the oracle defines the theme of the story and can be regarded as a definition, or definitory hypothesis. It resembles a preconception, or an algebraic calculus, in that it is an 'unsaturated statement' that is 'saturated' by the unfolding of the story; or an 'unknown', in the mathematical sense, that is 'satisfied' by the story. It is the statement of the theme of the story that is to unfold; the description of the criminal who is wanted.

2. Tiresias may be regarded as representing the hypothesis, known to be false, that is maintained to act as a barrier against the anxiety anticipated as a concomitant of any hypothesis or theory that might take its place.

3. The myth as a whole may be taken as the record of a realization and therefore to fulfil the function Freud attributed to notation.

4. The Sphinx stimulates curiosity and threatens death as the penalty for failure to satisfy it. It can represent the function Freud attributed to attention, but it implies a threat against the curiosity it stimulates.

5. Oedipus represents the triumph of determined curiosity over intimidation and may thus be used as a symbol for scientific integrity – the investigatory tool.

It may seem that I am forcing the myth to fall in with preconceptions of my own, but little ingenuity is required to see these facets

of meaning. The classical psychoanalytic employment of the myth sheds light on the nature of L and H links; it is equally illuminating for the K link. Features that can serve as symbols for the mechanics of thinking contribute to my suspicion that it is inadequate to regard the Oedipus situation as a part of the *content* of the mind. I propose to leave discussion of the conception of the mind as having content in abeyance until I have dealt later on with the Oedipus myth in its function as a pre-conception.[1]

I turn now to a clinical experience in which analyst and analysand appear to be speaking the same language, to have many points of agreement and yet to remain without any tie other than that of the mechanical fact of continued attendance at analytic sessions. Progress of the analysis reveals a divergence which I shall sum up as follows:

The analyst is, and thinks he is, in a consulting-room conducting an analysis. The patient regards the same fact, his attendance in analysis, as an experience affording him the raw material to give substance to a day-dream. The day-dream, thus invested with reality, is that he the patient being extremely intuitive, is able without any analysis, to see just where his difficulties lie and to astonish and delight the analyst by his brilliance and friendliness. The patient reports, and the analyst believes, that he, the patient, has had a dream. The patient reports, but does NOT believe, that he has had a dream. The dream, an experience of great emotional intensity, is felt by the patient to be a straightforward recital of the facts of a horrifying experience.[2] He expects that the analyst, by treating it as a dream requiring interpretation, will give substance to his day-dream that it was only a dream. In short, the patient is mobilizing his resources, and these include the facts of the analysis, to keep at bay his conviction that the dream not only was but is the reality, and the reality, as the analyst understands it, is something to be appreciated only for those elements that are suited to refutation of the 'dream'.

This account is not of a new theory of dreams, but is a description of a state, seen in an extremely disturbed patient, but probably of fairly common recurrence. The 'dream', whether it is correctly

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[1]See below, Chapter 15, towards the end, and Chapter 19 on the function of the Oedipus myth as an inborn pre-conception intended to match the realization of the parental relationship.

[2]For the Grid categorization of this phenomenon see the later discussion on the application of the Grid to feelings: Chapter 19.

described by inclusion in the category of dreams or not, is something that would emerge in the session as a hallucination if the patient's capacity for day-dream weakened.

The description fails to bring out one marked peculiarity of such a situation and that is the extent to which analyst and patient agree about the facts. But the agreement on facts is similar to the agreement that two people might have about the disposition of lines, light, and shade in a drawing illustrating reversible perspective – one sees a vase while the other sees two faces: what then are the facts on which both are agreed? In the example of reversible perspective it may be supposed that it is the actual visual impressions and that the divergence is in the domain of preconceptions. It is possible that this might fairly represent the situation with the patient, but it is a matter that has to be determined by clinical observation of each case in which such phenomena appear. I prefer not to lay down a general rule. The principle should be that clinical observation must determine where the intersection of the analyst's and patient's views is.

The significance of the agreement between analyst and patient lies in the fact that the agreement is obvious and obtrusive but the disagreement, which may be just as obtrusive, is by no means obvious. It lies in the use of the agreed facts by the patient to deny what he is convinced are the facts. The conflict between the view of the patient and analyst, and in the patient with himself, is not therefore a conflict, as we see it in the neuroses, between one set of ideas and another, or one set of impulses and another, but between K and minus K (–K) or, to express it pictorially, between Tiresias and Oedipus, not Oedipus and Laius.

The common-sense view of mental development is that it consists in an increase of capacity to grasp reality and a decrease in the obstructive force of illusions. Psychoanalysts suppose that the exposure of archaic phantasies to modification by a sophisticated capacity for approximation to a series of theories that are consistent and compatible with the reception and integration of further experience, is therapeutic in its effects. This supposition cannot stand up to rigorous examination, but has to be received with indulgence to yield meaning of value. Is it possible to find any description in which scientific rigour can make up for absence of indulgence? On the answer to this question depends the possibility of arresting the processes of mental and personality deterioration as those terms are understood

medically. The first problem is to see what can be done to increase scientific rigour by establishing the nature of minus K (–K), minus L (–L) and minus H (–H). I shall start by considering the mechanics of thinking. I shall not consider further the ♀♂ mechanism as I do not wish to add anything to what I have said about the denudation of each component by the other. The Ps ⇌ D mechanism may be briefly dismissed: instead of an interaction involving dispersal of particles with feelings of persecution (Chapter 8) and integration with feelings of depression we have in –Ps ⇌ D disintegration, total loss and depressive stupor, *or*, intense impaction and degenerate stuporous violence. Although these descriptions of –♀♂ and –Ps ⇌ D are incomplete they may serve until further experience is forthcoming. I must now consider the nature of the mechanism that I have likened to reversible perspective.

Clinically the picture presented is curiously baffling. There is usually no doubt about the severity of the patient's disability, but it is difficult even for the patient to say why he seeks analysis. It may also be possible at first to underestimate the degree of severity of the disturbance. But before long the lack of contact between analyst and patient and the lack of signs of ordinary conflict begin to build up an unmistakable picture. There is evidence that the patient is a prey to extremely painful emotional experiences: the analyst usually has to rely on the patient's report as the only evidence of these. If they take place in the session the patient invariably has a facile 'explanation' of what is taking place. The explanation is often couched in terms that successfully disguise the real nature of the experience. If the patient has been in analysis for some time they are manipulated in such a way that they invite interpretation in terms that the patient has learned to expect from the analyst – the 'agreed' intersection is thus maintained. Between analyst and patient there is thus established what I have elsewhere, in *Learning from Experience* (1962), called a contact barrier. Is it possible to glean from the mechanisms involved in this behaviour any material that will throw light on minus phenomena (–L, –H, and –K) and incidentally on the problem of establishing the elements of psychoanalysis?

12

The model of reversible perspective, when applied to the analysis, reveals a complex situation. The patient detects a note of satisfaction in the analyst's voice and responds in a tone conveying dejection. (What was said is irrelevant to our immediate concern.) The patient detects a moral supposition in an interpretation: his response is significant for its silent rejection of the moral supposition. That which makes one person see two faces and another a vase remains insensible, but in the domain of sense impressions there is agreement. The interpretation is accepted, but the premises have been rejected and other silently substituted.

In any interpretation there is a significant assumption, one being that the analyst is the analyst: this assumption may be denied silently by the patient. Although he appears to accept the interpretation he denies its force by having substituted another assumption. Further associations may show what *his* assumption is.

The debate between analysand and analyst is therefore unspoken[1]; what the analyst says is shown to be agreed by both parties to the analysis, but – it is insignificant. The conflict is therefore kept out of discussion because it is confined to a domain which is not regarded as an issue between the analyst and analysand. The supposition that the analyst is the analyst and the analysand the analysand is but one of these domains of disagreement that is passed by silently. Suppose it is brought into the analysis: the patient and the analyst are at once in agreement, for what proposition could be more obvious, or one

[1]The analyst can detect this situation if he uses the Grid to categorize interpretations and the responses they evoke, and then compares the relationship of the Grid categories to each other. See Chapter 20.

more loyally accepted by the patient? But the mode of acceptance will indicate that the significance, in the patient's opinion, of the analyst's interpretation lay in the analyst's premises – his false premises. The nature of the falsity is not pressed: it lies in the implication that the premises are of the kind that lead one person to see two faces when he might with equal propriety have seen a vase.

A difference of opinion about the significance of known facts differs from the phenomenon I am describing; on such occasions the difference is overt and concerns the facts. In 'reversed perspective' the disagreement between analyst and analysand is apparent only when the analysand appears to have been taken unawares; there is a pause while he carries out a readjustment.

The pause may seem indistinguishable from one that a neurotic patient will make in order to digest the interpretation he has heard. I doubt whether the true nature of the pause can be clinically observed; it may be that an ability to differentiate depends always on long experience of the patient's pauses and the discovery, later rather than sooner, that after many months of apparently successful analysis the patient has gained an extensive knowledge of the analyst's theories but no insight. The pause is not being employed to absorb fully the implications of the interpretation, but rather to establish a point of view, not expressed to the analyst, from which the analyst's interpretation, though verbally unchanged and unchallenged, has a meaning other than the one the analyst intended to convey. Any growth of insight depends on the extent to which the patient has been forced to digest the interpretation in order to effect the change in his point of view. Such misinterpretation differs from the common run of resistances; the patient will often seize on an ambiguity in the analyst's phrasing or intonation to give his interpretation a slant that the analyst does not intend. The difference is difficult to observe because the patient who reverses perspective also employs the common modes of misinterpretation sufficiently frequently to obscure the more serious condition. He will welcome interpretations of these misunderstandings if they emphasize the deliberate aspects of his contribution; it is a relief to believe that his difficulty is under conscious control.

The following is an example from the analysis of an intelligent man who gave the impression, in session after session, of co-operation that was both friendly and informed – if his responses were not

scrutinized too keenly. 'My secretary', he said, 'complains bitterly of his wife: he says that she does not understand him. He says she complains constantly of him: bitter criticisms and hostility about his lack of understanding, inability to love and so on . . .' In the context of this and similar communications of which his analysis consisted, it was evident that a wide range of transference phenomena might be discussed. In view of the patient's experience of analysis, his undoubted ability and sensitiveness, it would be reasonable to suppose that he would observe a transference relationship between his secretary and himself and that he would be able to understand what his communication of this material would imply about his feelings for me. On several occasions his manner of communicating associations made me suspect that the episodes described might have been invented by him to illustrate a theory of transference that he had picked up in the course of his analysis.

I gave interpretations to this and similar communications, all, as I hoped, being reasonably apposite and given sufficient cogency by the context. His responses were varied; they ranged from an almost stupefied silence to apathetic acquiescence followed by more material – more 'free associations'. Sometimes he would say that he had been 'thinking' during the silence, 'about what you said'. Sometimes he would disagree with the interpretation, or some aspect of it, and then, as if striving to achieve a solution, would come round to agree that I was probably, no – certainly right. On other occasions, when I felt that my interpretation was one with which he must surely be familiar, he would blandly agree as if it were a cliché that hardly stirred a ripple in his thoughts. It was not till I was able to suggest that he made this class of communication because he felt that the episodes he mentioned were utterly incomprehensible that he made a response showing that this was indeed the case. Such a blank failure to understand would be remarkable at any time, but doubly so in a man who had had so much experience of being analysed. It could not be explained by lack of intelligence, lack of sensitiveness, lack of experience, or ineptitude of my analysis; for the instances he communicated were nearly all of the kind that might be chosen to illustrate psychoanalytic theories.

This last characteristic of these communications is, in this context, particularly baffling: if the patient has no psychoanalytic acumen, how is the evidence of careful selection in accordance with psychoanalytic

principles to be accounted for? If the evidence of selection is admitted how is one to explain the failure of comprehension?

I exclude the hypothesis of deliberate conscious or semi-conscious denial of the analyst's work. My reason, of which I shall say more later, is the evidence of pain. There was ample evidence, after interpretations had established the reality of the patient's inability to comprehend, of the severity of his pain.

In each instance, the perspective that enabled me, but not the patient, to grasp the meaning of the associations, was that afforded by the Oedipus theory. In every instance, that which appeared to cause the patient to reverse the perspective, was the Oedipus myth. I say myth, not theory, because the distinction is important: the Oedipus theory and its various formulations, belongs to the area of the Grid, covered by F4, G4, F5, G5. The myth pertains to the area C.

The patient's capacity for learning but not using analytic theories is a failure to match pre-conceptions with the realizations that approximate to them. The unsaturated element remains unsaturated.

Melanie Klein described a situation in which the personality attacked its object with such violence that not only was the object deemed to become minutely fragmented, but the personality likewise. In the situation I describe there appears to be no dynamic splitting. It is as if the splitting was arrested in a static pose, action being no more necessary than it is when hallucination is substituted for reality. The patient does not have to disagree with the analyst or experience Oedipal conflicts within himself; he reverses the perspective. It is important to consider more closely what this means.[1]

Reversing perspective is not the same as evacuation of *β*-elements. That is an active process and the patient's behaviour in the analysis affords evidence that is, to put it no higher, quite compatible with a theory that he is taking action to 'disburden his psyche of accretions of stimuli' as Freud described it, in 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911b). As near as I could tell, the patient regarded the analyst's interpretations as evidence that he, the patient, had evacuated *β*-elements, a state of mind more akin to hallucination than delusion. The search for elements involves further investigation of pain, reversible perspective and the Oedipus myth.

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[1]The 'static' splitting and failure to match pre-conception with realization will be better understood when it is related to discussion in first half of Chapter 19.

13

Reversible perspective is evidence of pain; the patient reverses perspective to make a dynamic situation static. The work of the analyst is to restore dynamic to a static situation and so make development possible. As I said in my last chapter, the patient manoeuvres so that the analyst's interpretations are agreed; they thus become the outward sign of a static situation. Since the analyst's interpretations are unlikely to permit this and the patient is unlikely always to command sufficient nimbleness of mind to match the interpretation with a shift that reverses the perspective in which the interpretation is viewed, the patient employs an armoury that is reinforced by delusion and hallucination. If he cannot reverse the perspective at once he can adjust his perception of the facts by mis-hearing and misunderstanding so that they give substance to the static view: a delusion is in being.

If this is not sufficient to keep the situation static the patient resorts to hallucination. For simplification, I can restate this as hallucination in order to preserve, temporarily, an ability to reverse perspective; and reversed perspective in order to preserve a static hallucination.

The prolonged resort to reversible perspective is thus accompanied by delusions and hallucinations that are difficult to detect because they are both static and evanescent. Moreover, since their aim is to preserve the analyst's statements (interpretations) as an overt expression of agreement and a defence against change, so the true significance of the patient's behaviour as a sign of delusion or hallucination is not apparent unless the analyst is alert to this possibility. The analyst's expressed thoughts belong to the area F5, G5, and G6: the same formulation is accepted by the patient but as an expression of thought belonging to F1, G1, G2.

An analysis that is taking this course appears to be curiously unsatisfactory because the lack of real progress obtrudes only slowly and then appears to be stable, unspectacular and dull. In reality the situation is unstable and dangerous. The clue to it lies in the fact I mentioned at the start of this chapter – pain. The patient's manoeuvres appear to lack an aim because, though the ready acceptance of interpretations arouses suspicion, it is not apparent that they are directed against change, *any* change, and pain. It is the dynamic quality of the interpretation that evokes evasive reactions. That is to say, the objection to the interpretation is that, *whatever* the content may be, it has the qualities appropriate to columns 5 and 6 of the Grid.

Reference to the Grid would lead one to suspect that if the patient manoeuvres to shift all *I* to the area of columns 1 and 2, with the possible addition of 3, he must tend to do the same with his own *I* phenomena. That is in fact the case and it helps to explain some of the features of his dreams, pre-conceptions and theories.

The lesson to be drawn from this discussion is the need to deduce the presence of intense pain and the threat that it represents to mental integration. I shall therefore consider pain as one of the elements of psychoanalysis.

Pain cannot be absent from the personality. An analysis must be painful, not because there is necessarily any value in pain, but because an analysis in which pain is not observed and discussed cannot be regarded as dealing with one of the central reasons for the patient's presence. The importance of pain can be dismissed as a secondary quality, something that is to disappear when conflicts are resolved; indeed most patients would take this view. Furthermore it can be supported by the fact that successful analysis does lead to diminution of suffering; nevertheless it obscures the need, more obvious in some cases than in others, for the analytic experience to increase the patient's *capacity* for suffering even though patient and analyst may hope to decrease pain itself. The analogy with physical medicine is exact; to destroy a capacity for physical pain would be a disaster in any situation other than one in which an even greater disaster – namely death itself – is certain.

In reversible perspective acceptance by the analyst of the possibility of an impairment of a capacity for pain can help avoidance of errors that might lead to disaster. If the problem is not dealt with the patient's capacity to maintain the static situation may give way

to an experience of pain so intense that a psychotic breakdown is the result.

The case for acceptance of pain as an element of psychoanalysis is reinforced by the position it occupies in Freud's theories of the pleasure–pain principle. It is evident that the dominance of the reality principle, and indeed its establishment, is imperilled if the patient swings over to the evasion of pain rather than to its modification; yet modification is jeopardized if the patient's capacity for pain is impaired. As I have discussed the relationship of the establishment of the reality principle to psychosis in *Learning from Experience* I shall say no more about it here.

Pain cannot be regarded as a reliable index of pathological processes partly because of its relationship with development (recognized in the commonly used phrase 'growing pains') and partly because intensity of suffering is not always proportionate to the severity of the disturbance. Its degree and significance depend on its relationship with other elements.

Implicit in the discussion of reversible perspective as a means of preserving a defence against pain is the concept of growth. Growth is a phenomenon that appears to present peculiar difficulties to perception either by the growing object or the object that stimulates it, for its relationship with precedent phenomena is obscure and separated in time.[1] Difficulty in observing it contributes to the anxiety to establish 'results', e.g. of analysis. It will be necessary to trace its relationship with Ps ⇌ D, ♀♂ . Its dependence on a capacity to entertain the social and narcissistic components of the Oedipal situation involves further discussion of the Oedipus myth, the Babel myth (Genesis XI, 1–9) and the early version of the Eden myth (Genesis II, 8–3 *passim*). The primitive models for mental growth are the Tree of Knowledge, the Tower and city of Babel, and the Sphinx. The myths (Row C of the Grid) provide a succinct statement of psychoanalytic theories which are relevant in aiding the analyst both to perceive growth and to achieve interpretations that illuminate aspects of the patient's problems that belong to growth.

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[1]One of the advantages of reference to the Grid is that Grid categorization of the patient's response to interpretation should reveal growth.

14

In Chapter 3 I described personal myth as an important tool in psychoanalytic work. In Chapters 11 and 12 I attributed augmented though similar significance to the Oedipus myth because it has public and racial, as opposed to private, status. The advantages of transition from private to racial myth are analogous to the transition from private to public communication.[1]

The Oedipus myth will be differently read by different people, but the measure of agreement makes it a channel of public communication as Freud's use of it has shown. I shall use the myths of the garden of Eden and the Tower of Babel to reinforce the expression, already implied by the Sphinx in the Oedipus myth, of attitudes of a god inimical to the gaining of knowledge by human beings whose search is felt to imperil his supremacy.

In the garden of Eden, possessed by the Father, eating of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil is forbidden. The serpent, or Satan disguised, incites the woman to defy the ordinance of the Almighty. The revelation of disobedience is associated with guilt and nakedness. The outcome is banishment as it is in the Oedipus myth. In the Babel myth the use of the tower is to effect an entry into realms regarded by Jahweh as his own – heaven. The outcome is exile, as in the garden of Eden and Oedipus myths, but an important precursor is the destruction of a common language and the spreading of confusion so that co-operation becomes impossible.

The components of these myths that I wish to use are those which pictorialize, in the sense of internal pictures or symbols that we make

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[1]Compare *Scientific Explanation* – R. B. Braithwaite, p. 6, and his reference to Heinrich Hertz on p. 91.

for ourselves, features that might turn out to be the psychoanalytic elements that I seek.

1. There is a god or fate, omniscient and omnipotent though modelled anthropomorphically. This god belongs to a moral system and appears to be hostile to mankind in his search for knowledge, even moral knowledge.

2. In all, penetration into, or ingestion into, or expulsion from a blissful place or state is prominent. Sexual knowledge and pleasure is a prominent feature of the knowledge sought and forbidden.

3. In Eden and Oedipus myth there is a stimulation of forbidden desires – the serpent incites desire for the fruit: Oedipus instigates the search for the criminal: in the Babel myth there is a significant variation – the people come together and are dispersed, the language is one and is replaced by a number of languages. The Sphinx incites to curiosity by its riddle. Using these myths as a source for pictorial representation of the elements in the horizontal axis of Table 1 the definitory function of a formulation may be represented by the oracle and the statement of aims as expressed in the phrase 'let us build us a city and a tower'. The repressing force exerted by the formula used in Col. 2, by Tiresias or the god of fate of whom he is the representative. The action column 6 is represented by the outcome, exile or dispersion.

It is not my object to establish an exact correspondence; I suggested in Chapter 11, that these myths serve as a primitive counterpart of the sophisticated formulations whose employment in scientific work I have placed on the horizontal axis of the Grid. Since they are primitive and pictorial they are vital but lack precision – hence the need for sophisticated formulations as in science. Therefore to make the correspondence between the horizontal axis and the elements of the myth appear to be exact would be a falsification that obscured the nature of the myth. Equally failure to see that there is this correspondence obscures the value of the myth as a fact-finding tool. I wish to restore it to its place in our methods so that it can play the vitalizing part there that it has played in history (and in Freud's discovery of psychoanalysis) and it is for that reason that I have introduced it in Chapter 3. It is also an object for investigation in an analysis as part of the primitive apparatus of the individual's armoury of learning.

If the Oedipal myth, in addition to the place it already occupies in analytic theory, is recognized as an essential part of the apparatus of learning in primitive stages of development, a number of

elements discernible in the debris of a disintegrated ego assume a new significance.

In certain highly disturbed patients, the patient according to Melanie Klein, attacks his object with such violence that not only is the object felt to disintegrate but the personality delivering the attack also. This disintegration is characteristic of the patient who cannot tolerate reality and has therefore destroyed the apparatus that enables him to be aware of it. The private myth, corresponding to the Oedipus myth, enables the patient to understand his relationship with the parents. This private myth, in its investigatory role, if impaired or maldeveloped or subjected to too great a stress, disintegrates; its components are dispersed and the patient is left without an apparatus which would enable him to comprehend the parental relationship and so to adjust to it. The Oedipus debris will in these circumstances contain elements that are components of the Oedipal myth that should have operated as a preconception. How are the scattered components of a disintegrated ego to be recognized? In this instance the analyst who seeks to illuminate the fragments of the patient's apparatus of learning may be led to recognize them by noting isolated[1] fragments of the Oedipal myth (and the myths I have associated with it).

The private myth has this important role in the individual's attempt to learn from experience analogous to that played by public myths as systems of notation and record in the development of groups. Conviction comes only from clinical experience in which material resembling Oedipal components appears, the components being dispersed and evocative in tendency. The myth must be expected to appear in a private version. The operation follows the pattern of the fragments in Ps ⇌ D as I have described it at the commencement of Chapter 10. The verbalizations of the patient, and behaviour associated with them, seem to vary from something incoherent and meaningless to formulations that appear vaguely to be inviting comment, sometimes even suggesting the comment that they invite.

Search for the elements of psychoanalysis is restricted to that aspect of them that it is the business of the psychoanalyst to discern. They cannot be represented, either by abstract signs, such as I have

[1]Such fragments appear, particularly in psychotic material, widely dispersed in analytic time. One of the problems of interpretation is to show that these temporarily dispersed fragments are related.

suggested, or by mythological narratives evoking visual imagery, in such a way that anyone other than a trained and practising psychoanalyst could recognize the realization approximating to the representation. In this chapter I hope that by showing a correspondence between myth and the items of the horizontal axis of the Grid, analysts who are used to observing patients in the light of the preconceptions with which psychoanalytic Oedipal theory endows them, will find it easier to make the transition from theoretical background to consulting-room phenomena. The gap remains and can only be bridged by training and experience and, to some extent, by interpolation, between the concept of 'Oedipal components' and the events of the consulting room, of description of those events in terms that are vivid and exact. Such description would tax the powers of a writer and would then represent a degree of particularization unsuitable except for short and relatively infrequent passages of a total analysis.

Although I aim to isolate elements of the reality of psychoanalytic practice and not of theory I have to represent them by signs and myths that belong to the domain of representation of abstractions and the high-level hypotheses of a scientific deductive system. This must not obscure the fact that every sign is intended to represent phenomena that a psychoanalyst might experience in analytic sessions. The signs chosen to represent the elements are to aid in working on and thinking about the experience of the analysis.

15

In this chapter I reconsider transference. The elements of the transference are to be found in that aspect of the patient's behaviour that betrays his awareness of the presence of an object that is not himself. No aspect of his behaviour can be disregarded; its relevance to the central fact must be assessed. His greeting, or neglect of it, references to couch, or furniture, or weather, all must be seen in that aspect of them that relates to the presence of an object not himself; the evidence must be regarded afresh each session and nothing taken for granted, for the order in which aspects of the patient's mind present themselves for observation are not decided by the length of time for which the analysis has endured. For example, the patient may regard the analyst as a person to be treated as if he were a thing; or as a thing towards which his attitude is animistic. If $\psi(\xi)$ represents the analyst's state of mind *vis-à-vis* the analysand it is the unsaturated element (ξ) that is the important one in every session.

The peculiarity of a psychoanalytic session, that aspect of it which establishes that it is a psychoanalysis and could be nothing else, lies in the use by the analyst of all material to illuminate a K relationship. The transference interpretation is peculiar in that it refers to all material without discrimination, but is highly selective in appraising its significance. The patient communicates information that has significance by virtue of criteria of his own: the analyst is restricted to interpretations that are an expression of a K relationship with the patient. They must not be expressions of L or H.

Ordinarily an analyst would not expect to go through a series of conscious speculations on the nature of simple statements. But if he wishes to do some 'homework', that is to say extra-analytic

meditation, on a session, either to train and amplify his capacity for intuitive deduction, or because he has some doubts about the accuracy of the work he has been doing, he may refer the doubtful material to the Grid. Suppose the patient had said 'I know that you hate me': his speculations might take some form such as the following: On the face of it the sentence is grammatically and semantically straightforward, but there is need to examine it critically to determine which of the Grid categories apply.

The context of the statement, taken together with the (ξ) element of $\psi(\xi)$, representing the patient's state of mind, could make it probable that the significance lay in its being for the patient a disguised expulsion of flatus: in that case the analyst would assess the chance that it was a β-element pertaining to row A.

The session might indicate that the phrase related to a dream that the patient had had or was perhaps part of a phantasy. In that case it would belong to rows B or C.

In yet another context it might be more appropriate to suspect that it was a pre-conception and should lie in the class represented in row D.

Suppose however that the statement had followed a critical interpretation that could itself have been interpreted by the patient as an expression of hostility it might then be appropriate to regard it as, from the patient's point of view, a mating of a pre-conception with a realization.

It cannot be supposed to lie in row H; it might, however, be correctly attributed to row G, but for this to be appropriate the analyst would need to be able to draw on a number of attendant circumstances that led him to suppose that the statement represented a hardening of belief into a more nearly permanent fixed idea.

Let us now consider the horizontal axis. The columns in this axis represent the functions that a statement is being made to perform. The statement may be an oracular pronouncement, an announcement of the theme of the session, a definition in the light of which the remainder of the session is to be understood. In short it may fall in the category represented by column 1.

If it seems rather to fall in the column 2 category, it will mean that the statement is known to be false but provides the patient with a theory that will act as a defensive barrier against feelings and ideas that might take its place.

If it seems to fall in columns 3, 4 or 5, it is a probing statement, and is quite compatible with co-operation in the analytic investigation.

If it belongs to column 6 it is a warning of acting out, in which I include the use of the analysis itself as a form of acting out. To illustrate the value of the Grid as an instrument to aid the analyst in thinking about an analytic problem, that is to say, as an instrument of notation that provides a record of fact and a sign that can be manipulated in a manner analogous to a number in mathematics, I shall contrast A6 and F6 by considering the significance of each.

A6 indicates that the statement, 'I know that you hate me', is to be regarded as a β-element employed as an act. If the analyst concludes that the statement falls in this category it can only mean that the session must be regarded as an acting out rather than as an ordinary analytic session. The muscular movements necessary to express the words, since they are intended to disburden the psyche of accumulations of stimuli, must be regarded as of primary significance. The words indicate that the patient has a feeling (which is apparently regarded by him in much the same light as a normal personality would regard a concrete object) that was part of his personality (also regarded as a concrete object) that he can by his muscular movements detach and expel. The end-product of this manoeuvre is that he has achieved a state of mind in which he is no longer burdened by the feeling that the analyst hates him. He is now, supposedly, free to feel that the analyst is his friend.

To turn now to F6. If this is the category to which the statement belongs it now means that the patient is convinced that the analyst is his enemy. It means furthermore, by virtue of its membership of column 6, that the patient is already acting, or is about to act, on this supposition. The analytic significance of the patient's statement is very different in the two instances; it is a matter of importance to distinguish between the two categories and to decide to which of the two the statement belongs.

Consider the statement 'I know that you hate me' as it appears in another category; suppose that it belongs to the categories lying in row C, because the patient said that he had dreamt it. Or it might be part of a phantasy or day-dream : in such a case the characteristics of visual imagery, or perhaps myth, would be prominent. The intensification of this element is bound to affect the elements expressed by the headings of the horizontal axis of the Grid. Such interplay is implied

by the Grid. Consequently the columns 1–6 tend to become pictorialized and personified in the way I have suggested by equating each of them with a character from the Oedipus myth. For example, if the statement appears to be appropriate to C6 when a break in analysis is impending, the break would be related to exile and the analyst should anticipate the appearance of other features of the Oedipal situation. I stress the importance of recognizing the category to which material belongs as a step towards anticipating and therefore recognizing related phenomena in the material. If the material fits category C5 one would expect an intensification of the determination with which curiosity was pursued; if in category C2 an intensification of resistance to the emergence of new material. I shall leave the significance of the emotion expressed – 'I know that you *hate* me' – to the next chapter.[1]

The description I have given is not of a process of thought appropriate to actual contact with the patient. The analytic session is too precious an opportunity for observation to be jeopardized by preoccupations of the kind my description implies; the theme of this book is a scheme to facilitate thinking about analytic work *outside* the sessions themselves. The object of such extra-sessional work is to substitute creative thinking for laborious and frequently meaningless note-taking; it provides practice, analogous to the musician's scales and exercises, to sharpen and develop intuition. It becomes increasingly possible to arrive at conclusions instantaneously which at first are the fruits of laborious intellectualization.

[1]And in the latter part of Chapter 19 where I discuss feelings.

16

Problems of instinct and emotion belong to the main body of psychoanalytic theory and must be considered for inclusion amongst the elements of psychoanalysis as they appear in psychoanalytic practice.

The emotion to which attention is drawn should be obvious to the analyst, but unobserved by the patient; an emotion that is obvious to the patient is usually painfully obvious and avoidance of unnecessary pain must be one aim in the exercise of analytic intuition. Since the analyst's capacity for intuition should enable him to demonstrate an emotion before it has become painfully obvious it would help if our search for the elements of emotions was directed to making intuitive deductions easier. The sexual instinct is an integral part of psychoanalytic theory, but the element of sex in the sense of something for which I need to look is not sex but that from which the presence of sex may be deduced. But for my purpose the term 'element' cannot be properly used to denote something that would appear to be a property of some more fundamental thing whose presence it betrays. Therefore the element I choose is not a sign of sexuality but a precursor of sexuality. Amongst the elements that we seek there must be the precursor of emotion, not an emotion itself unless it is the precursor of some emotion other than itself. Thus, if the hate that a patient is experiencing is a precursor of love its virtue as an element resides in its quality as a precursor of love and not in its being hate. And so for all other emotions.

I am adumbrating, in the domain of emotion, something that is reminiscent of the relationship of preconception to conception.

If interpretations forestall the development of emotions by illuminating their precursors it follows that sexual and other feelings

should not be regarded as elements. The counterpart of the preconception is the *premonition.* Directly observed emotional states are significant only as premonitions.

I have defined the pre-conception as an element private to the individual, possibly not conscious; the same is true of the pre-monition.

Lest it seems confusing to use the term preconception as something to be distinguished from a scientific deductive system and then speak of an analytic theory as an analyst's preconception I shall use the term pre-conception to distinguish it from a preconception. Pre-conception, as I have placed it in row D of the Grid, is a term representing a stage in the development of thinking; preconception, in the sense of the analyst's theoretical preconceptions refers to the use of a theory and so belongs to columns 3 and 4 of the Grid. As an example, the analyst may have a hunch that something of which he is not properly aware is going on in the session. This state might be represented by D3. As he feels greater conviction about the development, his state of mind changes until, say, he conceives that oedipal material is emerging; his state of mind is now represented by G4 or G5. In other words he thinks that Freud's oedipal theories will give point and direction to his probing curiosity. To return to the significance of emotional drives that are active in the course of the analytic experience and the manner of their elucidation: when a patient comes for a first consultation his premonitions give information about him that cannot be obtained from other factors. From them it is possible to obtain some idea of the use that he is likely to make of an analysis.

The term 'premonition', as I propose to use it represents emotional states rather than ideational content, thus leaving the term 'preconception' to represent the latter. I do not dissociate 'pre-monition' from its association with a sense of warning and anxiety. The feeling of anxiety is of value in guiding the analyst to recognize the premonition in the material. The premonition can therefore be represented by (anxiety (ξ)) where (ξ) is an unsaturated element.

Analysis must be conducted so that the conditions for observing pre-monitions exist, a conclusion compatible with Freud's definition of the analytic situation as one in which an atmosphere of deprivation[1] is dominant. If premonitions cannot be experienced, correct interpretation becomes difficult for the analyst to give and difficult

[1]See Chapter 4, p. 18 above.

for the analysand to grasp; unnecessary pain, of which I have already spoken, becomes more likely.

The distinction between pre-conception and premonition facilitates the creation of a system for thinking about analytic practice; it is no more of a falsification than the separation, implied in the use of the term 'sex' or 'fear', of one emotion from another. Freud showed that in certain hysterical palsies and anaesthesiae, the distributions corresponded to *ideas* of anatomical structure, rather than to the nerve distribution known to an anatomist. An anatomist can use the concept of a hand provided he does not allow his view of anatomical structures to be obscured by using it in investigations to which it is inappropriate. A patient says he feels fear but does not know of what he is afraid. We also suppose that man can feel fear but not sex. What is the model implicit in a statement that a man feels afraid, but does not know why? One possibility is that it is derived from the model of himself that the parents have presented him with. It would seem to suggest that 'feeling afraid' and 'knowing why', or 'sex' and 'fear' are different things. Correct treatment depends on the view we take of a patient who has lost all feeling 'in his mind'. By analogy it is important to know what the premises are on which we base a view that 'sex' and 'fear', or 'feeling afraid' and 'knowing why' differ. The supposition that pre-conception and premonition are to be distinguished in this universe of discourse and its implication that there is a similarity between the objects thus distinguished leads me to the point I wish to establish, namely that the categorization of ideational content that is facilitated by the Grid is equally significant if it is applied to the emotional experience. For example we may regard the statement 'I feel that you hate me' is significant for the idea it expresses. This idea can then be placed in one of the grid categories. Or we may regard the statement as significant for its expression of an emotion. The emotion (or pre-monition) can then be placed in one of the grid categories. The matter will be discussed more fully after we have considered the problem of 'feelings' which is raised in Chapter 19.

17

The Grid itself can obviously be categorized in accordance with its own categories. Thus the horizontal axis may be described as a series of definitions of various uses. In so far as it is employed to define the horizontal axis belongs to the categories of column 1. But as it is, its use could qualify it for inclusion in row F. But suppose it were desired to test out the value of some of the suggestions made in this book; in that case the horizontal axis might be regarded as a preconception to which one wished to find a matching realization. As the object of investigation it would fall in the category of a bound constant conjunction, a definitory hypothesis that stated that certain elements are constantly conjoined. As the object of further investigation it would then be treated in a manner intended to invest it with meaning or expose whatever meaning it might have.

As I have set it out in the Grid the horizontal axis is represented by abstract signs, in a manner, as I said above, that can qualify it to belong to one of the categories of row F. But, following a suggestion implicit in the Grid, I shall take the 'uses' of the horizontal axis and substitute personifications, thus incidentally restating it in terms that would qualify it for categorization in row C.[1]

It might be convenient to substitute any sign or symbol that I chose, for example, the sign ψ for column 2. By proceeding in this way I can fill the line with signs and symbols that have meaning for me and thereby establish the basis for private communication, that is, for communication private to myself. Instead of the sign ψ I can use

[1]The preceding suggestions are examples of the use of the Grid to choose a mode of employment for a concept. It contrasts with the use of the Grid to find the category for a psychoanalytic object that has been employed already.

the sign 'Smith' a man known to me who has a significance private to myself. Since however this discussion is intended to be public, I shall employ signs representing symbols that are public already and are consequently more likely to effect a public communication. This I can do by using elements in a myth familiar to the audience I hope to reach. It must be appropriate to the matter to be symbolized on the one hand and to culture of the group to which I want to address myself on the other. As this is addressed primarily to psychoanalysts I shall use the Oedipus myth, in the way indicated at the end of Chapter 15, the Jehovistic account (the second in Genesis) of the Creation and the account in Genesis XI of the building of the Tower and City of Babel. Both accounts are Jehovistic and anthropomorphic, the latter characteristic contributing to their value for this discussion.

Since I am using a myth as the course of my symbols the substitution is itself an artificial[1] use of row C elements rather than those of, say, G or H. I can choose characters to correspond to the separate columns 1, 2, 3, etc., or I can place the entire myth in each of the compartments C 1, C2, C3, etc., or any single character, symbolizing 1–6 can be placed in all the columns 1–6 in row C. Thus Tiresias, symbolizing Col. 2, may now appear in cols. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6. If it is used in column 2 it would represent a symbol representing an idea entertained for the purpose of denying the emergence of a more accurate but more frightening idea. In this instance it would represent the adherence to a myth of a repressing force, for use as a repressing force. Since Tiresias is a symbol for the use represented by Col. 2 it may seem that it would be shorter and simpler to say that any use represented in cols. 1–6 may be placed in any other column – and its own. But in fact this is not so: a use cannot act as a use; C2 cannot be meaningful placed in C2. [2]But a symbol representing a mode of thought, as 'Tiresias' represents dream or myth or model, can, by being placed in column 2, represent a dream or mythological thought used to inhibit another mode of thought even though this other mode of thought is being used to inhibit. Thus a deductive system used to inhibit the emergence or other thoughts may itself be inhibited by a

[1]See previous note.

[2]'C2' represents an abstract statement. But the category C2 is intended to contain dream thought not sophisticated statements. C2 in C2 would therefore mean either that C2 or what it represents was wrongly categorized, or, what comes to the same thing, C2 only appears to be a scientific concept but is a myth.

dream of mythological thought used for that purpose. Tiresias, or a corresponding private symbol, may be used to inhibit the use of a scientific theory to inhibit further thoughts. Stating this abstractly, in terms of the Grid, C2 can be used to inhibit G2.

The reformulation of the uses to which thought can be put by the substitution of symbols drawn from myth has expressed the uses in terms that bring them into the category designated by row C. The new formulation should therefore make it possible to subject the reformulated statement to the treatment or process, whatever it is, that governs the transition of the elements in the vertical axis from one to the next below a process I have described as one of growth, positive or negative. The uses, formulated in terms of myth, row C, may now be successively diminished in quality till they become analytical objects represented by the β-elements of row A, or be stimulated to grow so that they can be represented by signs appropriate to the elements of rows D, E, F, G and H.

The categorization from which we started, namely that expressed by the signs used to represent the uses to which a statement may be put (the numbers representing the columns) can itself be seen to belong to row G. The numbers are used purely as a means of notation. They can be seen therefore to be classifiable under column 3.

To substitute personifications as symbols for the 'uses' could be described as effecting a transition in the vertical axis from below upwards – from row G to row C – a matter of manipulation of signs and topographical distribution in the Grid.

If the total myth is placed in each of the compartments of row C, the compartments represent a primitive scientific instrument[1] for scanning the analytic material. It may itself be represented by F or G5 an instrument for a macroscopic view of the analytic material. If only one component of the myth is used, instead of the whole myth, the grid reading represents an instrument affording a more restricted view of the material – a view analogous to microscopic scrutiny. The movement → A diminishes sophistication of the component represented, but the movement → H increases it, the latter being approximate to a prelude to interpretation.

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[1]Cf. Chapter 19. The use of the Oedipal myth as a pre-conception intended to mate with the parental realization to produce understanding of the parental relationship.

The Grid as the representation of an instrument used by the analyst in scrutinizing the patient is equally a representation of the material produced by the patient as an instrument for scrutinizing the analyst. But if the analyst scrutinizes the material (the realization) to see in what Grid category the representation lies to which the realization approximates the Grid is an instrument and not merely its representation.[1] The realization to which his attention (Col. 4) is directed is the reality of pre-conception and premonition.

So far I have been concerned with manipulations of signs in the Grid. Is it possible to say that these manipulations correspond with the dynamics of the realizations represented by the readings in the Grid? There is no difficulty in supposing that growth takes place but are the processes of growth, as deduced from observations in the consulting room, approximate to the rules of manipulation of the signs in the Grid? The movements can be said to represent the results of growth or diminution – I am not discussing acquisition and denudation related to greed and envy – but for the present the actual manipulation of symbols must not be taken to represent growth or diminution itself. This matter can be reconsidered after discussing the vertical axis.

In the Jehovistic version of the creation a feature of the myth of the expulsion is the apparent conflict between the thirst for knowledge and the will of the deity. In the story of Babel, the god is also opposed to the will of the people; it appears to impinge on his right to occupy heaven undisturbed. The god in both is anthropomorphic in the manner typical of J sources. The Eden shows him opposed to eating that confers a knowledge of good and evil: the Babel myth shows him opposed to language because the common language confers on the people capacity to co-operate in building both a city and a tower, the latter facilitating entry into the god's heaven. The punishment in Eden is expulsion from the garden: in the Babel story the integrity of the language is destroyed, each fragment becoming a new language, confusion supervenes and the differing language groups are scattered. The exile theme common to both stories is discernible in the exile of Oedipus. In all three sex is implied. Knowledge is related to eating in Eden and to morality in so far as it makes discrimination between good and evil possible. In Babel knowledge seems to be

[1]See N. R. Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery*, p. 100, §5 (*d*).

referable to scientific rather than to moral standards though the god's possession of heaven is a 'moral' issue.

The elements in each of these three myths bear a resemblance to the elements of the other two; from them symbolic representations of oral sexuality and scattering, repressive superego, linkage through language, learning and self-knowledge, genital sexuality (e.g. tower and city) may be readily obtained. The difference in the apparent content is due to the form of narrative by which the elements are linked in each story. The relative importance of the elements will depend on the nature of the exploration for which they are used and the fact selected to bring coherence to the elements when they are re-integrated in the process of analysis. Re-integration is not something occurring once for all; throughout an analysis elements of the analytic material are seen by the analyst to be inappropriately assembled and a fresh integration and cohesion is made possible by the elucidation his interpretations afford. The Selected Fact that gives coherence, can be an idea or it may be an emotion. What emotions give rise to the patient's integrations and disintegrations must be deduced from inspection of the premonitions.

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The vertical axis (A–H), related to a genetic rather than a systematic exposition, involves a premise of growth dependent on (a) psychomechanics, (b) an alternation of particularization and generalization (concretization and abstraction), (c) successive saturations, and (d) emotional drives.

(a) The relationship between the mechanisms of projective identification and the alternation of paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions in K presents difficulties that seem due to an incompatibility. A solution may be approached through investigation clinically of the destructive splitting attacks that transform ♂ into fragments which nevertheless retain in their fragmented form an association with each other sufficient to permit penetration of a problem. Similar fragmentation of ♀ leaves an association of fragments that still perform the function of ingesting or introjecting. The objection to attributing priority to splitting lies in the fact that it does not allow primary quality to the alternation between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions: yet both projective identification (♀♂) and paranoid-schizoid ⇌ depressive positions must be regarded as potentially primary.

(b) The 'alternation between particularization and abstraction' as a method of describing a theory is open to the objection that 'abstraction' is a term that implies removal of a quality from something. The theory is more likely to match realizations if the *formulation* of an abstraction or generalization is seen to be the significant feature of the transaction and not extraction of qualities from a known representation or its corresponding realization. Generalization (or abstraction) must be recognized as a process by which the saturation of an unsaturated element is bound in order to consolidate the gain. The abstraction, or formulation, of a generalization consists in

the naming[1] of a new entity. What has been regarded as a dynamic state in which elements of a realization are abstracted selectively to form an abstraction, generalization or, more abstractly still, an algebraic calculus, should be regarded as the mating of a pre-conception with a realization to form a conception and *thus* a reformulation : the reformulation is a *naming of* the total constellation of pre-conception and conception to prevent the loss of the experience by dispersion or disintegration of its components. The process known as abstraction is related to notation (as described by Freud) and an enlargement of memory. It is relevant here to consider in more detail the idea of growth positive and negative (Chap. 17, p. 69).

I introduce the idea of negative growth as a method of approaching an aspect of learning from experience; I do *not* mean denudation which I associate with hostile and destructive impulses such as envy. Denudation implies impoverishment of the personality. What I mean is exemplified by the restatement of the horizontal axis of the Grid in mythological symbolism rather than in the terms appropriate to a deductive system (row C rather than row F or G). A capacity for negative growth is needed partly to revivify a formulation that has lost meaning, partly to establish a link in making private knowledge public, but perhaps most important of all to achieve naïvety of outlook when a problem is so overlaid by experience that its outlines have become blurred and its possible solutions obscure. One of the advantages of the Grid is that its use in thinking about material that emerges in psychoanalytic practice stimulates reconsideration of familiar phenomena such as dreams or Oedipal material and their corresponding psychoanalytic theoretical formulations. The ability of an analyst to retain the substance of his training and experience and yet achieve a naïve view of his work allows him to discover for himself and in his own way the knowledge gained from his predecessors.

(c) The theory implicit in the representation of a pre-conception by a constant ψ together with an unsaturated element (ξ) has its

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[1]Compare Condillac's theory that ideas become fixed by being associated with a sign or word (Etienne Bonnet de Condillac, *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*), Hume on constant conjunction, and Freud on thinking: ". . . became endowed with further qualities which were perceptible to consciousness only through its connection with the memory traces of words" (Freud, 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning', 1911b).

convenience provided it is remembered that the sign $\psi(\xi)$ is a representation of a complex realization. We do not know the nature of the process of saturation or how the extent of the suffusion of the psyche by the stimulus of a new experience is to be determined. I find it a useful representation till it can be discarded for a better.

(d) To what I have already said about emotional drives I add a reminder that the analyst's concern is with the premonitory aspects of these drives and that the political nature of the human being should be borne in mind in assessing the force and direction of these premonitions. The determining factors in even intimate manifestations of sex or aggression may lie outside the personality and within the group.[1]

A vertical axis related to a genetic exposition depends on a concept of growth; in the formulation of this axis I have been governed by the idea of preconception as central. Hitherto it has served to suppose that abstractions and generalizations are extracted or abstracted from an already existing concept.[2] With patients in whom disorders of thought are prominent this view of abstractions and generalization fails to explain the nature of his thoughts. The fault lies in the model implicit in the term 'abstraction'. The term I require must express in the domain of psychoanalysis what is expressed in mathematics when it is said that a formula, already discovered, has been, and may at some future date be, approximated to by a realization. This meaning is inherent in the term 'pre-conception' as I wish to use it. It is the meaning I wish to express in terms such as 'generalization' and 'abstraction'. The scientific deductive system (G) and the algebraic calculus (H) may also share the quality of a preconception; different terms in the vertical axis express differences in degrees of sophistication rather than differences in function. Stating the same thing in another way terms in the vertical axis vary but all have the same use whereas in the horizontal axis all terms are the same but the 'uses' vary. The significance of the formulation I am putting forward lies in its use to establish the theory that any term such as 'dog', 'unconscious', 'dream', 'table', comes into existence when a set of phenomena are recognized as having a coherence of which the meaning is *unknown.*

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[1]S. Freud, 'Instincts and Their Vicissitudes' (1915c).

[2]See Chapter 1.

An object is not perceived and given the name of 'dog' because from the object perceived a quality of 'dogginess' is abstracted. The term 'dog' ('unconscious', 'dream', 'table', etc.) is used when and because a set of phenomena is recognized as being related yet *un*known. It is used to prevent the scattering of the phenomena. Having found the name, and thereby bound the phenomena, the remainder of history, if so wished, can be devoted to determining what it means – what a dog *is*; the name is an invention to make it possible to think and talk about something before it is known what that something is. To postulate an α-element or α-function as I have done, is, according to this theory, merely a conscious sophisticated extension of normal spontaneous procedure that has always existed and is inherent in the development of language. The term 'dog' or the term α-function comes into existence, the one spontaneously and unconsciously, the other by premeditation and contrivance, because phenomena are meaningless and need to be bound together so that they can be thought about. Once a name has been given and the scattering thereby prevented, meaning can begin to accumulate. How readily and spontaneously this can occur is illustrated by the observation[1] that attempts to contrive a term devoid of a distorting penumbra of associations is often defeated by the speed with which such a meaningless term collects a meaning.

To sum up: the preconception awaits its realization to produce a conception: the term 'dog' waits for a real dog to provide it with meaning. The algebraic calculus awaits a realization to approximate to it. In this way mathematicians who say mathematics have no meaning are justified. The mathematical formulae are analogous to pre-conceptions, as I use the term, and await a realization that approximates to them before they can be said to have meaning. The Grid, as I have adumbrated it here, itself shares the qualities I attribute to the pre-conception.

It will be observed that this theory of the name as that which prevents scattering of phenomena so that they can function as a pre-conception, is at variance with the theory, that I have already used, that Euclidean geometry, for example, is abstracted from the realization of space and finds therefore its realization in space. The theory of pre-conception I am putting forward requires a readjustment in

[1]K. R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1959), Chap. II, 9 and 10.

our views about concretization, particularization and *β*-elements. The term 'pre-conception' is ambiguous because it denotes a tool, the function for which it exists and the use to which it may be put; the two last may of course be the same.

The genetic view of an abstraction differs from the conception of an abstraction as a representation of something that has been removed from something. A readjustment of our idea of the concrete is required. The term 'dog' and all other terms apparently possessing a definite meaning must be seen to have no meaning until they acquire one through accretions of experience. A theory that such terms must be regarded as binding phenomena helps to dissipate contradictions inhering in the theory that an abstraction is something that has been removed from something else. Hume's postulation of constant conjunction is quite compatible with a theory that the term 'dog' comes into existence in order to be a sign that certain discrete and previously incoherent phenomena are constantly conjoined. There is no difficulty if this fact is kept clearly separated from any idea that the term implies that the constantly conjoined elements have any meaning other than that the elements are constantly conjoined. The genesis of the term 'dog' is thus adequately accounted for as a product of the Ps ⇌ D mechanism. But only after the term 'dog' has served to signalize and perpetuate the conjunction does the question of meaning arise. It might be stated thus: "These phenomena are constantly conjoined. I record this fact and bind the phenomena to each other so that they shall remain constantly conjoined by the sign 'dog'. Now that I have bound the phenomena, I can try to find out what their constant conjunction means. Thus we shall arrive at the *meaning of* the term 'dog'."

The mechanism ♀♂ comes into play, and the product *of* its operation is meaning.

The nature of the relationship between Ps ⇌ D and ♀♂ thus receives some clarification. On the Ps ⇌ D operation depends the delineation of the whole object: on the successful operation of ♀♂ depends the meaning of the whole object.

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The choice of axes may appear arbitrary without further reasons; it stems from the analytic situation itself.

The patient's activity most in evidence in an analysis is thinking. The analyst can see the use he makes of the analytic situation. He may appeal for help, exploit the possibilities of cruelty to the analyst, seek an outlet for love and generosity and so on. This he does by thinking silently, talking to the analyst, thinking aloud and occasionally by action. He makes statements classifiable under the headings of the vertical axis A–H. The information available for communication is selected, withheld, or expressed according to the use to which he wishes to put it. Since this is so the significance of the content of the communication can be assessed from the use, only *one* of the features of the patient's contribution, but it is a feature that is most continuously significant and is therefore worthy of attention, isolation and elevation as the 1–6 axis of the Grid.

Since self-knowledge is an aim of psychoanalytic procedure the equipment for attaining knowledge, the function and apparatus of pre-conception, must be correspondingly important. Growth and a capacity for growth are equally fundamental. The vertical axis (A–H) represents both the stages of growth and the function of pre-conception.

Representation of a process, such as growth continuing, by the headings A–H gives a misleading impression of discrete, clear-cut entities; transition from one to another must be assumed, for lack of evidence, probably to be gradual.

Choice of the Oedipus myth as a reservoir on which to draw for symbols to replace the horizontal axis (1–6) enables me to illustrate

a feature of the myth as a pre-conception. The Oedipus myth may be regarded as an instrument that served Freud in his discovery of psychoanalysis, and psychoanalysis as an instrument that enabled Freud to discover the Oedipus complex. I turn now to the part played by the myth, or its counterparts in α- and β-elements, in the growth of the psyche.

The myth may be regarded as a primitive form of pre-conception and a stage in publication, that is, in communication of the individual's private knowledge to his group. Any scientific theory must ultimately be represented by a medium that facilitates publication. The processes by which private knowledge is communicated within the individual is obscure; elucidation waits on advances that psychoanalysts have yet to make. The dream has fresh significance if it is regarded as a private myth. Oedipal material in a dream requires the accepted classical theory that it displays the Oedipus situation as yielded up by the unconscious under the impact of the analytical investigation, but in certain cases this material must also be regarded as evidence of a primitive mechanism of pre-conception, a private version of what later becomes publicly communicable through its correspondence with the Oedipal myth. When the issue is capacity for thought the same is true of the Eden and Babel myths. Analysts need accordingly to consider that the Oedipal material may possibly be evidence for primitive apparatus of pre-conception and therefore possessing a significance additional to its significance in classical theory. I am postulating a precursor of the Oedipal situation not in the sense that such a term might have in Melanie Klein's discussion of 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' [1928], but as something that belongs to the ego as part of its apparatus for contact with reality. In short I postulate an α-element version of a private Oedipus myth which is the means, the pre-conception, by virtue of which the infant is able to establish contact with the parents as they exist in the world of reality. The mating of this α-element Oedipal pre-conception with the realization of the actual parents gives rise to the conception of parents.

If, through envy, greed, sadism or other cause, the infant cannot tolerate the parental relationship and attacks it destructively, according to Melanie Klein the attacking personality is itself fragmented through the violence of the splitting attacks. Restating this theory in

terms of the Oedipal pre-conception: the emotional load carried by the private *α*-element Oedipal pre-conception is such that the Oedipal preconception is itself destroyed. As a result the infant loses the apparatus essential for gaining a conception of the parental relationship and consequently for resolution of Oedipal problems; it does not fail to solve those problems – it never reaches them.

The significance of this for practice is that scraps of what appear to be Oedipal material must be treated with reserve. If the evidence is related to a disaster to the ego, the destruction of the pre-conception and consequently of the ability to pre-conceive, interpretations based on the supposition that fragmental Oedipal material is evidence of a destroyed object will be only partly successful. The investigation must be directed to distinguishing amongst the elements of Oedipal material those that are fragments of Oedipal pre-conception from those that are fragments of the fragmented Oedipal situation. Since the experience of learning from which the patient is thus debarred is that of the parental relationship, the importance for the patient's development and for a successful outcome of analysis, depending on resolution of the Oedipus complex, is gravely prejudiced.

I must leave the development of this theme for future treatment when I hope to show in greater detail the manner of using the Grid for penetrating to a clearer perception and understanding of clinical material. The nature of the elements is determined by their position relative to the two axes (1–6) and (A–H).

What might be called the psycho-mechanics of thinking, represented by the interplay between ♀ and ♂ and between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions (Ps ⇌ D and the Selected Fact) provides the link between row and row.

At the beginning of this chapter brief reasons were given for the choice of 'uses' for the axis 1–6. In the genetic axis the psycho-mechanisms represented by Ps ⇌ D and ♀♂ were accorded an importance that requires further discussion. At the end of Chapter 18 I said that when hitherto unrelated elements were discovered, by the operation of Ps ⇌ D, to be coherent their relatedness was fixed by nomination. The name had a function, analogous to that of the mathematical formulation, in fixing the constant conjunction that it represented. In this respect the fixing of the cohering elements is identical with the mating of preconception with realization to produce a conception. We must

now consider the process by which the name accumulates meaning through the operation of ♀♂ .

I have discussed the part played in the understanding of thinking by the model of the alimentary canal. Detailed discussion of the mechanisms and dynamics involved in the growth of meaning is helped by introducing a shift of emphasis in our scrutiny of the phenomena represented by the vertical (A–H) axis of the Grid. I shall represent this shift of emphasis by using the term 'feeling' instead of the term 'thinking'. This substitution is based on the common usage, in analytic practice, of phrases such as 'I feel I had a dream last night', or, 'I feel you hate me', or 'I feel that I am going to have a breakdown'. Such locutions imply an emotional experience and are therefore more appropriate to my purpose than the more austere implication of 'I think . . .' Communications introduced by terms such as 'I feel . . .' are often methods of expressing emotions or premonitions. It is in their function as expressions of emotion that I wish to consider these phenomena. I propose to leave the Grid unaltered; the categories represented by the co-ordinates of the Grid apply equally to classes of 'I think . . .' and 'thoughts' as to classes of 'I feel . . .' and 'feelings'. In order to indicate emphasis of the emotional content I shall speak of 'feeling' rather than 'thinking', but the Grid remains unchanged for the categorization of 'thoughts' or 'feelings'.

Regarding the statements whose development is represented by the vertical (A–H) axis as expressions of feeling, the mechanism ♀♂ by which change from one row of the Grid to another is effected, may be represented by models other than that provided by the digestive tract. Of these the most suggestive are (1) the respiratory system, with which is linked the olfactory system; (2) the auditory system with which is linked transformations such as music ↔ noise, and (3) the visual system. Each of the three provide models for the mechanism ♀♂ representing projective identification as employed for purposes of K. The sense of touch is usually employed as an antidote to the confusion that can be incidental to the employment of ♀♂. Its use to establish the reassurance obtained from feeling there is a barrier between two objects, a limiting boundary that is absent in the container ↔ contained relationship characteristic of models (1), (2) and (3), produces the paradoxical effect that the topographically closer relationship implied by tactile contact is less intimate, i.e. confused,

than the more distant relationship implied by the models (1), (2) and (3).[1] It is worth noting that clinical manifestations of asthma become psychoanalytically more meaningful if their relationship to the respiratory model for thinking–feeling is recognized.

Views of thinking and feeling, stated in terms appropriate to row G, can be restated by use of these models of digestive tract, respiratory system, auditory system and visual system in terms appropriate to row C and *vice versa*.

The mechanism Ps ⇌ D allied with the mechanism ♀♂ is thus responsible for growth of pre-conception either in the direction of naïvety or of sophistication.

Since we can use the grid categories to represent feelings much will depend on the analytic context in which statements are made. The analyst must decide whether the idea that is expressed is intended to be an instrument whereby feelings are communicated or whether the feelings are secondary to the idea. Many subtle expressions of feeling can be missed if the ideas by which they are expressed are regarded, wrongly, to be the main burden of the communication. The facility with which subtle shades of feeling can be expressed makes the communication of what appear to be ideas an ideal vehicle for the communication of premonitions; the 'ideas' should be scrutinized accordingly.

If the Grid categories are as appropriate to 'feelings' as 'ideas' there should be an emotional counterpart of elements. In the limited field to which I have restricted them hitherto I have suggested that the term '*β*-elements' should be used to cover the area of phenomena such as the 'thoughts' that some psychotic patients regard as indistinguishable from 'things'. In the domain of feelings and those aspects of thought in which feelings are dominant, the term '*β*-elements' should be extended to cover the analogous phenomena. I am not sure what these analogous phenomena, if any, are. But the same patients who regard 'thoughts' as 'things' show every sign of regarding what I am used psychoanalytically to believe are phantasies as 'facts'. I therefore suggest provisionally that the *β*-element categories of the Grid should not be dismissed off-hand as non-existent, but should be thought of, in the domain of expressions of feeling, as related to phantasies that

[1]A psychotic patient can have genital intercourse without confusion but will become seriously confused by (1), (2) and (3).

are felt to be indistinguishable from facts. These phantasies that are indistinguishable from facts must be considered as the emotional counterpart of *β*-element 'thoughts' that are indistinguishable from 'things'. In other words the *β*-element categories of the Grid should be regarded as representations to which some realization, discovered psychoanalytically, may be found to approximate.

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Before I summarize the main themes of this book I must make it clear that the Grid, though genetically related to a number of analytic theories, differs from the object which the term 'theory' is usually taken to represent. Its nature is better indicated by describing it as a convention for construing psychoanalytic phenomena.[1] But if an analyst uses this convention he entertains a pre-conception of which the Grid, as printed or written, is a representation. Thus the analyst's state of mind, which is approximating to the representation, the Grid as printed or written, can be classified under one of the Grid categories according to the use to which it is being put and the position it occupies in the genetic development of the analyst's scientific equipment. Since the Grid and the associated theories may be used for whatever motives the analyst chooses it can be used to keep knowledge at bay (column 2) as well as to further it (cols. 1, 3, 4, 5, etc.). Equally, since use of the Grid means that the analyst entertains a preconception, it is possible that his use of it can be categorized more precisely if we employ the vertical axis for this purpose and see the appropriate Grid category in row D. If, therefore, the reader does not wish his state of mind to be disturbed he will either not use the Grid or employ it as a means of expressing feelings and thoughts that can be represented by D2. If on the contrary he is disposed to employ the Grid for further investigation he will be employing it as a means of expressing feelings and thoughts that can be represented by D (or, according to the degree of sophistication he brings to bear, F (or G)4.

I am aware that the Grid not only can be, but requires to be improved. I have felt that col. 2 might be replaced by a negative sense

[1]But note the discussion at beginning of Chapter 17.

to the horizontal axis. It is plausible and would conform to a pleasing similarity with the system of Cartesian co-ordinates as used in the development of algebraic geometry. Furthermore, it would simplify some difficulties if, instead of the present arrangement, the horizontal axis read

$$-(n), -(n-1), \ldots, -5, -4, -3, -2, -1,$$
$$1, 2, 3, 4, 5, \ldots, (n-1), (n)$$

with the 2 column standing for what is, in the present Grid, column 3. Then one might say that all the 'uses' $1 \leftrightarrow n$ can be used negatively, as a barrier against the unknown or known but disliked. But I am primarily concerned to sketch out the uses to which the phenomena represented by the vertical axis are put and not to embark on the complexities of the 'uses' to which 'uses' may be put, regarding the latter as an extension best left to clinical investigation.

I turn now to uses of the Grid. The summary is not intended to be exhaustive.

A. Meditative review

1. Suppose that at the end of the day's work the analyst wishes to review some aspect of his work about which he is doubtful. Assume further that the preoccupation centres on some phrase of the patient's. Recalling the session, the context of the statement, the patient's intonation, the analyst can place the statement in a category which, in the light of after-knowledge, he thinks is correct. Such meditation is related to notation and memory. It is akin to recording what took place and is an example of using the Grid and the theories it represents for the purposes of notation. Even if he does not commit his work to paper the analyst is doing something that will stamp the episode in his memory.

2. The analyst may place it speculatively in any Grid category he chooses. He can then give direction to his speculations by considering what the implications would be if in fact the statement belonged to the category in which he had provisionally and speculatively placed it. This means that he has 'bound' a number of elements and can proceed to discover the meaning of their supposed conjunction. The Grid assists in giving direction to his speculations.

3. In the course of 1 and 2 he will be considering the possibility of other categories in which the statement might with propriety have been placed. Such activity is a stimulant to the analyst's capacity for attention.

4. The analyst can scrutinize his interpretations by subjecting them to the same procedure as that to which he has submitted the patient's associations in 1, 3, and 4.

5. The analyst can place the association and its actual, or proposed interpretation, in the appropriate categories and thus examine the *couple*; association and interpretation. It then becomes possible to compare and examine the relationship, not of the association to the interpretation, but of the category of the association to the category of the interpretation. A basis can, by these means, be provided for investigation of the developmental value of interpretation and association according to the nature of the relationship of their categories.

6. The analyst can take conflicting statements in the patient's associations, place them according to their respective Grid categories, and then scrutinize the nature of the conflict by a comparison of the *categories* of the conflicting statements. It should then be possible to see what is contributed to conflict by the nature of the categories of the conflicting statements.

B. The psychoanalytic game

In A I have proposed uses for the Grid closely associated with actual analytic experiences. The Grid may, however, be profitably used in a kind of analytic make-believe in which the experiential element is far less dominant. Such an imaginative exercise is closer to the activity of the musician who practises scales and exercises, not directly related to any piece of music but to the *elements* of which any piece of music is composed. This brings me back to the elements of psychoanalysis and their elucidation. I define the elements of psychoanalysis as being those phenomena whose various aspects can be seen to fall within the Grid categories even though some categories must for the time being remain empty. Such phenomena are:

a. Ideas as described in Chapters 1–18.

b. Feelings as described in Chapter 19, including pain.

c. Association and Interpretation.
d. The couple (association and interpretation).
e. Conflicting pairs (I use the term 'pair' so as to leave the term 'couple' free for the phenomena of (d) above).
f. The two axes of the Grid (as special cases).

In Chapter 3 I suggested that the psychoanalytic object had three 'dimensions'; sensa, mythology and analytic theory. Translating this into terms of Grid categories, any analytic object before qualifying as such must display features categorized in rows B, C and G. An analytic object is not the same as an element but may be regarded as having a relationship with an element analogous to that of a molecule to an atom. The analytic object is not necessarily an interpretation though an interpretation is an analytic object. An interpretation must be based on evidence of analytic objects and is itself an analytic object composed of analytic objects. The analytic object emerges as a result of the operation in the observer of Ps ⇌ D and ♀♂. To the analytic observer the material must appear as a number of discrete particles unrelated and incoherent (Ps ⇌ D). The patient may be describing a dream, followed by a memory of an incident that occurred on the previous day, followed by an account of some difficulty in his parents' family. The recital may take three or four minutes or longer. The coherence that these facts have in the patient's mind is not relevant to the analyst's problem. His problem – I describe it in stages – is to ignore that coherence so that he is confronted by the incoherence and experiences incomprehension of what is presented to him. His own analysis should have made it possible for him to tolerate this emotional experience though it involves feelings of doubt and perhaps even persecution. This state must endure, possibly for a short period but probably longer, until a new coherence emerges; at this point he has reached → D, the stage analogous to nomination, or 'binding' as I have described it. From this point his own processes can be represented by ♀♂ – the development of meaning. It has been necessary to give this somewhat schematic description of the analyst's mental working to introduce a discussion of certain apparent anomalies to which I now turn. I shall take the statement I made (Chap. 17) that the whole Oedipus myth could be placed in a single category, or, alternatively, that parts of the myth could occupy a single compartment

in the Grid. It may seem that this is not compatible with the distinction I have made between a psychoanalytic object and an element of psychoanalysis. The anomaly disappears however if it is appreciated that, in the context in which the myth is mentioned, it is the shortest and most compact representation that can be devised to express, say, a sense of foreboding of a particular quality. In this instance the importance of the myth lies in the fact that it represents a feeling and as such its place in a Grid category denotes a psychoanalytic element. Taken with other similar psychoanalytic elements it and the other elements together form the field of incoherent elements in which it is hoped that the Selected Fact, that gives coherence and relatedness to the hitherto incoherent and unrelated, will emerge. Thus 'nominated', 'bound', the psychoanalytic object has emerged. It remains to discern its meaning. This verbally same myth may then be a psychoanalytic object which is instrumental in giving meaning to the totality of elements, one of which was the feeling represented by the myth in its Grid category. Correct interpretation therefore will depend on the analyst's being able, by virtue of the Grid, to observe that two statements verbally identical are psychoanalytically different. To reiterate, a verbal statement observed to have aspects falling in rows B, C and G represents a psychoanalytic object. A verbally identical statement seen to fall in, say, D2 is a psychoanalytic element. In the example I have taken the myth in category D2 represents a *feeling* of foreboding and is a premonition of a particular kind employed to exclude something else. (Incidentally the whole of the preceding discussion can be taken as an example of the use of the Grid for an exercise designed to develop intuition and the capacity for clinical discrimination.)

To conclude: the *elements* of psychoanalysis are ideas and feelings as represented by their setting in a *single* Grid-category; psychoanalytic objects are associations and interpretations with extensions in the domain of sense, myth and passion (see Chap. 3), requiring three Grid categories for their representation. It follows that the classes a–f above are only elements if they fall in one Grid-category only. The practical significance of this is that if they are elements, despite any appearance to the contrary, it is necessary to know of what psychoanalytic object they are a part.

TAMING WILD THOUGHTS [I]
THE GRID
1963

‘The Grid’ was presented to the British Psychoanalytical Society on 2 October 1963. It was first published in 1997 as part of *Taming Wild Thoughts*, edited by Francesca Bion (London: Karnac Books).

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Taming Wild Thoughts is a short book of just 51 pages, consisting of a 1963 paper, 'The Grid', plus two untitled papers. 'The Grid' has been extracted from the original book and is published here to be together with *Elements of Psycho-Analysis,* and *Transformations,* in which the Grid features extensively. Accordingly the parts of the original Foreword to *Taming Wild Thoughts* by Parthenope Bion Talamo have been divided between this volume and Volume X, in which the untitled transcriptions from May 1977 now appear.

Taming Wild Thoughts [I]

The Grid

FOREWORD

Parthenope Bion Talamo

The Grid was given to the British Psychoanalytical Society on 2 October 1963. The principal theme is that of the classification (and hence the taming) of the psychoanalytic objects that belong to the domain of ideas, as Bion defines them at the end of the first chapter of *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* (1963), and the ways in which they can be used. The short paper would seem to have been written at much the same time as *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* and might constitute an early draft which later grew into the book. My reasons for thinking this are based on a fairly detailed comparison of the two texts. In the first place, the Grid itself has a slight change in it: in the paper printed here, Column 5 is indicated as Oedipus, whereas the Grid printed in *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* and onwards has this column labelled as Inquiry, as though the author had decided to opt for the more general category, of which 'Oedipus' is simply a special case, as the discussion of this column in the book shows. Secondly, if you try to read *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* 'innocently', so to speak, as though you did not know that the book contains the first and main detailed discussion of the Grid, you will discover that Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the horizontal and then the vertical axes of the Grid without mentioning the word 'grid' for a full nine pages, and when it is brought in towards the end of Chapter 6, the term itself is not discussed at all. It is almost as though an introductory piece had been left out at the beginning of Chapter 5. I do not think that the paper printed here constitutes the missing introduction – it is far too long and detailed for that – but I suspect that Bion may have had the paper in his mind, as something 'already written', while he was preparing *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* for the press and did not feel the need to enlarge further on the introductory aspects in the book itself.

It would not be the first time that something of this sort occurred in Bion's published writings: the passages in *Cogitations* (1994) on alpha-elements, dream-work-alpha, and beta-elements seem to come into a similar category, that of a full discussion of terms which was then left out of the text to be published – or taken out, perhaps, as being too introspective? In any case, I think it is fair to say that one's understanding of both the Grid and the above-mentioned concepts is made easier by studying what could perhaps be thought of as being the 'parings', which Bion whittled away from his finished writings.

As it stands, this particular paper is a model of clarity and highlights some background characteristics of Bion's thought, which he was never to abandon. The most important of these shows through when he makes explicit the fact that what he says about the patient's development of thoughts or his usage of them can also apply to the analyst, who, inasmuch as he is a human being, also suffers from the vagaries and limitations of the human capacity for thinking and communication. I do not mean that Bion is talking about what is called countertransference, either in the strict sense of the term or the looser one that it generally has today, but that he was working on a system that would help him to track down after a session, in a moment of relative peace and quiet, what had happened during the session. And the things that happen during the session include just as much the analyst's thought processes and the use he makes of these as it does the patient's: and they both need scrutiny at the end of the session.

How things moved around, developed, evolved (or failed to do so) was a never-failing source of interest to Bion, and I do not think that it is too fanciful to see an early precursor of the Grid in the description that he gives, in 'Experiences in Groups' (1961; in 'Intra-Group Tensions in Therapy', towards the end of the section on 'Discipline for the Neurotic'), of his visualization of

> . . . the projected organization of the training wing as if it were a framework enclosed within transparent walls. Into this space the patient would be admitted at one point, and the activities within that space would be so organized that he could move freely in any direction according to the resultant of his conflicting impulses. . . . As a result, his behaviour could be trusted to give a fair indication of his effective will and aims . . . [Volume IV, p. 108]

The Grid itself plots the evolution and use of ideas and not the development of men, but the 'visualization' behind both the fantasy and the Grid is not substantially different in its aims in both cases.

Another interesting link between 'Experiences in Groups' and the present paper can be found in the discussion of the importance of the circumference of the circle as a factor in the fecundity of thought: a brief mention of this in the earlier book, later to be picked up again in a cursory and almost joking fashion in *Transformations* [this volume, p. 226], receives a far more detailed treatment in this version of the Grid. There is another sense, too, in which *Transformations* seems to be foreshadowed by this paper. It contains the discussion of the 'transformation' of the field of poppies that becomes the starting point for the 1965 book; it also introduces the symbols for short-hand indication of the analyst's and patient's transformations.

Why Bion never published this paper, which has an important linking function between the work that preceded it and that which came later, as well as constituting a remarkably clear discussion of the whys and wherefores of the Grid itself, and then later, in 1971 (Bion, 1977),[1] produced another one with the same title, remains a mystery. The 1971 paper grew out of a talk that he gave to the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society in April of that year and is unusual in that it contains some fairly detailed clinical material. It is also rather more discursive in style than the present paper (as are the two transcripts that follow the latter in this collection), and I think that on the whole, although there is a certain amount of overlap, the two Grid papers complement each other in a rather interesting fashion. They might even be said to make up the two viewpoints of a possible binocular vision (for the reader), 1963 and 1971, England and California, inception of the Grid and a re-visitation of it.

Turin
7 April 1997

[1] [*Two Papers: The Grid and Caesura*: see Volume X. *Ed.*]

INTRODUCTION

In 1994 Dr Rosa Beatriz, from Rio de Janeiro, sent me a copy of this paper, which had been given to her by Dr Hans Thorner in 1971, when she was in London. I am grateful to her for resurrecting this piece, especially as it had disappeared from my records – and my memory – and has not been previously published, with the exception of its inclusion in a magazine containing the contributions to a workshop held in Rio de Janeiro in November 1994. Bion presented it at a scientific meeting of the British Psychoanalytical Society on 2 October 1963; I believe that a hand-written date on the first page, 2/10/63, was added by Dr Thorner.

It was written after the publication of *Learning from Experience* (1962b), in which the Grid is not mentioned, although Bion had been working on the idea for some time before that. We discussed various possible names for the new 'offspring' about which he was then expressing all the usual enthusiasm aroused by a new invention – followed ultimately by the equally usual realization of its defects (see Bion, *Two Papers*, 1977 [Volume X, p. 9; see also Volume VIII, p. 291]).

In this 1963 paper, his aim is to give a clear and detailed explanation of the Grid's construction and its uses; this he does admirably and does not 'digress', as he could be said to do in the 1971 version, which is twice as long. That paper contains some vivid clinical material and a fairly lengthy discussion of six myths (Row C constructs); he laid increasing stress on the importance of their use from 1963 (*Elements of Psycho-Analysis*, 1963) onwards.

He produced plenty of evidence to highlight the deficiencies of the Grid: 'I can say that an early casualty in trying to use the Grid is the Grid itself.' But he goes on, 'Nevertheless, its use has made it easier for me to preserve a critical and yet informative, illuminating attitude

to my work' [Volume X, pp. 9–10]. In 1974, in Rio de Janeiro, he said, 'The Grid is a feeble attempt to produce an instrument. . . . I think it is good enough to know how bad it is, how unsuitable for the task for which I have made it' [Volume VII, p. 126]. And as late as 1977, in New York, he stated: 'As soon as I had got the Grid out of my system I could see how inadequate it is . . . the satisfaction does not last for long' [Volume VIII, p. 291]. Asked if it was difficult, he replied, 'Not for me – only a waste of time because it doesn't really correspond with the facts I am likely to meet'. Although it was certainly not his intention, these remarks were discouraging, to say the least; on the other hand, in São Paulo in 1973, he reacted with obvious interest and enthusiasm to a question about a possible amplification of the Grid (see Bion, *Brazilian Lectures* [Volume VII, p. 36]). In reply he spoke of visualizing the Grid as repeating itself as a helix. Again in São Paulo in 1978, he touched on an interesting extension of the Grid (see *Bion in New York and São Paulo* [Volume VIII, p. 291]): he imagined it turned so that 'the distances between the lines would become very fine' and called it a Grating.

Bion emphasized that the Grid is not a theory, nor should it be used during the session, but it can be used to advantage 'in relative isolation from attack'. He gave a warning: '. . . it cannot do harm, provided it is not allowed to intrude in the analyst–analysand relationship as a theory about the patient which is stored up and then discharged like a missile in battle' [Volume X, p. 27].

It may be helpful to set out the uses to which, he believed, and indeed found through his own experience, the Grid could be put. They are these:

1. to keep the analyst's intuition in training;
2. to help in impressing the work of the sessions on the memory;
3. to increase the accuracy of observations;
4. to make it easier to bridge the gap between events of an analysis and their interpretation;
5. as a 'game' for psychoanalysts to set themselves exercises as a method of developing their capacity for intuition;
6. to help in developing a method of written recording analogous to mathematical communication, even in the absence of the object;

7. as a prelude to psychoanalysis, not as a substitute for it;
8. to provide a mental climbing-frame on which psychoanalysts could exercise their mental muscles;
9. as an instrument for classifying and ultimately understanding statements.

Francesca Bion

1963

This paper is to introduce a method I have found useful in thinking about problems that arise in the course of psychoanalytic practice.

We are familiar with anxieties arising in the course of treating patients and of the need to deal with these anxieties by being ourselves analysed. Today I am concerned with an aspect of this that seems to have received little or no attention, namely, what might be called reasonable anxiety that arises when it is clearly important to solve a problem that is by virtue of its complexity very difficult to solve. Because of our work, there is a tendency to regard such anxiety as counter-transference and to forget that it may also be proper to the search for an adequate response to a danger. My approach must not be regarded as implying that there is any less need for the analyst's personal analysis. What I shall say should in fact contribute to the approach through personal analysis.

My subject does not belong directly to the sphere of work done in analytic situations or throw much light on how to record sessions. Yet it has a bearing on the work of the session because the procedures I am about to advocate do help to keep the analyst's intuition in training, so to speak, and do help in impressing the work of the sessions on the memory. Later perhaps it might help in developing a method of written recording analogous to that enjoyed by the mathematician who can record his findings and use the record for communication and further work on his findings even in the absence of the object.

The instrument that I have elaborated for this task is the Grid (see p. vii).

It will be seen that there are two axes, one vertical marked A–H, the other horizontal, which is numbered 1, 2, 3, . . ., to *n*. The vertical axis is genetic and is divided roughly into phases of sophistication.

The meaning is broadly indicated by the terms I have used. They are borrowed from philosophy and elsewhere but must not be taken to have the meaning with which they are already invested in their rigorous employment in the discipline from which they are borrowed; they must be regarded as intended ultimately to have a meaning appropriate to psychoanalysis.

The horizontal axis relates to 'uses' to which the elements in the genetic axis are put. I have annotated the numbers in an imprecise manner similar to that with which I have used terms to annotate the vertical axis. When an element in the vertical axis appears to be identical with that in the horizontal axis the confusion will disappear if it is remembered that the term in the vertical axis is intended to denote a phase in development, whereas in the horizontal axis it is intended to denote the use that is made of the element.

The Grid is intended to aid the analyst in the categorization of statements. It is not a theory, though psychoanalytic theories have been used to construct it, but has the status of an instrument. A word or two is necessary to explain my use of the term 'statement'.

By 'statement' I mean anything from an inarticulate grunt to quite elaborate constructions such as this paper itself. A single word is a statement, a gesture or grimace is a statement; in short it is any event that is part of communication between analyst and analysand, or any personality and itself.

The horizontal axis is incomplete and is accordingly divided into columns marked to indicate that the series is extensible. Whether it should be so extended, and if so in what manner, is left to be determined in the course of its use. The existing columns have been used by me and I do not think they should be lightly discarded. They were devised primarily with what I have called a K link in mind, but their usefulness is unimpaired for L and H. I may explain that K is intended to denote the domain of learning from experience, L to denote the domain of love in all its aspects, and H the domain of hate. The domains are assumed to overlap, despite the rigidity that the signs may seem to impart. The letters L, H, and K are to facilitate discussion in a manner similar to that described later when I discuss α and β.

The horizontal axis is intended to relate to a statement that is constant; its meaning changes only because its use has changed in

accordance with the column in which it is felt to be appropriate to place it.

Column 1 is subtitled 'definitory hypothesis'. This term, like many others I use, is not to be taken as possessing the meaning it already has alone and unmodified. It is used to indicate an aspect of statements that belong to, or are placed in, that category. Statements to which this category is appropriate mark that elements previously regarded as unrelated are believed to be constantly conjoined (Hume, *Hume's Enquiries*; Poincaré, *Science and Method*) and to have coherence. A statement in this column should be considered to have significance but not meaning. The term '*cat*' in this context indicates that the observer has become convinced of the constant conjunction of, say, fur, life, eyes, and so on. This constant conjunction is felt *not* to be some previous constant conjunction (Aristotle, *Topics*, VI, 4, 141, & 26 sqq.), and the statement is intended to bind the elements constantly conjoined and to define the area within which the conjoined elements reside; it is in this respect that it resembles what is ordinarily considered to be a definitory hypothesis. From the fact that the definitory statement does not refer to an earlier conjunction springs the objection, sometimes made, that a definition is negative. The binding of a constant conjunction and the implication of significance it carries with it makes possible the next step in learning, the task of finding out what 'cat' means.

Column 2 is to categorize the 'use' to which a statement – of whatever kind it may be and however untrue in the context – is put with the intention of preventing a statement, however true in the context, that would involve modification in the personality and its outlook. I have arbitrarily used the sign ψ to emphasize the close relationship of this 'use' to phenomena known to analysts as expressions of 'resistance'.

Column 3 contains the categories of statements that are used to record a fact. Such statements are fulfilling the function described by Freud as notation and memory (Freud, 1911b).

Column 4 represents the 'use' described by Freud, in the same paper, as the function of attention. The statement '*cat*' would then be used to ensure sensitiveness to a repetition of the constant conjunction. Statements properly regarded as appropriate to Column 4 relate to constant conjunctions that *have* been previously experienced, and

the 'use' represented by Column 4 categories differs in this respect from the 'use' represented by Column 1.

Column 5, particularly the gloss 'Oedipus', requires some explanation. In so far as it represents a 'use' similar to Column 4, it may be regarded as redundant. I am loth to discard it, partly because it serves as an example of a 'use' that makes me unwilling to formulate 'uses' prematurely. A criticism of Oedipus implicit in the story (I refer specifically to the Sophoclean version) is the obstinacy with which he pursues his inquiry. This aspect of curiosity may seem unimportant to the philosopher of science, but it is of significance clinically and therefore worth including with Columns 3 and 4 as representing something that is more than a difference of intensity, just as 4 (Attention) is more than an intense 3 (Notation). A situation that will serve as an example is an occasion when the analyst has to distinguish between allowing himself too easily to abandon an approach to the solution of a problem and pressing it beyond the patients' capacity for endurance.

The last column, which I have annotated 'Action', also requires comment. It refers to those phenomena that resemble motor discharge intended to unburden 'the mental apparatus of accretions of stimuli' (Freud, 1911b, p. 221). To qualify for inclusion in this category, the action should be an expression of a theory that is readily detectable – otherwise it cannot be described as a 'use' of a theory. The problem of clarifying Grid categories arises from the fact that clarification must depend on experience. Inclusion in a Grid category is itself a statement by the analyst: all Grid categories may be regarded as having the quality of Column 1 categories in that they are significant but cannot be held to have meaning until experience invests them with it.

The first two rows of the genetic axis may be discussed together: *β*-elements and *α*-elements are intended to denote objects that are unknown and therefore may not even exist. By speaking of *α*-elements, *β*-elements, and *α*-function, I intend to make it possible to discuss something, or to talk about it, or think about it before knowing what it is. At the risk of suggesting a meaning, when I wish the sign to represent something of which the meaning is to be an open question, to be answered by the analyst from his own experience, I must explain that the term '*β*-element' is to cover phenomena that may not reasonably be regarded as thoughts at all. Included in this category are the phenomena that I have previously tried to describe

in a discussion of bizarre objects (see *Learning from Experience*). The problem, from my point of view, arises because of the tendency for meaning to creep in prematurely. Ideally, any meaning that the term accumulates should derive from analytic practice and from analytic practice alone. Much the same is true of the *α*-element, except that this term should cover phenomena that are reasonably considered to be thoughts. I would regard them as elements that make it possible for the individual to have what Freud described as dream thoughts.

Row C includes dreams and other possible organized systems of dream thoughts. Myth is to be included, together with organized structures that are primitive forms of model.

All rows except the first are to represent categories of statements that are unsaturated – that is, capable of accumulating meaning. In this respect it may seem misleading to describe Row E as consisting of pre-conceptions to the exclusion of the remaining rows, for they are capable also of functioning as pre-conceptions (because pre-conception may refer either to a phase of development or a 'use') in an ascending order of sophistication. As I have said elsewhere, I do not think it likely that in analytic practice an analyst would discover anything that would pass muster, by any rigorous standard of accepted scientific method, for inclusion in Rows G and H. Nevertheless I think it important that these categories should exist, although it involves the paradox of employing or appearing to employ rigorous standards loosely. One reason for such categories lies in the fact that statements, that under analytic scrutiny turn out to be loose statements, are often employed by scientists and philosophers as if they were rigorous.

If a competent artist, using the artistic conventions familiar to Western civilization, were to paint a field of poppies, we should have no difficulty in saying it was a field of poppies. Why should this be so? The lines on a straight stretch of railway would be thought of as being parallel, yet we should recognize a painting in which they were represented by lines that converged. And so on.

I propose to use the term 'transformation' to describe the process, whatever it is, by which the painter has transformed his experience into oil and pigment disposed on the canvas. But I don't wish the term to mean what it would mean if I said a building had been transformed by a painter and decorator – that the field of poppies has been used as raw material for the manufacture of canvas, oil, and pigment. Nor do I mean to suggest that the observer of the painting thinks he has

discovered the source of the raw material if he describes the painting as a field of poppies. In short, I propose to use the term 'transformation', in accordance with my description of elements in Column 1, as a binding together of a constant conjunction so that I can proceed, with the help of this term, to find out what the constant conjunction means. The constant conjunction to which my term relates occurs in psychoanalytic sessions, and I hope to bind it by this term and to communicate the experience to the reader. If I can succeed in my aim, I hope that those to whom I communicate it will be able to discover the meaning of the term 'transformation' and the emotional experience whose constantly conjoined elements I have represented by the term.

As a first step towards understanding the meaning, I shall resume my discussion of my model, the field of poppies and the painting that represents it, and my 'myth' that an artist has effected a transformation. The realization – i.e. the field of poppies and all similar objects – I shall represent by the sign 'O'.

In analysis I shall assume that the medium for the transformation is conversational English. By this I mean that grammatical and verbal exactitude is not to be looked for, and that mien and gestures – muscular movements – are included in the expression 'conversational English'. I shall further assume that communication is being made by patient and analyst. Finally, I shall assume that the analytically relevant part of the communications of both patient and analyst is about an emotional experience. For brevity, I shall use the following signs:

Tp α signifies the process of transformation in the mind of the patient; Ta α the same process in the mind of the analyst. Similarly, Tp β and Ta β represent the finished product, the result of the process of transformation, the analytic counterpart of the artist's painting. In our work, O must always be an emotional experience, for the assumption in psychoanalysis is that patients come for help with, and therefore presumably want to talk about, an emotional difficulty.

There are a number of interesting ramifications into which I cannot enter here. It is only necessary to consider questions such as those touching the nature of the artist's communication – whether he is attempting to record a particular landscape or his emotions about it, whether he does or does not wish to influence the public to whom the finished product is to be displayed, and so forth – to see the complexities that are involved. I shall therefore introduce one more point only, namely the question with which I started: why is there no difficulty

in recognizing that a painting represents a field of poppies? I shall answer it by saying that there is always something in the transformation that is invariant both to O and T β, the finished product.

To return now to the Grid: I have said that it is an instrument for classifying and ultimately understanding statements. The object of my discussion of transformations is to introduce the idea that in analytic practice all statements must be regarded as transformations. Even a single word such as 'cat', with its accompanying movements, intonation, and so forth, is a transformation of an emotional experience, O, into the final product, Tp β. It is for the analyst to decide when the transformation is complete. He may think that this point has been reached with the utterance of a single word or after a verbal communication lasting for a considerable period.

The analyst's communications may be scrutinized by the same mode of analysis as that to which I have subjected the communications of the patient. But it must be borne in mind that his aim is to give an interpretation. Any interpretation is a statement and a transformation but it is also something more and less than both, and the term 'interpretation' should apply only to something peculiar to the practice of the psychoanalyst. I hope that use of the Grid to classify the analyst's statement, and scrutiny of the transformation, may lead to a clearer understanding of the qualities that are necessary before a statement can be properly regarded as a psychoanalytic interpretation.

I have attempted so far to formulate some of the elements involved in observation. They may all be included under the heading of determining three things: the significant, its meaning, and the interpretation of the meaning. It will be seen therefore that I wish to establish a distinction between meaning and psychoanalytic interpretation. To put it in another way, I think it helpful to make a distinction between what the patient's meaning in conversation would be, and what the interpretation of that is when it is a psychoanalysis and not an ordinary conversation.

To summarize: the analyst is concerned with making observations on behaviour in which a number of components may be distinguished. These are: the genesis and use of the statements, the nature of the statement as a transformation, the process by which the transformation is effected (Tp α), the end-product of the transformation (Tp β), invariants, and the Grid category of the transformation.

The analyst, to observe correctly, must be sensitive to as many as possible of the phenomena that are included in these headings. The more nearly he is able to approximate to this ideal, the nearer he is to the first essential in psychoanalysis – or, for that matter, any other science – namely, correct observation. The complement of the first essential is the last essential – correct interpretation. By 'first' essential I mean not only priority in time but priority in importance, because if an analyst can observe correctly there is always hope; it is of course a big 'if'. Without the last essential he is not an analyst, but if he has the first essential he may become one in time; without it he can never become one, and no amount of theoretical knowledge will save him. This brings me to reconsideration of the nature of interpretation.

Interpretation is a special case: it is like all other statements in analysis in that it can have any of the characteristics (though ideally it should not) that I have attributed to the statement, and, like all statements, it is a transformation. It is unlike in that it should have K characteristics and be classifiable in a restricted range of rows. It should, on the face of it, be restricted to Columns 3, 4, and, more rarely, 1 and 5. When I deal later with the psychoanalytic game (see p. 114), I shall show that it may be placed hypothetically in any Grid category that the reviewing analyst thinks might stimulate a useful train of thought. With these points I shall deal after discussing some of the implications of my proposal to regard only particular aspects of events in an analytical session as peculiarly the province of psychoanalytic observations. This is already implicit in the application of psychoanalytic theories: I wish to make it explicit as a theory of observations that are to be matched with psychoanalytic theories. For, if observation is sound, the conclusion that certain observed phenomena appear to approximate to a psychoanalytic theory will also be sound. But the soundness of the conclusion is impaired if the theory, which is always a pre-conception (Row D), colours the selection of the facts to be observed. The object of the Grid is to aid in developing a pre-conception, in the analyst, that is *not* directly psychoanalytic so that the observations made are not such that they are bound to approximate to a psychoanalytic theory. For if the pre-conception is psychoanalytic, there is clearly a risk that the observations made under such a pre-conception appear to approximate to a psychoanalytic theory because they in fact derive from it. Such a condition amounts to circular argument. I have no objection to the circular

argument and shall discuss the nature of its dangers later (see p. 111). For the present I shall assume the desirability of avoiding a circular argument to return to the consideration of 'statements'. Those, as I have said, must be considered to be 'transformations' in the sense in which I have used the term above, but, in addition to the characteristics already described, they must also be recognized as having the character of a theory. In other words, the objects of psychoanalytic study (psychoanalytic objects) have the characteristics I have bound by the term 'statement', the characteristics I have bound by the term 'transformation', and now also the characteristics I wish to 'bind' by the term 'theory'. So I shall now discuss the term 'theory'.

Reference to the Grid will show that I might equally well choose the term 'pre-conception' (Row D) but prefer a term that would be appropriately categorized in a relatively more sophisticated category.

The theory, no matter what the statement (or formulation) may be or what characteristics it has derived from its nature as a transformation, is never right or wrong: it *is* meaningful. Much confusion exists amongst scientists through beliefs that theories are right or wrong and accordingly require to be validated by empirical testing. I must therefore make it clear that this approach is unrewarding and that any supposition on which it is based must be replaced, as far as psychoanalysis is concerned and in the context of this discussion, by the supposition that the psychoanalytic object (= statement–transformation–theory) must be regarded in its theoretical aspects as if it were a formulation binding a constant conjunction. To make my point clear, I shall choose an extreme example.

A patient, though aware of the approach of a car, walked out in front of it, was knocked down, and sustained minor injuries. This result was apparently quite unexpected. Many of his statements had prepared me to expect that he was dominated at the time of the event by the conviction that he was a puff of flatus.

The statements amounting to an assertion that he was a puff of flatus constitute an example of what I mean by theory.

From the point of view of the patient, this was not a theory that needed validation to test the truth or otherwise of the statement. (I shall assume from now on that the reader is aware of the special sense in which I use the term 'statement'.) According to my theory of the statement, he was engaged in establishing its meaning. Furthermore, the 'statement' was not only the verbal account he attempted to give

me but was, in my opinion – although I was not there to see – probably also the correct term to apply to the event itself: it was a statement indistinguishable from the many statements to which, as his analyst, I am a witness. I shall now consider the implications of regarding this as a statement.

Let us first take the point that the statement is never right or wrong but only meaningful. Any view that the episode was an empirical testing of a hypothesis leads to a dead end. But if it is regarded as a statement designed first to bind a constant conjunction and thereby to take the first step in establishing the meaning of the constant conjunction, certain aspects of the episode become clearer. The accident and its attendant conclusions do not con-tribute meaning to the statement that he is a puff of flatus. For such a contribution to be possible, a realization must be found that approximates to the statement. In this respect the situation is in no way different from that presented by a highly sophisticated statement such as the mathematical formula for the expansion of gases. For the investigator to catch a bus could not add to the meaning of the formula. But if he were to experience an explosion, it might. But in the instance I have given, the realization – my patient's accident – did not approximate to the theory. It did not falsify it either. What is required is a realization that does approximate to the theory. From a sane point of view, or what is generally known as such, the patient is unlikely to find, in the world of external reality, any realization that approximates sufficiently to his statement to constitute meaning; there is nothing that will mate with his pre-conception to produce a conception. Therefore there cannot be any development such as is represented by the vertical axis of the Grid. But in the world of psychic reality there are realizations that approximate to the patient's statement.

This fact, recognized by psychoanalysts since Freud made his discoveries, is not taken sufficiently into account by the scientist who considers that a single negative fact can invalidate the theory it appears to contradict. Such an attitude to theory ignores its significance as a factor of mental growth. I stress the point because for the analyst it is essential to recognize this quality of the statement. The fact that a statement, and any scientific theory, can be matched by a realization in the domain of psychic reality is ignored by the natural scientist because it is in the world of physical realizations that he seeks his approximation, and because he fears and dislikes, with

varying degrees of intensity, the existence of an approximate realization in the realm of psychic reality. This was, with reservations, true of my patient.

My patient's statement, his account of the episode and his display of feeling about it, required an interpretation from me. Briefly, a part of the interpretation was that he thought he was a puff of flatus. I attempted to make clear that his associations indicated the presence of a fantasy that he was a puff of flatus. As far as I could tell, there were two main obstacles to his understanding of this: first, it involved recognition of a domain that he feared, and second, that if he recognized the realization (his fantasy) as a realization that corresponded to his statement, others including myself would consider him mad.

Obviously this has substance, for an outside observer if he accepted the statement would not expect external reality to provide a realization that approximated to the statement, but would conclude that the explanation of the patient's statement was that the patient was mad. But, ignoring these obstacles, another problem now arises.

If the statement that the patient is a puff of flatus has as its approximating realization a fantasy that he is a puff of flatus, a logical construction that is a circular argument has come into being. It is similar to another argument that was typical of him. It would emerge that he was angry: he was angry because he was depressed. Why was he depressed? Obviously (in his view) because he was angry. And so on. I shall therefore consider the circular argument before taking up further details of this episode.

Experience of the circular argument, of which I have had a considerable amount, has convinced me that there is not much wrong with its logic, that it involves acceptance of a theory of causation, and that probably any logical argument is essentially circular. Since I am disposed to believe this of even classical instances of logical inquiry, I felt that the failures of circular arguments, such as those of my patient, to lead to any development had to be sought elsewhere than in their circularity. I decided that the difficulties that arose depended (to extend the use of the circle as a model) on the diameter. If the circular argument has a large enough diameter, its circular character is not detected and may, for all I know, contribute to useful discoveries such as I understand the curvature in space to be. But the curvature in space provides me with a model for the postulate of a circular argument of such large diameter that it is conducive to the

development of thought and personality. Conversely, the diameter can be so reduced that the circle itself disappears and only a point remains: similarly with the circular argument. Restating this in the instance of my patient, the circular argument ends in the point (it may not be frivolous to say 'in the point of the argument') that he *is* a puff of flatus.

I shall try to make this statement clearer by returning to the patient and giving some details of what happens if the argument is not diminished in this way.

In my paper on thinking at the Edinburgh Conference (1962a), I pointed out the relationship of a 'thought' to a 'no-breast'. The thought owes its genesis to the absence of the object. I cannot enter into the bearing of this on the negative nature of a definition due to a lack of time but must point out that the statement, as the element that binds together a constant conjunction, at the same time implies that the constant conjunction is *not* any one of the constant conjunctions already bound.

In some instances the 'no-breast' is indicated, as it were, geometrically. That is to say, the mathematical counterpart of a thought is a point, something that marks the place where the breast was. Similarly, a line marks the place where the penis was – the 'no-penis'. The successive attacks on the breast, the 'no-breast', the thought (the place where the breast was) are repeated in the more complex combination of thoughts logically combined to form an argument. We thus witness the reduction of the fruitful, growth-producing circular argument by the successive diminutions of 'diameter', until it becomes the sterile circular argument, of which the 'diameter' is further diminished until the circle disappears and only a point remains.

Does the statement 'circular argument' represent more than an element that can be categorized in a compartment of Row C? On the answer to this depends the usefulness of extending the model to include ideas of diameter. As I am not writing a clinical paper, I must limit clinical material to illustrations; I prefer, therefore, that the reader should not attach importance to them as anything other than models – part of my private thinking, which I hope may nonetheless serve for public communication.

A week or ten days elapsed after the episode of the accident had been produced in analysis. The time was taken up with many interpretations, including attempts to draw his attention to the circular

argument. I did not say it was of small diameter, but I had this in mind myself. I was also able to show him his fear of any interpretation that drew his attention to the fact that he had two dissimilar views about the same facts. The interpretations were not new but appeared to produce a response in him. His statements continued to be remarkable more for their distance from any point (I mean this to be understood by the reader as a conversationally loose phrase) than for any attempt to get to grips with the point. Or (I now employ my model) he was engaged in a circular argument, the diameter being determined by the need to say nothing that brought him nearer the centre of the circle.

Then, not having directly referred to the episode again after his first mention of it, he said the car driver had called him a 'fucking fool'. I feel better now, he said. I regarded this as meaning that his circular progress had brought him round to the point on the circle that was 'opposite' the statement that the car had collided with him. In time, at least, the argument was a circle of measurable diameter. But during that period of circular argument we had had opportunity for a number of interpretations, including the interpretation that he felt he was a puff of flatus. I therefore said that he felt the car accident was a sexual intercourse between a puff of flatus and the car and its driver. He said he felt better and added he felt he was going mad.

The point I wish to illustrate is that the circular argument of small diameter, though it precludes the matching or correlation of two statements and is therefore sterile, is preferred to the argument in a circle of relatively wide diameter because of the risk of a matching of two ideas that is accompanied by a feeling of madness. There is implicit in this the possibility that there must be distance between the correlated statements if meaning is to be achieved. If 'madness' is feared, the operation that leads to meaning is avoided. The circular argument must therefore be of small diameter to preclude the conjunction of meaning and a feeling of madness.

By my illustration I have intended briefly to indicate the value of considering the phenomena of psychoanalysis as statements (= transformations) that can be assessed by reference to Grid categories. My contention is that accuracy of observations is increased and that they are thereby brought into closer approximation to psychoanalytic theory. The gap between the events of an analysis and their interpretation consequently becomes easier to bridge.

In conclusion I shall refer briefly to the psychoanalytic game. Suppose, in the course of reviewing some aspect of the day's work, the analyst is satisfied that the interpretations he gave were adjusted with a reasonable degree of accuracy to the needs of the material. He may compare the categories to which he has assigned the patient's statements with the categories to which he would assign his interpretations. From this he may proceed to consider the nature of the relationship between material and interpretation. But he may also arbitrarily assign either interpretations or patients' statements to some different category and attempt to work out the implications of the arbitrary categorization. For example, he can place an interpretation that he is satisfied was correct, in a Column 2 category such as D2 and then ask himself what the interpretation, correct though it may be, would be excluding. The analyst can set himself similar exercises not as a mere tax on his ingenuity but as a method of exercising and developing his capacity for intuition.

TRANSFORMATIONS: CHANGE FROM LEARNING TO GROWTH

1965

Transformations: Change from Learning to Growth was first published in 1965 by William Heinemann Medical Books, London, and reprinted in 1984 as *Transformations* by Karnac Books, London. It was included in *Seven Servants*, published in 1977 by Jason Aronson, New York.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Completing the trilogy of the epistemologically based papers published in the 1960s, *Transformations* (1965) followed on from *Learning from Experience* (1962) and *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* (1963). Although Bion had meant *Transformations* to stand alone, as it were, he expressed some regret in his introduction that his intention that the book could be read without reference to the previous two works had not been achieved.

Bion, a painter himself, begins this book with a description of a painter who sees a field of poppies and decides to paint it. The painting represents the field of poppies. Bion makes the point that for the painting to represent adequately the field of poppies something must effect the representation by remaining invariant between the two 'fields' – that of the poppies and that of the marks on the canvas perceived by the human eye. The unaltered group of elements that enables this to take place Bion calls *invariants*. Another way to put it is that the painter has rendered on the canvas elements that are *abstracted* from his perceptions of the field of poppies. In Chapter 5 Bion refers to principles of abstraction described by Bertrand Russell in the *Principles of Mathematics*. There is also a relevant passage by Russell (1992) in his Introduction to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*:

> In order that a certain sentence should assert a certain fact there must, however the language may be constructed, be something in common between the structure of the sentence and the structure of the fact. This is perhaps the most fundamental thesis of Mr Wittgenstein's theory. That which has to be in common between the sentence and the fact cannot, he contends, be itself in turn said in language. It can, in his phraseology, only be shown, not said, for whatever we may say will still need to have the same structure.

The invariant has an underlying aspect that is beyond the capacity of the representational system. This fact relates to what is perhaps the most enigmatic of Bion's conceptual tools, to which he gave the sign 'O', which he had introduced in 'The Grid' (1963; see p. 106, this volume), and then developed further in Chapter 2 of this book (p. 137)

Bion's thinking on this point is close to what Bertrand Russell stated, that the representation and the represented must exhibit the same 'logical manifold[1]' (the term used by Russell), which "cannot be itself represented since it has to be in common between the fact and the picture". On this point Wittgenstein had said, famously, "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent".

Bion uses the deliberately empty sign 'O' to point towards this unspeakable reality, which, he says, can be "intersected with" but not grasped.[2]

> It may seem perverse to judge it as revealing, especially since in fact the patient could, though extremely rarely and then only for short periods, speak coherently. *My reason lies in the experience of many sessions of which the cumulative effect was to give an* ***impression of O****. The impression was often difficult to express in words*. Sometimes it was strong, but hard for me to formulate without feeling my interpretation, even to myself, was fanciful. [emphasis added]

Tempting though it is to attach known terms to it, such as 'Ontology',[3] which seems really quite close in meaning, or 'Origin', as Bion appears to do in Chapter 2,[4] it turns out to be more helpful, ultimately, in approaching his thinking to allow it to remain undeciphered and uncompleted as one reads through the work.

It seems worth noting that Bion's annotations in his copies of Buddhist and Zen texts suggest that his O, like the concept of Tao, is not considered as a 'name' for a 'thing' that can be known: it is, instead,

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[1]In the specialized sense used by Kant: *the sum of the particulars furnished by sense before they have been unified by the synthesis of the understanding*. "By means of the synthetical unity of the manifold in intuition" (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* 1929).

[2]For a more detailed discussion of this important aspect of Bion's later work, see Volume VI, p. 215.

[3]N. Symington, personal communication, 2011.

[4]"I shall therefore assume that the material provided by the analytic session is significant for its being the patient's view (representation) of certain facts which are the origin (O) of his reaction."

a reference to the underlying natural order of existence; something "eternally nameless" with ineffable qualities that prevent it from being defined or expressed in words.

Bion discusses his theory of transformations in relation to his Grid, which he calls 'home work', and in Chapter 6 he reminds the reader of the importance of integrating Grid categories with recollections of direct experience of analytic work – by which he means, in the experience of the immediacy of the transference/countertransference relationship of intensive psychoanalysis:

> No one can understand the grid or transformations without experience of their use as part of psychoanalytic practice. . . . Although home work is not done in an atmosphere of emotional tension, grid and transformation theory are applied to the recollection of such situations. The analyst's intuition, which it is the object of these reviews to exercise and develop, is operating in contact with the tense situation. It is important to distinguish between the Grid (as it appears in my scheme) operating in tranquillity on recollections, and the Grid as part of the analyst's intuitive contact with the emotional situation itself.

The reader will notice the lack of entries in Row H of the Grid, and there are few comments in the text concerning this row. Row H is included in those problems that Bion has left without attempting an approach to their solution, as he wrote in his closing remarks to the book. The likely reason is suggested in Chapter 6, where he comments:

> . . . my analytical experience is compatible with a development that proceeds from the complete visual image to elaboration in non-visual terms; that is, from row C categories to row H, *though I have not witnessed a row H transformation*. [emphasis added]

Finally, it is worth highlighting that *Transformations* holds many interesting implications for our thinking about psychoanalytic interpretations. One is that it extends the function of interpretations beyond rendering conscious the unconscious, as stated in Chapter 10:

> For a greater part of its history it has been assumed that a psychoanalytic interpretation had as its function the rendering conscious of that which is unconscious. The relatively simple division of elements into conscious and unconscious has proved extremely fruitful, but it no longer provides a satisfactory criterion of an interpretation to regard it as either making or failing to make conscious that which is unconscious.

The other is that it expands the function of interpretation, and therefore the aim of psychoanalysis, beyond that of bringing about *insight* – a form of learning based on emotional experience and learning. In the book, Bion uses his theory of transformations, a theory that necessitates the existence of O, to consider mental growth – growth which can be real only if founded on becoming and being real, and not only *knowing about* what is real. This is reflected in the original title of the book: *Transformations: Change from Learning to Growth*.

Bion wrote that the domain of K is one in which it is sufficient to know *about* something. The significance of O to psychoanalytic method lies in the importance of an analysis furthering the shift from insight to becoming real.

Transformations

Change from Learning to Growth

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Again it is a pleasure to me to acknowledge help and criticism of this book from a number of colleagues and friends who have read it in proof.

Professor Elliott Jaques, Miss Betty Joseph, Mr Money-Kyrle and Dr H. Segal have all helped with advice and criticism. I am also indebted to Dr J. O. Wisdom[1] for many helpful criticisms of my previous work, and in particular of *Learning from Experience*, which have made me more aware of the pitfalls in this one. But whether I have avoided them is another matter. I would thank them all, but would not have them debited with my faults.

As always there remains my debt to my wife which I can acknowledge but cannot repay.

W. R. Bion

[1][John Oulton Wisdom (1908–1993), philosopher, Lecturer at the London School of Economics (1948–53), Reader (1953–65), Editor of the *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* (1952–63). *Ed.*].

INTRODUCTION

I had hoped to write this book so that it could be read independently of *Learning from Experience* and *Elements of Psycho-Analysis*, but I soon found this impossible without an intolerable degree of repetition.

The other two books are therefore still necessary for the understanding of this one. I regret this; there are some things I said before which I would now say differently. But any reader who thinks the subject is as important as I do will find it rewarding if he can think the thought through despite defects of presentation.

1

Suppose a painter sees a path through a field sown with poppies and paints it: at one end of the chain of events is the field of poppies, at the other a canvas with pigment disposed on its surface. We can recognize that the latter represents the former, so I shall suppose that despite the differences between a field of poppies and a piece of canvas, despite the transformation that the artist has effected in what he saw to make it take the form of a picture, *something* has remained unaltered and on this *something* recognition depends. The elements that go to make up the unaltered aspect of the transformation I shall call invariants.

The artist is not the only person involved in looking at a picture; recognition of what the picture represents could not occur if the observer were to rely exclusively on his sense of smell. The wider his experience of art the more likely he would be to interpret the painting correctly.

In many pictures the effectiveness of the representation would depend on perspective. A peculiar feature of this domain is that a completely circular pond, for example, might be represented by an ellipse, or a path with borders running parallel to each other might be represented by two lines that meet. Indeed the representation of pond or path would be less adequate if it were a circle or parallel lines. Accordingly we assume that in ellipse and intersecting lines, circular pond and parallel borders, is some quality that is invariant under artistic creation.

Suppose now that we view a stretch of railway line that is straight as far as the eye can see. The two lines of the track will be seen to converge. We know that if we were to test the convergence by walking up the line this convergence would not be confirmed; but, if we

were to walk far enough and to look back the way we had come, the convergence would appear to lie behind us and to be confirmed by our sense of sight; the two parallel lines meet in a point. Where then is this point?

One theory would explain the apparent meeting as an optical illusion. I propose not to accept this explanation, for in a domain in which the sense of sight only is employed correlations based on common sense[1] are not available; furthermore, the explanation, though valid in its sphere, does not promote development in the domain of this investigation.

In Euclidean geometry definitions of terms such as 'point', 'straight line' and 'circle' are so closely wedded to marks on paper and similar realizations that these definitions, which are really suggestive descriptions, serve well enough. But points and straight lines as defined in Euclidean geometry are not things-in-themselves. The mathematician has found that the extensions which his subject demands are not served by these definitions. The point and straight line have to be described by the totality of *relationships* which these objects have to other objects.[2] I shall leave on one side the problem of the extent to which the totality of relationships can be either explored or ignored.[3] The mathematician can investigate invariants common to circular object and ellipse by algebraic projective geometry. In his investigations statements about length, angles or congruence cannot find a place in the theorems of projective geometry, though they are a part of Euclidean geometry; therefore psychoanalysts need not be dismayed if it can be shown that there is no place in their theories for measurement and other entities that are a commonplace of disciplines accepted as scientific. Just as there are geometrical properties invariant under projection, and others that are not, so there are properties that are invariant under psychoanalysis and others that are not. The task is to find what are the invariants under psychoanalysis and what is the nature of their relationship to one another.

What is the relationship of the point at which parallel lines meet to the points at which lines that are not parallel meet? The railway lines

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[1]See *Learning from Experience* [Volume IV], in which I discuss the use of the term 'common sense'.

[2]The definitions of such commonplace physical substances as zinc are summaries of relationships, described as 'properties'.

[3]W. Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy* (1958, p. 82).

of my example can be seen to meet; the surveyor would not confirm the finding and nor would the neurologist. Though this problem is not of consequence to the psychoanalyst it may resemble problems which are. To them I shall now turn.

In his paper, 'Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' (1905e [1901), Freud gives a description of a patient Dora. The paper may be regarded as analogous to, but differing from, a painting, in that it is a verbal representation of an analysis; we can gain an impression of the experience as we can gain an impression of a field of poppies though the original field of poppies or the original analysis are unknown to us. There must then be something in the verbal description of the analysis that is invariant. Before the invariants in the printed description can be effective certain precedent conditions must exist; the layman must be literate. The invariants in Freud's description I shall accordingly describe as 'invariant under literacy'.

Not all laymen would understand the same thing from the printed description; therefore 'invariance under literacy' is not an adequate limitation. We must therefore consider briefly some of the problems that are involved in establishing the limitations of the field. We are introduced to some of these problems in Freud's 'Prefatory Remarks' to this paper; he points out that it can be read as a *roman à clef* designed for private delectation. The understanding of such a reader will depend on invariants under prurience and is not what Freud intends to bestow on his reader. He indicates this by his reference to the *Studies on Hysteria* [1895d] and subsequent developments of psychoanalytic technique; invariants under pornographic literature are not invariants under psychoanalysis. To use the visual arts to provide an analogy, invariants in photography are not the same as invariants in impressionist painting.

For my purpose it is convenient to regard psychoanalysis as belonging to the group of transformations. The original experience, the realization – in the instance of the painter the subject that he paints, and in the instance of the psychoanalyst the experience of analysing his patient – is *transformed* by painting in the one and analysis in the other into a painting and a psychoanalytic description respectively. The psychoanalytic interpretation given in the course of an analysis can be seen to belong to this same group of transformations. An interpretation is a transformation; to display the invariants, an experience felt and described in one way is described in another.

Freud's reference to developments that had taken place in psychoanalytic technique indicates one direction in which this inquiry must be pursued. Since psychoanalysis will continue to develop we cannot speak of invariants under psychoanalysis as if psychoanalysis were a static condition. In practice it is undesirable to discard established theories because they seem to be inadequate to particular contingencies; such a procedure would exacerbate a tendency to the facile elaboration of *ad hoc* theories at times when it were better to adhere to established discipline. It is therefore advisable to preserve a conservative attitude to widely-accepted theories even when it has become clear that some adjustment needs to be made. For my present purpose it is helpful to regard psychoanalytic theories as belonging to the category of groups of transformations, a technique analogous to that of a painter, by which the facts of an analytic experience (the realization) are transformed into an interpretation (the representation). Any interpretation belongs to the class of statements embodying invariants under one particular psychoanalytic theory; thus an interpretation could be comprehensible because of its embodiment of 'invariants under the theory of the Oedipus situation'.

The advantage of classifying psychoanalytic theories as members of groups of transformations will be discussed later (in Chapter 2), but I shall anticipate some of the main considerations here. The painter by virtue of his artistic capacity is able to transform a landscape (the realization) into a painting (the representation). He does so by virtue of invariants that make his representation comprehensible. The invariants depend on the technique he employs: thus the invariants in an impressionist painting are not the invariants of a painting by a member of, say, a realist school of painting. Similarly, the invariants in a description of a family situation by a layman will not be the same as they are in a description of the same family situation by a psychoanalyst using oedipal theory. The various psychoanalytic theories enable the psychoanalyst to effect similar transformations. Analytic theories, or groups of theories, can be combined to transform the realization into a representation or series of related representations (interpretations). The analytic theories thus associated may then be classified by their association with the type of transformation (and its associated invariants). The type of transformation will depend on the analyst and his assessment of the demands of the clinical situation. Thus an analyst may employ theories of splitting and the oedipal

theory to effect a transformation such that the invariants ensure understanding in his patient. His theories, transformation (or group of theories) and interpretation (or group of interpretations) will be analogous to the artist's techniques, transformation and end-product. Just as impressionism can be regarded as a method of transforming landscape into a painting, so the grouped analytic techniques are part of transformation of analytic experiences into interpretation. As the painter's transformations vary according to the understanding his painting is to convey, so the analyst's transformation will vary according to the understanding he wishes to convey. Kleinian transformation, associated with certain Kleinian theories, would have different invariants from those in a classical Freudian[1] transformation. Since the invariants would be different, so the meaning conveyed would be different even if the material transformed (the analytic experience or realization) could be conceived of as being the same in both instances. Similarly the painting of the same scene by a realist and an impressionist would convey different meanings. Further particularization is achieved; one Kleinian analyst's transformation, and therefore interpretation, would differ from another's. Nor would the interpretations by two impressionist painters be alike though both painters could be recognized as belonging to the same school (of transformation). For the problems of diagnosis the approach I am making may have value in that clinical entities might be defined and classified according to the transformation[2] and invariants employed.

Throughout this book I suggest a method of critical approach to psychoanalytic practice and not new psychoanalytic theories. By analogy with the artist and the mathematician I propose that the work of the psychoanalyst should be regarded as transformation of a realization (the actual psychoanalytic experience) into an interpretation or series of interpretations. Two concepts have been introduced: transformation and invariance. The book will be devoted to these concepts and their application to the problems of psychoanalytic practice. I use borrowed philosophical and other terms for psychoanalytic purposes because the meaning with which they are already invested comes near to the meaning I seek to convey. When I write

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[1]In practice I would deplore the use of terms such as 'Kleinian transformation', or 'Freudian transformation'. They are used here only to simplify exposition.

[2]Transformation is discussed in detail later. See Chapter 2.

'transformation' or 'invariance' I leave it to be understood that I am discussing psychoanalysis. What I mean by these terms will, I hope, become clearer as I use them.

Psychotic mechanisms appear in the course of a psychoanalytically controlled breakdown, but the analyst may be called upon to deal with them after such a breakdown has occurred, or, because something has happened, despite the work of the analyst, to precipitate such a breakdown during analysis. I discuss the latter contingency because the material illuminates transformation and invariance as a function of patient and analyst. The clinical description which follows is designed for reasons of discretion to be impossible to apply to any one of whom I have heard, but the reader will not be misled if he treats it as true.

The man[1] could be regarded, in view of the predominance of psychotic mechanisms and bizarre behaviour, as a borderline psychotic. Analysis seems to proceed slowly and there may be little evidence open to observers or members of the family that his behaviour is different from what it has been.

Then a change: friends or relations who have been denying that there is anything the matter cannot ignore his illness. He has been strange: he spends hours seated morosely in a chair; he appears to be hearing voices and seeing things. On this latter point there is some doubt; in the consulting room it is difficult to say if the patient is describing a delusion or indulging his fancy. In analysis he is hostile and confused. There is sudden deterioration. The alarm of relatives is evident in letters and other communications from them or the family doctor. There appears to be reason for the analyst to be alarmed, or, if he is not, to lay himself open to grave miscalculation and consequent blame.

In such a situation the common view is so pervasive that it is difficult to suppose that the analyst's anxieties and those of the relatives could be regarded profitably as anything other than rational and appropriate to the facts. Preservation of an analytic view of what is taking place is made difficult because it can fit so easily into a pattern of denial, by the analyst, of the seriousness of his predicament. In such a situation the analyst will take such steps as his experience in the management of analytic cases dictates. He will try to assess

[1]Later referred to as A.

the contribution that his own psychopathology may be making. I mention these points without discussion save for their bearing on transformation and invariance. In the material I wish to include the analyst's anxieties and, in so far as he has access to them, those of the patient's relatives and friends. The analyst's main concern must be with the material of which he has direct evidence, namely, the emotional experience of the analytic sessions themselves. It is in his approach to this that the concepts of transformation and invariance can play an illuminating role.

Change, from an analytical experience confined to the consulting room to a crisis that involves more people than the pair, is remarkable for a number of features. It is catastrophic in the restricted sense of an event producing a subversion of the order or system of things; it is catastrophic in the sense that it is accompanied by feelings of disaster in the participants; it is catastrophic in the sense that it is sudden and violent in an almost physical way. This last will depend on the degree to which analytical procedure has produced a controlled breakdown. Since, for the purposes of this description, it is easier to deal with phenomena whose characteristics are exaggerated I shall rely on the description of events pertaining to the less analytically controlled episode. It must be borne in mind, however, that the analytically controlled event is more difficult to deal with – in that the reactions being more restrained, the elements in the situation are correspondingly unobtrusive and difficult to detect. Furthermore, in the analytically controlled event the catastrophic elements bear the same relationships to other elements as katabolic features bear to anabolic features in metabolism. I shall therefore ignore complications which I do not for the present wish to introduce.

To return to my illustration, there are three features to which I wish to draw attention: subversion of the system, invariance, and violence. Analysis in the pre-catastrophic stage is to be distinguished from the post-catastrophic stage by the following superficial characteristics: it is unemotional, theoretical, and devoid of any marked outward change. Hypochondriacal symptoms are prominent. The material lends itself to interpretations based on Kleinian theories of projective identification and internal and external objects. Violence is confined to phenomena experienced by psychoanalytic insight – it is, as it were, *theoretical* violence. The patient talks as if his behaviour, outwardly amenable, was causing great destruction because of its

violence. The analyst gives interpretations, when they appear to be appropriate to the material, drawing attention to the features that are supposed by the patient to be violent.

In the post-catastrophic stage, by contrast, the violence is patent, but the ideational counterpart, previously evident, appears to be lacking. Emotion is obvious and is aroused in the analyst. Hypochondriacal elements are less obtrusive. The emotional experience does not have to be conjectured because it is apparent.

In this situation the analyst must search the material for invariants to the pre- and post-catastrophic stages. These will be found in the domain represented by the theories of projective identification, internal and external objects. Restating this in terms of clinical material, he must see, and demonstrate, that certain apparently external emotionally-charged events are in fact the same events as those which appeared in the pre-catastrophic stage under the names, bestowed by the patient, of pains in the knee, legs, abdomen, ears, etc., and, by the analyst, of internal objects. In brief, what present themselves to the outward sense of analyst and patient as anxious relatives, impending law-suits, mental hospitals, certification, and other contingencies apparently appropriate to the change in circumstances, are really hypochondriacal pains and other evidences of internal objects in a guise appropriate to their new status as external objects. These then are the invariants or the objects in which invariance is to be detected. I shall turn now to the relationship of violence to the change that has taken place from pre- to post-catastrophic.

The change is violent change, and the new phase is one in which violent feelings are violently expressed. By analogy with an explosion, the patient's state of violent emotion sets up reactions in the analyst and others related to the patient in such a way that they also tend to be dominated by their over-stimulated internal objects, thus producing a wide externalization of internal objects.[1] In practice, in the pre-catastrophic stage the violence of the emotions has to be deduced, and this is true even of the post-catastrophic stage if the breakdown is analytically controlled. Though adequate as a theory there is advantage in using an explosion and its expanding pressure-waves as a model. I shall do so.

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[1]Contrast with this state – shock, the seeping away of sanity into his own 'mental tissues'.

The catastrophic event may be described in terms of the theory of transformations: this involves regarding the transformation, implied by employing the theory of transformations, as itself belonging to the group of transformations. That is to say that I transform the *facts* I describe by regarding them in a particular way. My description is therefore a transformation, analogous to the artist's painting that is a product of the particular artist's approach. For convenience I shall call my approach here transformation 'A'.

Within this usage of the term 'transformation' there are three ways that need to be distinguished from each other. These are related to: (i) the total operation which includes the act of transforming and the end product (sign T); (ii) the process of transformation (sign T α) and (iii) the end product (sign T β).

Further distinctions are needed to minimize ambiguity. In my illustration it is possible that we shall need to discuss the lay point of view, such as that we involved in concluding that the patient is not simply a normal person being difficult, but that he is mentally disturbed. Evidently the final opinion (T β) will not be the same when the facts are viewed in the light of a belief that the patient is normal as it is when the belief is that the patient is mentally disturbed. If discussion of the lay point of view is necessary we shall need to distinguish T still further; for example, by a sign T (lay) or a sign T (lay: normal) or T (lay: mental). To illustrate this notation: if we wish to categorize the description given by relatives who think that the patient has gone mad, it is first necessary to categorize the transformation (T). In this instance it would be: T (lay: mental). This however by itself could mean all of three things: (i) the relatives' point of view, (ii) the particular processes of thought leading to the description, and (iii) the description itself. Since we are concerned only to employ a sign for the last of these, the full sign would be: T (lay) β.

In general it may be said that the cultural background against which analytic work must be done is hardly a matter with which the individual analyst can concern himself; yet the culture may concern him. In the exceptional case, notably Freud himself, psychoanalytic work has profoundly affected the social outlook. Therefore it is a matter of importance to analysts that the public image of our work is not distorted to produce a climate of opinion in which difficulties, already great, are enhanced. That image will be influenced by patients, their analysts, and the societies and groups that analysts form. In the event

of catastrophic change such as I postulate in my illustration there is a further transformation, T (public), and therefore – since we are concerned with the end product – the opinion the public has formed, T (public) β. In some instances it may be of consequence to determine the content or meaning of the realization represented by the signs T (public), T (public) α, and T (public) β.

In the catastrophic event the concern of the analyst must be with transformation manifested in the patient. In this notation the representative signs are T (patient) standing for change in his point of view and including T (patient) α, the processes by which he effects the change from the realization to T (patient) β. The end product or transformed material is what is presented to the analyst.

Finally, we come to the analyst. In general terms the analyst's point of view differs from those we have considered because it is psychoanalytic. He will observe the pre-catastrophic state and make his own description, usually embodied in interpretations. In so far as the catastrophe may affect the armoury of theories on which he relies there will be a need to represent two transformations, one pre-catastrophic and the other post-catastrophic. This change must be reflected in the sign employed for the transformation. If he makes no change the signs will be T (analyst) and this will include T (analyst) α and T (analyst) β. If there is a change we can replace 'analyst' by a sign representing the cycle of transformation, pre- and post-catastrophic.

If the reader considers the first chapter in the light of his experience he will realize that any apparent strangeness lies in the method of approach and not in the experience described. It will help understanding if he will satisfy himself before he reads further that phenomena described are already familiar to him.

2

The term 'transformation' may mislead unless the limitations of the implication of 'form' are recognized. In painting, in geometry, it is safe to think in terms of form, but I am concerned with a function of personality in the process of being represented and it may introduce errors to suppose that a function of personality has a form. In severely disturbed persons a transformation T (patient) may be a deformation. Such a patient, abandoning one transformation for another, may produce T_2 (patient) β which has no obvious resemblance to T_1 (patient) β. Suppose that T_2 (patient) β is a shapeless lump, the term 'deformation' is not likely to mislead. But if T_2 (patient) α is the patient's experience of being greeted by the analyst, and T_2 (patient) β is the patient's representation of the event as a hostile attack made on him by the doctor, it may seriously obstruct understanding of what has taken place in the mind of the patient to suppose that either T_2 or T_2 β have, or are, forms.

The Grid in *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* [see p. vii] affords a method of escape from the implications of 'form' through resort to signs for abstract categories (the various grid compartments) to represent the content of T_2 α and T_2 β. A sign to represent the realization would denote, to take the example in Chapter 1, the landscape as a thing-in-itself, and therefore distinguish it from both T_2 α and T_2 β. The sign would denote something that is not a mental phenomenon and therefore, like Kant's thing-in-itself to make clear the status of T_2 α and T_2 β as signs for mental phenomena.

The use of these signs may be clarified by an illustration: The patient enters and, following a convention established in the analysis, shakes hands. This is an external fact, what I have called a 'realization'. In so far as it is useful to regard it as a thing-in-itself

and unknowable (in Kant's sense) it is denoted by the sign O. The phenomenon, corresponding to the external fact, as it exists in the mind of the patient, is represented by the sign T (patient) α. This sign I mean to replace by a grid category. The grid category is determined by picking on that category to which my clinical observation of the patient's behaviour seems most closely to approximate. Suppose the handshake is intended as a denial of hostility that the patient experienced in a dream about me. His action would then fall in a category in column 2 and row C. The sign then would be C2.

The associations following this start to the session would have yielded the evidence for choosing the sign C2. In addition I expect to find evidence on which to determine the category in which I shall place the representation that has resulted from his transformation, T, of the episode, O (thing-in-itself), to T (patient) α and thence to T (patient) β – this last being the representation, his representation, of the episode. This sign T (patient) β I shall now replace, as I have already done with T (patient) α, by a grid category. Once more the grid category must be determined by assessment of the associations. Suppose the evidence suggests that the patient's experience is that my handshake was a sexual assault on him. The context shows me that this approximates to a definitory hypothesis; I expect accordingly to find the category in column 1. If, from my knowledge of him, I am convinced that the patient is not experiencing this as a thought or idea or even as a dream, but as an actual fact, I assess the category to lie in row A – the β-elements. The category with which I replace T (patient) β is A1.

Using the facts (of my illustration) to achieve a formulation in terms of a theory of transformations, I arrive at the following: the total analytical experience is being interpreted as belonging to the group of transformations, denoted by the sign T. The experience (thing-in-itself) I denote by sign O. The patient's impression, T (patient) α, is replaced by grid category C2. The patient's representation, a resultant of the transformation he has effected, T (patient) β, is replaced by grid category A1. Since we have not yet come to a decision about the nature of the process of transformation it is convenient to employ a sign showing that the abstraction represented by T is unsaturated.

The emotional experience of my illustration, as I have described it verbally, can be represented in the form of an equation as follows: $T = C2 \rightarrow A1$.

This formulation can be regarded as analogous to a model: a man observing that certain elements are constantly conjoined, binds the conjunction by using a sign, say the term 'dog'. Once the elements observed to be constantly conjoined are bound by the term 'dog', the person thus binding them can set about discovering what meaning is to be attributed to the term 'dog'.[1] By analogy, we, having bound the constantly conjoined elements of the analytic experience by the formulation T (ξ) = C2 → A1, may now resort to further analytical experience for evidence which will provide us with meaning: in other terms, to saturate the unsaturated element (ξ); or, again, to put it in another way, we hope to find evidence from analysis for a more precise understanding of this particular patient's transformation. The investigation of this and other analytical experience should in time enable us to see different types of transformation and perhaps to arrive at some classification of the different sets of transformation which together make up the group of transformations.

In practice this means that if a patient is encountered with whom the analyst has experiences of which my illustration is typical, the analyst should be able to distinguish phenomena of the type C2 → A1. This would enable him to formulate characteristics of T implying the existence of sets of T. It may help to clarify my meaning if I anticipate the findings of our investigation by provisional formulation of what such sets of transformation might be. Further it will serve the purpose of setting bounds to the area in which we search for clinically based theories of transformations. I therefore propose provisional hypotheses as an apparatus for further inquiry.[2] They are to be replaced by formulations to which the realization of psychoanalytic practice more closely approximates.

I assume that mental disorders fall into one of two categories, neuroses and psychoses, and ignoring existing criteria used to distinguish one category from the other I shall attempt to distinguish them on the basis of the theory of transformations. I shall therefore assume that the material provided by the analytic session is significant for its being the patient's view (representation) of certain facts which are the origin (O) of his reaction.

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[1]An analogical counterpart can be seen in the group: if I succeed in binding a constant conjunction by writing this book the group can take over the task of discovering what it means.

[2]In fact another instance of binding – this time by provisional hypotheses.

In practice this means that I shall regard only those aspects of the patient's behaviour which are significant as representing his view of O; I shall understand what he says or does as if it were an artist's painting. In the session the facts of his behaviour are like the facts of a painting and from them I must find the nature of his representation (or, in terms of my notation, the nature of that which I denote by the sign T (patient) β). From the analytic treatment as a whole I hope to discover from the invariants in this material what O is, what he *does* to transform O (that is to say, the nature of T (patient) α) and, consequently, the nature of T (patient). This last point is the *set* of transformations, in the group of transformations, to which his particular transformation (T (patient)) is to be assigned. As I am concerned with the *nature* (or, in other words, meaning) of these phenomena, my problem is to determine the relationship between three unknowns: T (patient), T (patient) α, and T (patient) β. Only in the last of these have I any *facts* on which to work.

I shall call on clinical experience to illustrate the next stage in this investigation. The patient[1], a man of 40, married, with one son, whose childhood was spent in a well-to-do professional family of father and mother with three older brothers, had complained of insomnia. The occasion was the last session before a weekend, and he commenced it by saying he had dreamt that a tiger and a bear were fighting. He felt dreadfully frightened lest the animals in their ferocious maulings would stumble across him and kill him. He woke in dread with a shout ringing in his ears. It was his own shout. The dream reminded him of a story by a famous big game shot; he could not remember the name of the man. The tiger who was very well known to be the fiercest of animals was driven off its kill by a bear. But the bear had its nose bitten off. It made him shudder to think of it. (Here he screwed up his face and shuddered.) He could not think of any more. He went on after a pause: the girl he was once engaged to for a year had broken off the engagement because she wanted to be free to flirt with other men. It still made his blood boil. Pepper was the man she married. He was very fond of pepper himself. Pepper was hot stuff with the girls. So unlike himself who was always afraid of them. With his wife it was different, but she was dull. At this point he became confused and I omit the rest of the session.

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[1]Referred to earlier as A.

I have chosen this illustration because it lends itself easily to interpretation. The reader can see that the stimulus of the week-end break might be the trigger for the dream and its associations. There is no lack of analytic theories that might be appropriate and with the knowledge of the patient I had – he had been in analysis with me for two years – I was able to narrow choice of interpretations to two or three. But even two or three interpretations can be an embarrassment when one only is wanted and that one correct in the context in which it is given. I am therefore ignoring here, and throughout this book, any discussion of psychoanalytic theories. I am however concerned with theories of psychoanalytic observation, and the theory of transformations, the application of which I am here illustrating, is one of them. Can this theory be applied to bridge the gap between psychoanalytic preconceptions[1], and the facts as they emerge in the session?

First I shall apply the theory to my own account of the session: something occurred during the session – the absolute facts of the session. What the absolute facts are cannot ever be known, and these I denote by the sign O. My description is of the facts as they appear *now* to have been at the time they took place: it is a description of phenomena and the description can be represented, in conformity with the theory of transformations, by the sign T (analyst) β. My mental processes, by which the phenomena were transformed to become the description I have given (T (analyst) β) are represented by the sign T (analyst) α. Since I may want to talk about them even if I do not know what they are, it is convenient to be able to refer to them by the sign T (analyst) α.

I shall not discuss T (analyst) α or T (analyst) β, except to point out that the session is the stimulus for discussion and can therefore be represented by O, and my description of it by T (analyst) β. As the patient is to be discussed we shall be concerned with a different O, call it O (patient), and T (patient) α and T (patient) β. To discuss O (patient) I shall represent the phenomena, to which he reacted by T (patient) α and T (patient) β, as T (patient).

The first question is, what is O (patient), or, to express it in more conversational terms, what was the patient talking *about*? One

[1]The grid category of 'psychoanalytic pre-conceptions' as I use the term here is F4, not D4 or 5, because I use the term 'pre-conception' to denote 'use', not 'genesis'.

answer is that he was talking about the week-end break. Let us examine this.

Such a solution cannot be arrived at by any ordinary view of his statements. To re-state question and answer in terms of transformation theory: O (analyst), the patient's statements, have been transformed by me, my mental processes being represented by T (analyst) α, to form a view, T (analyst) β, from which I deduce that T (patient) = the week-end break. Or rather that I have assumed that a week-end break, O, exists, and that the phenomena associated with O by the patient is something I denote by T (patient). In some circumstances it may be adequate to say that the patient was talking about the week-end break. It may be adequate to say this in an analysis. But, as analysts know, such a statement will not provide an answer that is adequate to all breaks in analysis. The question itself lacks precision and is yet overloaded with meaning. In discarding the conversational expression for something more precise but less encumbered with meaning, for example, T (patient), and then falling back on the analytical experience and procedure to invest it with meaning, lies the justification for 'naming'. Analytically trained intuition makes it possible to say the patient is talking about the primal scene, and from the development of associations to add shades of meaning to fill out understanding of what is taking place. I have chosen this session because, although the reader has not the emotional experience itself, he will be able to make deductions from the material that will serve for understanding this that I am saying without my own deductions. I shall proceed on the assumption that the reader will draw his own conclusions and from them see in what way his view of the session might be enhanced by a theory of transformations.

I shall now consider the state of mind in the patient which makes him see the week-end break as he does, that is, the *process* of transformation T (patient) α. By what mental processes does the patient come to experience the week-end break as an object of fear? What, when he contemplates the week-end break, does he see? In other words, what meaning are we to ascribe to T (patient) β? The material should show both what he sees and how he comes to see it as he does, the process of transformation and the product of that process.

I shall propound my views in general terms known to every analyst. As far as the process is concerned I assume that transference plays a predominant role and that the end-product, T (patient)

β, is what an analyst would call a transference neurosis. The aspect of transference important in transformation is that which Freud[1] described as a tendency "to repeat as a current experience what is repressed" instead of recollecting it as a fragment of the past. He goes on to say, "This reproduction appearing with un-welcome fidelity always contains a fragment of the infantile sex life, therefore of the Oedipus complex and its off-shoots, and is played regularly in the sphere of transference, i.e. the relationship to the physician." It is this "unwelcome fidelity" that helps to make the term 'transference' so appropriate. At its worst the fidelity of the reproduction tends to betray the analyst into interpretations that have a repetitive quality seeming to suggest that what the patient says about someone else applies almost unchanged to what he thinks and feels about the analyst. Though such interpretations are a parody of what transference interpretations should be they contain a germ of truth. The feelings and ideas appropriate to infantile sexuality and the Oedipus complex and its off-shoots are *transferred*, with a wholeness and coherence that is characteristic, to the relationship with the analyst. This transformation involves little deformation: the term 'transference', as Freud used it, implies a model of movement of feelings and ideas from one sphere of applicability to another. I propose therefore to describe this set of transformations as 'rigid motions'. The invariance of rigid motion must be contrasted with invariance peculiar to projective transformations.

In the clinical illustration I said the patient became confused; I shall use an instance of the type of confusion he displayed for an illustration of a session for this chapter, but it will be from a different patient[2] and will be more intense. Here it is:

The patient came in, but, though he had been attending for years, seemed uncertain what to do. "Good morning, good morning, good morning. It must mean afternoon really. I don't expect anything can be expected today: this morning, I mean. This afternoon. It must be a joke of some kind. This girl left about her knickers. Well, what do you say to that? It's probably quite wrong, of course, but, well, I mean, what do you think?" He walked to the couch and lay down, bumping his shoulders down hard on the couch. "I'm slightly anxious . . .

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[1]S. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920g), p. 18.

[2]Referred to later as B.

I think. The pain has come back in my knee. You'll probably say it was the girl. After all. This picture is probably not very good as I told him but I should not have said anything about it. Mrs X. . . . thought I ought to go to Durham to see about, but then" and so on. I cannot do justice to the episode because I remember only the general impression, and the general impression – depending on changes of tone expressing depression, fear, anxiety, confidentiality, and others – was itself intended to give a general impression.[1] The short report is verbally nearly correct; yet as I read it again I see it is a misleading record of the experience. I shall therefore make another attempt to describe this fragment of session but without attempting verbal exactitude.

After his pause of uncertainty he whispered his good mornings as if he were pre-occupied with an object he had lost but expected to find close at hand. He corrected himself in a tone that might imply a mental aberration that had led him to think it "good morning". The speaker of the words "good morning", I gathered, was not really the patient, but someone whose manner he caricatured. Then came the comment that nothing could be expected. That was clear enough, but who was making the comment, or of whom nothing could be expected, was obscure. It might have been myself; I did not think it was the patient. Then he spoke of the joke. The way this term was used implied that the joke had no tincture of humour about it. To me it could mean a cruel joke, but such an interpretation depended on an assumption that the words retained the meaning that they would have in sane conversation and that the emotion expressed, by and with them, had the value that it would have in ordinary speech. When he spoke of "this" girl it was evident that I was supposed to know her; in fact I did not nor did I know whether she had left her knickers lying about or given notice on account of some episode connected with her knickers. "What do you say to that?" meant that in either case I would know as well as he did what her behaviour signified, though, as his next sentence showed, the significance (unmentioned) attached to her behaviour by both of us was probably mistaken, girls being what they are.

When he lay on the couch he did so as if trying to express surreptitiously his wish to damage my property. I thought his next comment compatible with this surmise in that it might mean that, being

[1]See Chapter 1.

confused with me and yet detached from both of us, he hazarded a guess that I was anxious at his violence, that I supposed him to be anxious and not aggressive, that he thought the feelings he experienced were what I would call anxiety. His reference to the pain in his knee was typical of certain very rare statements in that it meant "The pain in my knee, which I now experience, is what you as analyst think is really the girl inside me." Such a statement meant that despite evidence to the contrary he had knowledge of my analytic theories and that he was now having an experience which I would explain by that particular theory. It might mean that he wished me to know what experiences he was having and that the correct interpretation could be arrived at through the theory of internal objects. Such interpretations were rare but previous experience had convinced me that they occurred and had the significance I have attributed to this one. But the flatness of tone, the tortuosity of the communication and the ambiguity made it probable that I would either fail to grasp the latent meaning, or, in searching for some such meaning, would fail to notice the almost obvious sense.

His "after all" is typical; it is meaningless, but can act as a stimulus to speculation. Subsequent remarks meant that what had been taking place in the session was a pictorial representation, an externalization of a visual image, not likely to be regarded by me as good and therefore evacuated by me with such force that this fragment of his personality would be projected as far away from me as Durham is from London.

It will be observed that this, my second account of the episode, contains a very high proportion of speculation. The speculations depend on my theoretical pre-conceptions. In addition to classical analytical theory I have had in mind Kleinian theories of splitting and projective identification. I expected to find that some part of the confusion would be illuminated by applying the theory of projective identification to the patient's inability to distinguish between himself and myself. I also assumed that experience of hallucinations, as I have described them in my paper, 'On Hallucination',[1] would stand me in good stead. But beyond preserving an awareness of such a background of theory I allowed myself to be as open to clinical impressions as possible. I have already indicated what some of these

[1][Chapter 6 in *Second Thoughts*, in Volume VI, p. 112. *Ed.*]

impressions were. The experience, as usual, was one of stimulation and frustration. The sense of being at a loss, which will be apparent to the reader, is not quite so profound in the consulting room as the written account makes it appear, because the clinical experience affords a mass of detail that cannot be communicated in print; even though it is grasped imperfectly it is sure to make an impact. Yet an account that contains so much speculation about so little fact must be unsatisfactory to a scientist. To what extent is the patient's communication the most direct and informative instrument he can employ, obscure though it may appear? Is its obscurity due to the difficulty of the matter of the problem for which he seeks help, or is it due to his need to conceal? The analyst's task is to distinguish one from the other. In terms of T, it is necessary to determine whether T (patient) β is characterized primarily by the need to conceal O, or by the need to give as direct a representation of O as possible in view of its obscurity to him; in the illustration I have given the characteristic of T (patient) β is revelatory rather than obscuring.

It may seem perverse to judge it as revealing, especially since in fact the patient could, though extremely rarely and then only for short periods, speak coherently. My reason lies in the experience of many sessions of which the cumulative effect was to give an impression of O. The impression was often difficult to express in words. Sometimes it was strong, but hard for me to formulate without feeling my interpretation, even to myself, was fanciful. At other times I was satisfied that my formulation was a correct translation into words and that it was a valuable communication; such occasions made interpretations to the patient likely to be analytically sound. The decision that the communication is revelatory must depend on the strength of the impression received by the analyst, and this weighed against the fact that the patient appears to choose an obscure method of communication. Later I shall consider the possibility of classifying the types of communication[1] T (patient) β, as well as the process of communication T (patient) α. In my next chapter I shall discuss the illustration in terms of the theory of transformation.

[1]See Chapter 5.

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The clinical illustration of Chapter 2 made a distinction between the patient's experience O and the analyst's experience O. When the stimulating experience is the analytic session itself, O is the same for patient and analyst and the distinction has to be made between the processes by which the patient transforms his experience to achieve his representation of it and the processes by which the analyst does so; similarly between the patient's representation and the analyst's between T (patient) α and T (analyst) α, between T (patient) β and T (analyst) β. I shall abbreviate these signs further to Tp α and Ta α, Tp β and Ta β.

The experiences illustrated in Chapter 2 differ, but the illustrations may not display these differences adequately. The inadequacy lies in notation for the presentation of psychoanalytic phenomena with the precision required.

B has an emotional background which I believe to be typical, though this will need confirmation. From the first, it was evident that the resources of psychoanalysis might prove inadequate to the demands of such a patient. In terms of time and money alone treatment would be costly. Patience and a capacity for taking risks were also soon seen to be necessary. It was only necessary for the patient to feel that one demand was satisfied for him to make it the prelude for further exactions; this attitude pervaded all aspects of relationship with me and apparently with life at large. Typical of the development of awareness of a situation to a point at which I could venture on a verbal impression of it, was the fact that awareness grew gradually so that it was difficult to say, when an aspect had been clarified, what material, in the immediate circumstances, was sufficient to sustain the burden of interpretation I wished to lay on it. An interpretation

therefore appeared to lack the scientific quality that is conferred by supporting evidence. I have drawn attention to the high degree of speculation in my second description of B. A series of such doubts sprang naturally from the fact, obvious at the outset, and therefore of slight significance in the immediate analytic setting, that any collaboration, and particularly an analytic one, with such a patient would be unrewarding and even dangerous. Such premonitions have two mainsprings: the first from the analysis itself, which is so transformed that the intention that the analytic association should be healing and rewarding is frustrated by actions intended to wound; the second from perceptions of the patient's material as it coheres to form his representation of O. This first transformation is analogous to that of the landscape gardener who works to transform the landscape itself; the second transformation is analogous to that of the painter who transforms the landscape into a painting. It is doubtful whether the transformation of the analysis into something wounding[1] should be included amongst transformations in the sense in which I have used the term so far. The state of mind in which such behaviour is dominant may be described as the patient studying the interpretations he receives (Ta β). The object of his study is to arrive at action by which he may destroy psychoanalysis. It is a necessary part of the process to arrive by Tp α at Tp β as a prelude to destructive activities, but the transformation does not require special categorization because of the end it is to serve. The danger that the colloquial sense of a 'transformation of the analysis' will infect the meaning I wish to reserve for the theory of transformation is one against which I wish to guard by using the sign T. The 'transformation of the analysis' refers to a change of 'uses' as set out on the horizontal axis of the Grid.[2] The subject is one to which I shall return after investigating illustration B.

I shall make three assumptions: (i) that the patient is talking about something (O); (ii) that something, O, has impressed him and that he has transformed the impression by the process represented by Tp α, and (iii) that his representation Tp β is comprehensible.

According to the theory of transformations the emotional experience gives the analyst the opportunity of deciding whether he is faced

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[1]The transformation into action approximates to grid category A6.

[2]See *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* [this volume], where the grid system is more fully discussed.

by evidence for Tp (the impression of O gained by the patient), Tp α, or Tp β. Ideally the analyst should be in the state of mind presented by C3, C4, C5 and D3, D4, D5, with the exception of moments when he intends to give an interpretation. In fact, this is unlikely because the patient's attacks on his state of mind can be incessant and, in my experience, not infrequently successful.[1] Attacks may be generalized and depend for their force on the patient's capacity for being a liability in any situation in which he finds himself. Or they may be given particularity by the evocative use of sundry words such as "police . . . what are you doing?" "My uncle . . . I am saying 'madness' for some reason", and so on, depending on material that has been presented at various times during the analysis. I ignore distraction produced by counter-transference as I have nothing to add to what is already known about it or the methods of dealing with it.

The problem of classifying the material is complicated because it contains elements of all three: Tp, Tp α, and Tp β. It is a matter of consequence because the decision depends on what is most convenient for the analyst.[2] If it seems the best approach to interpretation to narrow scrutiny (say C4 and D4) to those aspects of the material that are expressions of Tp β the analyst should adjust accordingly. The problem is to reformulate Tp β in conversational, but precise, English. This aim is to produce statements that could be appropriately categorized by the grid category F, or G1. That is to express a definitory hypothesis. In my second version of B, sundry speculative statements cannot be classified as F1 or G1, for that implies too great a degree of scientific sophistication. I suggest the category C1.

Suppose the approach to be fruitful: this would mean that I was gaining an impression of the patient's picture of some event – O. What, then, is Op?

At this point defects in this approach obtrude because the nature of the speculations indicates that the differences of B from A are such that the signs Ta and p, Ta and pα, Ta and pβ are insufficient. Their inadequacy derives from the fact that the combined operation by patient and analyst receives an accession of emotion from the confusion, in the patient's mind, between himself and the analyst. I shall

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[1]See Chapter 5, p. 174.

[2]And the decision the analyst makes is to identify with a particular vertex: see Chapter 6.

anticipate by marking the difference between the transformation of A with that in B by calling the former a Rigid and the latter a Projective Transformation.

A patient[1] was speaking of problems in his office. But for certain peculiarities which I shall come to in a moment, his account seemed to be realistic, coherent and rational. The peculiarities lay in his response to interpretations. When I referred to something he had just said, a row with his secretary, for example, he would reply blankly "What row?" as if the topic were strange to him. On these occasions there seemed to be nothing that I could say that did not have the effect of leading him away from the theme of his communication and destroying the coherence of the material. About half of the session was employed in this way and the mood was not replaced by another till I had given a number of interpretations to the effect that his questions showed that the thread in his apparently coherent account was precariously maintained. Every sentence was a series of tenuously connected splits so that if I drew attention to something he mentioned at the beginning of a sentence he had forgotten it by the time he had reached the end; interpretation was made meaningless. My interpretation was based on the assumption that the episode approximated to the Kleinian theory that an attack was being delivered against analytic potency by means of splitting which had the incidental effect of splitting him. Judged by the change of mood and the associated developments, the interpretation appeared to have been correct.

Assumption of hostility depended less on the matter of his communication than on the manner, and particularly on the peculiarities stressed here. Once the assumption of hostility was made it became possible to see the analytic significance of the matter he was communicating. The problem depends for its solution on observation of the patient's behaviour over a relatively short period, and contrasts with the problem of hostility spread out over a long period and expressed in episodes of short duration. The individual episode is easier to deal with than the totality of episodes. In so far as they are dealt with they contribute to the solution of the whole, yet the problem of the whole comprises far more than the sum of the parts. I shall illustrate this by a situation that is built up over, and endures for, years. In the last chapter I pointed out that with some patients any association is unrewarding

[1]Referred to later as C.

to both associates; this applies to the class of patient to which the one of whom I am writing belonged. Consequently such analysis brings about a progressive discrediting of patient, analyst and psychoanalysis in the eyes of all who know the case socially. Together with this, and essential to it, is arduous and devoted effort, directed towards both attendance and work in the session itself. The essential feature is stimulation and frustration of hope, and work that is fruitless except in discrediting analyst and patient. Destructive activity is balanced by enough success to deny the patient fulfilment of his destructiveness. A helpful summary of such a case is to describe it as 'chronic' murder of patient and analyst, or, an instance of parasitism; the main features are dependence of the patient, the parasite, on analyst and the associated group, or family, or wider social group. The patient draws on the love, benevolence, indulgence of the host to extract the knowledge and power which enables him to poison the association and destroy the indulgence on which he depends for his existence.

I could give instances, such as example C, which are essential to the production of this result but which are none of them individually of obvious consequence; that aspect is apparent only when they are repeated and then only if seen to form part of a coherent whole. A total view is possible for the analyst; the problem, in face of constant splitting and projective identification, is how to make it clear to the patient. The theory of transformations affords an approach to a solution in the following way.

First, the problem needs to be stated in terms of the theory. I have at my disposal the following signs: 'Invariants', 'O', 'T', 'Tp α', 'Ta α', 'Tp β', 'Ta β'. Preceding chapters have indicated the universe of discourse to which they are intended to apply and the domain of that discourse to which each term is assigned. To that extent each sign may be said to represent a meaning. The status of the meaning represented by each sign is indicated by grid category C4; that is to say that the genetic stage of thought is that of dream or myth – the pejorative philosophical expression for a doubtful theory as a mythology – and column 4 that it is to be used to focus attention on appropriate facets[1] of material.

In practice the next development would be dictated by the experience of the session; according to the form taken by it one or more of

[1]See vertices, Chapter 6.

the signs would become invested with meaning. Reliance on clinical observation for accretion of meanings is central to the use of the theory of transformations. But in this theoretical discussion we may substitute an inquiry into the meaning to be sought for any sign, for the stimulus which would in practice be supplied by the material; no significance is to be attached to the choice I make other than the convenience of exposition.

I shall commence with Op and Oa. The advantage of this is that the facts are limited to the experience shared by patient and analyst. I shall reduce O to the simplest terms by considering first the facts known to the analyst, Oa. With modifications appropriate to the individual Oa may be said to consist of the following components: two people, patient and analyst, together in conditions of privacy. The furniture of the room, remaining unchanged, should be quite familiar to the analyst. The same should be true of features such as the usual sounds of the household and neighbourhood. The familiarity of the surroundings may blind the analyst to the possible significance of them for the patient and he must be on his guard against this. This completes, in general terms, the constant features.

Amongst changing features must be listed absence of patient or analyst, or, notably during breaks, of analyst and patient. To these must be added changes in time-table and others likely to be significant. *All* change is a component of O, but one is constant, namely that which flows from the passage of time.

The personality of the analyst is recognized as a feature of the analytic situation, but he may not attach enough importance to the strength and weakness of aspects of his personality that are relatively unrelated to psychopathology and have to be learned from experiences other than those of his own analysis.

O, subjected to Ta α, eventuates in Ta β, the analyst's view of himself and extensions of his personality.

Turning to the patient, we find that some features of Oa and Op intersect to give Oa and p. Patients vary in what they include in O. In the group of projective transformations, events far removed from any relationship to the analyst are actually regarded as aspects of the analyst's personality. Thus a patient reported angrily that the milkman had called. The patient was angry with me and went into a sulk. For about five minutes he would not talk, but then began to complain about the noise. I knew he was referring to a boy who was

whistling cheerfully in the street. I was certain that the milkman had called and that the patient made no distinction between the milkman and myself; conversely, my presence in the consulting room was not distinguished from the milkman's call; this phenomenon differs from transference. A patient might use the milkman's visit to express emotions arising in his relationship with me and it could be interpreted accordingly. That transformation belongs to the set of rigid motions. In this illustration the interpretation might be couched in terms suitable for a transference interpretation and it would probably still be effective. But the difference between rigid motion and projective transformation on other occasions might be important. The importance lies in the fact that the patient believes that the 'milkman me' did in fact visit his house and that this same 'milkman me' has just appeared to him. If I do not seem to know about the milkman's visit it makes the patient feel I cannot be aware of my behaviour and am therefore not responsible for my actions – that I am, in short, 'mad'. Contrasting this with a session where I have to deal with his reactions, say to my absence during a weekend, in the latter instance I know what he is talking about, what Op is, but on other occasions I am confronted with his reaction to Op without knowing what Op might have been – though I can always attempt to guess.

It does not meet the case to suppose that Op, as I am describing it here, is a manifestation of transference, for the term 'transference' should be reserved for the description of the response to a stimulus – whereas I am concerned to delineate the stimulus. Op, in projective transformations, must not be regarded as identical with Op in rigid motion transformations. The necessity for establishing the nature of the difference springs from the exigencies of psychoanalytic practice. When I assigned O to denote the reality, the impressions of which the individual submits to the process T α, I had in mind what Kant describes as the unknowable thing-in-itself. Ta β or Tp β denotes the analyst's or patient's representation of what is a private communication understood only by the individual whose processes have effected the transformation. They are thus denoting a representation that is related to what Kant describes as a primary process. If patient and analyst agree on an interpretation the interpretation can be correctly denoted by the sign Tp and Ta β. Since this is shared by two people it is no longer a private communication but has become public. In this respect it is related to what Kant describes as a secondary quality and

is by way of qualifying for recognition as common-sense, as I have defined that expression in *Learning from Experience*.

In rigid motion transformations the invariants establish the relationship with O. But in projective transformations the differences between Op and Oa do not permit of a process of arguing back from Tp and Ta β to Op and Oa as can be done in rigid motion transformations. The crux lies in the nature of Op in projective transformation. Op is apparently the stimulus; yet it has qualities which seem to be appropriate to Kant's primary quality. The difficulty becomes less formidable if Op in projective transformation is a psychic reality and has the same capacity for initiating a train of mental events as is possessed by an event of external reality such as a break in the routine of sessions. A feeling of dread might be such an internal psychic reality.

The artist stimulates a reaction in his public by his representation of the subject of his painting. Recognition that a painting depicts a field of poppies depends on invariants common to the original landscape and the representation, to O and T β. Such an invariant might be that which stimulated, in landscape and painting, the impression of redness. A transformation dependent on a 'red-to-red' invariant would not be likely to produce the effect achieved by the 'great' artist who produces a 'great' painting. The problem is the transformation that issues in an end-product, T β, which communicates an *emotional* experience, such as the artist intends to produce, in the greatest number of the people in whom he intends to produce it. The components of T β in this class of transformation are: emotional experience, precision of communication, universality and durability.

The psychoanalyst tries to help the patient to transform that part of an emotional experience of which he is unconscious into an emotional experience of which he is conscious. If he does this he helps the patient to achieve private knowledge. But since scientific work demands communication of discovery to other workers the psychoanalyst must transform *his* private experience of psychoanalysis so that it becomes a public experience. The artist is used here as a model intended to indicate that the criteria for a psychoanalytic paper are that it should stimulate in the reader the emotional experience that the writer intends, that its power to stimulate should be durable, and that the emotional experience thus stimulated should be an accurate representation of the psychoanalytic experience (Oa) that stimulated the writer in the first place.

It will be observed that in model and psychoanalytic experience the following parallels exist: landscape and psychoanalytic experience, painting and scientific paper, emotions stimulated by landscape and analytic session, emotions represented by painting and scientific paper. We may regard the transformation as extending beyond the limits I have imposed if we consider the progression from O to T β as a link in the progression from O to the emotional state stimulated by T β in the observer of the painting, or the reader of the paper. If the emotion stimulated in the recipient of the communication is a *representation* of the emotion stimulated by O in the artist we may regard the artist's intervention in the chain of events as one that does not stop at the disposal of patterns of pigment on canvas, but extends to the emotional state evoked in the individual, or group, and to giving durability to the power to evoke emotion.[1] The sign T can be made to denote either canvas, or paper, or the emotional state of the recipient of the communication. Our model serves psychoanalytic needs better if T β denotes the emotional state stimulated in the recipient and T represents the emotional state, stimulated in the analyst by O, which Ta α is to transform. The same value must be given to each sign throughout any given universe of discourse; if the universe of discourse is transformation in the domain of emotion, T β, for example, must not at one moment denote canvas and pigment and at another the emotional state of the recipient of the communication.

To bring the discussion into closer approximation to the needs of psychoanalysis – no one can ever know what happens in the analytic session, the thing-in-itself, O; we can only speak of what the analyst or patient *feels* happens, his emotional experience, that which I denote by T. We know what the participants *say* happens, or the emotional state engendered by the verbalization of analyst or patient in the listener. By analogy with the model we must decide whether to use T β to denote (a) the verbalization (association or interpretation) or (b) the emotional state *produced* by the association or interpretation.[2] Similarly we must decide whether the significance of the association

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[1]The theme of "Vixere fortes ante Agammemnona multi . . ." (Horace, Odes, Bk. IV, 9).

[2]Strictly speaking the interpretation draws attention to an existing emotional state; but it produces the emotional state of awareness of an emotional state. In fact the decision depends on whether we think the analyst or patient works in words or in emotions.

or interpretation lies in its being an emotional response to O or in its intention to evoke or represent an emotional response. If it is the former, then it belongs to the category represented by T. If T, then it is necessary to know whether it is significant because it *is* the emotional response or merely represents it. The model of the artist retains its value, but it may become misleading and lead into paths that are irrelevant; the signs may lack specificity or tend to a proliferation that obscures rather than illuminates. I shall retain both model and signs until something better becomes possible.

To forestall misgivings and criticisms which may have an insidious appeal for the psychoanalyst: a book on psychoanalysis in which the first chapters contain no substantial reference to sexuality, conflict, anxiety, or Oedipus situation, may seem irrelevant, or of specialized interest and minor consequence. In fact, if the matters I am discussing are regarded as seriously as I think they should be, it becomes possible for the analyst to have a firm and durable grasp of the reality of the analytic experience and the theories to which it approximates. The theory of transformations and its development does not relate to the main body of psychoanalytic theory, but to the practice of psychoanalytic *observation*. Psychoanalytic theories, patient's or analyst's statements are representations of an emotional experience. If we can understand the process of representation it helps us to understand the representation and what is being represented. The theory of transformations is intended to illuminate a chain of phenomena in which the understanding of one link, or aspect of it, helps in the understanding of others. The emphasis of this inquiry is on the nature of the transformation in a psychoanalytic session.

T β may be expressed through the medium of speech. Psychoanalysts agree that correct analysis demands that the analyst's interpretation should formulate what the patient's behaviour reveals; conversely, that the analyst's judgement should be embodied in an interpretation[1]1 and not in an emotional discharge (e.g. countertransference or acting out). To this we may add provisionally that his contribution may be regarded as embodied in the change in the patient's emotional state.

I shall not discuss transformation in scientific communications except to illustrate transformation in analytic practice.

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[1]F1, 3, 4.

The analyst conducting a session must decide instinctively the nature of the communication that the patient is making. I suggested, in *Elements of Psycho-Analysis*, a method of classification to aid in developing capacity for such instinctive decisions and have embodied it in the Grid. If exigencies of the analysis demand emphasis on the growth of the patient's thought the analyst's attention will dwell mainly on the row that determines the category – the vertical axis. If emphasis is on the use that the patient is making of his communication the analyst's attention will be directed to the horizontal component. The content of the communication, so important in analysis, will be touched on only incidentally in the discussion of transformations; it will depend on O as deduced from the material in the light of the psychoanalyst's theoretical pre-conceptions. Thus, if the content is oedipal material I do not concern myself with this but with the transformation it has undergone, the stage of growth it reveals, and the use to which its communication is being put. This exclusion of content is artificial, to simplify exposition, and cannot be made in practice.

Since I shall refer to phenomena related to Melanie Klein's theories of projective identification, transition from paranoid-schizoid to depressive positions, and *vice versa*, it may seem that I am concerned primarily with psychotic personalities, but this is not so. These mechanisms are operative in neuroses and psychoses alike. But their investigation is a prime consideration in psychotic disorder, secondary in neuroses. This has been discussed further after elaboration of the theory of transformations[1] has shown the possibility of making a fresh distinction between neurosis and psychosis.

To review briefly the points made in this chapter: we must be prepared to find the model of the painter misleading though still useful. The theory of transformations is to be developed, not as an addition to or alteration of psychoanalytic observation. I shall use the grid categories and in particular refer to column 6. This will involve some explanation of what I mean by the term, loosely employed, 'action' in column 6. I shall start by taking the last point first.

In his paper, 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' Freud distinguishes between a stage where muscular action is taken to alter the environment and a stage when a capacity for thought exists. I propose to include in the category represented by the

[1]See Chapter 2, p. 139.

term 'action' phantasies that the mind, acting as if it were a muscle and a muscle acting as a muscle, can disburden the psyche of accretions of stimuli. I include the Kleinian concept of the phantasy known as projective identification in this category of 'action'. The growth of insight depends, at its inception, on undisturbed functioning of projective identification. If it is disturbed, mental development is hampered by the phantasy that insight depends on what is regarded, even by the sophisticated mind, as action. There are thus two attitudes distinguishable in patients of whom some behave as if action were precedent to action. The first I associate with projective transformations, the second with rigid transformations.

Since there is a breakdown in the early stages of development of insight, many elements[1] involved in projective transformations will be represented by the first row of the Grid. The existence of elements A2 and A3 is questionable, but I include them because their exclusion would be equally debatable.

Elements and objects in rigid transformations are likely to be found in all grid categories.

[1]See *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* [this volume].

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Theory leaves us free to give Ta β the value of the analyst's verbalization of his experience in the session, or the emotional state induced in his patient. That the analyst works on his patient's emotions as a painter might work on his canvas would be repugnant to psychoanalytic theory and practice. The painter who works on his public's emotions with an end in view is a propagandist with the outlook of the poster artist. He does not intend his public to be free in its choice of the use to which it puts the communication he makes. The analyst's position is akin to that of the painter who by his art adds to his public's experience. Since psychoanalysts do not aim to run the patient's life but to enable him to run it according to his lights and therefore to know what his lights are, Ta β either in the form of interpretation or scientific paper should represent the psychoanalyst's verbal representation of an emotional experience. An attempt to exclude by restriction to verbal expression any element from Ta that would make it pass from the domain of communication of knowledge to propaganda would be inadequate. Verbal expression must be limited so that it expresses truth without any implication other than the implication that it is true in the *analyst's opinion*. How this is to be attempted lies outside the scope of this discussion, except for certain implications which I shall now consider. The first concerns the route by which we have arrived at this conclusion. It is sometimes assumed that the motive for scientific work is an abstract love for truth. The argument I have followed implies that the grounds for limiting the values that may be substituted for Ta β to true statements lies in the nature of values *not* so limited and their relationship to other components in the T theory. If truth is not essential to all values of Ta β, Ta β must be regarded

as expressed in and by manipulation of the emotions of patient or public and not in or by the interpretation; truth is essential for any value of Ta β in art of science. How is truth to be a criterion for a value proposed to Ta β? To what has it to be true and how shall we decide whether it is or not? Almost any answer appears to make truth contingent on some circumstance or idea that is itself contingent. Falling back on analytic experience for a clue, I am reminded that healthy mental growth seems to depend on truth as the living organism depends on food. If it is lacking or deficient the personality deteriorates. I cannot support this conviction by evidence regarded as scientific. It may be that the formulation belongs to the domain of Aesthetic. In practice the problem arises with schizoid personalities in whom the super-ego appears to be developmentally prior to the ego and to deny development and existence itself to the ego. The usurpation by the super-ego of the position that should be occupied by the ego involves imperfect development of the reality principle, exaltation of a 'moral' outlook and lack of respect for the truth. The result is starvation of the psyche and stunted growth. I shall regard this statement as an axiom that resolves more difficulties than it creates.

The medium in which the psychoanalyst works is verbalized thoughts. Using the Grid to categorize the verbalized thoughts more precisely, they should be true and fall within the categories of rows E, F, and possibly D and G, and columns 1, 3, 4 and 5. Row G and H apply to phenomena endowed with a greater degree of sophistication and precision than any to which psychoanalysis attains at present. If the statements made in the course of interpretation are expressions of feeling they should fall in the same categories. The patient's contribution is not restricted and may fall in any grid category; the grid categories are intended to be adequate for all the elements and psychoanalytic objects met with in the practice of psychoanalysis. They should therefore be adequate for the requirements of a theory of transformations.

By considering psychoanalytic experience in the light of a theory of transformations, or with a vertex having the value T (see Chapter 6), it is possible to see the problems of thinking afresh. Freud associated thinking with the dominance of the reality principle and showed that it interposed a stage between awareness of an impulse and the

action necessary for its fulfilment; he drew attention to its ameliorating effect on frustration. Its absence exacerbates frustration. Transformations have a number of functions, such as notation and record, private and public communication and the pursuit of knowledge; I shall consider an aspect of the latter, seeking an analogy with mathematics for the purpose.

A mathematical illustration is afforded by the use of numbers for enumeration and record. An increase in sophistication marks the manipulation of numbers to solve a problem *in the absence of the objects giving rise to the problem*. Applying this analogy to the elements of psychoanalysis, as I have categorized them in the Grid, it is evident that an advance in sophistication separates the categories of columns 1 and 3 from the categories in all other columns. A distinction must be made between categories in column 2 and those of columns 4 to n – 1, n, but in this case the distinction is one of kind, not sophistication.

Columns 1 and 3 represent uses of a relatively simple kind; if a word, hypothesis, theoretical system, myth, or transformation were limited to uses represented by those columns, it would not be suitable for working with. An analyst's notes on his cases are useless for the statement of problems and adumbration of solutions if their form prevents extension beyond definition and record. The theory of transformations must serve to illuminate and solve the problems that lie unsolved at the heart of certain forms of mental disturbance; and to do the same for problems inherent in the psychoanalysis of such disturbances.

A theory of transformations must be composed of elements and constitute a system capable of the greatest number of uses (represented by the horizontal axis of the Grid) if it is to extend the analyst's capacity for working on a problem with or without the material components of the problem present.

This may seem to introduce a dangerous doctrine opening the way for the analyst who theorizes unhampered by the facts of practice, but the theory of transformations is inapplicable to any situation in which observation is not an essential. Observation is to be made and recorded in a form suitable for working *with* but inimical to wayward and undisciplined fabrications. As grid categories show, any scientific theory can be used in accordance with the categories of column 2 but it may be possible to prevent unpredictable changes

from the uses of one grid column to the uses of another. In short, the theory is to aid observation and recording in terms suitable for scientific manipulation without the presence of the objects.

One problem in analysing the psychotic patient seems to be his difficulty in working without the actual presence of the objects for and about which work must be done.[1] If we could suppose that there was a failure to develop a system of notation and record which could also be used for manipulation in the absence of the object, it might explain a number of features associated with the psychotic's behaviour. I have noticed that he sometimes behaves as if in order to 'think' something he had to wait for that thing to appear in the world of external reality. Similarly he seems unable to think or imagine a situation but has to act it out. Stating this in terms of a theory of transformation the patient is not able to transform T (the phenomenal counterpart of O) into Tp β. Indeed he talks as if he felt unable to transform O into T. It is as if in one view man can never know the thing-in-itself, but only secondary and primary qualities; whereas in the other view he can never 'know' anything but the thing-in-itself. This apparent attitude has similarities with another apparent attitude, namely, that postulated by the theory of projective identification. He behaves as if parts of his personality had physical properties and could be split off and projected into others as physical objects which the other object could modify or use.[2] Since a psychotic patient can express words and sentences it seems reasonable to suppose that he can think. But thinking, in the sense of manipulating words and thoughts to do work in the absence of the object, seems to be just what the patient cannot do. I have said, in *Learning from Experience*, that such patients do not have memories but only undigested facts. The breakdown appears to occur in the necessity for an object into which the patient feels he is able to project parts of his personality for their development and manipulation. If he feels there is no such object, and no such possibility as 'splitting off parts of his personality' disturbance is set up.

The use of transformation to produce T β such that T β can be worked with in the absence of O is one aspect of transformation theory. The theory must be extended to be adequate to cover

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[1]Hence the tendency to produce problem situations instead of solving problems.

[2]See M. Klein, 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms' (1946).

transformation of this kind and the projective transformations of which I spoke earlier.

The similarity of phenomena associated with the theory of projective identification to those associated with lack of any differentiation of thing from its corresponding thought is probably due to their being different aspects of the same state of mind.

If the apparent inability to transform O to T corresponds to a real inability it would mean an end to the discussion – no theory of transformations could apply as no transformations take place. I have, however, deliberately described the patient as talking *as if* he could not transform O to T so as to leave the matter open to discussion; patients who show, or appear to show, this disability are in fact able to communicate with the analyst. The communication, though words are used, is more akin to musical or artistic than verbal communication. It contrasts with what I have said (on pages 147–149) about the nature of Ta β, the analyst's contribution.

Ordinary language is already more than a method of recording and enables work to be done, like mathematics, in the absence of the object worked on, but it is less effective in precision and universality. So long as our communications are reliable only in the presence of the objects we study, we work under disabilities analogous to those of the psychotic, and quality must suffer correspondingly. The theory of transformations is designed to decrease the disabilities of the psychoanalyst in his study of similar disabilities in the patient. I propose therefore to study alternately the transformations of the patient and the transformations of the analyst with a view to formulating a theory of transformations superior to those already used consciously and unconsciously.

The next task will be to examine afresh the group that I have provisionally called projective transformations. In this group Tp β appears to require two personalities – an object into which something is to be projected and an object responsible for the projection. Associated with this is the problem of deciding what the nature of Tp β is, if the object, into which the projection is made, is missing.

The mathematician, in the absence of other than mathematical objects, can work with his notation and formulations to solve a specific problem. To some extent the analyst can do the same with verbal communications; he can work with a patient, transform his experience into words, communicate his results to patient, or make them

available to another analyst who can in turn use them, and the work already done, in his task with a new patient and a new problem. Work has thus been done, in the absence of a patient, to carry forward the solution of a *general* problem and make it available for *specific* use in a specific instance. This can be likened to the process whereby growth[1] has been promoted, from the state represented by the earlier rows in the Grid, to the state represented by row D. Such a transformation of the communication fits it for one of the uses in the horizontal axis, in this instance, column 4.

This description is of a characteristic common to several types of mental growth. Starting with the simplest example – the name of an object – and proceeding to quite complex combinations of objects, the growth process can be described as passing through a number of stages from *β*-element to algebraic calculus. Each stage is a record of a previous stage and a pre-conception of the subsequent stage. Each stage can be used in ways indicated in the headings of the horizontal axis. Each 'use' represented in the horizontal axis can be seen to be representable by a term used to represent a stage on the genetic axis. 'pre-conception' can represent equally the use which is being made of a statement and the genetic stage of the statement. It is therefore appropriate to ask if the investigation would gain and the Grid be improved by bringing stages and uses into clearer approximation to each other. Thus columns 4 and 5 might be amalgamated and be represented by the term 'pre-conception'. The term would then denote a use, but in the vertical axis it would continue to represent a stage in growth. But if each stage can be regarded as an element that is both record and pre-conception it may be objected that there is no need for terms such as '*β*-element', 'dream', 'concept', etc. In practice this is not so; it is useful for psychoanalysts to be able to signify degrees of growth and to represent these by stages with their proper sign.

Hitherto I have spoken of 'growth' and 'increased sophistication' when speaking of the progression from A to H; is it possible to give more precise meaning to these terms? I shall consider some possibilities.

Growth from elements of one row to the row next below cannot

[1]'Growth' here refers to the growth of a mental formulation. It is interesting to consider the relationship that exists when the growth of a mental formulation appears to be matched by a realization of growth that approximates, or is 'parallel' to, the mental formulations.

very well be measured by an increase in the 'uses' (represented by the columns of the horizontal axis) to which the element can be put for I have already supposed that any element in its character as member of a row also can have a character derived from its membership of any column of the horizontal axis and in practice it is useful to retain this supposition. An approximation to universality of uses to which a row can be put is therefore unlikely to provide a criterion for growth. It may be that some rows are better suited to serve a multiplicity of uses than others. Similarly some uses may be served more effectively by some rows than by others. For example, I have said that *β*-elements lend themselves to projective identification when that mechanism is employed to evacuate a part of the personality, but are useless, or at best extremely unsuited, for use in thinking – which is to say for any use other than those of columns 2 and 6. A possible approach may therefore be provided by considering the nature of the match between the stage (or row) and the use matching row and column in terms of the appropriateness of one to the other, but this only shelves the problem by postponing it to a later stage in the discussion, for it necessitates criteria by which to judge appropriateness. Some of the pitfalls are less dangerous in the practice of analysis than they are in an abstract discussion of the problems. Thus in practice it is easier to feel that *β*-elements are not appropriate to thinking than to discuss in the abstract a criterion for the appropriate. Herein lies one advantage that the psychoanalyst possesses over the philosopher; his statements can be related to realizations, and realizations to a psychoanalytic theory.

What psychoanalytic thinking requires is a method of notation and rules for its employment that will enable work to be done in the absence of the object, to facilitate further work in the presence of the object. The barrier to this that is presented by unfettered play of an analyst's phantasies has long been recognized: pedantic statement on the one hand and verbalization loaded with unobserved implications on the other mean that the potential for misunderstanding and erroneous deduction is so high as to vitiate the value of the work done with such defective tools. I would retain the freedom to speak of "incorporating" a particular theory "in the main body of analytic theory", with the precision necessary for the use[1] of Melanie Klein's

[1]Columns 1, 3 and 4.

theories of internal objects. This means that there must be psychoanalytic invariants, of which I have already written, psychoanalytic variables, and psychoanalytic parameters. These mathematical terms, used in this sentence as models, row C, need transformation to fit them for psychoanalytic use as row F, G and H elements.

By writing 'psychoanalytic' invariants, variables and parameters I have limited the universe of discourse; only within this universe of discourse can these terms be described as representing invariants or parameters. There is opportunity for ambiguity if this is not recognized; the term 'variable' may describe something which, in a particular universe of discourse, is given a constant value and so qualifies for description as a parameter (as in a mathematical formulation, say $ax + by - c = 0$, the signs a, b, c, representing variables are given constant value).

According to Heisenberg, in atomic physics a situation has arisen in which the scientist cannot rely on the ordinarily accepted view that the researcher has access to facts, because the facts to be observed are distorted by the very act of observation. Furthermore, the field in which he has to observe the relationship of one phenomenon to another is unlimited in extent, and yet none of the phenomena 'in' that field can be ignored because all interact. It follows that the fact that the universe of discourse is finite is not matched by a corresponding fact in the relationship to each other of the realizations supposedly approximating to the universe of discourse. The universe of discourse itself must always be defined (thus falling into the categories of grid column 1) if its terms are to have meaning. Yet, by virtue of this very fact it becomes of doubtful validity unless it is realized that to the finite universe of discourse no realization corresponds.

The point may not be of immediate importance, but it may be a source of error and it *is* a part of the psychoanalyst's methodological problem. The situation of the psychoanalyst dealing with psychotic transformations is similar to that attributed to nuclear physicists. He has to deal with relationships of a domain that has no finite limitations. The terms psychoanalytic invariant, variable and parameter are meaningful in a universe of discourse that has in one important respect no realization corresponding to it; his interpretations have characteristics of relatedness that are applicable to his universe of discourse, but not to the phenomena they represent, since those

phenomena possess a relatedness, if there is one, appropriate to an infinite universe. If a patient says that he knows that his 'char' is in league with the postman because his friend left white of egg in the bathroom, the relatedness implied by his statement may differ from forms of relatedness to which I am accustomed because his statement represents phenomena related to each other in an infinite universe.

Freud made a statement, which is similar in principle, when he adumbrated the universe of discourse in which conscious behaviour is studied by postulating an unconscious, but the characteristics of *relatedness* remain unchanged in the new universe of discourse. The differentiating factor that I wish to introduce is not between conscious and unconscious, but between finite and infinite. Nevertheless I use, as my model for forms of relatedness in an infinite universe, forms of relatedness operative in a finite universe of discourse and its approximate realization. It follows therefore that the model is likely to be faulty.

When I used the concrete elements of a transformation (namely the subject stimulating the artist) at one end of the chain of events and the finished painting at the other, I did so to provide a model for a part of the whole – the part that takes place in the mind of the artist. The psychoanalyst's domain is that which lies between the point where a man receives sense impressions and the point where he gives expression to the transformation that has taken place. The principles of this investigation must be the same whether the medium is painting, music, mathematics, sculpture, or a relationship between two people, whether expressed verbally or by any other means. These principles must be determined so that they remain constant whether the transformation is effected in a mind which is sane or insane.

I take an illustration from an analysis in which the patient had made considerable adjustment to reality. He entered the room, and, avoiding my glance, walked to the couch and lay down while I was going to my chair. On these facts, as it appeared in the session, there was agreement between us, but he showed great anxiety and told me that he felt, when walking to the couch, that I was attacking his genitalia from behind. He was able to tell me that this was as real to him as the agreed facts. He did not know why he was anxious. That, as near as I can make it so, is a correct account of what took place and is my transformation (Ta β) of what took place

(O). Is it advantageous to regard this episode as a transformation and, if so, in what respect?

I propose to consider this episode in detail though in analysis this was not, and could not be, possible. I shall use the proposals I have made in *Learning from Experience*, *Elements of Psycho-Analysis*, and the preceding chapters of this book.

The discussion has a two-fold aim; to carry the investigation further and to give an example, in doing so, of my way of applying my methods. First I shall divest myself of pre-conceptions approximating to the state of naïvety[1] which translate roughly into words: '*not* knowing to make room for a pre-conception that will illuminate a problem that excites my curiosity.'

A lake in calm bright weather reflects trees on the bank opposite the observer. The image presented by the trees is transformed in the reflection: a whole series of transformations is effected by atmospheric changes. Suppose the observer could see only the reflection; he would be able to deduce the nature of O from what he saw. Provided conditions were not too disturbed, the demands on the observer's deductive powers would be relatively simple if he were expected only to recognize that he observed the reflection of trees, but more difficult if he were called upon to pronounce on the species of tree, and impossible if he were to state the nature of microscopic features of leaf structure.

The change in atmosphere from light to darkness or from calm to turbulence would influence the transformation sometimes slightly, at others so deeply that the observer would have to exercise all his perceptiveness to deduce the nature of O. Just as the demands on him could be impossibly exacting, so the atmospheric conditions could be impossibly distorting.

I shall use this as a model for the analytic observation of transformations. It will be convenient to suppose that the L, H, K links influence the transformation in a manner analogous to the atmospheric changes in the model: convenient, but not necessarily true, as will be obvious by reference to analytic experience when the emotional tie is extremely complex; so are atmospheric conditions. I do not suggest that turbulence and distortion are invariably the outcome of emotion, but wish to leave myself free to consider the situation when emotions

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[1]See *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* [this volume], p. 72.

might provide a constant and the variations might be due to some other factor.

In the model, the trees at the lake-side are supposed to be the manifestation of O. What is the nature of the counterpart of O in analysis? Can we suppose that it is invariably a fact known to analyst and analysand, or at least knowable to both? In fact there is no choice in the matter, for if we postulate that O might be *any* circumstance in the patient's life, whether known to the analyst or not, we postulate a condition that makes analysis impossible. There *are* such facts, but analytic effectiveness depends on their being irrelevant to the analytic procedure or relevant only in so far as some aspect of such a fact is available to both analyst and analysand. I therefore postulate that O in any analytic situation is available for transformation by analyst and analysand equally.

I shall ignore disturbance produced by the analyst's personality or aspects of it. The existence of such disturbance is well known and its recognition is the basis for analytic acceptance of the need for analysts to be analysed and the many studies of counter-transference. While other scientific disciplines recognize the personal equation, or the factor of personal error, no science other than psychoanalysis has insisted on such a profound and prolonged investigation of its nature and ramifications. I ignore it therefore so as to keep an already over-complicated problem down to its simplest terms. I shall assume an ideal analyst and that Ta α and Ta β are not distorted by turbulence – though turbulence and its sources are part of O.

To summarize the preceding discussion:

1. In psychoanalysis any O not common to analyst and analysand alike, and not available therefore for transformation by both, may be ignored as irrelevant to psychoanalysis. Any O not common to both is incapable of psychoanalytic investigation; any appearance to the contrary depends on a failure to understand the nature of psychoanalytic interpretation.

2. Transformation (i.e. Tp α or Ta α) is influenced by L, H and K. The analyst is assumed to allow for, or to exclude, L or H from his link with the patient, and Ta α and Ta β are assumed for purposes of this discourse to be free from distortion by L and H (i.e. by counter-transference). Tp α and Tp β, on the contrary, are assumed always to be subject to distortion and the nature of that distortion, in so far as it is an object of illumination through psychoanalytic interpretation, is the

O of the transformation that the analyst effects in his progress from observation to interpretation. This brings me to consider whether or not it is possible to put a further limitation on what must be considered to lie in the domain of O in psychoanalysis; so far I have suggested O must be available to Ta α and Tp α and to this I have added that the transformation of the patient must always be the O that is transformed when the analyst works to arrive at an interpretation. But the analyst must have a view of the psychoanalytic theory of the Oedipus situation. His understanding of that theory can be regarded as a transformation of that theory, and in that case all his interpretations, verbalized or not, of what is going on in a session may be seen as transformations of an O that is bi-polar. One pole of O is trained intuitive capacity transformed to effect its juxtaposition with what is going on in the analysis, and the other is in the facts of the analytic experience that must be transformed to show what approximation the realization has to the analyst's preconceptions – the preconception here being identical with Ta β as the end-product of Ta α operating on the analyst's psychoanalytic theories.

Freud stated that one of the criteria by which a psychoanalyst was to be judged was the degree of understanding allegiance he paid to the theory of the Oedipus complex. He thus showed the importance he attached to this theory and time has done nothing to suggest that he erred by over-estimation; evidence of the Oedipus complex is never absent, though it can be unobserved.

Melanie Klein, in her paper, 'Early Phases of the Oedipus Complex',[1] made observations of Oedipal elements where their presence was previously undetected; methods of observation, notation and record, should make failure to detect relevant material less frequent. Part of the equipment of observation is pre-conception used for preconception – D4. It is in its D4 aspect that I wish to consider the Oedipal theory; that is, as part of the observational equipment of the analyst. The behaviour which this apparatus (Oedipus complex, D4) is to scrutinize bears qualities of rows A and B.

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[1]['Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928) was Melanie Klein's first paper devoted to the Oedipus complex. It contained the idea of the maternal body phantasied by the child as the site of sexual activity. It made possible new conceptions of female sexuality. *Ed.*]

But now, difficulties. The first step seems simple enough: to set out the theoretical apparatus with which I shall investigate the material. The theories with which I propose to investigate the patient's material should, in accordance with the theories in the previous part of this book, be described as transformations of the experience of training and learning that I have had. They may be denoted by the sign Ta β of O_1 (O_1 here being the stimulus provided by my accumulation of experience) and Ta β of O_2 (O_2 being the experience of the session I am investigating). Ta β, the end product of my transformation of theories that were passed on to me in personal analysis and training, can now be categorized, according to the degree of sophistication with which it is expressed, as belonging to columns 1, 3, 4, 5, and rows D to F. But the state of free-floating attention, usually regarded as desirable in the analyst, is the more effective the more it approximates to being represented by a wide spectrum of grid categories. Therefore the analyst's state of mind should not be limited to categories E4 and F4, say, but rather to the area of categories C $\rightarrow$ F by 1, 3, 4, 5. In practice this means that the analyst should be cognizant of dreams in which patients appear, though his interpretation of the significance of their appearance will relate more to their characteristics as column 2 phenomena than to their significance as evidence of his own psychopathology.

The analyst's theoretical equipment may thus be narrowly described D4, E4, F4, but the state of mind in which the theories are available in the session should cover a wider spectrum of the Grid. With this proviso in mind I propose to limit the following description of theories to statements that fall in the categories E1, E3, E4 and E5. I mean to employ the following theories:

1. The theory of projective identification and splitting; mechanisms by which the breast provides what the patient later takes over as his own apparatus for α-function.
2. The theory that some personalities cannot tolerate frustration.
3. The theory that a personality with a powerful endowment of envy tends to denude its objects by both stripping and exhaustion.
4. The theory that at an early stage (or on a primitive level of mind) the oedipal situation is represented by part objects.

5. The Kleinian theory of envy and greed.
6. The theory that primitive thought springs from experience of a non-existent object, or, in other terms, of the *place* where the object is expected to be, but is not.
7. The theory of violence in primitive functions.

As I have already written of these theories in *Learning from Experience* and *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* I shall say no more of them here. As extensions of the oedipal situation, these theories must be present in the analyst's mind in a form that enables them to be represented in a wide range of grid categories.

I shall now consider phenomena that the state of expectation represented by these theories might be expected to reveal. One difficulty, of those to which I referred on pages 130–131, concerns the communication of material from an experience that is ineffable; the scientific approach, as ordinarily understood, is not available and an aesthetic approach requires an artist. Therefore the reader will need to be indulgent if he is to grasp the meaning I wish to convey; he will find the clinical experience, if it comes his way, simpler than my description makes it appear.

The external stimulus, O, is provided by an impending break of sufficient duration to excite more powerful reactions than those observed at weekends. I knew envy and intolerance of frustration to be powerful factors in the analytic situation and that violence was a prominent function in the patient's personality; he feared violence, his own and other people's; his emotions were violent, his ambitions violently pursued and obstructed, his course of action violently maintained. His thought processes were extremely disturbed, many of his utterances being incomprehensible even after prolonged analysis. When I thought I grasped his meaning it was often by virtue of an aesthetic rather than a scientific experience. There were short-lived lucid communications in which words and syntax were combined in a conventional manner. My own theoretical pre-dispositions I have already indicated. For reasons of discretion references to actual clinical material will be few, and drawn from more than one patient, but this I believe will not produce distortion in matter relevant to the discussion. I shall draw on a wide range of illustration, including historical matter, to fill gaps that I cannot leave without obscurity or fill without disclosure of private matter.

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The patient's reaction to O is primitive with material belonging to the categories of rows A and B.

His presence shows that he knows that *I* am present. This fact is used, conformably with column 2 categories, to deny my *absence*. He reacts in the session as if I were absent. This behaviour, in accordance with column 2 categories, is intended to deny my *presence*. Though 'absence' and 'presence' are each characteristic of column 2 they are brought together at this stage in the analysis, in accordance with A4 and B4 categories.[1]

The state of mind I have described is represented for me by a model – that of an adult who *violently* maintains an exclusively primitive omnipotent ↔ helpless state. The model by which I represent *his* 'vision' of *me* is that of an absent breast, the place or position, that I, the breast, *ought* to occupy but do not. The 'ought' expresses *moral* violence and omnipotence. The visual image of me can be represented by what a geometer might call a point, a musician the staccato mark in a musical score. As this attitude is important I shall deal with it in detail, using ideas expressed earlier in the book.

The name given an object, often regarded as the sign for a quality abstracted from something, or from which something has been abstracted[2], I define as genetically related to a Selected Fact. It is a sign intended to mark and bind a constant conjunction. It is therefore significant, but devoid of meaning[3]; it receives its accretion of

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[1]Second cycle of transformation.

[2][See H. J. Paton (1947). *Categorical Imperative: A Study in Kant's Moral Philosophy. Ed.*]

[3]Compare B. Russell, *Principles of Mathematics*, Chap. XXVII.

meaning from experience. It is similar to a theory in that both imply that certain qualities are constantly conjoined; therefore, it cannot properly be described as true or false in its relationship to O. These terms express judgements on the health-giving effect of the theory to which they are applied. And upon the personality entertaining the theory. The differentiation to be made to the name, or theory, is between 'useful' and 'not useful'; it can be categorized according to the terms of the 1 . . . n axis.

Implicit in the name as that which signifies constant conjunction, and inseparable from this significance, is the quality of negation. A constant conjunction, thus bound by a name, is *not* whatever the personality has observed as existing previously, but may be similar to it. This has been a cause of difficulty as far back as Aristotle.[1] In practice it presents difficulty to the patient who cannot tolerate frustration, and in whom envy, greed and cruelty are dominant.

In the illustration[2] the problem centres on the fact that the absent breast, the 'no-breast', differs from the breast. If this is accepted the 'no-breast' can be represented by the visual image of the point. But if this is a column 2 phenomenon, the point lacks the quality of a definitory statement and approximates to an object with column 3 characteristics. It therefore has the meaning that it is a breast that has been reduced to a mere position – the place where the breast was. This state appears to the patient to be a consequence either of greed that has exhausted the breast, or of splitting that has destroyed the breast leaving only the position.

The patient's relationship with himself is prejudiced if he *cannot* advance to recognition of a new experience and so falls back on existing meaning, or *does* progress and has to face frustration he cannot tolerate. He can decide, if such a term is permissible in this context, whether to make destructive attacks on his link with his object and so destroy his embryonic thought processes, or to tolerate it and allow his apparatus for thought to develop. A patient with the characteristics postulated will be likely to suffer disturbances of thought either way, for acceptance of the 'no-breast' confronts him with the problem of what to do with the attendant 'thoughts'. The problem does not

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[1] Aristotle: *Topics*, VI.6.

[2] [Presumably Bion is referring to the patient described at the beginning of the chapter. *Ed.*]

exist in one dimension only; tolerance of frustration involves awareness of the presence or absence of objects, and of what a developing personality later comes to know as 'time' and (as I have described the 'position' where the breast used to be) 'space'.

The factors that reduce the breast to a point, reduce time to 'now'. Time is denuded of past and future. The 'now' is subjected to attacks similar to those delivered against space, or more precisely, the point. It is both exhausted and split. This leads to expressions which can mislead for such a patient will say 'at the moment' when he means 'never', and 'yesterday' or 'tomorrow' when he means a split-off fragment of 'now'. Such beliefs contribute to the problems of a patient who cannot tolerate staccato markings in a musical score.

To turn now to the problems that await the personality that can accept 'thoughts'; as I have said, the definitory aspect of the name can be seen to have a negative foundation, that is, not a, b, c, etc.; or significance without meaning (thereby taking on the uses of column 4, the counterpart in 'use' of what I have called, in the genetic axis of the Grid, a pre-conception).

The 'thoughts' can be combined with other 'thoughts' in accordance with rules of syntax if they are verbally stated, rules of mathematical manipulation if they are mathematically stated, or rules of musical composition if musically stated. But such rules are easier to conceive of in an advanced state of mental development than in the primitive domain with which I am dealing here. I shall leave the discussion of rules of combination on one side until later.[1]

According to Proclus, objection was raised against the term στιγμη by Plato on the grounds that it meant puncture and therefore suggested a background of reality that was not appropriate to geometric discussion. The objection resembles that of a patient to the visual image of the point because of its unwelcome penumbra of associations. He had evaded the difficulty by a neologism; my concern is not with the solution of the problem, but with its resemblance to the scientific difficulty of using terms with a long history to express novel situations.

The Pythagoreans regarded the point as having position, but Euclid did not include this in his definition, though he and Archimedes and

[1]See Chapter 10, p. 245.

later writers used the term σημετον instead of στιγμή; Aristotle, in discussing the prevalent notion of the relatedness of the point to the line, objected that – the point being indivisible – no accumulation of points can give anything divisible such as a line.[1] The significance of the discussion lies in the wish to establish the connection felt to exist between the point and the line. An analyst reading contributions to the establishment of scientific geometry would see that elements appear that invite psychoanalytic interpretation of the kind indicated. I shall have reason to quote illustrations that strengthen the impression of the sexual component in the mathematical investigation, but I do not propose to go into this aspect of geometric history.

Granted that a patient is capable of visual images, represented by the words 'point' and 'line', two apparently divergent courses appear to be open to him; he can think them, that is, use thoughts in accordance with rules which are acceptable to, and understandable by, others. [This leads to the proliferation of a range of statements that fall into grid categories H1, H3, H4, etc. – I ignore H2, though that is possible also – and ultimately to the scientific structures of modern mathematics]. *Or*, he *cannot* think them – if we exclude splitting, exhaustion and projection or evacuation as outside what is ordinarily meant by thought – and does not elaborate or employ rules of combination and manipulation that are widely acceptable. Such a patient, as in an instance quoted by Segal[2], has no difficulty in seeing that a man playing a violin is masturbating in public: the fact that he is giving a public performance on the violin is significant, in the sense I have given the term, and it has a meaning, but the meaning it has for him is not the same as the meaning which it has for the ordinary person who regards the performer's activity as a part of music. The ordinary view of it as a musical activity is as alien to him as his view is to the ordinary person. Why then, to revert to the point and line, do these visual images lead in one case to the efflorescence of mathematics and in the other to mental sterility? And is it certain that 'mental sterility' is a correct assessment? The question implies the validity of a theory of causation which I consider misleading and liable to give rise to constructions that are basically false; if it is fallacious we may discard it for one as fallacious – which may be true of the formulation, by

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[1] *Physics*, IV, 8, 215, big.

[2] H. Segal, *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein* (1964).

Heisenberg[1], of the problem of multiple causation. Both views have proved of value in the development of science, but developments of physics by the Copenhagen school appear to have made the theory irrelevant. If so, the logical step would be to bother no longer with causation or its counterpart – results. In psychoanalysis it is difficult to avoid feeling that a gap is left by its disappearance and that the gap should be filled. Over a wide range of our problems no difficulty is caused by regarding the theory of causation as fallacious, but useful. When it comes to problems presented by disturbances in thought the difficulty cannot be met in this way. For though it is possible, as in the chain of reasoning I have reported, to see that the patient has a theory of causation that requires assessment, such assessment cannot be made without contrasting it with some other theory – presumably the analyst's own.

Melanie Klein's theory of the part played by intolerance of depression illuminates the problem presented.[2] The patient is persecuted by the meaning of certain facts that he feels to be significant. Further, he is persecuted by the feelings of persecution. This is explicable if we accept that the patient is intolerant of depression and that this hinders the Ps ⇌ D interchange. The proposed chain of causation can then be seen as a *rationalization* of the sense of persecution. Furthermore, if the patient is capable of seeing that his proposed chain of causation is nonsensical, he may use it to deny the persecution and thus evade any explanation that would reveal the depression that he dreads.

In putting forward such a suggestion I am postulating a chain of causation in the phenomena I witnessed. I shall risk being misled by an inadequate theory and suggest, as I did in the actual analysis, that the fear of depression depends on the dominance in the patient of a cruel super-ego.

I shall employ mythology to clarify the next stage in my discussion. In terms of the Grid I use thought that belongs to category C4, and in particular the myth (Eden) that an omniscient and harsh god, opposed to knowledge, is dominant. The Babel myth of the god that confounds language, or the myth of fate attending the Sphinx in the Oedipus myth would serve equally well.

The logical formulation of the problem points to a conflict between

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[1]W. Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy* (1958).

[2]See Chapter 4.

omniscience on the one hand and inquiry on the other. Further steps will show that the logical causal approach produces a circular argument. Is there any objection to this and, if so, is there an approach that is better? We have to consider not the patient's 'theory of causation' only but that of the analyst also. As the problem is methodological, psychoanalytic findings on all that touches learning cannot be separated from it.

The patient in the illustration was attempting to convince himself, or me, of the validity of a causal chain as something to which reason automatically owed allegiance. I was invited to collude with him in agreeing that this particular causal chain was valid; and in this context 'valid' meant 'not requiring scrutiny'. This interpretation is my assessment of the emotional scene in which I was witness and participant; it is an experience that cannot be understood by any that have not encountered it. I cannot demonstrate that the account given represents the facts accurately, but at some future date an experience, mine or another's, may approximate to this description.

The accounts that I have given, and the one that I am about to give, might be described as 'theories' of what took place. In view of the associations that belong to the term 'theory' I prefer the term 'transformation'. The accounts I give of this episode are transformations in the sense that I have given the term in Chapter 1 and subsequently. The reader may use the Grid for evaluating the transformations described in this book. My overt aim is to write something that could correctly be regarded as falling within the categories F1, 3, 4, 5; but the reader may assess them differently and attach different grid categories to the communication according to the facets that he sees.

To return to the episode: the patient was passing rapidly from one visual image to another. In so far as the visual images were parts of his own personality he was identifying himself first with one and then with another. They could not be synthesized; that is to say, he could not allow himself the experience of the Selected Fact which gives coherence to elements not previously seen to be coherent. Nor could he dismiss the persecuting elements so long as he could not permit coherence; the chain of causation was designed with the express purpose of preventing coherence. But the feeling of persecution itself becomes a persecution 'bound' by the idea of a cause. In this context the term 'cause' and the associated theory of

causation relates not to external but to psychic reality. The source of anxiety in the patient is his fear of depression and an associated fear of the Ps ⇌ D interchange, the mechanisms of the Selected Fact. I categorize the idea of cause, in this context, as D2, that is, a relatively primitive pre-conception used to prevent the emergence of something else. The patient's communication, in so far as it is to be described as logical, is a circular argument (supposedly based on a theory of causation) employed to destroy contact with reality, not to further it. In this respect it qualifies for one of Freud's criteria for psychosis – hatred of reality. But the reality that of an aspect of the patient's personality.[1]

To avoid complexity and the risk of confusion, I shall assume that my interpretations were governed by the need to establish my own and the patient's contact with his psychic realities. If I employ a theory of causation and give it expression in a circular argument[2] my transformation differs from that of the patient; his transformation falls in category C2 and mine in F3 and F4.

This account implies that the apparatus is secondary to the impulses that lie behind its employment – a conclusion which would not surprise a psychoanalyst. Nevertheless the apparatus matters. The impulses concerned determine (i) the way in which the apparatus is employed, and (ii) the fate of the apparatus itself. In severe disturbance it is possible to see apparatus employed in a manner calculated to destroy it. What, in a less disturbed patient, appears as a hostile attack on either the oedipal situation or a part-object oedipal situation, must, in the severely disturbed patient, be seen as an attack on the oedipal, or part-object oedipal, *pre-conception* – the apparatus that should make the relationship between the parents comprehensible and give it meaning. In disorders of thought interpretations must illuminate the condition of the apparatus of thinking, the nature of its deficiencies and the nature of the associated impulses. In practice I find I have constantly to give interpretations in the form that some impulse 'leads to' a particular defect (or characteristic) of the mode of thought; or that some characteristic of the mode of thought 'gives rise' to a particular impulse, as, for example, that frustration, engendered

[1]The theory of causation is only valid in the domain of morality; only morality can *cause* anything. Meaning has no influence outside the psyche and causes nothing.

[2]For Circular Argument, see Chapter 8, p. 226.

by failure to solve a problem, 'leads to' a destructive attack on the analytic approach. I regard these statements as conversational formulations employing a theory I know to be false because it serves a useful purpose in the absence of the correct theory. This may, and often does, prove adequate in practice – it is usually adequate to speak in everyday life of sunrise. Nevertheless there are analytic situations, particularly when psychotic material is to the fore, when this is *not* adequate. The patient seems unable or unwilling to make for himself the adjustment of a conversational phrase which would make that phrase meaningful for him. The theory implicit in the interpretation must be exact. As I shall show later, this also applies to the emotional tone accompanying the interpretation: if I am attempting to establish a K link, which is after all the case with any interpretation, there must be no emotion belonging to the H or L group. This may seem a commonplace of counter-transference theory, but it is not. A neurotic patient makes some allowance for human frailty; the psychotic patient either behaves as if the verbal communication had not been received, or that it is a vehicle for transmission of some aspect of L or H – usually projection of it by the analyst into the patient. In successful analysis the patient brings to bear quite brilliant intuitive grasp of the possibilities that his analyst's deficiencies offer his super-ego for demolition of the analyst.

The patient's apparent demand for exactitude both with regard to the verbal communication itself and the emotional accompaniment seems to have some relationship to what I have said about the point 'now'. I spoke of this as associated with denudation of the elemental or primitive breast. In this context it is associated with inability to receive anything but a communication that is 'pure'.

Analysts are so accustomed to the fact that the link between analyst and patient is verbal that certain implications of this may escape scrutiny. These can be made to emerge more clearly by considering the verbal exchanges as transformations.

The analyst's transformations employ the vehicle of speech just as the musician's transformations are musical and the painter's pictorial. Though the analyst attempts to transform O, in accordance with the rules and discipline of verbal communication, this is not necessarily the case with the patient. He may, for example, transform O into what may *seem* to be a verbal communication but is to the analyst

something akin to hallucination.[1] Such transformation (Tp β) belongs to the domain not of verbal communication but of hallucination, be it auditory, visual or tactile. It should therefore be helpful if, by analogy with painting, music or verbal communication, it were possible to understand the discipline and rules, so to speak, of hallucination.

The patient as receptor seems to receive everything as if it had the characteristics of the point, whether he is to understand time, or space, or meaning: as emitter he can only express transformations that are effected in a domain with the discipline of which we are unfamiliar. What 'rules' govern the transformation of O into a visual hallucination rather than an auditory hallucination, or *vice versa*? Or into hallucination rather than music or art or more ordinary forms of communication?

In discussion of transformation I drew attention to invariants; in painting there must be something that is invariant to the representation and that which is represented. It may be that the reaction stimulated is the element common to both object represented and representation. Yet one feels that something more is required than the reaction of the beholder – something present in object and its representation. If so, what is invariant in the word 'cow' and the object it represents? If the word is onomatopoeic the sound can be regarded as invariant but such an element is relatively rare. It cannot satisfactorily be supposed that there is some simple factor like learning by heart that the name 'cow' belongs to a particular animal. That memorization is present seems to be supported by incidents where an adult repeats to a child "Look, there is _____ (whatever or whoever it is)!" when it reappears. If so, it may be part of being taught by communication of adult experience as opposed to learning from experience direct. It is easier to accept it as true that someone 'cannot understand music' or 'cannot understand painting' than to accept that a similar difficulty exists with regard to speech. Yet sometimes I think that this is so; the actual *medium* of speech is not understood.

The mother's inability to accept the projective identifications of the infant and the association of such failure with disturbances in understanding is matched by complications arising through the existence

[1]What I say here is not exclusive of, but in addition to, what I have said about hallucination elsewhere.

of an extremely understanding mother – particularly understanding by virtue of the ability to *accept* projective identification. A reaction associated with this resembles character disorder, an unwillingness to face loss of an idyllic state for a new phase, and suppression of the new phase, because it involves pain. It is against this background of hallucinosis, projective identification, splitting and persecution, accepted as if it were the ideally happy state, that I want to consider the domain of verbal communication. The sense of well-being engendered by a belief in the existence of the perfectly understanding mother (or analyst) adds force to the fear and hatred of thoughts which are closely associated with, and may therefore be felt to be indistinguishable from, the 'no-breast'. A painful state of mind is clung to, including depression, because the alternative is felt to be worse, namely that thought and thinking mean that a near perfect breast has been destroyed.

The name, in its function of binding a constant conjunction, partakes of the nature of a definition; it commences by being significant but meaningless, until experience gives it accumulations of meaning; it derives negative force both by virtue of its genesis as part of thought and by the necessary logic of its coming into existence precisely because the constant conjunction it binds is *not* any of the previous and already named constant conjunctions. Dislike of it is therefore derived from its genesis and from fear of the implications of its 'use'.[1] As naming and definition are inescapable, this contributes to dislike of the unknown and the challenge it presents to the learner. The intensity of dislike depends on other factors. At what point the dislike of the unknown and its impact on the development of procedures which are a part of finding out must be regarded as pathological is an academic question; it is decided for the analyst whenever there is evidence of a desire to learn and an inability to do so. In such a situation primitive levels of thought are stimulated to discover the 'cause' of the obstruction.[2] Evidence of the employment of a theory of causation is evidence of the operation of a theory that is not adequate. I shall consider the genesis of a theory of causation and its

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[1]Cf. Aristotle and definitions. *Topics*, VI, 4, 141b, 21.

[2]Cf. D. Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding*, Q 43–45. See also Circular Argument later, p. 226 [this volume].

use with the aid of the Grid and its two axes. Appearance in a given situation – inquiry obstructed either by analyst or patient – must be assessed on the category in the Grid to which it should be relegated. If it appears to belong to column 2 categories the presumption of a pathological origin will be strong. If it belongs to column 4 it is evidence, especially in a K link such as an analysis ought to be, for something compatible with healthy growth.

Ideally this inquiry should deal simultaneously with the process of transformation by which O is converted into thought, or whatever the alternatives to thought may be, and the processes of development (or transformation) which are associated with the *link* between thoughts and the *links* between the various alternatives to thought.

Invariant to *β*-elements and bizarre objects, in so far as they share the characteristics of *β*-elements, is the moral component of such objects. The moral component is inseparable from feelings of guilt and responsibility and from a sense that the link between one such object and another, and between these objects and the personality, is moral causation. The theory of causation, in a scientific sense in so far as it has one, is therefore an instance of carrying over from a moral domain an idea (for want of a better word) into a domain in which its original penumbra of moral association is inappropriate.[1]

The observation of constant conjunction of phenomena whose conjunction or coherence has not been previously observed, and therefore the whole process of Ps ⇌ D interaction, definition and search for meaning that is to be attached to the conjunction, can be destroyed by the strength of a sense of causation and its moral implications. Patients show[2] that the resolution of a problem appears to present less difficulty if it can be regarded as belonging to a moral domain; causation, responsibility and therefore a controlling force (as opposed to helplessness) provide a framework within which omnipotence reigns. In certain circumstances, to be considered later[3], the scene is thus set for conflict (reflected in controversies such as

[1]Usurpation of ego-function by super-ego. See Chapter 4.

[2]And not only patients. The group is dominated by morality – I include of course the negative sense that shows as rebellion against morality –and this contributed to the atmosphere of hostility to individual thought on which Freud remarked.

[3]See below, p. 278.

those on Science and Religion). This situation is portrayed in the Eden and Babel myths. The significance for the individual lies in its part in obstructing the Ps ⇌ D interaction.

Hume's objection to a theory of causation supposes that since neither a hammer nor a nail can feel force it is not correct to speak of a nail being forced into position by the hammer, the term 'force' being properly applicable only to the sense-experience of a human being who exerts force or on whom it is exerted. He supposes therefore that to speak of force as an external reality is a projection of human feeling; the fact that one merely follows the other is thus obscured. This argument does not satisfactorily dispose of an objective link between hammer and nail. To begin with, why is a selection made so that only the movement of the nail is considered, and then only in relation to the hammer? There must be precedent 'causes' that lead to the presence of nail and hammer. Furthermore, it takes no account of the need of the human mind to apply a term, already with its penumbra of association and proper domain, in a different domain and because of its value as a model. For the analyst there is an added complication; since he is dealing with beings like himself, there would appear to be justification for supposing that the relationship between two people was force if identification with one or other leads him to think that in such a situation he would feel force was being applied. The problem of conflict, which I shall name 'Science versus Morals' as a prelude to finding meaning, will be found to be illuminated by the transformation of scientific thought into moral thought that is necessary for the former to be made suitable for action – column 6.

In spite of these objections I think Hume's argument has validity for psychoanalysis. In its extreme form it could mean that scientific validity was denied to a conjecture even though it was supported by common sense. (But the argument must not be supposed to be employed in an extreme form; if it is so employed it would be wise to consider why the argument was employed in a manner that qualified it for column 2.) Hume's theory that an idea owes its genesis to a sense impression contrasts with the theory of force as the link between hammer and nail, for the latter is derived from an animistic outlook.

The earliest problems demanding solution are related to a link between two personalities. The breast, as analytic experience shows, can be regarded as an object with personality, or as inanimate. Or it

may be that no distinction between animate and inanimate is made. Sometimes a problem is 'dealt with'[1] by regarding the object as a thing, sometimes by regarding it as if it were a person – an infant person. In either case O is being transformed; judgement of either operation must hinge on whether the solutions attempted are growth-producing or the reverse. If the solution is a pre-conception, and can be used in accordance with columns 3, 4, 5, it is growth-producing.

Patients can be observed to change their attitude to an object by changes in view-point[2] which may be perverse or analogous to changes of position that a surveyor, terrestrial or astronomical, uses to estimate the range of a distant object. The procedure involves splitting in time and space and, depending on the nature of the intention, may aid the solution of a problem by providing a substitute for 'binocular vision' when it is not available, or hinder a solution by destroying 'binocular vision'[3] when it *is* available. The immediate relevance of this lies in the use of splitting as a method of achieving correlation. The mechanism involves bringing together the splits. The obstacle to correlation for a personality whose splitting is motivated by destructive impulses, is the need for two objects to be brought together creatively.

Throughout this book I employ precisely the mechanism I attempt to describe as observable in analytic practice. To draw attention to these occasions at all frequently would burden the text with so many digressions that it would make a difficult subject appear more difficult. In this instance I am using a phrase taken from a domain of scientific statements appropriate to Optics and a high category of sophistication – row E or F – to provide a model which would be best classified as a member of row C. It is an example of the mechanism I am discussing as related to correlation (see also Circular Argument).

The instances examined in this chapter indicate that the mechanisms remain the same, but that the situation changes according to the emotional drives in operation – a banal enough conclusion, but its significance lies in what it may portend. I associated K with curiosity, but it is necessary to consider other impulses, emotions and instincts (I do not distinguish these terms because no distinction is precise

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[1]I use an ambiguous phrase deliberately.
[2]See discussion of vertices, Chapter 6.
[3]See also Circular Argument, p. 226.

enough) namely, the phenomena I have lumped together as L and H and the effect of the intrusion of one group on the other.

Hitherto I have considered the use of the Grid almost entirely in terms of K and have not questioned its applicability to relationships with L and H dominant. To return to my 'conclusion' that the character of a dynamic situation changes according to the emotional drives in operation even though the mechanisms are unaltered: I put the term 'conclusion' in inverted commas because I am using it in a special way unrelated to any belief that some discussion has been 'concluded'. The statement made is a premise and is intended to fulfil the function of premises and postulates. I regard that function as marking a point of view which is used as part of the mechanism of splitting and correlation to which I have referred.

This 'view', which appears to ascribe a dominant position to emotion, is not a report, fact or discovery. In psychoanalysis there is difficulty in deciding when a statement is intended by its maker to represent a theory to be used if and when any realization appears to approximate to it (columns 4 – n–1, n., of the Grid), or when it is intended to be a statement of fact ('notation': column 3). It is therefore often criticized in a way that would be appropriate to one belief but not to the other.

I shall combine the theory of dominance of emotion with the theory of transformation and use the Grid to investigate both.[1]

In Chapter 1, I used as a model of transformation the instance of the painting and its relationship to the object it purported to represent. I shall now use the image of reflection in water and the movement of air that disturbs it (Chapter 4). A representation, though distorted by emotion as a reflection in a lake might be distorted by a breeze, can be seen to have a relationship with the object. Equally, emotions that are active can be seen to have a relationship with the object even if disturbed by the representation. Again, the representation can be seen to be related to the emotions, and *vice versa*, even if disturbed by the object. To illustrate by clinical examples: a patient is dominated by hate of the analyst because of the transformation (Tp β) the analyst has undergone, and the representation (Tp β) of the analyst that he now entertains. The patient entertains a representation (Tp β) of

[1]It would be more correct to say I shall correlate the three and see what eventuates from the correlation.

the analyst that is compatible with the hatred that has effected his transformation (Tp β). The patient entertains a transformation (Tp β) (it might be of a loved object) because of the hatred he feels for the person O of the analyst. It is inadequate to say there is a cause[1] for any of these situations. Yet I have said there is a relationship between the elements, and this means that one element effects and is effected by the others. Hume's argument that such a belief is a projection of an animistic outlook may not seem to apply to the view that one human being entertains of another. The fact that it is animistic may be obscured by the accident that the object observed is a human being. I shall suppose that the relationship is a 'constant conjunction'; that is to say, it is an element in the mind of the observer, and may or may not have a counterpart in reality. I make no claim for objective reality (as far as I understand the meaning usually attributed to the term) but for me, a factual situation (conjectured), an emotional state (say hate, also conjectured), a representation (Tp β), are constantly conjoined, and I record (Grid E3) or bind it (Grid E1) by the term 'transformation'.

It follows from the theory of transformations that whenever I see one element of the equation that includes O, Tp α, Tp β and L, or H or K, the others must be present. But I shall *not* assume that one *causes* the other, though for convenience I may (as I have already done when I used the phrase, "because of the hatred", etc.) employ a theory of causation to express myself.[2] Indeed the object of binding what seems to be a constant conjunction of elements by a name, 'transformation', is in the hope of discovering the meaning of the constant conjunction.

The constant conjunction does not *have* to be marked by one word; it may be marked by two – e.g. 'constant conjunction', or by a phrase, or an entire deductive system. Indeed such expansion may be an expression of the growth of meaning once the constant conjunction has been bound or recorded (Columns 1 and 3).

To return to the model of the reflection in water and its representation of transformation: in analysis all transformations, patient's or analyst's, are conventionally supposed to be expressed verbally. Such a supposition cannot legitimately be entertained with patients who

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[1]But see Circular Argument for the value of such a theory (p. 226).

[2]I shall not draw attention to this, leaving the reader to note instances for himself, unless there is some special reason for doing so.

transform in hallucinosis or some other unknown realm. The following problems may be discerned.

(1) What is invariant to a name and the object named? For example, it appears that there is a flower rose (O) called 'rose'. What is it that leads a person who hears this word to relate it to a particular flower? What is invariant to the following marks on the paper – rose – and the flower visible in a garden?

(2) Since I am proposing to classify statements, such as 'rose', according to grid categories, and these statements are representations of transformations; and furthermore, we know that a statement such as "I hate you" can be used in a manner compatible with column 1, or 6, or 2 (and therefore represents a transformation whose elements are in a state of balance that differs according to whether it properly belongs to column 1 or 2 or 6) what difference does it make if the Grid is being used to investigate an H link rather than K, or L rather than H? The balance is different because the components are different and to suppose that a change in components makes no difference can only mean that in the domain of the psyche the observer is incapable of discrimination and therefore of recognition of the Selected Fact that gives coherence and meaning where none existed before. Can the Grid be used for situations other than K? And if not, does this mean a defect in the Grid or some basic difference between L, H or K?

In analytic practice it is generally agreed that love or hate between analyst and patient should not obtrude. Curiosity cannot be banned if patient and analyst are to learn anything. It is a part of common experience that strong feelings of love and hate affect ability to discriminate and learn. Therefore it is worth considering what grid categories the statements made by the two parties to an analysis are when L or H obtrude in what should be a K relationship. The problem can also be regarded as concerned with the appropriateness of the Grid as an instrument to be used for investigating L or H links. Considering the horizontal axis, there is no difficulty in retaining the headings found useful for K because an L relationship clearly cannot be regarded as excluding K either in logic or reality. Therefore a statement expressing love might perfectly well fall in column 1 as a definitory hypothesis. But the question, in practice, is not simply whether a statement *can* fall in a particular category. There are two questions involved. Can I formulate a theory that a transformation associated with L, or suffused with love, or perturbed by love, can be conceived of as falling

in categories of column 1? And, is a particular statement illuminated by being thought of as belonging to one of the column 1 categories? The latter question is one that must be answered through the analytic process. The former must be answered with due consideration for methods of theory-formation and the construction of instruments (such as the Grid) which are based on theoretical pre-conceptions. Is the Grid soundly constructed for use not only in K but also for L and H links? If so, what is the difference between, say, D1 in K and D1 in L? There must be a difference because it is hard to imagine a transformation – and, in the view I am putting forward, all statements are transformations – that is, affected by L being correctly placed, in a manner that increases meaning, if it is placed in the same category as a transformation affected by K.

Though I am speaking of "transformations affected by . . ." and so implying causation, I do not wish the reader to infer my belief in the implied theory, except as a convenience in verbal communication. At this juncture a theory of causation is a hindrance to understanding the theory I wish to advance, namely, that any element in a transformation can appear to the analyst to affect any other element and *vice versa*. It appears to affect other elements in the transformation (on the analogy of atmospheric change, affecting the reflection) but other elements can be regarded, indifferently, as affecting L. Using the model to show its inadequacy to represent my meaning: the atmospheric change disturbs the reflection, but (it would be necessary to say), the disturbed reflection affects (or 'causes') the atmospheric change. Such a theory would not commend itself as a useful theory about reflections in lakes, but it is the theory of transformation that I wish to put forward. The transformation represents a constant conjunction and the idea that it has a cause, or that one element causes another, I regard as derived from forces within the observer and not necessarily having a part in the conjunction observed. In short, the idea that the constant conjunction has a meaning may be logically (psychologically) necessary but is not necessary to the constant conjunction; its importance for this discussion lies in the fact that L, H and K must be regarded as an essential element amongst all the elements seen to be constantly conjoined. This is true of the analyst's constant conjunctions and of those that he thinks are an aspect of the analysand's personality. Any transformation may thus be regarded as (a) an instance of the analyst's seeing a number of elements as constantly conjoined

and therefore worth binding by the name 'transformation', and (b) an instance of the analysand's seeing a number of elements as constantly conjoined and therefore to be bound by whatever name he regards as adequate. The interpretation given should then afford an opportunity for analyst and analysand to contrast two sets of transformation, the analyst's and the analysand's, and the analysand's and the analysand's (when the latter is affecting two transformations of the same O – which is commonly the case in conflict).

A common instance of the factors I am discussing can be seen in pictorial art where the picture (transformation) can be classified as a portrait, or a caricature, or a cartoon, and so on. O may be the same in all representations, but a different name is given according to the components of the transformation. In the named examples the dominance of L or H or K will influence classification of the whole.

I shall now consider 'meaning' and 'constant conjunction' in more detail, leaving discussion of L, H and K till later.

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A constant conjunction is a function of consciousness in the observer. The observer feels that it is a necessity *for him* that the conjunction should have a meaning *for him*. Meaning is a function of self-love, self-hate or self-knowledge; it is not logically, but psycho-logically necessary. The constant conjunction, once named, must, as a matter of psychic necessity, then be found to have a meaning. Once psycho-logically necessary meaning has been achieved reason, as the slave of the passions, transforms psycho-logically necessary meaning into logically necessary meaning. Inadequacy of hallucinatory gratification to promote mental growth impels activity designed to provide 'true' meaning: it is felt that the meaning attributed to the constant conjunction must have a counterpart in the realization of the conjunction. Therefore the activity of the reason as the slave of the passions is inadequate. In terms of the theory of pleasure/pain principle there is a conflict between pleasure principle and reality principle to obtain control of the reason. The objection to a meaningless universe (however big or small it may be thought to be) derives from fear that the lack of meaning is a sign that meaning has been destroyed and the threat this holds for essential narcissism. If any given universe cannot yield a meaning *for the individual*, his narcissism demands the existence of a god, or some ultimate object, for which it has a meaning from which meaning he is supposed to benefit. In some instances meaninglessness is attacked by splitting and projected into an object. Meaning or its lack, in analysis, is a function of self-love, self-hate, self-knowledge.

If narcissistic love is unsatisfied the development of love is disturbed and cannot extend to love of objects. Disturbed self-love is accompanied by intolerance of meaning or its lack. The one

contributes to the other. If the theories put forward in this book are felt to have or to lack meaning, they and the reasons for rejection, or acceptance, must be regarded as functions of L, H and K links of the self with the self.

The significance of self-love, -hate and -knowledge in psychoanalytic practice may be contrasted with its philosophical, moral or religious significance as it appears, to take one example, in the saying of Jesus that, "No man hath greater love than this, that he lay down his life for another". Psychoanalysis is concerned with love as an aspect of mental development and the analyst must consider the maturity of love and 'greatness' in relation to maturity.

The value of the vertical axis of the Grid as marking steps in maturation or L or H could be supported from experience with patients. The analyst may ask himself which of his clinical experiences of L might appear to approximate to the category D4; and so with other categories.

Superficially an analytic session may appear boring or featureless, alarming or devoid of interest, good or bad. The analyst, seeing beyond the superficial, is aware that he is in the presence of intense emotion; there should be no occasion on which this is not apparent to him.

The intense experience is ineffable but once known cannot be mistaken; this chapter must be understood to relate to and be in preparation for participation in it, for if such a contact is maintained the analyst can devote himself to evaluating and interpreting the central experience and, if he sees fit, the superficialities in which it is embedded.

One such group of superficialities pertains to the circumstances in which analysis is conducted. These are usually physically comfortable and bear the stamp of unadventurous civilized existence. They therefore conspire against awareness that analysand and analyst are engaged on a venture which is as hazardous as activities in which the perils are more obvious and dramatic. In what the danger consists will depend on circumstances, but danger and awareness of danger are features of the situation with which the analyst should be in contact. The approach to it, to be effective, is 'binocular'; the analyst must be aware, while attending to the patient's material, of the dangers of his association with that particular patient: he should also be able to see what the danger is that the patient is inviting him by his presence

to share. I stress these points because what I have to say about the Grid and transformations is incomprehensible without it.

An explorer's knowledge of instruments must be such that he can use them in situations of stress. The analyst must use instruments that are altered by the circumstances they are devised to study. The Grid and the concept of transformations are altered by the situation they are devised to examine in proportion as they are brought to bear on it. They retain their character so long as they are employed *away* from the tense situation; after a session in which they have been employed, though so transformed by Ta α and by the tension of the session that the analyst may not be able to see that grid and transformation are in use, they resume the characteristics they possess extra-analytically. This is disquieting, but no one who tries to use the Grid or transformation concepts in a session would doubt that it is true. Unless transformed so that the instrument (O = the Grid) has become Ta β it loses power to illuminate during the session, but regains it afterwards. Untransformed, they would reduce the analyst to the state of a musician who, aware that the composition of which he was giving a concert performance was made up of scales and arpeggios, began to play it as if it were an exercise in scales and arpeggios.

No one can understand the Grid or transformations without experience of their use as part of psychoanalytic practice. Suppose that this essential contact is established and that the patient is making his contribution: the more it were possible to go into it, the more complex would the contribution appear to be. If the analyst's attention is slanted to pick up the characteristics that determine grid classification, it would be selective attention. Therefore construction of the Grid is such that it picks up what is wanted for psychoanalysis.

Although home work is not done in an atmosphere of emotional tension, grid and transformation theory are applied to the recollection of such situations. The analyst's intuition, which it is the object of these reviews to exercise and develop, is operating in contact with the tense situation. It is important to distinguish between the Grid (as it appears in my scheme) operating in tranquillity on recollections, and the Grid as part of the analyst's intuitive contact with the emotional situation itself.

The appearance in psychoanalysis of black-heads, spots, dots, staccato marks in musical scores, points, etc., can all be represented by the geometer's point; similarly the variety of supposedly phallic

symbols can be represented by the geometer's line. I shall take advantage of this to demonstrate the difference of K and –K.

The point and the line, representing all Tp *β*'s, are used by certain patients, who believe others do the same, as if they or their signs in painting, music, words, etc., were things. That is to say, such a patient hearing me say "point", or seeing a dot, behaves as if the point, however it is signified or represented, marks the place where the breast (or penis) was. This 'place' seems to be invested by the patient with characteristics that less disturbed people might attribute to an object they would call a ghost. The point (·) and the term 'point' are taken as sensible manifestations of the 'no-breast'. In so far as I can express it in ordinary terms, the patient seems to think that the fact that the word "point" is used, is a sign of the presence of a non-existent breast, 'the place where the breast was', having many of the characteristics of a breast that is hostile because it no longer exists. In short, the word 'breast' is not recognized as a word representing a breast, but is thought to be the outward manifestation of a 'no-breast', one of the characteristic qualities, so to speak, of the 'no-breast' itself. It is in this way that a certain class of patient 'concludes' that a thought is a thing, albeit a 'thing' in a sense that a rational being does not ordinarily understand. Such a view contrasts with that which enables a mathematician to use a point, however represented, to elaborate a geometric system.

Similarly, it contrasts with the ordinary view of the word 'breast' or 'point' that enables it to be used to elaborate anatomical or physiological or artistic or aesthetic (in the philosophical sense) systems.

I can differentiate the views by regarding the extra-ordinary view as backward-looking and relating to what has been lost, and the ordinary view as forward-looking and relating to what can be found. Such a differentiation is not convenient because it implies a penumbra of associations, and therefore has implications, that limit my freedom of discussion. I shall therefore denote the extra-ordinary view by the sign –K and the ordinary view by the sign K. I shall continue the process of differentiation of the ordinary from the extra-ordinary view by using as a model a system of co-ordinates, analogous to that employed by the algebraic geometer, in which two axes intersect at a point O. K will lie to the right of O, –K to the left. I shall further suppose that O can be replaced by the point or the line, or a word such as 'breast' or 'penis', or any other sign representing any constant conjunction. For this

discussion I shall suppose the point replaces O as the origin. For the point to become adequate for manipulation in geometric systems it is clear that it should not be invested with a penumbra of inappropriate associations. The associations of a statement include feelings: indeed many of the associations of a verbal statement represent feelings; the objection to Aristotle's term for point, on the ground that it 'meant' puncture and therefore was too closely tied to reality, may be matched by Aristotle's objection that Plato called the point the beginning of a line (*Metaph*. 992. a. 20). It suggests that the importance of a definition is to mark a constant conjunction without the evocation of feelings; but something seems real only when there are feelings about it. The negative quality of a definition, then, relates to the need to exclude existing emotion as well as ideas. If 'point' is to be available for use in K, it must be defined to exclude the penumbra of associations with which it is invested; it has to be developed so that it reaches the stage represented by D category. The realization which will approximate to it will be an emotional experience. It must lend itself to saturation by an emotional experience and its sign should represent this.

As I do not attempt clinical description, except by way of illustration, I shall sketch very briefly the development in K of the geometrical elaboration. The sketch represents clinical experience and is accurate only as far as one experience can be.

The geometrical elaboration proceeds as follows: commencing with a point, line, or any more complex figure such as those associated with the theorem of Pythagoras, the proposition is read off the figure, that is to say, it seems to be regarded as self-evident from the nature of the figure. Inspection of the figure may be followed by a formulation in terms other than pictorial. Plutarch gives a fanciful and oedipal description[1] of the 3, 4, 5 triangle. The mathematical development may have been achieved by transformation of the visual image into an arithmetical formulation. However that may be, my analytical experience is compatible with a development that proceeds from the *complete* visual image to elaboration in non-visual terms; that is, from row C categories to row H, though I have not witnessed a row H transformation. I have no evidence for mathematical formulations that are not geometric in origin (other than material suggesting a relationship between having a third son and having three sons).

[1]Quoted by Heath: *The Thirteen Books of Euclid's Elements*, Vol. 1, p. 417.

What is not clear is the reason for a geometric rather than verbal development.

As I have no evidence in my experience, with one possible exception, of mathematical change in –K, I shall confine myself to verbal transformations.

The point has appeared clinically as dot or dots, spot or spots ('spots' in or before the eyes is a fairly common phenomenon). I have described the point or line as an object indistinguishable from the place where the breast or penis was. Owing to the difficulty of being sure what the patient is experiencing I resort to a variety of descriptions, each of which is unsatisfactory. The spot, for example, seems to be part-conscience, part-breast, part-faeces, destroyed, non-existent yet present, cruel and malignant. The inadequacy of description or categorization as thought at all has led me to the term *β*-element as a method of representing it. The spoken word seems significant only because it is invisible and intangible; the visual image is similarly significant because it is inaudible. Every word represents what is not – a 'no-thing', to be distinguished from 'nothing'.

The patient's attention passes from one *β*-element to the next, all linked by a chain of pseudo-causation to deny that their 'cause' or genesis lay in the destruction and dispersal of their common origin. Such manifestations are compatible with Melanie Klein's theory of splitting and projective identification which she elaborated to describe aspects of the infant's relationship with the breast. The aspect that is most relevant to discussion of K and –K is the breast's association with provision of meaning. It will be remembered that a fear that it is dying is, in accordance with Melanie Klein's theory, projected into the mother's breast. It should be taken back purged of its painful quality and invested with more benign associations, but as I said in my paper on thinking[1] it may in some circumstances be denuded of such meaning as it has, so that the transaction terminates in the infant dominated by a re-introjected nameless dread.

I recall this to explain the behaviour of the patient who strives to link in a chain of pseudo-causation a number of visual images (or other elements) in the way described.[2] In K and –K the analyst

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[1] 'A Theory of Thinking' [in *Second Thoughts*: see Volume VI].

[2] See Chapter 4.

and analysand are searching for meaning. The column 4 categories, which I have described as corresponding to Freud's term 'attention' are searching for meaning. Any element categorized by the column 4 use is therefore being employed to discover meaning. (Contrasted with 3, notation, which is concerned with retaining meaning, and 5, which may now be further differentiated from 4 as being concerned with the search for *moral* meaning.)

Pseudo-causation is the –K version of causation (which falls in the K domain). Both pseudo-causation and causation are 'linear' in character. That is, the elements in a chain of causation may be represented geometrically by points in a line. The idea of causation is itself an assertion (in grid terms it falls in one of the categories of column 1) that certain elements are constantly conjoined and that the conjunction is one of cause and effect. It is therefore an assertion that the conjunction has a meaning.

Both representations may be compared with Ps ⇌ D and Selected Fact.

Suppose we regard the linear representation, as it occurs in K and –K, in the light of the theory of transformations: the line of points in –K may then be regarded as a version of the straight line of points in K. Furthermore, we may consider the line in –K as a disturbed version of the straight line in K, or *vice versa*. What then is the disturbance?

From the psychoanalytic point of view the most likely source of disturbance can be regarded as emotional. This source can be further regarded as lying in the individual's (a) narcissism and (b) social-ism. In so far as the geometrical representation can be regarded as a visual image it can be related to the model[1] of the reflection of objects in a disturbed surface such as a sheet of water. The reflecting surface and the source of the disturbance would both represent parts of the personality.

Narcissism and social-ism may be regarded as at opposite poles; I shall not consider what they are poles *of*, but shall suppose that the intensity of narcissism falls off as the intensity of social-ism increases, and *vice versa*. Further, I shall suppose that the increase of intensity in narcissism is accompanied by a narrowing or concentration of emotion till it can be said to be one emotion such as love or hate or fear or sex, or any other. Similarly the intensity of social-ism is accompanied

[1]See Chapter 4.

by a widening of the spectrum of emotions. I shall further suppose that the total range from intense narcissism to intense social-ism is subject to splitting. In other words, that there can be a state in which intense narcissistic hate is split off from all other feelings and that this is true of all feelings in turn. The same description will apply to splitting of the social feelings.

Splitting need not be associated with L or H. It may be a function of K, in which case it is what is scientifically known as analysis and is quite commonly used in psychoanalysis. If the range narcissism ↔ social-ism is regarded as split, for whatever reason, it may be represented geometrically by points on a line. As we shall have later to consider the geometrical representation of certain states by control (from a point) and parallel projection (from a series of points) and the transformations and invariants associated with them, splitting of the range narcissism ↔ social-ism is important.

The importance for the psychoanalyst of the range narcissism ↔ social-ism can be grasped by considering the close relationship of meaning and narcissism.[1]

The infant's experience of the breast as the source of emotional experiences (later represented by terms such as love, meaning, understanding) means that disturbances in relationship with the breast involve disturbance over a wide range of adult relationships. The function of the breast in supplying meaning is important for the development of a capacity to learn. In an extreme instance, namely the fear of the total destruction of the breast, not only does this involve fears that he has ceased to exist (since without the breast he is not viable) but fears that meaning itself, as if it were matter, had ceased to exist. In some contingencies the breast is not regarded as the source of meaning so much as meaning itself. This anxiety is often screened by the fact that the analyst gives interpretations and thus seems to provide evidence that meaning exists. If this is not observed the patient's intolerance of meaninglessness is not interpreted: he will pour out a flood of words so that he can evoke a response indicating that meaning exists either in his own behaviour or in that of the analyst. Since the first requisite for the discovery of the meaning of any conjunction depends on the ability to admit that the phenomena may have no meaning, an inability to admit that they have no

[1]See Chapter 6.

meaning stifles the possibility of curiosity at the outset. The same is true of love and hate. The need to manipulate the session to evoke evidence of the existence of meaning extends to a need to evoke evidence of the existence of love and hate. Anyone with experience of the psychotic personality will be familiar with the incessantly active probing designed to tap sources of counter-transference. The patient's associations are directed to obtaining evidence of meaning and emotion (here broadly divided into two all-embracing categories of love and hate). Since the patient's attention is directed to finding evidence of meaning, but not to finding what the meaning is, interpretations have little effect in producing change until the patient sees that he is tapping a source of reassurance to provide an *antidote* to his problem and not a *solution* of it.

The thought, represented by a word or other sign, may, when it is significant as a no-thing, be represented by a point (·). The point may then represent the position where the breast was, or may even *be* the no-breast. The same is true of the line, whether it is represented by the word line or a mark made on the ground or on paper. The circle, useful to some personalities as a visual image of 'inside and outside', is to other personalities, notably the psychotic, evidence that no such dividing membrane exists.

Intolerance of a no-thing, taken together with the conviction that any object capable of a representative function is, by virtue of what the sane personality regards as its representative function, not a representation at all but a no-thing itself, precludes the possibility of words, circles, points and lines being used in the furtherance of learning from experience. They become a provocation to substitute the thing for the no-thing, and the thing itself as an instrument to take the place of representations when representations are a necessity as they are in the realm of thinking. Thus actual murder is to be sought instead of the thought represented by the word 'murder', an actual breast or penis rather than the thought represented by those words, and so on until quite complex actions and real objects are elaborated as part of acting-out. Such procedures do not produce the results ordinarily achieved by thought, but contribute to states approximating to stupor, fear of stupor, hallucinosis, fear of hallucinosis, megalomania and fear of megalomania.[1]

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[1]See Chapter 12.

I now explore some implications of the concurrence of elements of verbal with elements of geometrical formulation. The association of the circle with 'in and out' contributes to the difficulty of understanding the concepts of the line that cuts a circle in points that are conjugate complex. The difficulty arises from the supposition that the line that does so lies 'outside' the circle; as opposed to the line that cuts it in two points, whose roots are real and distinct, and is supposed to lie 'inside' the circle. The difficulty is diminished if there is no intolerance of the no-thing to contend with and therefore no opposition to a term of which the meaning is undetermined.

The simple example I have taken of the straight line that may cut a circle in two points that are (i) real and distinct, or (ii) real and coincident (if the line is a tangent), or (iii) conjugate complex (if the line lies entirely 'outside the circle'), poses a problem that the mathematician has been able to solve by taking a mathematical point of view, but I use it to illustrate the nature of the psychological problem. I shall state this as follows: in the domain of thought where a straight line can be regarded as lying within, or touching, or wholly outside a circle, a transformation has been effected whereby certain characteristics, lending themselves to mathematical manipulation, have been manipulated mathematically to adumbrate and then solve a mathematical problem. The residual characteristics, however, retain their problem, un-named (un-bound) and so un-investigated. Hallucinosis is a domain, analogous to that of mathematics, in which their solution is sought. The mathematical problem resembles a psychoanalytic problem in that it is necessary that the solution should have a wide degree of applicability and acceptance and so avoid the need to apply different arguments to different cases when the different cases appear to have essentially the same configuration. Any analyst will recognize the confusion that is caused, or at best the sense of dissatisfaction that prevails, when a discussion by members makes it quite clear that the configuration of the case is apprehended by all, but the arguments formulated in its elucidation vary from member to member and from case to case. It is essential that such a state of affairs should be made unnecessary if progress is to take place. The search must be for formulations that represent the essential similarity of the configurations, recognized by all who deal with them, and thus to make unnecessary the *ad hoc* nature of so many psychoanalytic theories.

The individual error can always be recognized and allowed for if once the lack of a unifying theory, applicable to all similar configurations, has been recognized and eliminated. It will be noted that in writing of 'similar configurations' I am pre-supposing the presence of invariants which are consciously or unconsciously recognized as such.

The geometric problem may appear more intractable than it need be by the apparatus of circles and straight lines drawn on paper. Included in this apparatus and of paramount importance, for the paper representations are not necessary, is the mental equipment of concepts such as inside and outside and the rules for their manipulation. Ignoring for the present any question of psycho-pathological inhibitions, it is evident that the inadequate apparatus must be replaced by a better. If we place ourselves in the position of the mathematician before Cartesian co-ordinates had been invented and before the geometric approach could be transformed into an algebraic approach (or in the position of the therapist before psychoanalysis was discovered or invented), it is easy to suppose that our dilemma would be the result of inadequate knowledge and experience, or simply lack of mental acuity. Such an explanation, however convincingly supported by the facts, is open to the objection that is levelled against the state of affairs where a number of different arguments are educed to apply to what appear to be different cases of the same configuration. For I have in this present argument proposed ignoring the presence of psychopathological inhibitions, and it is evident that such an exclusion makes any theory based on it exclude the similarity of the configuration in the two cases: in one, of the person unable to tolerate the no-thing, and in the other, of the person who lacks the knowledge of Cartesian co-ordinates and algebraic manipulation. I propose therefore to suppose that the personality who cannot tolerate the point (breast, penis, and other verbal representations) and the pre-Cartesian mathematician (the prefix 'pre-' being used not in a social-temporal sense but as a term for a stage in individual development) to be in the same predicament. This I shall do by assuming that the mathematician is unconscious of the system of co-ordinates or algebraic manipulation.

By this means the two personalities can be differentiated by reference to the same frame. This disturbed patient can be said to be

conscious of a 'past' that no longer exists and the mathematician to be unconscious of a 'future' that has not come to pass.

I now transform the theory adumbrated in the preceding paragraph to the domain of the mind; in doing so, the temporal component is first transformed into a scale at one end of which is the past and at the other the future. This description is inadequate as I wish to divest the concept of its associations of time and space. I shall do this by giving the term unconscious a sense, thus: $\overrightarrow{\text{unconscious}}$ and $\overleftarrow{\text{unconscious}}$; reciprocally, $\overrightarrow{\text{conscious}}$ and $\overleftarrow{\text{conscious}}$. The state of mind of the mathematician unaware of mathematical formal artifices can then be represented by $\overrightarrow{\text{unconscious}}$ and that of the disturbed patient by $\overleftarrow{\text{conscious}}$.

It will be seen that as it stands the last statement is ambiguous, for it can be taken to represent a passive statement that the patient knows of his past as any ordinary personality might do. In fact it must represent an active hallucinatory state in which he is conscious of being in a past that replaces and excludes the present. Similarly, $\overrightarrow{\text{conscious}}$ does not represent an awareness that events of some sort will take place in the future: it represents a replacement and exclusion of the present by a hallucinatory state of gratification either of foreboding, or of pleasurable anticipation. An instance would be a patient who was conscious of unknown (because nothing has taken place) dread in a state of perpetual imminence, or reciprocally of unknown pleasure equally imminent. The tone of $\overleftarrow{\text{conscious}}$ and $\overrightarrow{\text{conscious}}$ is determined by factors I am not at present discussing; $\overleftarrow{\text{unconscious}}$ and $\overrightarrow{\text{unconscious}}$ will be marked by the presence of elements belonging to column 2 categories. Typical of this would be theories about the past or future that are known to be false. If it is correct to assume that column 2 categories are related to $\overleftarrow{\text{unconscious}}$ and $\overrightarrow{\text{unconscious}}$ we must consider what relationship exists between column 4 categories and $\overleftarrow{\text{conscious}}$ and $\overrightarrow{\text{conscious}}$ for it is natural to suppose there is a relationship between *attention* to a problem and *consciousness* of it. If it is to be assumed that this is true of a problem it is legitimate to assume it is also true of a state of pleasure or unpleasure. It can now be seen that conscious and unconscious, with a sign for sense, are signs for something that is a denial of 'the present' and can accordingly represent the Kleinian theory of splitting and projective identification. The realization represented by these theories and

signs, annihilated time, can be visualized as a point – 'where the present used to be'.

By definition the term 'conscious' relates to states within the personality; consciousness of an external reality is secondary to consciousness of an internal psychic reality. Indeed consciousness of an external reality depends on the person's ability to tolerate being reminded of an internal reality.[1] If he cannot tolerate being reminded of an internal reality, it may involve widespread employment of column 2 categories to keep awareness of aspects of real external objects at bay.

Before proceeding further, the reader may find it helpful to reconsider any difficulties he has in understanding formulations involving differences in point-pairs. If he has difficulty in understanding points that are conjugate complex, real and coincident, real and distinct, he can compare this experience with the difficulty he may feel in understanding the following problem:

Two breasts have disappeared. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say they have shrunk or faded away until only two points remain. The protagonist may feel reconciled to this fact, or he may feel quite unable to tolerate these spots (or points or (·)) because to him they are either places where the breasts were, or, more poignantly, no-breasts. As he watches they appear to come together until they are coincident with each other and the boundary of his personality. They might just as well have travelled towards each other in a straight line and so coincided without touching him. But suppose they have travelled towards, or been drawn towards, him at the same time: then the line along which they travel to meet each other has been pulled into a curve that touches his personality at the point of coincidence. Then they disappear. Where have they gone? If he had an inside or an outside they might have gone inside him or gone out the other side. But suppose they are not inside or outside. Worse still, suppose there is no inside or outside, that he himself is only a place-where-he-used-to-be, a place-where-inside-and-outside-used-to-be?

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[1]Relationship between the external and internal reality is thus similar to the relationship between pre-conception and the realization approximating to it. It is reminiscent of Plato's Theory of Forms.

The elements of the problem are: (i) the no-breast, or point, or (·), (ii) the no-penis, or straight line, or (——), and (iii) the no-inside-or-outside, or circle, or (O).

We can now allow our lack of understanding to impel curiosity along paths that are apparently different. Starting, say, at the no-inside-or-outside, we may proceed towards sophistication by one of two paths which lead respectively to the concept of a circle in one instance (the geometer's view) and in the other to the concept of depersonalization. Or, we may proceed by using both paths; before this I shall discuss some problems of the no-penis, straight line, (——).

It will be noticed that some configurations in which the no-breast and no-penis are involved suggest the possibility that it is unnecessary to have two concepts (of straight line and point) and that they could be replaced by a single concept.

The pre-Euclidean definition of a straight line, given by Plato, seems to depend on a visual impression of a straight line as it would appear to an eye placed at one end. The geometer's need to make the definition independent of an implied appeal to vision can be expressed in grid terms as a process of transformation from C1–H1. I shall use the sign ↑to imply 'sense from' for H to A, and ↓ for A to H.

I shall commence my investigation of the point and line as visual images. As I propose first to explore their characteristics as 'no-things' the sense will be towards *β*-elements. Therefore the trend of the investigation of the point and line can be indicated by writing the category of the objects concerned as C1 ↑. When I wish to indicate that I am reversing the trend I shall write the category of the object with the appropriate sign.

Reversing the procedure of the geometer, who needs to divest the straight line C1 of its visual implications and does so by resort to algebraic calculi H1, we progress H1 ↑, C1 ↑ to A1.

The category A1 indicates that the straight line is a thought that is indistinguishable from a thing and is related to the *β*-elements as I have at various times described them. In view of the preceding discussion we may describe the straight line of category A1 as being, indifferently, a no-thing, a no-thought (in so far as it is a 'thing'), a no-penis; in short, many descriptive expansions may be applied to it, but all will be characterized by the vice attributed to fundamental definitions of geometry, namely, that all are negative.

I have previously given my reasons for supporting the definition of a definition as something negative in *essence*; a definition should implicitly or explicitly be a statement that the statement itself is not any *past* statement (if not, where would be the need for the statement?) and has no meaning (if it had there would be no need for a definition) to bind the constantly conjoined elements; for they are to be bound so that their meaning can be determined. It is therefore quite appropriate that we should arrive by way of discussion of the no-thing at characteristics which are impregnated with a quality regarded by the scientist (proceeding in thought to H1 ↓) as undesirable.

To return to the straight line. Suppose we approach it as it is in category C1. As a visual image we can subject it to a number of manipulations that are excluded by the rules that govern its manipulation as an H1 object. Any mathematical terms I employ must be considered likewise to be freed from the rigour that governs the regulation of H1 elements when they are H1 elements themselves.

We may start with a mental image of a line in front of us. We can suppose that the two ends of the line are joined to our eye or that our eye projects the line outwards to a point where we want it. In both instances the eye is the vertex of a configuration of lines. We can rotate the line so that it is end-on to our 'line of sight' and so appears as a point. Or we may consider that the point is projected outward while remaining attached to the eye. If projected outwards while remaining attached, it becomes stretched out and can be considered therefore as a line. The line 'seen' end-on and the point stretched out may be regarded as duals, or the same object transformed under projection and possessing a different sense according to whether it is supposed to be proceeding from the eye or drawn in to it. I have already discussed other manipulations of these visual images and shall not therefore elaborate further; the reader can continue the exercise for himself. The immediate question is whether it is helpful to consider point or line as separate entities, or whether it is better to consider them as different manifestations of one entity. But this raises the immediate question, better or useful to whom and for what? So long as I concern myself with visual images there seems to be freedom. If I want to use the point to enclose an object, I can make it stretch out so that it catches up with its tail, the object to be enclosed lying inside the circle described. But is this a point with a tail, or a circle?

Suppose for the purposes of discussion it is convenient to replace point and line by a single object. This involves simplification in that we now have one object for all configurations but it involves restriction to objects of category C1 and resort to projection from a vertex.

Suppose the problem chosen (enclosure) proves recalcitrant[1]; we may vary the choice of vertex spatially, or from one sense to another, say visual to auditory. The no-thing owes its existence to the alimentary system as a model of the mind in its function of employing thought. Assuming the visual mental system, despite its freedom, is inadequate to provide a solution to problems of enclosure, is it possible to find some shift of vertex that will neutralize the obstacles encountered in employing the eye as a vertex of the mental visual system? There is nothing out of the way in making such an approach; as we saw, conversational English betrays the widespread use of alimentary metaphor when processes of thought are in dispute.[2] Equally common are locutions such as being "hot on the scent" of a problem, "smelling a rat", etc., but change to a vertex provided by the mental counterpart of a sense of smell, so poorly endowed verbally, simplifies the problem of enclosure, thanks to ideas of inspiration and expiration, but complicates all else further.

To shift from a vertex of one 'sense' or 'system' to another affords a way out of a difficulty that use of one vertex alone makes impossible. Apart from the problem of transformation of olfactory, or respiratory, representation into verbal representation the respiratory mental counterpart is no less effective than the visual in accepting point and line. The use of an aural mental counterpart to provide another vertex reveals some interesting comparisons with the alimentary, visual and respiratory vertices. Noise presents problems that sound, treated musically, can transcend. Musical methods of notation are in their adequacy reminiscent of algebraic methods of geometrical notation. But the important and striking feature revealed by a comparison of the mental counterparts of visual with other vertices is the superior power of the visual vertex to illuminate a problem over that of all other mental counterparts of the senses. (I find I turn spontaneously to the use of verbal representations of visual elements to express my

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[1]As it well may – even to the infant.

[2]See *Learning from Experience*, Chapter 3 [this volume].

meaning.) Reversal of direction in the system of which the vertex is a part, is associated with what are ordinarily known as hallucinations. The supremacy of the visual vertex contributes to my belief that the solution of the problem of communicating psychoanalytically will have to be found through row C elements to geometrical formulation and thence to row H elements.

Before leaving the discussion of choice of vertices I shall consider the vertex provided by the mental counterpart of the reproductory system. First I deal with a matter that may have puzzled the reader, namely my use of the term 'mental counterpart'.

If the reader visualizes a point or a line, without representation of it on paper, he does something that has been variously described as, "using his inward eye", "visualizing", "seeing in imagination", etc. I consider this activity to depend on a "mental counterpart of the sense of sight". Similarly the "bitterness" of a memory is dependent on a mental counterpart of the alimentary system; similarly with others including the reproductory system.

The 'inner' reproductory system, as I may call the mental counterpart of the reproductory system by analogy with the 'inward eye' of the mental counterpart of the visual system, must not be confused with awareness of reproductive activity any more than visual images that are related to the activity of the mental counterpart of sight are to be confused with objects of sight. The mental counterpart of the reproductory system is related to premonitions of pleasure and pain. The second source of confusion may lie in my use of the term 'vertex'. I am unwilling to use a term such as 'point-of-view' because I do not wish to be reduced to writing 'from the point of view of digestion', or 'from the point of view of a sense of smell' when the distinctions between metaphorical and literal usages are fine yet difficult to preserve. I can describe my use of the term 'vertex' as an example of taking a mathematical term (grid category H1) and using it as a model (grid category C1). With the reproductory mental counterpart as vertex, transformation of the point or line is into a surface or plane. In the last sentence I resort to verbal representation of geometrical visual images. This occurs so naturally as to suggest that the visual mental counterpart has supremacy over other mental counterparts; visual images lend themselves to transformation in different media. In using the term 'vertex' I employ a geometrical concept of a high degree of sophistication, but as used by me its grid category is C1.

To sum up: the point/line may be transformed by central projection from any one of a number of vertices, or it may be transformed by parallel projection by a single point at infinity. What this may mean must be discussed below, together with the use of the point to mark a vertex of projection.

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The 'point' and the 'line' represent visual images which remain invariant under a wide range of conditions. The same is true of the visual images associated with the propositions of Euclid; hence the propositions themselves are communicated over long periods of time and between widely separated cultures and races. This may appear to be true of any visual representation, such as cave paintings, but although the column 3 component, record or notation, is strong, the artistic representation does not appear to be so rich in ideational content as the geometrical representation. The geometer Bhāskara[1] drew four right-angled triangles inwards, one on each side of the square of the hypotenuse, and left it with the comment, "See!"[2]

There are two dissimilar observations that can be made. One is mathematical and can be stated: $C^2 = 4\ (ab/2) + (a - b)^2 = a^2 - b^2$. The other is mythical and can be stated: of the 3, 4, 5 triangle, 3 is the first odd number and is perfect, 4 is the square on an even side 2, while 5 partly resembles the father and partly the mother, being the sum of 3 and 2, "and we must then liken the perpendicular to the male, the base to the female and the hypotenuse to the offspring of both".[3]

The mathematical statement of the theme has been profitable and has led to development. The mythological statement, though widely

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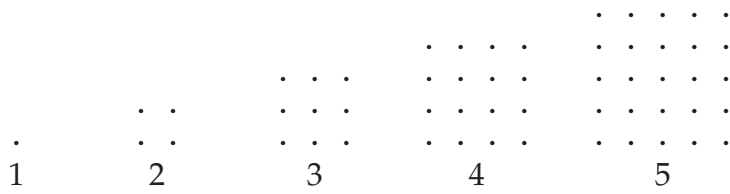
[1][Bhāskara (1114 AD–1185 BC) (also known as Bhāskarācārya) was the leading mathematician of the twelfth century, and the first known to have made full and systematic use of the decimal number system. *Ed.*]

[2]T. Heath (1956), *The Thirteen Books of Euclid's Elements*, Vol. I, Book I, Proposition 47, p. 355.

[3][Ibid., p. 417. *Ed.*]

spread, has not. Is it possible to release it from its fetters by reverting to point and line?

If we use the point alone to construct a square, we can produce the following effects:



In each case we have added a gnomon to the previous figure. It could represent accumulative if not creative activity. It adds to something or someone not specified. Whether we regard it as creative or not depends on whether ↑ ↓ represent its direction and a process of coherence or disintegration. If the direction is ↑ the trend is destruction of the capacity for thought. In verbal terms, if the process is from square to fragmentation of the square[1] it can be distinguished from the process of integrating fragments to make a square by calling the former creative, the latter destructive. If the horizontal axis represents uses, there should be some relatedness between the elements of one column to the preceding and subsequent column, such as I have established between rows and put forward tentatively for the columns. It is easy to see that such a relationship might exist between 1, 3, 4, and 5 in that the order may be seen as one of increasing curiosity, at least in K, and possibly in L and H also. But 2 does not fit into such a progression. It might be better to replace it by a sign ← indicating that the element so distinguished was a use of that particular element to suppress another. $\overleftarrow{3}$ would then indicate the element was being employed to note or record something with the express purpose of exclusion of a true statement. But the antithesis I require is to a use in its fundamental nature. The $\overleftarrow{\text{square}}$ should mean the total denial of any initiative that $\overrightarrow{\text{square}}$ could effect. $\overrightarrow{3}$ would mean notation that is growth-producing: $\overleftarrow{3}$ would mean notation that was growth-inhibiting. But in fact I want to give the ← the quality of binding or

[1]The points can be disposed so that their number represents a square but their visual impression does not: which 'view' (vertex) are we to adopt?

definition as I have described it and that being so it must be understood to have no meaning that exists already.

What meaning can be attributed to $\overleftarrow{1-n}$? It is *not* that 4 is transformed into 3, unless we suppose that curiosity, once aroused so that column 3 elements become column 4 elements, might again subside so that column 4 elements left a residue of column 3 elements. This change is better represented by denoting the terminal categories thus: 3 ← 4. If we assume that the progression of uses is not linear there is no difficulty in writing n → 2 or 2 ← n without assuming any transition from column 5 to 4 to 3 to 2. Suppose 3 → 4 accompanied by suspicion. Suppose 4 leads to stimulation of impotent envy and hate. Destructive retreat takes place 4 → 1. The fragmentation of point and line cannot go beyond the point; though the line may be annihilated, having been transformed into a series of points, to a single point, to the place where the point was, this last is still a point. The point is thus indestructible. A patient's state of mind could be represented by such a model on occasions when he continues attack after attack on objects by which he is persecuted.

Such behaviour is determined more by the strength[1] of emotions than by their character. A desire to be loving and creative turns to hate and destructiveness if it is frustrated by disparity between equipment and ambition. This is true of every impulse to act, including impulses to change from one state of mind to another. Such an impulse is analogous to the impulse to translate thought into action.

It sometimes helps to illuminate an analytic problem by speaking of a characteristic appearing to the patient as a "ghost of the past". The infant experiences what may be called ghosts of the future. Such locutions are possible in adult investigations, for maturity provides terms born of experience together with facility in their manipulation. But the facts of personality, its own and that of others, exist for the infant and present him with problems that he must solve. Is there some adult problem that will provide an analogy for what the infant appears to experience? What analogy is available to the infant by aid of which it can approach its problems of personality? What past problems provide us with analogies for our present problems? What, in our present problems, is analogous to problems we have encountered in the past?

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[1]See discussion of 'Hyperbole' in Chapters 10–12.

The problem of the personality at the crossroads, the problem of what impulses must dominate when thought is translated into action, or from meditation into decision, or from one state of mind into another, may be regarded as one of power and the seizure of a commanding position. This struggle may be regarded indifferently as taking place within the psyche, outside it, or tangentially; the model may be that of Oedipus at the crossroads at Thebes or the circle whose circumference is intersected at two actual and separate points, two points that are actual and coincident or two that are conjugate and complex.

The advantage of using the Oedipus myth to represent the row C category version is economy and avoidance of a whole series of *ad hoc* models and theories for different problems that have the same configurations. The circle cut by the line offers a connection with point and line, and a model for inside and outside. Later we shall have to consider the appropriateness or relevance of inside and outside to emotional states recognized to be 'infectious' or 'contagious'.

Emergence of a group of impulses as dominant in the psyche involves conflict within the personality and crisis outside, but this same crisis can be seen as the point at which T α gives rise to T β.

A proper use of the oedipal elements is obstructed by a tendency to allow the narrative form[1] of the myth to impose a cause-and-effect outlook on the investigator. The theory of causation is implied in and inseparable from the narrative form of the myth, but the narrative form is a function of column 3 categories and is related directly to notation. The confusion of notation (particularly in its association with narrative and a theory of causation) with categories of columns 4 and 5 (attention and investigation) obscures the importance in learning from experience of the mechanism of Ps ⇌ D. The essential of the narrative form is that it permits easy memorization (as one might memorize a mathematical formula) of a constant conjunction. The narrative form, with its implication of causation, is relevant and significant to the myth's function to record a constant conjunction,

[1]The narrative, by introducing cause and effect as a means of binding its elements, mis-represents the constant conjunction relationship. Cause and effect is proper to the narrative but has no corresponding link between one element and another in the realization. In the realization the elements are merely conjoined.

but the relationship in which the constantly conjoined elements are combined depends on the relationship of the conjunction to Transformation.

Transformation may be a transference of characteristics from one situation to another, from one medium to another, a rigid motion, or a projective transformation. A musician or artist may transfer or project an emotional experience through T α to the finished product, T β, which may be a musical composition or a painting. If the transformation is considered to extend to the state of mind of the artist's public, the emotional experience O may be regarded as transformed into the same medium – another emotional experience.

If the transformation is in the same medium, one man's state of mind serves to produce not just *any* state of mind in another man, but a *particular* state of mind – in which the invariants are such that T β, in the second man, can be seen to relate to T, the first man's emotional response to O.

The transformation cannot occur without an emotional experience such that its proper model is the scene of violence at the crossroads at Thebes. Stating the model in other terms, the elements that must be formulated to establish their relation to each other are: the no-penis (one that is yet to be) with the no-penis (where the penis used to be).

Narrative and cause-and-effect are intrinsic to notation or record. The story of the meeting at Thebes crossroads belongs to category C3. Is there any essential difference between the record C3 and the signification of constant conjunction by C1 (definitory hypotheses)? A term 'cat' (C1) signifies a constant conjunction. So does the crossroads episode I have placed in C3. There is no narrative and no causation theory in 'cat'. The crossroads narrative has power to represent murderous feeling as part of the constant conjunction. C1 differs from C3 in that the crossroads narrative, if placed correctly in C1, would indicate the boundary within which the problem was to be completed. C3 would indicate that the story represented an element, part of a record, of a problem stated but incompletely. H1 would be a category in which only those elements would find a place which implied closure, e.g. the primitive counterparts of a circle cut by a line in two points, actual and separate. H3, however, would require that there was no limiting boundary. If the category of the episode were H3 it would represent an emotional experience outside the personality but cutting

it at two points quite different from the point pair of H1. Alternatively, the two straight lines, representing the no-penis, would not be limited by any boundary and the frame of reference would have to be provided by something that could fulfil the functions of two axes and a system of co-ordinates. The system of co-ordinates, by making possible a transformation from the visual imagery of geometry to the manipulations of algebraic symbols confers greater freedom of investigation and in this respect differs from the frame of reference provided by a state of being inside or outside the state represented by a circle. That state is centred on a no-breast (or point) and is therefore analogous to the geometrical circle, 'centred on' its centre (or point).

Column 1 categories are limiting since the definitory hypothesis is to mark a constant conjunction and the exclusion of all previously recorded constant conjunctions (the 'negative' quality of definition). The column 3 categories bind a constant conjunction, but the meaning of the constant conjunction does not have to be sought within the domain of the conjoined elements: it must be assumed that the recording aspect of notation is related to the need to find other constant conjunctions which, taken with conjunctions already bound and recorded, yield meanings (that is, relatedness and coherence) hitherto unrecorded. The recording aspect of 3 is related to the function of attention that inheres in all column 4 elements.

Freud speaks[1] of the capacity for thinking as affording relief from frustration, in that thought can fill the gap between the time when an impulse is born and its satisfaction. He is referring to action taken by the organism, under the influence of pain, to change its environment. I propose to class the transformation that takes place when thought is expressed in speech as action. Before this transformation thought is restricted to the domain of *β*-elements, *α*-elements, and dreams before they are verbalized. But as thought can be used to inhibit action, so definition can be used to inhibit thought. If persecutory feelings are strong the constant conjunction of elements can lead to a naming of the conjunction with intent to contain it, rather than to mark it for investigation. Such motivation, represented by D, approximates to the production of *β*-elements; but in its less severe forms shows as speech in which nothing can be taken for granted; the term 'cat' has no undertones and overtones, whether it is heard or uttered. In

[1]S. Freud (1911b), 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning'.

talking to a person in whom such a state is active it appears to be impossible to avoid misunderstanding unless words are used with their exact signification. The negative aspect of the definitory hypothesis is strengthened so that the exclusive function of the hypothesis is not a barrier against irrelevance but a denial of the domain to which the hypothesis belongs. For example, the term 'cat' would not bind a constant conjunction that excludes 'dogginess', but binds a constant conjunction so restrictively that it excludes all animal characteristics. Carried to extremes, the term 'cat'. is merely a sign analogous to the 'point' as the "place where the breast used to be"[1] and should mean the 'no-cat'. Further denudation leads ultimately to the point which is merely a position without any trace of what used to occupy that position.

There would seem to be no reason why the point or the line should not be regarded as 'an abstraction' or an 'unknown' in the mathematical sense. It will, or will not, be so regarded according to the use to which it is put (the horizontal axis of the Grid). Where I think it is useful to differ from the philosophical or mathematical view is in regarding 'abstraction' or 'unknown' as designations of stages on the genetic axis.

The point (·) or the line (———) and all substantival terms may, in the view put forward in *Learning from Experience*, *Elements of Psycho-Analysis*, and this book, be regarded as unknowns having two values: one, a sign for a constant conjunction and the other, a sign for the position, unoccupied, of the object.

The object, the constant conjunction, or the position it does *not* occupy, lend themselves to different treatment in that they differ from each other. If the difference can be recognized, it becomes possible to elaborate procedures which will turn to good account the properties of the two objects. For convenience I shall distinguish the object from the 'position it does not occupy' by signifying the latter by minus signs.

The rules for the manipulation of · and ——— lead to formulations, first through geometrical configurations, and then through algebraic transformations of those configurations that are analogous to pre-conceptions (row D) but belong to row H. These formulations

[1]Although I shall continue to speak of the place where something 'used to be' I mean it to be understood that the tense is a matter of indifference because, as I said earlier (Chapter 5) the point is also a 'now' which has no past or future.

may then be used in accordance with the categories I have set out on the vertical axis; such elaborations depend upon the genetic history of · and ———. This is a dimension of · and ———. They must represent where the · and the ——— used to be or where they will be at some future date. This is denied if time is reduced to a 'now' alone with a 'future' (that is where a future used to be, a not-present)and a 'past' (that is, where a past used to be and is now a not-present) that are both representations of the wreckage left by splitting attacks on the present. We must next consider the relationship of the no-thing to ideas of space, and the no-present to ideas of time.

The – · and – ——— retain meaning, as does the no-thing (because at least there is a trace of whatever it is that does not occupy the position) so long as time itself is not reduced to the moment without a past or a future. But if · represents only a position without duration, it and the corresponding line have become meaningless. In the situation represented by the meaningless · and meaningless ———, the patient can attempt to manipulate the analyst to give interpretations so that the session is used to deny complete meaninglessness and thus to provide reassurance against the dread that all meaning, all source of meaning, has been annihilated. This dread is associated with belief in the breast as the source of meaning as, physically, it is felt to be the source of milk.[1]

The point or line of the geometer may seem indistinguishable from the – · or – ———. In that case the failure to use or develop these objects or — would have to be sought in the relationship of the personality to the · or ——— part of itself. – · and + · are two values of ·, and the same is true of + and – ———. The transformation is from · or ——— to + or – and + or – ———. If we use the Grid we may replace – · and – ——— by $\overset{\leftarrow}{\cdot}\uparrow$ and $\overset{\leftarrow}{—}\uparrow$. Such signs represent objects which are devoid of characteristics, lack duration, or position, and, therefore, existence. But the sign $\overset{\leftarrow}{}\uparrow$ indicates that the object is not static. $\overset{\leftarrow}{}\uparrow$ represents a force[2] that continues after · has been annihilated and it destroys existence, time and space.

The state represented by $\overset{\leftarrow}{\cdot}\uparrow$ is different from that represented by · or —. If these signs merely represent the place where the object

[1]See Chapter 6.

[2]I do not wish to commit myself to the theory that there is a realization approximating to this force. [See Chapter 9 of *Elements of Psycho-Analysis*, p. 37, this volume. *Ed.*]

was or could be, there is nothing inherently difficult in supposing that they could be used for thinking about objects *in their absence*. I can make the mark, · where I like, and I can make another, – – and these marks may then be manipulated into a design according to my predispositions. They may be combined to form a geometrical configuration, or letters of a script, or a drawing. In the latter instance, the recognizable artistic product and the subject it is supposed to portray have features in common that may be called invariants. There may be other invariants common to the artistic production and the no-thing, the thing represented by a · where the thing is not, and these invariants are the points and lines actually represented by marks on paper or 'seen' (the mental counterpart) with the inward eye.[1] Some suspicion of the existence of this component probably lies in the search to find golden sections and other geometrical figures in, or to impose them on, artistic productions.

The need for rules by which · and ——— are to be regulated if they are to communicate, say, an impression of a landscape, is recognized. The same is true of every form of expression: it is accepted that there must be rules that are to be obeyed in verbal communication, or music, or painting, if the transformation of O is to combine the invariants in such a way that communication with others is effectual. These rules must be such that the no-thing is adequately communicated by a proper combination of the invariants. A work of art should satisfy by a proper disposition of the invariants to O, the no-thing (· or ———) and T β.

The problem posed by $\overleftarrow{\uparrow}$ can be stated by analogy with *existing* objects. $\overleftarrow{\uparrow}$ is violent, greedy and envious, ruthless, murderous and predatory, without respect for the truth, persons or things. It is, as it were, what Pirandello might have called a Character in Search of an Author.[2] In so far as it has found a 'character' it appears to be a completely immoral conscience. This force is dominated by an envious determination to possess everything that objects that exist possess including existence itself.

The premiss that the object does not exist would rule out the *existence* of the characteristics I have adumbrated except in the mind

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[1]See Milton: *Paradise Lost*, Bk. III, ". . . and the mind through all her powers irradiate, there plant eyes" (lines 51–55).

[2]Pirandello: *Six Characters in Search of an Author*.

of the patient who appears to entertain the phantasy of such a self-contradictory object. But the patient may identify himself with such an object, and the contradiction then lies in his existing sufficiently to feel that he does not exist. The rule that a thing cannot both be and not be is inadequate.

The problem is simplified by a rule that: "a thing can never be unless it both is and is not". Stating the rule in other forms: "a thing cannot exist in the mind alone: nor can a thing exist unless at the same time there is a corresponding no-thing." The rules that apply to the thing do not apply to the no-thing. Contradiction is not an invariant under psychoanalysis though it may exist in the domain of psychoanalytic objects (which *must* both be and not be).

If there is a 'no-thing' the 'thing' must exist. By analogy, if Falstaff is a no-thing Falstaff also exists: if it can be said that Falstaff, Shakespeare's character who had no real existence, has more 'reality' than people who existed in fact, it is because an actual Falstaff exists: the invariant under psychoanalysis is the ratio of no-thing to thing. But $+\cdot$ and $-\cdot$ can coincide; in this case the patient who displays a state of mind approximating to this representation regards the analyst who is actually present as also the *place* where the analyst is not. Conversely, the analyst who is actually absent is regarded as a space which is occupied by the absent analyst.[1]

The above description is an approximation. Its relationship with the description that follows is analogical. Using the geometrical visual image, I can represent the frame of mind to which I wish to draw attention by the point-pair that is actual and coincident (contrasted with the point-pair that is actual and separate and the point-pair that is conjugate complex). The line on which the coincident pair is situated is tangential to the circle that represents a situation in which 'inside' and 'outside' exist. The visual image, of the tangent to a circle, can represent a contact with a personality that has an inside and an outside in a manner that makes the $+\cdot$ and the $-\cdot$ coincident; there is no distinction between the thing and the no-thing though both exist. The personality has contact only at one point: since the point-pair are coincident the contact represents the tenuous relationship seen in patients with disturbances of thought.

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[1]See Chapter 5, pp. 187–188, where I discuss transformations in hallucinosis, and Chapter 10, p. 255.

The line and circle cut at coincident points can also be used to represent the relationship between ♀ and ♂ described by me in *Learning from Experience*. If ♂ is replaced by the visual image of the line (——) and ♀ by the visual image of the point (·), the relationship between the two objects, linear and circular (inside and outside), can be expressed by the relative positions of the two points without direct appeal to line or circle. The two points, thing and no-thing, are determined by the fact that they lie on the point of intersection of line and circle.

From what I have said of $\overleftarrow{\ }\uparrow$ the ultimate non-existent 'object', the 'space' and 'time' annihilated object and its all-consuming greed for, and envy of, anything that exists *because* it exists, is associated with fear of being the victim of this 'space' either as an object that would be devoured by it, or as the servant compelled to provide the $\overleftarrow{\ }\uparrow$ (space) with the means with which to satisfy its demand for all that exists. The individual feels himself to be occupying property that belongs to 'space'. 'Space' and the psyche are not felt to be capable of co-existence. Such fears can be seen in analysis of psychotic and claustrophobic patients. The Mad Hatter's tea party in *Alice's Adventures in in Wonderland* is a representation to which this timeless and spaceless 'space' approximates.

The analogies which I have sought for the breast and no-breast may be employed again with regard to the space and no-space. Space may be regarded as pure, violent emotion, dominated by greed: no-space as the place where space was. Or, to find another analogy: + space is high pressure, − space or no-space is low pressure; low pressure devours high pressure, high pressure occupies low pressure.

The relationship of Euclidean geometry to what is ordinarily called space has often been remarked upon and it has been supposed that in ordinary space, so-called, could be found the realizations that approximate to the theoretical constructions of Euclidean geometry, and from thence (at a further remove) the transformation leading to algebraic geometry. In my description I have remarked on certain states in which thought itself has been attacked as being indistinguishable from a no-thing. From this I have proceeded to $\overleftarrow{\cdot}$, $\overleftarrow{\cdot}\uparrow$, and finally to what I have represented by $\overleftarrow{\ }\uparrow$ or emotion + no-emotion, high pressure and low pressure. Geometrical constructions have shown their value in representing the realizations found in geographical space. By proceeding $\overleftarrow{\cdot}\uparrow$ I have sought to show that geometrical

constructions related to, and strove originally to represent, biological realities such as emotions. The progression represented by $\overleftarrow{\cdot} \uparrow$ leads to the possibility that mathematical space may represent emotion, anxiety of psychotic intensity, or repose also of psychotic intensity – a repose more psychiatrically described as stupor. In every case the emotion is to be part of the progression, breast $\rightarrow$ emotion (place where breast was) $\rightarrow$ place where emotion was. I hope that in time the base will be laid for a mathematical approach to biology, founded on the biological origins of mathematics, and not on an attempt to fasten on biology a mathematical structure[1] which owes its existence to the mathematician's ability to find realizations, that approximate to his constructs, amongst the characteristics of the inanimate.

I propose to devote a little time to the relationship of the elements of mathematics to the biological realizations to which they approximate.

[1]See remarks on the Golden Section, p. 217.

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The domain of thought may be conceived of as a space occupied by no-things; the space occupied by a particular no-thing is marked by a sign such as the words 'chair', or 'cat' or 'point' or 'dog'. The attempt to free this domain from associations of space perception is supported by use of concepts such as 'thought' or 'thinking' or 'in the mind', but a thought continues to have the penumbra of associations proper to 'the place where . . .' the no-thing is. This is also true of feelings and emotions, however expressed.

The 'objects' with which psychoanalysis deals include the *relationship* of the no-thing and the thing. The personality that is capable of tolerating a no-thing can make use of the no-thing, and so is able to make use of what we can now call thoughts. Since he can do so, he can seek to fill the 'space' occupied by the thought; this makes it possible for the 'thought' of space, line, point to be matched with a realization that is felt to approximate to it. In this respect $\overrightarrow{\cdot}$ contrasts with $\overleftarrow{\cdot}$ and new uses can be found for $\overrightarrow{\cdot}$ that cannot be found for $\overleftarrow{\cdot}$. The search for, and discovery of, elements perceived in space is part of the procedure by which elements of category 1 begin to acquire meaning; the negative quality of the definitory hypothesis is discarded or replaced by new elements that saturate the (ξ) elements of $\psi(\xi)$.[1] It is convenient to postulate the existence of a mind represented entirely by points, positions of objects, places where something used to be, or would be at some future date. Objects perceived in space contribute to the transformation of these elements (analogous to ξ) into specific no-things.[2]

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[1]*Learning from Experience* [Volume IV].

[2]Similar to the meeting of pre-conception with realization to give rise to

On the interplay between the no-thing and the realization that is felt to approximate to it depends the development of thought, and by thought I mean, in this context, that which enables problems to be solved in the absence of the object. Indeed unless the object is absent there is no problem. The problem is associated with the sense that the realization only approximates to the pre-conception (D1) (or A1, B1, C1). Whether the realization approximates, and if so how closely, depends on a number of factors with which I shall not deal here; with the psychotic personality the approximation has to be extremely close. Consequently (ξ) often remains unsaturated even though the realization does, to ordinary eyes, exist and appears to achieve an adequate degree of approximation to D1. No matter what the reason for the 'absence' may be, the active no-thing, without a corresponding thing, is associated with dis-satisfaction in the domain of alimentation when hunger exists but there is no food.

The following may be distinguished from each other: the no-thing and no corresponding realization, the realization, but no corresponding no-thing, the co-incidence of no-thing and thing (the sense-perceived object); this last is inseparable from contact at one point only between a personality (a series of points) and an inside-outside personality (∴ with a surface) represented by a circle. We shall have to consider shortly the problems of geometrical representation when detached from its genetic developmental association with sense-perceived space and return it to represent the mental domain from which it sprang.[1]

First I consider ↼↑ 'in search of existence'. What this sign represents must be determined by discovery of realizations approximating to it; it is both mental, and susceptible of sense-perception. (Sense-perception must here be contrasted with, and distinguished from, Freud's "consciousness as a sense-organ of psychic quality".[2])

Having allocated a sign ↼↑ which, according to theory, means that there is a constant conjunction that requires to be bound, I need to know what the constant conjunction thus represented means. I might as well say that it is because I think there is a constant conjunction that I think there is a meaning. Further, my belief that there is a meaning

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conception, but different from it by its closer approximation to the concept of Platonic forms of which the personality is 'reminded' by contact with a real object.

[1]See *Agoraphobia*, Chapter 9.

[2]S. Freud (1900a), *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Chap. VII.

is itself one element that is constantly conjoined with other elements in any situation in which a constant conjunction is felt to occur.

It is necessary to suppose that there is awareness of a constant conjunction. Since I have already allocated a meaning to $\leftarrow\!\!\uparrow$ I could attribute awareness of the constant conjunction to it. I shall not however do so; I shall keep it unaltered as a β-element. It may however improve the efficacy of $\leftarrow\!\!\uparrow$ as a form of notation if I, who think that stupor and violent greedy ambition to possess all the qualities of existence have the same configuration, rewrite $\leftarrow\!\!\uparrow$ as $\pm\leftarrow\!\!\uparrow$.

To return to 'awareness': by analogy I would like as a temporary measure to use Cs as a sign for 'awareness'. It might be useful to attribute this to $\pm\leftarrow\!\!\uparrow$, but Cs and $-\leftarrow\!\!\uparrow$ appear to be inconceivable. As I do not wish to be deterred from discussing the point merely because it is inconceivable, I shall assume a Cs that is a β-element (grid category A1), and further that Cs (A1) is or is not inseparable from $\pm\leftarrow\!\!\uparrow$ according to the needs of my inquiry. A wish to communicate with others involves consideration of the limitations imposed by that desire.

If I postulate Cs belonging to the category A1 I am assuming it is possible to conceive of a β-element and so to use the *concept* of a β-element although it is impossible to use a β-element itself. Therefore my *concept* of a β-element (category D1, D3, D4) is used as if it were 'about' something, that is, as if it had a meaning; that implies that there is, or that I can conceive that there is, a constant conjunction corresponding to my statement 'β-element', or, more particularly in this context, Cs (A1).

By analogy with more sophisticated inquiries I can ask what are the properties of Cs (A1); it has none of the qualities ordinarily believed to inhere in the idea of properties. The 'properties' of Cs (A1) are analogous to the 'properties' of zinc when they are said to be such that zinc combined with sulphuric acid produces zinc sulphate + water. In short, Cs (A1) represents a constant conjunction of relationships.

Cs (A1) is of the nature of a tropism. It involves $\xi(\psi)$ in which (ψ) seeks saturation. This 'consciousness' is an awareness of a lack of existence that demands an existence, a thought in search of a meaning, a definitory hypothesis in search of a realization approximating to it, a psyche seeking for a physical habitation to give it existence, ♀ seeking ♂. By analogy with mathematics one may then say that

psychoanalysis is concerned with establishing the laws governing relationships of psychoanalytic objects. To express this in a variety of terms: any constant conjunction that is apparent, becomes apparent; any constant conjunction that is apparent, is; any constant conjunction is a function of the relationships described (broadly) as a conjunction. The quality of any constant conjunction (its properties) is a function of the relationships 'within' the conjunction together with the function of its relationship with other constant conjunctions.

If I re-read one of my own notes, knowing it embodies what to me was knowledge when I wrote it, it can seem tautological, or to express a meaning so inadequately that if an interval of time separates me from the state of mind in which I wrote it, it fails to communicate its message even to myself. Yet its capacity to record is enough to make it possible for me to contrast two different views[1] and thereby see its defects both as a record (column 3) and as a precursor to further investigation (column 4).

A visual impression, as used by Euclid when he relies on deduction from visual representations, would offer some prospect of gain in communicability even if at the loss of logical rigour.[2] I gain something by using $\leftarrow\uparrow$ instead of a host of analogies, but this must be balanced against the advantages of using analogies instead of $\leftarrow\uparrow$. Logic, common sense, induction, deduction are terms that often represent mechanisms for bringing an intuition within reach of a realization should one exist. But intuition itself is a function of $\pm\leftarrow\uparrow$.

By regarding $\leftarrow\uparrow$ as a β-element and replacing Cs by something akin to a tropism, I can include in $\leftarrow\uparrow$ the counterpart of Cs in an element that is not defined by me as an element of thought.

The importance of such a manoeuvre is that it makes it possible to view consciousness as an element for which, at any of its stages of development, an appropriate grid category can be found.

Hitherto I have used the Grid for the categorization of elements which have qualities usually associated with substantives; except

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[1]This statement is itself an instance of splitting in time, as a method of achieving correlation.

[2]Logical rigour is an attribute of a particular form of manipulation. Every element, according to its grid category, has its appropriate and most nearly rewarding technique of manipulation. Logicians tend to believe that logical rigour is a *sine qua non*. Hence complete neglect of Newton's theological and mystical preoccupations as if they had no part in the genesis of, for instance, *Opticks*.

for ease of exposition this is not necessary. For example, 'consciousness' may be categorized in such a way that the use is emphasized. The grid categories have been left so that the horizontal axis can be extended. Thus: suppose the link to be H and the category D4. Consciousness categorized as link H (D4) would represent a state of hostile (H) scrutiny (D or pre-conception) for the purpose of destructive investigation (column 4). Suppose some method of notation by which the column 4 component is strengthened, then consciousness would be categorized to show less substantival and more operator quality.

I have chosen to discuss consciousness deliberately. From the present instance, and from previous discussion of awareness associated with tropism, it is evident that a term is needed which may represent the invariant function of consciousness in all grid categories in which it can appear or be placed. I propose to resort to the visual representation afforded by geometrical figures.

First I shall equate the object that I have described as analogous to consciousness with 'a point of view'. Since I do not wish to identify it with any particular point of view, or indeed with any sense, I shall not consider it to be a point 'of view', or 'of smell', or 'of touch', or 'of hearing', but simply as a point. The answer to the question, "point of what?", is then left to be determined by clinical experience; the geometrical point used to indicate the point of central projection in projective geometry will serve as a model. The geometer has succeeded, by transformation of Euclidean geometry and its visual representation into algebraic projective geometry, in freeing his investigations from some of the restrictions imposed by the genetic history of the procedures he uses; so psychoanalysis must be freed from the restrictions imposed by the associations with space and sight by which I look to geometry to simplify exposition. The difficulty is one that has to be resolved whenever past meaning, essential to communication or the rendering of private communication into public communication, has to be made suitable for further investigation. Repeating the present example in grid terms, the problem lies in the change that has to take place when column 3 elements are to be made suitable for functions appropriate to columns 4 and 5, and row H elements must provide models for row C.

Visual representations, sprung from the realm of emotional life (e.g. "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?) and applied to the realm of realization in space, have undergone transformation to make

them suitable to their investigatory function, whether for discovery of mathematical objects or suitable husbands or wives and recording them when so discovered: I need to return these procedures to the investigation of what I suspect to be their own origins. The argument is, I think, circular; I am relying on the adequacy of the circle's diameter.

The state I have represented by $-\leftarrow\uparrow$ is one I can also represent in terms classifiable as C3, thus $-\leftarrow\uparrow$ may be personified by a non-existent 'person' whose hatred and envy is such that 'it' is determined to remove and destroy every scrap of 'existence' from any object which might be considered to 'have' any existence to remove. Such a non-existent object can be so terrifying that its 'existence' is denied, leaving only the 'place where it was'. This does not solve the problem because the place where it was, the no-thing, is even more terrifying because it has, as it were, been further denied existence instead of being allowed to glut itself with any existence it has been able enviously to find. Denial of the existence of the 'place where it was' only makes matters worse because now the 'point', marking the position of the no-thing, cannot be located.

In accordance with Kleinian theory such an object can be within the personality of either analyst or analysand. Furthermore it can be regarded as being projected out 'into' (this point will be reconsidered in a moment) some other object. Equally it may be the ejecting force, that is, it may enter into an 'existing' object in order to eject the 'existingness'.

$-\leftarrow\uparrow$ may be anywhere. Its position, if known, may be represented by a point, or, it may be represented by 'space'. Space is therefore indistinguishable from feeling + or $-\cdot\leftarrow\uparrow$ may represent stupor (*"Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie"*[1]) or violence.

To consider the state I have just described from another 'point of view'; for reasons already given I do not wish to commit myself to a 'point of' anything. I require an element (category column 3 and 4 and C ↔ G) that is *unsaturated*. It would be useful to postulate unlimited 'points of . . .'. I shall use points on the circumference of a circle to represent unlimited 'positions' (formerly points of view) since it may be useful to be able to indicate direction 'inward' or 'outward'. Any point or number of points may then be regarded as vertices of

[1][Blaise Pascal, *Pensées. Ed.*]

projection. Any point, including that representing the centre of the circle, may represent the vertex of projection.

I shall illustrate the clinical use of this scheme by supposing that the extreme $-\leftarrow\uparrow$ is the vertex of a central projection. The clinical realization corresponding to this would be a patient dominated by bad internal objects with characteristics that I have described approximately above. The 'symptoms' as observed clinically can be represented 'spatially' in this geometric scheme by points that belong to the projected transformation. Before we can suppose that this geometric representation is appropriate to the realization, there must be some evidence to justify the supposition that the transformation is projected to a distance and in a manner that would make the points on the circumference of a circle a reasonable representation of symptoms other than those at the vertex. For example, if the patient showed that he felt that he was identified with the breast and that the transformed elements had been projected on to the inner source of the limiting breast, this might reasonably be regarded by the analyst as an occasion for supposing that this geometric representation was apposite. If my description seems strange to the reader, it may help if I remind him that I have chosen an illustration from amongst what I have called projective transformations, and that I have distinguished these from rigid transformations in which transference manifestations, as usually understood in classical analytic theory, appear.

In the example I have given it would be unlikely that $-\leftarrow\uparrow$ at a central vertex would project a transformation in a way that made anything so well organized as a circle or a way sphere an appropriate representation of the receptor, field or ground for the transformation. (By analogy with painting the 'ground' for the transformation would be the canvas onto which the transformation was projected.) The analytic situation has been devised to provide conditions in which the patient has a ground on to which he can project, either in the manner of projective transformation, or in the manner of rigid motion. For various reasons, the commonest being disturbances in the analyst, the 'analytic situation' can at best only approximate to the desirable.[1] Increasing analytic sophistication in the environment from

[1]Other reasons will probably be discovered when the geometrical approach will demonstrate the 'paranoid-schizoid position' of Melanie Klein and the geometer's vector space to be in a relation to each other analogous to the two views of a reversible perspective.

which patients come will introduce further variations in the nature of analytic situations. Even rigid motion transformations cannot always find an appropriate ground on which transference (in the classical sense) may be detected. Further study will be needed so as to include these changes and make it possible to detect transformations into different types of 'analytic situation'. I propose to discuss the problem of the ground for projective and rigid motion transformations as if it were stable and corresponded to what is regarded in classical analysis as the analytic situation.

So far I have expressed the idea of an analytic situation in column 1 category terms, say D1 or E1. There is rightly an aversion from formulations that seem to indicate a higher degree of scientific sophistication than is possible. Nor is it my intention to do more than explore the possibility of advance.

The idea implicit in the theory of transference is that the analyst is the person onto whom the analysand transfers his images. The theories of Melanie Klein already show that such a medium is not adequate for Tp β in what I have called projective transformations. In particular it does not help the analyst to recognize the elements of projective identification as they appear amidst clinical symptoms and material. The analyst must be able to detect signs of projective identification in a field which, relative to that which obtains in classical theory, is, as it were, multidimensional.[1] The analytic situation requires greater width and depth than can be provided by a model from Euclidean space. A patient who, in my view, is displaying projective transformations and requires the use of Kleinian theories for comprehension, also uses a field which is not simply the analyst or his own personality, or even the relationship between himself and the analyst, but all those and more. He will say ". . . this woman" ". . . this dream" and use other similarly undefined (to the analyst) expressions. As this vagueness is an expression of β-element 'thinking' the vagueness is not due to loss of definition but can obtrude because the analyst is in a position analogous to that of a listener to the description of a work of art that has been implemented in materials and on a scale that is not known to him. It is as, having heard

[1]Vector space, as a mathematical concept, comes as near as possible to representing multi-dimensional objects.

the description of a painting, he was searching on a canvas for the details represented to him, whereas the object had been executed in a material with which he is unfamiliar. Such a patient can talk of a "penis black with rage" or an "eye green with envy" as being visible in a painting. These objects may not be visible to the analyst: he may think the patient is hallucinating them. But such an idea, perhaps sound in the view of a psychiatrist, is not penetrating enough for his work as an analyst. Hallucination may be more profitably seen as a dimension of the analytic situation in which, together with the remaining 'dimensions', these objects are sense-able (if we include analytic intuition or consciousness, taking a lead from Freud, as a sense-organ of psychic quality).[1]

To make a step towards definition of this space we consider it to be a –K 'space' and contrast it with K 'space' – the space in which what is normally regarded as classical analysis takes place and classical transference manifestations become 'sense-able'. Using once more the analogies (C3 elements) I have already employed, –K 'space' may be described as the place where space used to be. It is filled with no-objects which are violently and enviously greedy of any and every quality, thing, or object, for its 'possession' (so to speak) of existence. I do not propose to carry my analogies further than to indicate that –K 'space' is the material in which, with which, on which (etc.) the 'artist' in projective transformation works. As an analogy with space may easily distort, I propose to drop the term and speak of transformation in –K.[2]

Can the psychoanalyst find signs that will represent –K? They must be such that he is able to work with them and provide the rules for doing so.

It is obviously extremely clumsy to have to repeat terms such as 'no-thing', 'place where the thing was', '·', 'point' and so on. Unless each term can be defined and used with accuracy misunderstandings multiply. Rigid definition would defeat the aim to provide an element unsaturated, but awaiting saturation, in the clinical experience (a D4 element). It is therefore desirable to use grid categories to distinguish between different no-things and to relate them to the

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[1]S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Chap. VII.

[2]See below: Platonic forms, Christian Incarnation and Hyperbole.

grid categories already proposed. This can be done by assigning a grid category to a statement and then assigning a grid category to the category already determined. Thus a second cycle of categorization is initiated. The process can be continued provided the differences in cycle are recognized.

9

The visual images and terms employed in the following model are chosen without regard to the sources from which they have been derived.

Two people are present: myself and a patient. I am detached and so is he, though for both of us the experience is important. As he lies on the couch and I sit, I imagine that a cloud begins to form rather in the way that clouds can sometimes be seen to form above a hot-point on a summer's day. It seems to be above him. A similar cloud may be visible to him, but he will see it arising from me. These are probability clouds.

Soon, other clouds form: some of these are new clouds, some formed from old ones, probability clouds that have changed into possibility clouds. The situation must be conceived of as tense, however little appears to be happening. I extend the scope of my model by doing away with the restriction implicit in the term 'visual' imagery. 'Olfactory image', 'auditory image', 'tactile image' are absurd terms which can, however, indicate the direction and scope of freedom I want. To abolish any restriction on absurdity, implicit in the analogies drawn from sense impressions, I shall describe the model as composed of C category elements and assume that tension, like 'possibility' and 'probability', is apparent[1] even if it is not apparent to any known sense. C category elements are described as visual because it enables me to draw on analogy from the sense of sight to communicate my meaning. The tension which is an essential part of the model is perceptible as are clouds. The clouds have increased; possibility clouds become clouds of doubt. Certainty clouds also appear; clouds

[1]Metaphorically? or does tension 'appear' visually?

of depression, guilt, hope and fear likewise. To every cloud there corresponds its hot point, but the cloud, like its analogue in nature, may have wandered far from it.

I associate pressure with both tension and clouds. The total situation I have tried to describe pictorially I would like to be able to describe odoriferously – as a dog might smell it, and, if he were sufficiently gifted, might delineate it odoriferously. And similarly with all other sensuous media available. Since I wish to find a system of representation that would serve for all these systems, and some of whose existence I am unaware, I seek a system of representation that is unsaturated ($\xi(\psi)$) and will permit of saturation.

It will be remembered that in a system in which β-elements dominate, 'thoughts' are 'things', and I pointed out that β-elements do not lend themselves to use as column 4 elements do because they are already saturated; there can be no pre-conception (row D) that can be *used* as a preconception, awaiting the realization that produces a conception, because the β-element is already saturated. We can now see that the defects of the no-thing are precisely these – the 'absent' or 'non-existent' object occupies the space that should be vacant. The analyst can represent the 'no-thing' by a sign that *can* be saturated though the object represented *cannot*.

Using clinical experience to represent the situation just described I may describe it thus: the patient occupies the couch because he is determined that no one else should; his aim is to 'saturate' the session so that I cannot work and no one can take *his* place. He employs terms (words, etc.) which are occupied by the meaning that they used to have *but* the meaning has been destroyed (or the term has been denuded of its meaning) so that the terms mark the place where the meaning used to be. This absent meaning (that is nevertheless present) will not permit any meaning to take its place. The verbal communication is therefore one that cannot represent O by virtue of the accepted meaning of the sign employed, nor can it represent O by access of meaning through saturation.

Therefore in my search for a system that would represent the chief systems that can be seen to exist in the analytic situation (as I have described it in grid category C1 terms) I must replace the C1 elements, visual images of clouds, analyst, analysand, etc. by elements approximating to $\xi(\psi)$. It is clear that the C1 elements must not be denuded because were that to occur they would be replaced by β-elements.

I can do this by using the point (·) to represent the 'place where' a some-thing (as contrasted with no-thing) could be, and the line (——) as the locus of a point or the place where a point is going. The analogy is defective because it is saturated by a meaning of movement. I shall try to make it more suitable for thought by considering point (·) and line (——) to represent a relationship thus: the point (·), 'place where' stage, must be conceived of as pertaining to the genetic axis: the line (——) must be conceived of as pertaining to the horizontal axis. A preconception, represented by ·, is a stage of development; a seed is a tree at a particular stage of its development; so is a tree. A pre-conception represented by a line (——) is a use (such as D4).

Throughout this book the changes I have had to make from analogy to more precise formulation, and from more precise formulation to analogy again, illustrate some of the difficulties with which I am attempting to deal. All these changes are examples of transformation. It may be as well to consider what the value of these transformations can be. With regard to transformation into terms of row C categories, one advantage is that the sensuous model has a reality, and that reality an invariant quality that aids communication. A 'circle' expresses a meaning that is at once understood by the person to whom it is addressed. If I mean to use (·) to represent 'the place where' or 'time when' or 'stage of growth' to which an object has attained (so that I am freed of limitations imposed by saturation) it is also true that I assume the existence of invariants under the particular transformation to which I resort. For example: I spoke in my model (row C) of clouds. I replace a cloud by because I may want to replace this by the idea represented by the term 'breast' or 'penis', 'flatus' or 'sanity' or a no-thing.

I have spoken of a non-existent malignant, hostile, greedy breast. We may regard these characteristics as, so to speak, inborn, primary, essential: or we may regard them as secondary; or indifferently as primary or secondary, but possessing those qualities by virtue of the accident that that is the point at which we start our story. Bearing in mind that narrative and causation are peculiarities of a mode of communication and may therefore be regarded as T α, the qualities attributed to the breast are quite likely to be a function of the relationship between observer and observed. Consideration of in-born or primary or secondary in this context must not interfere with the possibility that the qualities of any object are a function of its relationships.

Thus, to resort again to C category, one cloud in my model may represent greed, hostility, envy, and the hot-point may be the genital (of analyst, of analysand). This view may depend on a narrative approach and be a function of the fact that the analyst has just observed the object. Or it may be a function of 'tension'. By this I mean that the total analytic situation may be regarded as a system of energy (such as Freud postulated in his attempt towards a neurophysiological scientific psychology) in which the sum total remains the same within the system but the instability of any given part of the system can be seen in rises of 'pressure'. Using this description as my model (row C) the terms greed, hostile, malignant, may be regarded as T β of an O that is a pressure increase associated with relationships. If so, it is important to find rules for the manipulation of the signs, geometric and other, to be used. The rules for manipulation might be such that the signs, when manipulated in accordance with them, preserve a relationship to each other that represents the pressure changes and other supposed 'qualities' of the objects (cloud, etc.).[1] We may also consider to what extent the rules may themselves find a realization in the rules governing the relationship of personalities, that approximates to them.

If the qualities represented by point or line are a function of the relationship between the point and line; if the point is representing a genetic stage and the line the category of use, it is clear that the rules governing the manipulations of point and lines are really governing the relationships between two aspects of the same object – the point. But the use of the term 'aspect' in the above sentence and the meaning of the term 'use' has now become so obscure that it is better to replace both by the point.

To return to the model on p. 231: the model (represented by verbal signs of C category) of analyst and patient served to communicate by virtue of the rigidity (invariant quality) of the images. This same rigidity meant the model was saturated and therefore unsuitable for use as a pre-conception (column 4 element). The combination of terms such as 'hot-point' with other terms such as 'cloud' and 'probability' denied the model any variety of applicability but restricted

[1]The reader may compare the rules of grammatical construction used in a description of anxiety produced by a domestic crisis with the 'laws of nature' governing the production of anxiety by a domestic crisis.

its usefulness to one context. Terms such as 'probability' and 'cloud' are not homogeneous. Can they be replaced by signs that are? Yes: if they are replaced by points.

I am assuming that points were originally the space that had been occupied by a feeling, but had become a 'no-feeling' or the space where a feeling used to be. Furthermore I assume that instead of having this 'space' occupied by a 'no-thing', a 'point of view' (vertex of projection) can be found if the 'space' may be used as an unsaturated element. Systems of geometry significant in scientific development can be regarded as such unsaturated elements. Euclidean geometry has been found to have many approximations in realizations of space; it is supposed that it was derived from experience of space. My suggestion is that its *intra-psychic* origin is experience of 'the space' where a feeling, emotion, or other mental experience 'was'.

The rules governing points and lines which have been elaborated by geometers may be reconsidered by reference back to the emotional phenomena that were replaced by 'the place (or space) where the mental phenomena were'. Such a procedure would establish an abstract deductive system based on a geometric foundation with intuitive psychoanalytic theory as its concrete realization. The statements (i) the resumption by the psyche of an emotional experience that has been detoxicated by a sojourn in the good breast (Melanie Klein) and (ii) the transformation of the emotional experience into a geometrical formulation and the use of this geometrical formulation as the counterpart of a concrete realization for a geometrically based, rigorously formulated, deductive system (possibly algebraic), may now be regarded as the (i) intuitive psychoanalytic and (ii) axiomatic deductive representations of the same process. Both statements are verbal representations of a realization and neither of them is satisfactory; nor is much improvement likely by mastery of the medium of verbal expression. The intuitive statement lends itself to the representation of genetic stages: the axiomatic formulation lends itself to the representation of a use.

This distinction points to a similarity between the weakness of the element suitable for representing a genetic stage, and the weakness of the β-element. The element that represents genetic stages appears to have or to require a capacity for saturation, for becoming pregnant. I have phrased my last sentence in terms that illustrate the difficulty that arises when a term that in some contexts gains by its

metaphorical quality (a 'pregnant statement') loses communicative quality if it is employed in a context where its metaphorical quality ceases to be metaphorical because its context has approximated it to a β-element – it is, relative to its context, saturated. Some psychotic patients show skill in manipulating the analytic situation to bring this about. Therefore the element employed requires to have a high saturation point in its context.

The psychotic patient will show fear of an element with a high saturation point because a high capacity for saturation is felt as indistinguishable from greed in the element. That is, if I speak to him using terms in what I consider to be an ordinary conversational sense, and he thinks, perhaps rightly, that I am wishing to elicit information, he will react as if he thought I was trying to take away not information but his sanity. His reply will be what sounds to me nonsense but is his method of parting with rubbish, or making splitting attacks on my speech. If the latter, his sentences are felt by him to be split into words but each word then becomes a greedy, unsaturated (that is, meaningless and schizophrenogenetic) element in return. The presenting objects are further attacked and become more malignant and minute till finally they qualify to be represented by my sign: $-\leftarrow\uparrow$ for non-existent existence-greedy objects. Can this example from experience provide a starting point for transforming the model into something more scientific?

In analysis it appears that the patient has terrible feelings when he is in open spaces or if he feels shut in. Agoraphobia is a psychiatric term for a state of mind found in some patients. In my terms it is a name 'binding' a constant conjunction. If a patient presenting such symptoms is investigated psychoanalytically we find an extremely complex personality; this in itself is of no significance but for the fact, relevant to this discussion, that I am soon unable to use the term agoraphobia in a way that is meaningful: the conjunction is not of the elements that first appeared to compose it nor are they constant. I need to continue using this term, and with it the term 'claustrophobia'. I therefore assume that, both for the reader and myself, the term binds a constant conjunction.

I propose to use some of the ideas I have been putting forward in this book, as follows: the patient is coming to me for help and one reason for his distress is that his formulation does not afford scope for solution of his problem. With an actual case I would not attach

importance to this, but in this discussion I shall suppose he is stating *his* experience inadequately for *my* purpose which is to know what he is talking about and to meditate upon it. (What he is talking about = O.) I therefore transform his statement thus: the patient, experiencing "terrible" feelings with the intensity of emotion of an infant having painful feelings, supposes them to be some bad object, perhaps part of himself, if he thinks he has a self, perhaps not. Mobilizing his adult armoury of speech, he says he cannot possibly describe his feelings and then proceeds to do so. Since they are indescribable that itself indicates that the feelings described cannot be the ones that were felt. The patient may continue his description: "lost", "shut in", "panic", etc. I can match his diversity of terms with a diversity of my own: 'depersonalized', 'internal object', etc. For my purposes I want terms that will always be right in all situations in which the problems have the same configuration. Patients and analysts are constantly using different terms to describe situations that appear to have the same configuration. I want to find invariants, under psychoanalysis, to all of them. This condition is almost filled by the term 'place where the thing was' or 'space'. Almost, but not quite. Its virtue can be seen in the fact that it will do equally well for agoraphobia or claustrophobia, and to that extent avoids two terms for configurations that are only apparently different. What is needed is a solution that will dispose finally of the diversity of terms, at present required to describe the experience called 'claustro- or agoraphobia', and the far more serious defect associated with it, namely, the elaboration of as many theories as there are sufferers, matched by almost as many theories as there are therapists, when it is acknowledged that the configurations are probably the same. The solution required will cover more than claustrophobia and agoraphobia which I have chosen as a starting point. I choose 'space' to represent, on the one hand, emotions which are felt to be indistinguishable from the 'place where something was', and on the other, space akin to the geometric realization from which Euclidean geometry is believed to derive.

Certain peculiarities of the problem I am attempting to state are inherent in the problem. Thus I state, as part of an intuitive psychoanalytic theory, that the patient has an experience, such as an infant might have when the breast is withdrawn, of facing emotions that are unknown, unrecognized as belonging to himself, and confused with an object which he but recently possessed. Further descriptions only

add to the multiplicity of which I already complain – as the reader will see if he consults any analytic descriptions of infantile behaviour. The relationship of these representations with the realizations approximating to them may be compared with the axiomatic geometric deductive space that I wish to introduce as a step towards formulations that are precise, communicable without distortion, and more nearly adequate to cover all situations that are basically the same. I suggest the following comparisons: (i) 'Unknown', in the model afforded by the intuitive psychoanalytic theory, with 'unknown', in the mathematical sense in which I wish to use 'geometric space'. (ii) 'Variable', as applied to the sense of instability and insecurity in the model of infantile anxiety, with 'variable', as I wish to apply it to geometric space. Thus geometric space may represent and be replaced by constant values for any particular universe of discourse. The relationship of geometric space to the psychoanalytic intuitive theory that I propose as *its* realization; the further relationship of the psychoanalytic intuitive theory to the clinical experience which I consider is *its* realization; together these represent a progression such as that in the transformation of an experience into a poem – "emotion recollected in tranquillity." The geometric transformation may be regarded as a 'detoxicated' representation (with the painful emotion made bearable) of the same realization as that represented by the intuitive psychoanalytic theory (but with the painful emotion expressed). This implies that any individual capable of making the transformation from O to T β (when O is a psychic reality) is capable of doing for himself something analogous to projective identification into the good breast, he being identified with himself and the breast.

There are further similarities to which I want to draw attention: if it is accepted that geometric space affords a link between unsophisticated emotional problems, their unsophisticated solutions and the possibility of their restatement in sophisticated terms admitting of sophisticated solutions, then it may be that musical and other artistic methods afford a similar link. These must not be regarded as replacements of the geometric approach. The investigation must be directed to the elucidation of point and line as elements imbedded in the material of transformations in the media of all arts and sciences. In poetry it may be found in the long-short of rhythm; in painting it may be found not as Vitruvius sought to find it in a golden section or other geometric plan as the method of construction, but in the matter

from which the construct is formed; in music it may be looked for not in musical notation, but music itself; in science it may be seen in the atomic theories of Democritus of Abdera.

The Grid provides a scheme whereby visual images of category C may be seen to have counterpart in H category, and *vice versa*. The categories reserved for mathematical representations only may be open to sophisticated versions of auditory, visual, or other forms of C category representation. Thus certain paintings or musical compositions could properly be considered to fall in H categories together with certain algebraic formulations if their invariants were recognized and their relationships seen to conform to rule.

This discussion is concerned with such representations, whatever the discipline, as having disposed within them the invariants of point and line; intuitive psychoanalytic theory is its corresponding realization.

10

This chapter is a review and summary. I begin with a model of transformation: suppose a number of marbles of different colours and sizes, ½″, ¾″ and 1″ in diameter, lying in a tray. The colours and sizes are 'dimensions'. Make a rule that in another tray must be placed as many marbles of 1″ diameter as there are green marbles in the first tray. When the operation has been completed the marbles in the second tray will represent a transformation of the 'space' represented by the marbles of different size and colour in the first tray. The collection in the first tray represents the 'space' I have denoted O. The rule regulating the disposition of marbles in the second tray represents the mental activity I have denoted by T α (or Ta α if it governs the behaviour of the analyst). The marbles in the second tray represent the transformation I have denoted T β (or Ta β if effected by the analyst).

I may now use the marbles in the second tray as the O for further transformation. I can denote this by writing O (2nd cycle) = Ta β (1st cycle). I make a rule that in another tray are to be placed as many marbles of 1″ diameter as there are blue marbles in the second tray. This rule may accordingly be denoted Ta α (2nd cycle) and when the operation is complete the marbles in the third tray represent a state I denote by the sign Ta β (2nd cycle). This can now be made the starting point of a further operation which is similar to the two preceding but is now the third cycle of transformation.

The foregoing model I shall replace by one that comes nearer to representing an analytic experience, thus: suppose the patient makes a complex statement, in the sense I have given the term, which may have consisted of anything from a solitary ejaculation to a session of free associations. I shall suppose that the statement is so complex that it would only be adequately represented by being categorized

in every grid category. The categories, like the sizes and colours of the marbles, may be regarded as 'dimensions' of the statement. In practice, the patient's behaviour can fairly easily be seen to fall into two or three categories and analysts are familiar with the problem of trying to decide what aspect of the material should be regarded as immediately significant and interpreted accordingly. Use of the Grid makes it possible to scan the analytic material methodically. At first it is wise to use it retrospectively so that nothing should interfere with the analyst's absorption of the evidence. Practice in review of analytic work by this method leads quite soon to facility in unconscious and immediate assessment of evidence as it unfolds in the session. The hypothetical statement of my model has facets qualifying it for every grid category. I have said previously[1] that it is important to play psychoanalytic games as a part of the daily review of analytic work, and one valuable game consists in supposing what the interpretations would have been and what course the analyst might have taken if, instead of the actual conjectures and interpretations, the material had been categorized quite differently. Stating this in terms of transformation theory, the statement is regarded as a field of diverse dimensions with which we are required to deal. We may choose column 2 elements as most significant and ignore all other categories that are present. The interpretation which we base on the dimension thus isolated will be denoted Ta β. O, corresponding to the first tray of marbles in model 1, will be the total statement. The decision to choose column 2 elements as more significant than all others, corresponds to the rule determining how the marbles were to be disposed in the second tray; it is accordingly denoted by Ta α. The interpretation is the transformed statement and corresponds to the marbles in tray 2.

At first this rule appears arbitrary compared to the rule in model 1 because it can be argued that Ta α, in model 2, is merely a decision to ignore one set of facts in favour of another. Yet the rule in model 1 is no less arbitrary, although an appearance of legality is conferred by an appeal to the contents of tray 1 as decisive in determining the contents of tray 2.

The difference in the two models consists in the fact that in model 2 the rule makes the point of arbitrary change explicit. The fact that there are so many green marbles in tray 1 is used to decide the

[1]In *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* [this volume].

number of marbles of 1″ diameter in the second. No more explanation is given for this than for ignoring all dimensions, save column 2 in the second model.

In model 2 the interpretation (Ta *β*) should be associated with a K link; the analyst is concerned to understand the associations and to communicate that understanding to the patient. The patient in accordance with our postulate is the source of an L, H or –K link. But, since he comes voluntarily, it must be assumed that his associations are also intended to be part of a K link.

The conclusion must be that we must make assumptions about assumptions about . . . *ad infinitum*. No conclusion is possible about the arbitrary nature of the rule. The rule may be seen, however, to be a special case of the pre-conception; it is a formulation representing a pre-conception and it is used in accordance with column 4. The provisional category for the rule is D4. If we suppose that the rule is intended to *do* something, we attribute to it the quality of an act and the category would be more correctly D6.

Ta *α* is a private process limited to the analyst's mind: the categorization of Ta *α* impinges on the domain of counter-transference and the analyst's own analysis. The matter is relevant to discussion of the nature of the relationship of interpretations to the matter interpreted. The assumption underlying loyalty to the K link is that the personality of analyst and analysand can survive the loss of its protective coat of lies, subterfuge, evasion and hallucination and may even be fortified and enriched by the loss. It is an assumption strongly disputed by the psychotic, and *a fortiori* by the group which relies on psychotic mechanisms for its coherence and sense of well-being. Discussion of this assumption will lie on the periphery of the theme of transformations which I take next.

Treating my hypothetical statement, with dimensions represented by all grid categories, as the subject for the psychoanalytic game, I wish to consider the implications of ignoring all aspects (dimensions) of the statement save those that fall in category A6. I shall assume that it is not obligatory to do this and that many correct interpretations could be seen to be available from an ordinary scansion of the other grid dimensions – the dimensions I propose to ignore. I wish it to be supposed that if a layman could hear the patient he would not feel completely at a loss to understand, though he might easily be aware that there was something he did *not* understand and be puzzled to

know why. I also wish it to be supposed that the only reason for questioning the soundness of an analysis based on classical analytic theories would be the bizarre response to apparently quite correct interpretations. (By 'bizarre' I mean that the patient's response does not saturate the analyst's pre-conceptions but itself appears to require saturation.) In conditions such as these, postulated to facilitate psychological preparation for the theories that follow, the psychoanalytic game may develop the analyst's intuition (as a musician's exercises facilitate his capacity to perform an actual musical creation though not themselves being more than scales and other manual exercises) in preparation for the work required of it in analysis.

My aim is to illustrate a particular form of transformation and to approach it by consideration of the elements of a statement and its dimensions, notably the dimension bound by me by the term *β*-element, as manipulated in a mental domain where thoughts are not distinguished from things and the mind is felt to operate as if it were a muscle.

As I am assuming the grid category is A6 I shall not consider the significance of what is said to reside predominantly in the meanings of the words and sentences as it would do if I regarded the communication made by the patient as part of a rigid motion transformation. I expect it to be significant that the patient in the course of speaking expels air from his lungs. His failure to distinguish thoughts from things contributes to a sense that the actual meaning of the words, as that would be understood in a rigid motion transformation, is expelled as air from his lungs is expelled. Conformably with this the patient seems to feel that his mind is an expelling organ like a lung in the act of expiration. Were I regarding his communication as part of a rigid motion transformation I should hear him say something like this: "Whatever has happened to my key? It can't be six unless the milkman came early. The rounds are impeccable as a rule though my friend said it was quite different her way. You think you are wonderful but you are just a thief."

As I am supposing that his communication is part of a projective transformation composed of A6 elements, I consider that some 'thing' is being evacuated. The 'thing' may be the scene in the consulting room. In that case the patient is using his eyes, and the mental counterpart of his capacity for vision, as evacuatory musculature. What to me appears to him to be the product of a visual evacuation.

The 'thing' may be something adumbrated by his words – if I may assume I am correct in allowing myself to gain an impression based on what *I* think his words should mean if he were talking conversational English. Such an impression is based on long experience of the patient's communications, and on acceptance of them as row A formulations of a highly idiosyncratic type. What my assumptions amount to is that the communication is a mixture in which a meaning, grasped by ordinary modes of understanding, has been treated by the patient as if it were a thing, and evacuated phonetically and mentally as if by an apparatus whose characteristics are those usually associated with muscles.

I cannot attempt a detailed description of how or why I arrive at the qualities which I am about to attribute to the evacuated object. The F category meanings can be expressed approximately as follows: "The key, that which gives potency and is itself capacity or potency, has gone. The coming of the milkman could tell me the time – six o'clock. The time, six o'clock, could tell me the milkman was coming. The milkman's ejaculation (coming) could tell me the time and feed me. But none of these things happens. The key has been lost; they have been denuded of their meaning. I know this is because I am self-supporting because I can hallucinate a meal, time, an ejaculation and whatever else I need. Then, from these evacuated objects (hallucinations in the analyst's opinion) I can gain all the mental and physical sustenance I require. But I am unable to get such sustenance. Obviously, therefore, what you, the analyst, call psychoanalysis is simply your method of stealing the sustenance from my hallucinations, leaving me without a key, while you are able to feel how superior your psychoanalysis is and how clever you are. But psychoanalysis is not superior to my hallucinations. You only make it appear so by stealing the goodness from hallucinations so they seem bad mental faeces and psychoanalysis is made good."

My account of these events cannot be made plausible to anyone who has not had the analyst's experience. I shall not attempt to make the description convincing but shall pass on to consider implications of this and similar ineffable experiences.

Although I have said I proposed to play my psychoanalytic game on the assumption that all elements were A6, my introduction of the mixed association in which F row elements were being treated as if

they belonged to A row shows, as anyone might reasonably expect, that nothing in the practice of psychoanalysis ever fits into neat and rigid categorizations. Nevertheless the grid categories do make it possible to draw attention to find shades of difference in meaning in a way which would be difficult or impossible without them – as in this instance where relatively sophisticated elements are being treated in a manner much more suited to the primitive and immature.

As a result of treating the elements of the statement as A6, certain factors peripheral to A6 elements can be seen to be activated and can be detected in analysis.

1. Hallucination is seen as a method of achieving independence which the patient considers to be superior to psychoanalysis.
2. Its failure, in so far as it is seen as a failure, is attributed to the rivalry, envy and thieving propensities of the analyst.
3. Rivalry, envy, greed, thieving, together with his sense of being blameless, deserve consideration as invariants under hallucinosis.
4. The concept of hallucinosis needs to be widened to fit a number of configurations which are at present not recognized as being the same.
5. Transformation, in rigid motion or projection, must be seen to have hallucinosis as one of its media.
6. The rules of transformation in hallucinosis must be established through clinical observation. I have no doubt that they exist and can be delineated by observation of the operation envy, greed, rivalry, 'moral' and scientific superiority in hallucinosis. I offer the following suggestions provisionally as an example of such 'rules':
   A. If an object is 'top' it dictates 'action'; it is superior in all respects to all other objects, and is self-sufficient and independent of them.
   B. Objects that can occupy such a position include (a) Father, (b) Mother, (c) Analyst, (d) Aim, object or ambition, (e) Interpretation, (f) Ideas, whether moral or scientific.
   C. The only relationship between two objects is that of superior to inferior.
   D. To receive is better than to give.

Similarly it is possible to formulate a mathematics of hallucinosis. I offer the following suggestions formulated to give first a description of the emotional background, and second the arithmetical statement. In rigid motion transformation:

a^1 The infant feels it is being satisfied by the breast: the breast disappears and the satisfaction with it.

a^2 1 breast + 0 breast = 0 breast

a^3 1 + 0 = 0

Suppose now that the personality cannot tolerate frustration. This is associated with "that state of mind in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensations through the confusion of thought with the objects of thought, and the excess of passion animating the creations of imagination".[1] (I use Shelley's formulation of his poetic intuition to provide the background realization for the statement 'hallucinosis'). Memory of the satisfaction is used to deny the absence of satisfaction. Denial of time is used to deny that the breast is the place where the breast used to be, and to maintain that it is where the breast now is.

The mathematical transformation in hallucinosis may be stated thus (b^2 taking the place of a^2, etc.):

b^2 1 breast + 0 breast = 1 breast

b^3 1 + 0 = 1.

There may be good reasons for supposing that 1 + 0 = 1, for example that there is a realization that may approximate to it, and the formulation 1 + 0 = 1 may help to establish a K link with such a realization. But b^3 is intended to demonstrate the relationship between 0 and 1 in a domain where it is possible to remove the 'noughtness' from 0 and so produce 1. Therefore in the domain of hallucinosis 0 − 0 = 1. It is natural to wonder what would be the result of adding nought to nought. It is 0 + 0 = 00. That is to say that if noughtness is added to noughtness, the noughtness is multiplied by itself. The emotional state that might provide a background realization approximating to this is the state of complete freedom from the restriction imposed by

[1]Shelley's sixth note on his poem *Hellas*.

contact with realizations of any kind. The ability of 0 to increase thus by parthogenesis corresponds to the characteristics of greed which is also able to grow and flourish exceedingly by supplying itself with unrestricted supplies of nothing.

These mathematical manipulations serve a purpose in the domain of hallucinosis analogous to that served by mathematics in D4 and 5 investigations where frustration exists. In hallucinosis nought denuded of its noughtness is hostile, envious and greedy, and does not even exist as it is denuded of its existence.

The realizations which form the background of hallucinosis differ from those that form the background in the domain of accepted frustration. (To save time I shall denote the latter by *f* and the former by *h*.) In *f*, 1 breast + 0 breast + 1 breast + 0 breast + 1 breast + 0 breast + 1 breast + 0 breast = −4 breasts. Or: 1 + 0 + 1 + 0 + 1 + 0 + 1 + 0 = −4. In *h*, 1 breast + 0 breast = "one breast denuded of existence", and "a place where the breast was, also denuded of existence" = a raging inferno of greedy non-existence.

If we compare 1 in *f*-mathematics with 1 in *h*-mathematics, it can be seen in *f* to be a dimension of a statement, even though the statement of which it is a dimension is not known, and may be a realization whose existence is revealed only by the existence of this one dimension. In *h*, 1 is a column 2 element and is intended and understood to mean that an object is devoid of dimensions because it has dimensions that are to be rendered incapable of transformation. To be incapable of transformation the statement must be denuded of dimensions, rules must be made incapable of regulation (in other words denuded of any dimensions that qualify rules to be regarded as rules) and vertices must be destroyed. For analytic practice this means that any efforts that the analyst makes towards establishing dimensions, rules or vertices, or establishing that such dimensions, rules and vertices exist, will be under attack. Amongst such procedures will be projective identification placed in a vertex so that it will be inoperable; thus a part of the patient's personality will occupy 'the place of' the analyst to deny that vertex to the analyst. This leads me to reconsider some aspects of that particular form of transformation known to analysts as the interpretation.

For a greater part of its history it has been assumed that a psychoanalytic interpretation had as its function the rendering conscious of that which is unconscious. The relatively simple division of elements

into conscious and unconscious has proved extremely fruitful, but it no longer provides a satisfactory criterion of an interpretation to regard it as either making or failing to make conscious that which is unconscious. With the Grid it is possible to categorize a statement, its interpretation, and the statement that is a resultant of the two. Can the relationship between the categories to which statements are assigned provide a more illuminating approach than the relationship conscious: unconscious?

In the three models of transformation that I have sketched out in this chapter (A1, B1 and B2) O, Ta α and Tp α, Ta β and Tp β, can be distinguished. The medium in the first is provided by marbles and trays, in the second by the relationship between analyst and analysand (as subject to manipulation by the patient to make it fit in the framework of hallucinosis) and in the third by the relationship between analyst and analysand as subject to representation so that the representation could be manipulated as part of a K link.

The difference between B1 and B2 makes it likely that the statements of the analysand will differ in category from those of the analyst, for the medium of the analysand's transformation lies in the sphere of action, that of the analyst in the sphere of thought and its verbal representations.

The patient whose transformations are effected in the medium of hallucinosis might almost have as his motto, "actions speak louder than words" with its hint of rivalry as an essential feature of the relationship. The analyst appears to be offered the choice of abandoning his technique, which is an admission of surrender to the superior wisdom and technique of the analysand, or, keeping to analysis and thereby showing by *his* actions that *he* considers *his* technique superior; either course would fit in with an acting out of rivalry.

The statement, "acting out of rivalry", in my last sentence will serve as an example of the distorting effect produced by the approach to a configuration through one of its parts. Rivalry is an important element but its significance depends on the particular constant conjunction or configuration of which it is a part. 'Rivalry' signifies a constant conjunction, but the constant conjunction it signifies is not the relevant one in this context. It is common to find some feature, such as the cruelty of the super-ego, and to suppose that one has discovered the key to a baffling situation only to find that the same feature occurs in other situations which bear no marked resemblance to the situation

to which one hoped the key had been discovered. In my experience this difficulty arises because the *key* has been detected in the elements of a second, third or subsequent cycle of psychoanalytic (that is, analyst's) transformations when it should be sought in the nature of the transformations effected by the analysand. What matters in the present context is not rivalry so much as rivalry under transformations in hallucinosis. I shall therefore devote further attention to expanding what I mean by this term without troubling over-much to make the description rigorous. The general picture the patient presents is that of a person anxious to demonstrate his independence of anything other than his own creations. These creations are the results of his supposed ability to use his senses as organs of evacuation which are able to surround him with a universe that has been generated by himself: the function of the senses and their mental counterpart is to create the patient's perfect world. Evidence of imperfection is *ipso facto* evidence for the intervention of hostile envious forces. Thanks to the patient's capacity for satisfying all his needs from his own creations, he is entirely independent of anyone or anything other than his products and therefore is beyond rivalry, envy, greed, meanness, love or hate; but the evidence of his senses belies his pre-determinations; he is *not* satisfied.

We may now reconsider the term 'hallucination'. It must be distinguished from an illusion or delusion because both these terms are required to represent other phenomena, namely those that are associated with pre-conceptions that turn to conceptions because they mate with realizations that do not approximate to the pre-conceptions closely enough to saturate the pre-conception, but closely enough to give rise to a conception or mis-conception. The pre-conception requires saturation by a realization that is *not* an evacuation of the senses but has an existence independent of the personality. The hallucination arises from a pre-determination and requires satisfaction from (a) an evacuation from the personality, and (b) from conviction that the element is its own evacuation. Confusion occurs if due weight is not given to the fact that the total conjunction bound by the term 'hallucination' is associated with two different points of view, or, as I prefer to call it, with two different vertices, one represented by the patient, the other by the analyst.

To understand the nature of the difference between the two vertices it will be necessary to review phenomena that I class as D1,

D2, D3. The intuitive psychoanalytic background is that which I have 'bound' by terms such as pre-conception, definition, notation, attention. My object in using grid categories is to escape from the trammels imposed by the penumbra of associations that these terms possess; in the course of this digression I shall say something more of the term pre-determination which I introduced to represent a phenomenon of hallucinosis. I shall borrow freely any material that is likely to simplify my task, starting with Plato's theories of Forms. As I understand the term, various phenomena, such as the appearance of a beautiful object, are significant not because they are beautiful or good but because they serve to 'remind' the beholder of the beauty or the good which was once, but no longer is, known. This object, of which the phenomenon serves as a reminder, is a Form. I claim Plato as a supporter for the pre-conception, the Kleinian internal object, the inborn anticipation. Melanie Klein objected in conversation with me to the idea that the infant had an inborn pre-conception of the breast, but though it may be difficult to produce evidence for the existence of a realization that approximates to this theory, the theory itself seems to me to be useful as a contribution to a vertex I want to establish. Phenomena – the term being used as Kant might use it – are transformed into representations, T β. T β may then be regarded as a representation of the individual's experience O, but the significance of O derives from and inheres in the Platonic Form.

The object represented by the term Platonic Form may also be represented in mystical terms such as "One is one and all alone and ever more shall be so", and those of canto xxxiii of Dante's *Paradiso* (Barbara Reynolds's translation):[1]

> Eternal Light, that in Thyself alone
> Dwelling, alone dost know Thyself, and smile
> On Thy self-love, so knowing and so known!

The emphasis is altered by Christian Platonism so that the balance between the elements of the configuration is altered; this may be seen most clearly expressed in the doctrine of the Incarnation. The particular representation which is significant for this discussion has been formulated by Meister Eckhart and the Blessed John Ruysbroeck who distinguish the Godhead from God; thus in Tractate XI, "God

[1] Also, see p. 264.

in the Godhead is spiritual substance, so elemental that we can say nothing about it."

It is evident that in this view God is regarded as a Person independent of the human mind. The phenomenon of Good or Beauty would not then be that which 'reminds' the personality of a Form (pre-conception) but is an incarnation of a part of an independent Person, wholly outside the personality, to whom the phenomena are 'given'. The phenomenon does not 'remind' the individual of the Form but enables the person to achieve union with an incarnation of the Godhead, or the thing-in-itself (or Person-in-Himself).

For convenience I shall refer to these two configurations as 'Forms' and 'Incarnation'. In both there is a suggestion that there is an ultimate reality with which it is possible to have direct contact although in both it appears that each direct contact is possible only after submission to an exacting discipline of relationships with phenomena, in one configuration, and incarnate Godhead in the other. In neither is there discussion of establishing a direct contact with the reality of absolute evil, though it is possible that some of the 'repellant' quality attributed to St John of the Cross may be an unconscious tribute to his identification of absolute real evil with absolute real good.

The object of this digression, as of the previous discussions in this chapter and book, is to arrive at a postulate. The postulate is that already designated by O. To qualify O for inclusion amongst the column 1 categories by defining its definitory qualities, I list the following negatives: its existence as indwelling has no significance, whether it is supposed to dwell in an individual person or in God or Devil; it is not good or evil; it cannot be known, loved or hated. It can be represented by terms such as ultimate reality or truth. The most and the least that the individual person can do is to be it. Being identified with it is a measure of distance from it. The beauty of a rose is a phenomenon betraying the ugliness of O, just as ugliness betrays or reveals the existence of O.

L, H, K are links, and by virtue of that fact are substitutes for the ultimate relationship with O which is not a relationship or an identification or an atonement or a reunion. The qualities attributed to O, the links with O, are all transformations of O and *being* O. The rose *is* itself whatever it may be *said* to be. The human person *is* himself, and by 'is' I mean in both instances a positive act of being for which L, H, K are only substitutes and approximations.

Any formulation, including this one, is a representation, and all representations are transformations – often of transformations. Any analytic statement can be represented by the sign Ta β (cycle n) or Tp β (cycle n).

O, representing the unknowable ultimate reality can be represented by any formulation of a transformation – such as 'unknowable ultimate reality' which I have just formulated. It may therefore seem unnecessary to multiply representations of it; indeed, from the psychoanalytic vertex that is true. But I wish to make it clear that my reason for saying O is unknowable is not that I consider human capacity unequal to the task, but because K, L, or H are inappropriate to O. They are appropriate to transformations of O but not to O. To recapitulate:

Transformations may be scientific, aesthetic, religious, mystical, psychoanalytical. They may also be described as psychotic and neurotic, but though all these classifications have a value it does not appear to me that the value that they have is psychoanalytically adequate. I have chosen to write, though briefly, of transformation in hallucinosis because the description may serve to explain why I consider existing methods of observation, notation, attention and curiosity are inadequate, why a theory of transformations may aid in making these methods more nearly adequate, and why the theory of transformations itself must be freed from existing associations if it is to be fitted for its psychoanalytic tasks. The suggestion of projective transformations differentiated from rigid motion transformations is but one step to indicate the possibilities. The subject cannot be pursued further without considering the relationship between categories of patient's transformations and categories of analyst's transformations. These last I have said must be transformations in K, and this leads me to a peculiarity of transformations in K.

It is a commonplace that any attempt at scientific inquiry involves distortion through the exaggeration of certain elements in order to display their significance. This characteristic is present in L and H as much as in K. In order to link its phenomenological counterpart in analytic practice with the penumbra of associations that I regard as significant, I shall call this characteristic 'hyperbole'. I mean the term to convey an impression of exaggeration, of rivalry and, by retention of its original significance, throwing and outdistancing. The appearance of hyperbole in any form must be regarded as significant of a

transformation in which rivalry, envy and evacuation are operating. There is a profound difference between 'being' O and rivalry with O. The latter is characterized by envy, hate, love, megalomania and the state known to analysts as 'acting out', sharply differentiated from acting, which is characteristic of 'being' O.

Just as exaggeration is helpful in clarifying a problem, so it can be felt to be important to exaggerate in order to gain the attention necessary to have a problem clarified. The 'clarification' of a primitive emotion depends on its being contained by a container which will detoxicate it.[1] In order to enlist the aid of the container the emotion must be exaggerated. The 'container' may be a 'good breast', internal or external, which is able to detoxicate the emotion. Or the container may not be able to tolerate the emotion, and the contained emotion may not be able to tolerate neglect. The result is hyperbole. That is to say, the emotion that cannot tolerate neglect grows in intensity, is exaggerated to ensure attention, and the container reacts by more, and still more, violent evacuation. By using the term 'hyperbole' I mean to bind the constant conjunction of increasing force of emotion with increasing force of evacuation. It is immaterial to hyperbole what the emotion is; but on the emotion will depend whether the hyperbolic expression is idealizing or denigrating.

When the presenting problem in analysis is the hallucinations of the patient a crux has been reached. In addition to the problem that the patient is attempting to solve by transformation in hallucinosis, is the secondary problem presented by his method of solution. This secondary problem appears in analysis as a conflict between the method employed by the analyst and the method employed by the patient. The conflict can be described as a disagreement on the respective virtues of a transformation in hallucinosis and a transformation in psychoanalysis. The disagreement is coloured by the patient's feeling that the disagreement between patient and analyst is a disagreement between rivals and that it concerns rival methods of approach. Unless this point is made clear no progress can be made. When it has been made clear the disagreement still continues, but it becomes endo-psychic; the rival methods struggle for supremacy within the patient. The characteristics of the conflict are easier to discern when

[1][See *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* (this volume), pp. 26–27, on the alleviation of the fear of dying. *Ed.*]

externalized as a conflict between analyst and patient, and this can lead to a collusion between the two, for the patient finds it more tolerable and the analyst easier. As the conflict involves the nature of the contributions made by both, I shall use the Grid to elucidate the difference between the two.

As I have said, the patient's contributions are A6. The 'rules' according to which he manipulates these elements are:

1. He needs no analyst because he provides the material for his own cure and knows how to obtain the cure from it.
2. The material is evacuated by the mental counterpart (as the analyst would believe) of his sensory equipment.
3. Painful experience is not cure, any more than pleasure, but both are methods of scoring points in a rivalry relationship.
4. The relationship between the contestants is designed to prove the superiority of the patient and hallucinosis over the analyst and psychoanalysis.
5. 'Cure' is identical with 'winning'.

Following from these 'rules' certain anomalies arise: any benefit achieved as a result of analytic cure is vitiated by its being indistinguishable from 'defect' of the analysand; any victory of the analysand is vitiated by perpetuating the painful status quo. The painful element is due to the obtrusion of the analyst – 'the analyst's fault'. The analyst's 'fault' in the eyes of the analysand is attributable to a two-fold source: (1) all his 'interpretations' are A6 elements evacuated by him as a part of his resort to the patient's methods and employment of transformation in hallucinosis; (2) all his interpretations are psychoanalytic elements designed to prove the superiority of himself and psychoanalysis. In so far as he is guilty of (1), his actions as a psychoanalyst are 'acting out'; and of (2), his actions as a psychoanalyst are acts (as opposed to 'acting out') and are expressions of a capacity for compassion. But a capacity for compassion is a source of admiration and therefore envy in an analysand who feels incapable of mature compassion.

It follows that it is a matter of difficulty for the analyst to conduct himself in such a manner that his association with the analysand is beneficial to the analysand. The exercise, in the patient's view, is

the establishment of the superiority of rivalry, envy and hate over compassion, complementation and generosity. The crux to which I referred is found in the character of the co-operation between two people and not in the problem for which the co-operation is required. The nature of the co-operation may be determined by the disturbances in the personality of the patient, but that situation may be presumed to be amenable to psychoanalysis; it differs from the situation produced by the inborn disposition of the patient. If analysis has been successful in restoring the personality of the patient, he will approximate to being the person he was when his development became compromised. His disturbed state may be the outcome of an inadequate solution of his problem, but when that situation has been psychoanalytically reconstructed the need arises to solve the problem more adequately. If rivalry, envy and hate are secondary, the chance of an adequate solution would seem to be greater than would be the case if the patient's endowment of rivalry, envy and hate were intrinsic, inborn – the very stuff of his personality.

The more the problem relates to the patient's inborn character, the more difficult it is for him to modify his adherence to transformation in hallucinosis as the superior approach. If his solution were determined by a false belief that no real solution exists, it would be easier for him to admit his mistake than it is when his solution is dictated by an inborn need to be 'top'. This would be unimportant were it not for the belief that certain disorders, notably schizophrenia, are physical and originate in pathological physical states. Their nature would be easier to grasp if seen to originate in a *normal* physical state and to spring from the very health and virility of the patient's endowment of ambition, intolerance of frustration, envy, aggression and his belief that there is, or ought to be, or will be (even if it has to be created by himself) an ideal object that exists to fulfil itself. The impression such patients give of suffering from a character disorder derives from the sense that their well-being and vitality spring from the same characteristics which give trouble. The sense that loss of the bad parts of his personality is inseparable from loss of that part in which all his mental health resides, contributes to the acuity of the patient's fears. This acute fear is inseparable from any attempt to resolve the crux. Is the patient going to repeat the former error by becoming confirmed in his adherence to transformation in hallucinosis, or will he turn to transformation in psychoanalysis?

The generally accepted view amongst psychoanalysts is that interpretations are expressed verbally, that they should be terse and to the point, namely to make the patient aware of his unconscious motivations. The orthodox view can be expressed in my terms thus: the medium of transformation is conversational English. The analyst's statements should belong to categories F1, F3, F4. The link with the analysand should be K, not H or L. He should not express himself in any terms other than those used by an adult; theoretically this excludes certain categories (notably column 2) but, as I have shown, it is possible to regard the patient's statement in different ways, so that sometimes one dimension is thrown into relief, at other times another, and it is equally open to the patient to do just that. It is because he does so that his response to an interpretation may appear anomalous. Therefore, although the analyst is under an obligation to speak with as little ambiguity as possible, his aims in fact are limited by the analysand who is free to receive interpretations in whatever way he chooses. In a sense it can seem that the analyst is hoist with his own petard: he is free to interpret the statements of the analysand how he will; the analysand retorts in kind. The analyst is not free except in the sense that when the patient comes to him for analysis he is obliged to speak in a way which would not be tolerable in any other frame of reference, and then only from a particular vertex.

The patient's response would also be intolerable if there were no psychoanalytic indulgence to excuse it, or if it were not for a psychoanalytic vertex.

If the reader will reconsider the last page he will see a number of statements whose relationship to each other, and therefore meaning, is illuminated if we employ the concept of vertex thus:

"The generally accepted view amongst psychoanalysts . . ." – vertex 1

"The orthodox view . . ." – vertex 2

"Terms used by an adult . . ." – vertex 3

". . . analyst under an obligation . . ." – vertex 4 (implied, not stated)

". . . free to receive . . . he chooses . . ." – vertex 5 (receptor vertex)

". . . in a sense it can seem . . ." – vertex 6

". . . the analyst . . . is obliged . . ." – vertex 7

". . . not be tolerable . . . in any other frame of reference . . ." – vertex 8.

All these vertices represent views with which I am identified. With myself as the vertex, all these vertices represent 'other-people-as-seen-by-me'. Any view with which I am identified is, as I explained discussing O, a vertex from which I have separated myself or with which I have attempted to become-at-one; the direction of the link is immaterial in this context. 'Other-people-as-seen-by-me' are phenomena. I can know phenomena; I can know various aspects of my personality with which I am identified. I can identify myself with aspects of myself which I can know. Any such identification or knowledge is formulated and thereby becomes a statement and, like every other statement in whatever medium, can be classified in a grid category. It is a transformation T xβ. (x = the personality in whom T xα has taken place.)

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In none of this have I spoken of O except in so far as the horizontal axis of the Grid implies the existence of an object that 'uses', and the vertical axis implies the existence of an object that 'possesses' something to use.

My theory would seem to imply a gap between phenomena and the thing-in-itself; all that I have said is not incompatible with Plato, Kant, Berkeley, Freud and Klein, to name a few, who show the extent to which they believe that a curtain of illusion separates us from reality. Some consciously believe the curtain of illusion to be a protection against truth which is essential to the survival of humanity; the remainder of us believe it unconsciously, but no less tenaciously for that. Even those who consider such a view mistaken, and truth essential, consider that the gap cannot be bridged because the nature of the human being precludes knowledge of anything beyond phenomena save conjecture. From this conviction of the inaccessibility of absolute reality the mystics must be exempted. Their inability to express themselves through the medium of ordinary language, art or music, is related to the fact that all such methods of communication are transformations which deal with phenomena, and are dealt with by being known, loved or hated – K, L or H. Transformation then is intermediate between O and T xβ. We must therefore consider further the gap between O and knowledge of phenomena and transformations of O.

The gap between reality and the personality, or, as I prefer to call it, the inaccessibility of O, is an aspect of life with which analysts are familiar under the guise of resistance. Resistance is only manifest when the threat is contact with what is believed to be real; there is no resistance to anything believed to be false. Resistance operates

because it is feared that the reality of the object is imminent; O represents this dimension of anything whatever – its reality.

It is not knowledge of reality that is at stake, nor yet the human equipment for knowing. The belief that reality is or could be known is mistaken because reality is not something which lends itself to being known. It is impossible to know reality for the same reason that makes it impossible to sing potatoes; they may be grown, or pulled, or eaten, but not sung. Reality has to be 'been': there should be a transitive verb – 'to be' – expressly for use with the term 'reality'.

When, as psychoanalysts, we are concerned with the reality of the personality, there is more at stake than an exhortation to "know thyself, accept thyself, be thyself", because implicit in psychoanalytic procedure is the idea that this exhortation cannot be put into practice without the psychoanalytic experience. The point at issue is how to pass from 'knowing' 'phenomena' to 'being' that which is 'real'.

To recapitulate: It is possible through phenomena to be reminded of the 'form'. It is possible through 'incarnation' to be united with a part, the incarnate part, of the Godhead. It is possible through hyperbole for the individual to deal with the real individual. Is it possible through psychoanalytic interpretation to effect a transition from knowing the phenomena of the real self to being the real self?

If I am right in suggesting that phenomena are known but reality is 'become', the interpretation must do more than increase knowledge. It can be argued that this is not a matter for the analyst and that he can only increase knowledge; that the further steps required to bridge the gap must come from the analysand, or from a particular part of the analysand, namely his 'godhead', which must consent to incarnation in the person of the analysand.

Here there seems to be a matter of 'direction': it is not the same for the 'godhead' to consent to incarnation in the person of the analysand as for the analysand to consent to 'becoming' god or the 'godhead' of which 'god' is the phenomenological counterpart. The latter, at any rate, would seem to be closer to insanity than mental health.

The problem, psychoanalytically, is easier to grasp if O represents ultimate reality, good and evil. Becoming O would then seem to be easier to associate with cure than becoming ultimate good or ultimate evil by splitting. Moreover, health may be more easily associated with being passive, *vis-à-vis* ultimate good and evil, rather than with being active.

The gap between 'knowing phenomena' and 'being reality' resembles the gap between 'Knowing about psychoanalysis' and 'Being psychoanalysed'. The transition from 'knowing phenomena' to 'being reality' would seem certain to involve experience of modifying adherence to column 2 statements. It would appear to involve abandonment of making statements known to be false to form a barrier against statements believed to be true. If so, further consideration of column 2 categories offers a promising approach. In terms of resistance theory the aim of resistance is to preserve unconsciousness of thoughts, feelings and 'facts', presumably because that is felt to be the best method, *in the circumstances*, of dealing with the problem presented by those thoughts, feelings and 'facts'. Resistance cannot, however, be evoked unless there is in operation the contrary feeling that consciousness is the best approach. A widely inclusive example of such conflict is provided by the personality who feels unable to improve defects whose existence he suspects and resorts to being unaware of what he feels unable to change. There are occasions in the life of everyone when it is felt to be wise, not pathological, to turn a 'blind eye'. Such situations become pathological when the 'cure' achieved by these means is felt to be more painful that the original dis-ease. It is not always a matter of finding the 'cure' more painful: if the exclusion of unwelcome elements is effected with a view to keeping thoughts relevant to the problem and free from distraction, then dissatisfaction is felt because the result of the exclusion is to prejudice the usefulness of the train of thought. In analysis the problem is not necessarily associated with any particular instance of column 2 operation, but is associated with the habit of mind that resorts to column 2 mechanisms with such frequency that the state of 'being' O is indefinitely postponed.

The first requisite is to detect the column 2 dimension of the statements that are being made. It may not be a significant dimension and in that case the analyst must use his judgement to decide what statement or statements he is going to treat in this way. In transforming the patient's statement he is ignoring its other dimensions just as, in the model with which I start this chapter, the rule for forming the second tray of marbles ignores all dimensions save the green glass of the marbles on the first tray; all dimensions except for one very important one – the *number* of green glass marbles. To this important exception I shall now turn.

Mathematicians are aware that the progress of arithmetic is obstructed probably through some unsolved problem with regard to the nature of the discipline. Psychoanalytically the problem can be approached in the manner I have laid down in this book. 'Numbers' such as 'many', 'three', 'one', are attempts to bind a constant conjunction, preparatory to understanding the conjunction. Numbers are signs denoting a constant conjunction and are an attempt to bind the constant conjunction, but the constant conjunction is itself a constant conjunction – a group of elements that are felt to be constantly conjoined. Number is an attempt to seize upon a system, so to speak, of a group and by naming it take the first step towards understanding, or finding a meaning for, the group. 'One', true to the negative quality of the definitory hypothesis (col. 1) is a denial of the group. All other number are likewise attempts, first to bind, then to understand, the group. It is an over-simplification to describe the object as a group: it is perhaps too mathematical to call it infinity, too mystical to call it the infinite, too religious to call it the Godhead.

Psychologically the problem commences with the impingement on the individual of an object containing in itself the potentiality of all distinctions as yet undeveloped, a group, a conjunction and the need to bind the 'groupishness' of the group by a name, a column 1 element. If the initiative is felt to lie with the object, its 'distinctions' develop until such point as a 'distinction' impinges on the individual; in so far as it is felt to lie with the individual, his awareness develops to a point where some 'distinction', or dimension as I have called it, appears to him to demand binding.

Verbal expressions intended to represent the ultimate object often appear to be contradictory within themselves, but there is a surprising degree of agreement, despite differences of background, time and space, in the descriptions offered by mystics who feel they have experienced the ultimate reality. Sometimes the agreement seems close even when, as with Milton, the individual seems to know of it rather than to have experienced it.

> The rising world of waters dark and deep
> Won from the void and formless infinite.[1]

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[1]J. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. III.

I am not interpreting what Milton says but using it to represent O. The process of binding is a part of the procedure by which something is "won from the void and formless infinite"; it is K and must be distinguished from the process by which O is 'become'. The sense of inside and outside, internal and external objects, introjection and projection, container and contained, all are associated with K.

Distinction between the 'geometric' and 'arithmetic' developments can be made thus: the geometric developments of points and line are primarily associated with the presence or absence, existence or non-existence, of an object. The arithmetic development is associated with the state of the object, whether it is whole or fragmented, whole object or part object.

The geometric development is associated with depression, absence or presence of the object: the arithmetic development with feelings of persecution, the Kleinian theory of a paranoid-schizoid position.

When the dimensions of a statement are the presenting feature in analysis it is a matter of importance to observe whether the object is considered to have dimensions as a part of synthesis (K) or because the dimensions are seen as fragments unrelated to each other, the debris, as it were, of a splitting process (H).

It may at first seem strange to suggest that groups or the infinite should be regarded as epistemologically prior to all else, but less so if we consider that only when a problem is intractable, or seems to be so, will it be felt to engage, and demand, our most powerful efforts. Reciprocally the more we feel ourselves deeply engaged the more likely we are to suppose that the problem *must* be intractable and that it is so intrinsically.

We may now reconsider some of the problems associated with ideas of causation. T β is a formulated transformation, whatever the medium in which the transformation is expressed. T α is the process, employing α-elements, by which the individual arrives at T β. In thinking about transformation we may arrest the process, at whatever point we wish, to give ourselves the conditions in which to make our inspection. If carried to extremes the process of arrest can amount to a denial of the passage of time as in the instances I have cited of the disturbed state where time itself is destroyed by being reduced to a point and then denied altogether. Ignoring this extreme, but taking advantage of the freedom conferred by thought, we may interrupt what in fact is a continuous process by inspecting T α, T β or O in

as far as it can be possible to know, or be curious, *about* O. We can only have a K link with *transformations* of O. One dimension of O is expressed by terms such as 'cause', or a 'first cause'.

The 'cause' O may be felt to be present or absent, single or multiple, independent of the personality or hallucinated. O, in its 'caused' dimension, as in all others, may be located in the Platonic Form, of which people and things are 'reminders'; in a deity, of which people and things are 'incarnations'; in hyperbole, of which people and things are containers. 'Causation', as a dimension of O, has the characteristics of all other dimensions of O that are subjected to the various processes of transformation and inspected at various stages in the process.

Any statement should be assessed according to its grid category, re-assessed as T β in accordance with its position in the Reality scale, that is Form and reminder, deity and incarnation, hyperbole and evacuation. The interpretation should be such that the transition from *knowing about reality* to *becoming real* is furthered. This transition depends on matching the analysand's statement with an interpretation which is such that the circular argument remains circular but has an adequate diameter. If it is too small the circular argument becomes a point; if too great it becomes a straight line. The point and straight line together with numbers are representatives of states of mind which are primitive and unassociated with mature experience. The profitable circular argument depends on a sufficiency of experience to provide an orbit in which to circulate. To re-state this in terms of greater sophistication, the analytic experience must consist of knowing and being successively many elementary statements, discerning their orbital or circular or spherical relationship and establishing the statements which are complementary. The interpretations that effect the transition from knowing about O to becoming O are those establishing complementarity: all others are concerned with establishing the material through which the argument circulates.

The transition from 'knowing about' to 'becoming' O can be seen as a particular instance of the development of the conception from the pre-conception (row E from row D). I have described that process as one of saturation of an unsaturated element $\psi(\xi)$, to become $\psi(\psi)(\xi)$. That is to say, a pre-conception becomes a conception and retains its dimension of 'usability' as a pre-conception. The transition, in terms of transformation, may be formulated as T $\alpha \rightarrow$ T β (cycle 1),

T β (cycle) $\longrightarrow$ T α (cycle 2). The psychoanalytic conception of cure should include the idea of a transformation whereby an element is saturated and thereby made ready for further saturation. Yet a distinction must be made between this dimension of 'cure' or 'growth', and greed. To this I shall revert after considering 'arithmetic' further. I should say, if it is not already clear, that the domain of mathematics with which I am concerned is the 'Dodgsonian' or 'Alice Through the Looking-Glass' variety.

I have said numbers are a means of binding (col. 1) a constant conjunction. By definition this means that the conjunction is unknown or devoid of meaning. O is not known, but for ease in exposition I am supposing that the conjunction, or part of a conjunction, which is to be bound with a view to investigation, is the 'group'. The number signified by 1 is a way of denoting a whole object which is not a group. The group is infinite, whether it is a group of people, things or 'causes'. From this we may proceed to emotional mathematics (or the mathematics of emotion) thus: 1 = "one is one and all alone and evermore shall be so". 1/1 = a relationship with 'the whole of an object that is a whole object, that is unrelated to any other objects and therefore has no properties; since properties are a dimension of relationships'. With religion as vertex this sign can represent the O represented by the term 'Godhead'. With a Miltonic vertex it is represented by the "void and formless infinite" from which is "won" the object that is known. With a Dantesque vertex it is represented by the 33rd canto of the Paradise.[1] With a mathematical vertex, and regarding it in its negative aspect of definition, it can be represented by the term 'not infinity'.

Similarly 1/2 can represent, in its column 1 dimension, a relationship with a part of a part of a group. In its negative dimension it denies that there are more than, or less than, two in the group and affirms that the relationship is with one of them.

When formulated these numbers can be used in the process of transformation. They can be combined with other numbers as and when other numbers are formulated. The development is therefore two-fold: the group can be denoted by a new number whenever a constant conjunction is felt to require binding, as for example if a number 'two' is felt to be necessary because O is not felt to be

[1]See p. 250.

represented by 1. Thus development can proceed according to a plan of enumeration. Or, curiosity about the relationship of 1 to 1/1 or 1/2 to O, and from that to the relationship that each has to the other, leads to manipulation and combination of the numbers. A religious counterpart can be seen in St Augustine's formulation in *The City of God* that only when the individual has regulated his relationship with God (O, or more precisely 1, for the relationship with God is possible, but not with the Godhead because the latter is Darkness and Formlessness, potentially containing all distinctions but yet undeveloped), can he regulate his relationship with his fellow men.

The combination and manipulation of numbers is stimulated by the same force as stimulates their formulation – the awareness of a constant conjunction that requires to be bound.

Manipulation and combination of numbers lead to mathematical formulation as it is ordinarily understood; these formulations (or formulae) may be regarded as D category and used as elements in column 3 and 4 categories are used (or, of course, as elements in any other columns are used). In their category 3 and 4 dimensions they may then be used in the exploration of the world as it is ordinarily supposed by scientists to exist. The spur to the investigation is still the same spur that led to the binding of the constant conjunctions in the first instance. The domain investigated, whether it be called Platonic memories, or religious incarnations, or hyperbole (in the sense in which I have used the term) containers and contained, supplies further stimulation in that each D3 and D4 statement requires further saturation. Evidently the impulse to achieve saturation is unlikely to be fulfilled because in addition to the limitations of human capacity there is the factor of "the void and formless infinite" which, whether thought of as in the mind of man or outside it, cannot be known but must be 'become', that is, saturated in a particular way.

Psychoanalysts may find what I have said about theories of causation in the context of Transformation, as it exists in *knowing about* and *becoming* O, more familiar if they remember how big a part is played in analysis by the need to blame other people and the difficulties of maturation because maturation involves *being* responsible.

The function of T α is to lead to T β, which in turn must lead to growth, and therefore must be capable of categorization in D3 or D4. In K, a domain in which it is sufficient to know *about* something, the apparatus of pre-conception and transformation leads to repetition

but in a new cycle. We need to know what kind of transformation ($T\alpha \rightarrow T\beta$) is required to effect the transition from K to 'becoming' or 'being'. The discovery of the Differential Calculus by Galileo, Newton and Descartes produced a weapon adequate to deal with K phenomena in their inanimate dimension. But it does not produce growth, only permits accretions of knowledge about growth. The differential calculus may be described as D3 and D4 category in K, and must therefore be seen as an instrument furthering K but not O. It is *conducive* to becoming or being O, but has nothing to say about its place in that transformation. We do not learn from it what part it plays, or what the process is in which it plays a part, by which $T\alpha \rightarrow T\beta = K \rightarrow O$.

To rigid motion transformations, projective transformations, and transformations in hallucinosis, I shall now add transformations in O. That is to say I propose to extend the significance O to cover the domain of reality and 'becoming'. Transformations in O contrast with other transformations in that the former are related to growth in becoming, and the latter to growth in 'knowing about' growth; they resemble each other in that 'growth' is common to both.

Transformation in K has, contrary to the common view, been less adequately expressed by mathematical formulation than by religious formulations. Both are defective when required to express growth, and therefore transformation, in O. Even so, religious formulations come nearer to meeting the requirements of transformations in O than mathematical formulations. I shall illustrate my meaning by discussing first, Berkeley's objection to Halley, and Newton's formulation in his *Opticks of the Differential Calculus* which Halley sponsored, and second, the phenomenon known to analysts as Resistance.

12

Bishop Berkeley, prompted by the irreligion of Newton and his sponsor Edmund Halley, attacked certain illogicalities, notably circular argument, in Newton's presentation of the differential calculus; his criticisms exercised mathematicians for over a century. The following quotation is from *The Analyst*:

> It must, indeed, be acknowledged that he used fluxions, like the scaffold of a building, as things to be laid aside or got rid of as soon as finite lines were found proportional to them. But then these finite exponents are found by the help of fluxions. Whatever therefore is got by such exponents and proportions is to be ascribed to fluxions: which must therefore be previously understood. And what are these fluxions? The velocities of evanescent increments. And what are these same evanescent increments? They are neither finite quantities, nor quantities infinitely small, nor yet nothing. May we not call them the ghosts of departed quantities? [Berkeley, 1734, p. 130]

Newton's formulation of the differential calculus is a transformation in K. "The ghosts of departed quantities" expresses the negative of the column 1 dimension of his formulation. The transformation in K is effected by discarding the 'scaffolding' of fluxions, "the ghosts of departed quantities". The discarding of the scaffolding may be regarded as a step to achieve finite lines "proportional to them", a category H3 formulation; or, "the finite lines . . . proportional to them" may be regarded as an F3 formulation used as a column 2 formulation to prevent emergence of the "ghosts of departed quantities" and the psychological turbulence that such an emergence would precipitate; Newton did have what we would today regard as a psychotic breakdown in which, in his own words, he lost "the former consistency of

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his mind" and from which he emerged, according to J. M. Keynes, "slightly 'gaga'". Keynes's paper, which was read by his brother at the Centenary Celebrations held in July 1946, contains material which will repay study for its penetrating insights though I cannot enter into it here.

Berkeley's formulation may be regarded as an F3 contribution. The polemical tone gives it a column 2 category, denying, though he acknowledges the truth of Newton's result, the validity of the method: the ironic tone denies the reality of "the ghosts of departed quantities". The pamphlet as a whole is thus an example of an F3 formulation used, in its second cycle, as column 2 to deny both the "ghosts" component and the H3 component in his and Newton's confrontation. From a psychoanalytic vertex both formulations, Newton's and Berkeley's, can be seen as T β col. 3 (intended to produce a formulation T β col. 3 (cycle 2)), or, T β col. 2 (intended to deny emergence of β-elements).

T Newton β H3 furthers mathematic inquiry: T Newton β col. 2 denies the "ghosts". T Berkeley β col. 2 denies, by irony, "ghosts" and, by polemic, the scientific approach. In both instances the col. 2 dimension is directed against psychological turbulence; why? for fear of the turbulence and its associated 'becoming'. Put in other terms, transformations in K are feared when they threaten the emergence of transformations in O. This can be restated as fear when T $\alpha \rightarrow$ T β = K $\rightarrow$ O. Resistance to an interpretation is resistance against change from K to O. Change from K to O is a special case of Transformation; it is of particular concern to the analyst in his function of aiding maturation of the personalities of his patients.

My term 'psychological turbulence' needs elucidation. By it I mean a state of mind the painful quality of which may be expressed in terms borrowed from St John of the Cross. I quote:[1]

> The first (night of the soul) has to do with the point from which the soul goes forth, for it has gradually to deprive itself of desire for all the worldly things which it possessed, by denying them to itself; the which denial and deprivation are, as it were, night to all the senses of man. The second reason has to do with the mean, or the road along which the soul must travel to this union – that is, faith, which is likewise as dark as night to the understanding. The

[1] *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, 1, 1 and 2.

> third has to do with the point to which it travels – namely, God,
> Who, equally, is dark night to the soul in this life.

I use these formulations to express, in exaggerated form, the pain which is involved in achieving the state of naïvety inseparable from binding or definition (col. 1). Any naming of a constant conjunction involves admission of the negative dimension and is opposed by the fear of ignorance. Therefore at the outset there is a tendency to precocious advance, that is, to a formulation which is a col. 2 formulation intended to deny ignorance – the dark the night of the senses. The relevance of this to psychological phenomena springs from the fact that they are not amenable to apprehension by the senses; this tends to precipitate transformation into such objects as *are* and so contributes to Transformation in hypochondriasis. The 'col. 1' elements thus formed are liable to be second cycle col. 2 – transformations which are T β col. 1 $\rightarrow$ T β (second cycle) col. 2.

Similarly the intuitive approach is obstructed because the 'faith' involved is associated with absence of inquiry, or 'dark night' to K.

The third 'dark night' is associated with the transformation in O, that is from K $\rightarrow$ O. The transformation that involves 'becoming' is felt as inseparable from becoming God, ultimate reality, the First Cause. The 'dark night' pain is fear of megalomania. This fear inhibits acceptance of being responsible, that is mature, because it appears to involve *being* God, being the First Cause, being ultimate reality with a pain that can be, though inadequately, expressed by 'megalomania'.

The same tensions are involved in all transformations in O and these I shall now discuss.

Interpretations are part of K. The anxiety lest transformation in K leads to transformations in O is responsible for the form of resistance in which interpretations appear to be accepted, but in fact the acceptance is with the intention of 'knowing about' rather than 'becoming'. In other terms, it is an acceptance to preserve the K link as a col. 2 element against transformation in O. By agreeing with the interpretation it is hoped that the analyst will be inveigled into a collusive relationship to preserve K without being aware that he is doing so. If the manoeuvre is successful transformations in K fulfil an F2 role preventing the inception of T $\alpha \rightarrow$ T β = K $\rightarrow$ O.

For the next step in this discussion I shall regard the Kleinian theory of Projective Identification as a psychoanalytic formulation (row F categories) based on a background of realizations encountered in

analytic practice and in everyday life: these realizations I shall name 'hyperbole'. 'Hyperbole' is a term belonging to the system of Theories of Observation in contrast to the theory of Projective Identification which I regard as a term belonging to the system of Psychoanalytic Theory.

[I do not propose to discuss the system of Psychoanalytic Theory. For that I refer the reader to the work of Bowlby and the Research Committee of the British Psychoanalytical Society of which he is Chairman, J. Sandler and his co-workers, Segal and her introduction to Melanie Klein and Wisdom on the theories of Klein and Fairbairn. The domains of Theories of Observation and Theories of Psychoanalysis overlap, but the problem is simplified if a distinction is made and can be preserved. The workers on the Theories of Psychoanalysis, to whom I have referred, are engaged on a task which should lead to precise determination and formulation of psychoanalytic theory and eventually to a corpus which belongs uniformly to the category row F.

The following is a series of statements used as illustrations:

1. I have always believed you are a very good analyst.
2. I knew a woman in Peru, when I was a child, who had second sight.
3. It seems to me that psychoanalysts would do better if they believed in God: God *can* cure.
4. There ought not to be so much pain and suffering in the world. What can a mere human being do?

The interpretation of these statements would depend on circumstances which I cannot report here; the suggestions I make must be seen as related to exposition – not clinical experience.

Comment:

I. a. The goodness of the analyst stops short, as it were, in my person. I am 'it'.

b. The goodness of the analyst is incarnate in me. I am the embodiment of analytic goodness.

c. The goodness of the analyst is incorporated in me. Either I have obtained possession of the goodness of the analyst by 'taking it into' myself, or some force has 'put it into' me.

Which of these statements represents the facts most closely depends on the judgement the analyst forms in the emotional experience itself.

II. a. The goodness of the analyst has been projected a long way in time and place. This is hyperbole; there is something in the experience with the analysand that makes this term suitable for binding the particular conjunction, and none other (the negative dimension of the definition). The term already marks a conjunction (the positive dimension of the definitory hypothesis) which is present in the conjunction to which I want to draw attention, namely the early meaning of hyperbole as a 'throwing beyond' someone, else, signifying rivalry.

b. The goodness of the analyst has been thrown 'into' the woman, or Peru, or the past.

The analyst will have to decide according to the experience what further qualities are conjoined with the qualities represented by the term 'hyperbole'. For example, is the goodness incarnate in the woman, or incorporated by her, or projected into her, and if so by whom? And who or where is the rival?

These questions, often answered implicitly, require a means for making them explicit; this is aided by the Grid and the theory of Transformations. The term 'hyperbole' has a history which fits it for compact representation of a number of clinical statements which (i) occur frequently, (ii) are easily recognizable as instances of hyperbole and (iii) are almost certainly symptomatic of a constant conjunction which has significance for the personality being analysed, and for the main body of psychoanalytic theories of idealization, splitting, projective identification, rivalry and envy. In grid category terms it can be classified as row A (β-elements), row C (the visual or pictorial dimension), row D and row E. It has therefore a wide spectrum, is flexible and lends itself easily for use by the analyst as a 'Selected Fact' to aid in displaying coherence which, without it, may not be apparent. 'Hyperbole' can be regarded as representing hyperbole; hyperbole is projection conjoined with rivalry, ambition, vigour which can amount to violence and hence to 'distance' to which an object is projected.

By 'distance' I means something which is the "ghost of a departed quantity" or, to put it in another way, distance = $\psi(\xi)$ where (ξ) = a non-existent quantity. It could be where quantity was or where it

will be, but not where it is; it represents an unsaturated element, an evanescent increment or "departed quantity".

I shall reconsider O with the help of (ξ), Platonic Forms and their 'reminders' (phenomena); 'godhead', 'god' and 'his' incarnations; Ultimate Reality or Truth and the phenomena which are all that human beings can know of the thing-in-itself: all three possess a similar configuration. Milton can invoke light which at the voice of God invested

> The rising world of waters dark and deep
> Won from the void and formless infinite.

Eckhart considers Godhead to contain all distinctions as yet undeveloped and to be Darkness and Formlessness. It cannot be the object of Knowledge until there flows out from it Trinity and the Trinity *can* be known. According to Kant the thing-in-itself cannot be known, but secondary and primary qualities can be. Examples of similar configurations can be multiplied, but for my purposes these are sufficient to indicate what I mean to signify by O (without, I hope, distorting the historical meanings that the authors wished to formulate).

According to need it may be supposed that (i) from O undeveloped distinctions evolve, or, that (ii) from O, the "void and formless infinite", the individual (sense) and group (common sense) win secondary and primary qualities (in Kant's sense). The 'winning' of qualities is part of K. In so far as potentialities and distinctions 'evolve' from O, it is a part of becoming or Transformation in O. Transformations in K may be described loosely as akin to 'knowing about' something, whereas Transformations in O are related to becoming or being O, or to being 'become' by O. The 'distance' (ξ) between O and T β may be artificially described in a series of stages.

Assuming a direction O $\longrightarrow$ T β, O can be said to 'evolve' by (a) becoming manifest (or 'knowable') T β K$\longrightarrow$ (b) by becoming a 'reminder', an 'incarnation' or 'embodiment' or an 'incorporation'. $\longrightarrow$ (c) by becoming T β O, or 'at-one-ment'.

Assuming the reverse direction, T $\beta \longrightarrow$ O, the individual proceeds (T α K) $\longrightarrow$ (a) T β K (col. 1) definition, $\longrightarrow$ (b) T β K (cycle 1) = T α K (cycle 2) $\longrightarrow$ T β K (cycle 2) (col. 3) memory or notation 'reminder', 'incarnation', or 'incorporation' $\longrightarrow$ (c) T β (cycle n − 1) = T α K (cycle n) $\longrightarrow$ T β O.

As I have said, resistances, though apparently K phenomena, derive from Transformations in O. Hatred and fear derive from the fact that transformations in K threaten the further transformation represented by T β (cycle n − 2) ⟶ T β (cycle n − 1) = T α (cycle n) K ⟶ T β O.

The resistance based on hatred and fear of T K ⟶ T O manifests itself as preference for knowing about something to becoming something. The photograph representing Monet's *Les Coquelicots* (or any other artistic representation) is preferred to exposure to the painting itself: exposure to the painting is restricted to perceiving that it is 'about' a field of poppies. No matter what the domain may be, the resistance by 'knowing about' against 'becoming' is sure to be in evidence and is by no means restricted to psychoanalysis Nevertheless in analysis, where analyst and patient must hope for growth in a capacity for maturation, this aspect of T K ⟶ T O is important and must be considered further. Any interpretation may be accepted in K but rejected in O; acceptance in O means that acceptance of an interpretation enabling the patient to 'know' that part of himself to which attention has been drawn is felt to involve 'being' or 'becoming' that person. For many interpretations this price is paid. But some are felt to involve too high a price, notably those which the patient regards as involving him in 'going mad' or committing murder of himself or someone else, or becoming 'responsible' and therefore guilty. There is one class of interpretations, which seems to illuminate good qualities, but objection to which is not so easy to understand. The extreme example – interpretations which involve 'becoming O' – are dreaded as inseparable from megalomania, or what psychiatrists or the public might name delusions of grandeur or other diagnoses implying grave pathological disorder. The public or psychiatric view is more important than might appear as it introduces the social or group component in mental disorder and its treatment. To this I shall now turn.

A patient will manipulate his analysis and his environment in a manner which is consistent, determined, bearing the impress of a plan which is set but of which the pattern remains obscure. With most patients it is easy to understand that his disabilities are a trial to himself and his associates, but with a few his pain, obvious enough, seems to matter far less to him than it does to everyone else, including the analyst. Relatives and associates are frightened by his

irresponsibility into accepting, however powerless they may be, the responsibility he will not accept himself: he who has the power won't exercise it; they, who have not, are forced to do so. His company, so painful to himself, is nurtured and developed so that it will be even more painful to others. Granted the necessary endurance and a capacity to combine observation with it, certain characteristics begin to emerge; here are some:

1. Whenever the patient arouses pity or compassion he associates it with 'statements' that leave the analyst a choice between hating the patient or feeling that he has been guilty of inexperience of the world as it is.

2. Associated with 1. above the analysand exudes a sense of his superiority, an aloofness from humanity and the particular specimen that is his analyst. How he does this must be experienced in detail by the analyst and demonstrated to the analysand.

3. The patient's statements give an impression, sharp enough to evoke forebodings in the analyst yet vague enough to evoke forebodings about the forebodings. The qualities. of 1. and 2. above are thus in evidence, 'splitting' the analyst by leaving him evenly balanced on the horns of a dilemma, unable to remain indecisive and unable to decide on one interpretation without misgivings that the other was correct, thus contributing to the establishment of the superiority of the analysand. The additional feature is the forebodings. They derive from the patient's transformations, composed of category A3 and C3 elements, which are again transformed (cycle 2) into col. 6 elements for corrective purposes. The analyst finds himself in the following dilemma: the patient's statements (hints, clues, innuendos) give every reason to suppose that some grave threat to analyst and analysis is impending, the patient himself being all unaware of any cause for anxiety. These same statements are also made to carry an innuendo that if the analyst thinks the patient is 'all unaware' of what is happening the analyst must be as inferior as the analysand thinks. If the analyst gives an interpretation, the patient will make a new statement showing that he is unaware of what the analyst has said but that, according to the interpretation the analyst has given, either (a) the analyst is unaware of the feelings that all men of common sense would be bound to entertain about his conduct of the case, or (b) the analyst is, without cause, feeling persecuted. The total experience, typical of many, demonstrates the crudity of expression and of the

ideas expressed by the analyst as contrasted with the subtlety and evocative potency[1] of the analysand's ideas and methods of expression. Further the analysand has demonstrated the superiority of the aim to exacerbate pain over the aim to alleviate it.

From observation in the consulting room the analyst is left to deduce the patient's skilful use of psychological insight in manipulation of the individual (the analyst) and the group (the patient's associates outside the consulting-room).

To sum up briefly: the theories of splitting, projective identification and persecution by the projected (evacuated) split-off elements, have their approximate realization in the personality of the analysand. These realizations in the domain of the analysand's personality have been transformed (projective transformation), Tp β, the elements of which belong to row A (2nd cycle B $\leftrightarrow$ H) and col. 6 (second cycle 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, all $-$K). This transformation is then used in the consulting-room to destroy the analyst's psychoanalytic capacity and the psychoanalytic intercourse between analysand and analyst. To sum up in still more general terms: the analysis has been changed into a contest between (a) thought against action, (b) therapeutic use of insight against insight used to exacerbate, (c) pairing and dependent group against flight-fight group, (d) individual against group.

The patient's dilemma, in so far as he too is trying to be co-operative, reparative and creative, lies in his having to choose between 'sanity' which is powerful, destructive and devoted to exacerbation, on the one hand, and creativeness which is impotent and 'insane' on the other. If he wishes to be destructive his choice is between sanity which is creative and destructiveness which is insane. Strength of the desire is the determining factor. It has to be observed that this attempt at simplification by summary is vulnerable through its crudity. In the treatment of such cases there is no signification that is not over-simplification, and no subtlety of discrimination that is not over-subtlety.

The complexity of a statement, whether made by analyst or analysand, imposes choice on the analyst; he must decide what dimension of the patient's statement he is to interpret and in what terms he will interpret it. To a great extent the choice is already determined by the analyst's personality and historical development, but with those factors I do not intend to deal; I am concerned more with the immediate

[1]Cf. *Learning from Experience* – concept of beta-screen [Volume IV].

circumstances and those factors which are under the analyst's conscious control. He must beware of interpretation for no better reason than that the interpretation is one he can make. He cannot 'win' it "from the void and formless infinite" of the analysand's personality, but only from the elements of the statement that the analysand has won from his own "void and formless infinite". Nothing is to be gained from telling the patient what he already knows unless what he 'knows' is being used to exclude what he 'is' (K opposed to O). Such an interpretation is part of the circular argument of which the 'diameter' is too small: similarly the interpretation can be too abstruse and belong to a circular argument of which the 'diameter' is too great. How is the 'diameter' to be measured? If the interpretation is made mainly because it is available, it is a col. 2 statement intended to prevent 'turbulence' in the analyst. The abstruse interpretation relates to desire in the analyst, a wish to feel that he can see further than his analysand or some other who serves as a rival. It belongs to the domain of hyperbole. Too small and too large diameters indicate defence against and projection of hyperbole; defence is against hyperbole originated by the analysand.

Any statement may be supposed to include dimensions represented by every grid category. Not all dimensions have evolved (or been won) from the formlessness in which the potentiality for all distinctions exists. Therefore a statement can lack a varying number of classifiable dimensions because they remain undifferentiated potentialities. Epistemologically a statement may be regarded as evolved when any dimension can have a grid category assigned to it. For purposes of interpretation the statement is insufficiently evolved until its column 2 dimension is apparent. When the column 2 dimension has evolved, the statement can be said to be ripe for interpretation; its development as material for interpretation has reached maturity.

It is to be noted that a statement may be true in the context to which the analysand considers it to be relevant and yet have a column 2 dimension; it has a context to which its relevance is its column 2 dimension. A simple example of this is provided by statements which are recitals of common sense facts intended to deny expression to phantasy; the 'fact' in this context is a theory known to be false.

A distinction must be made between the genesis of thought in the patient's life history and the genesis of expressions of thought in a given contingency. The emergence of the column 2 dimension may be

observed in the contingency of the analysis as a step in the evolution of the statement, and from it the analyst can judge that the conditions for interpretation have arrived, but it does not mean that an interpretation must be made – the analyst's thought must also reach maturation. When he can see the column 2 element in his thoughts the conditions for interpretation are complete: an interpretation should be made. In terms of analytic theory it is approximately correct, but only approximately, to say that the conditions for an interpretation have arrived when the patient's statements provide evidence that resistance is operating: the conditions are complete when the analyst feels aware of resistance in himself – not counter-transference which must be dealt with by analysis of the analyst, but resistance to the reaction he anticipates from the analysand if he gives the interpretation. Note the similarity of the analyst's resistance to the response he anticipates from the patient to his interpretation, and the patient's resistance to the analyst's interpretation: the response anticipated by the analyst is coloured by his α-element version of the interpretation of his interpretation.

So far the 'distance' between the analysand's statement (association) and the analyst's statement (interpretation) has been stated in terms of time required for the emergence of the column 2 element in the statement of the analysand and 'proto-resistance', to coin a phrase, in the analyst to a response that has not yet been made. The analyst's proto-resistance must be projection of his own resistance to one dimension of his proposed interpretation. The interpretation he does give is a theory, known to be false, *vis-à-vis* an unknown contingent circumstance, but maintained as a barrier against turbulence expected to occur were it not so maintained; no statement is without a realization to which it stands in a col. 2 relationship. Thus a religious statement known to be false is used to exclude an aesthetic or scientific or other statement and *vice versa*.

In O the falsity of the statement is secondary to the fact that it is known to be so for it is the latter that inhibits growth whereas the former is part of human inadequacy. In K the fact that the statement is known to be false is secondary to the fact that it is so for it is the latter that inhibits the establishment of meaning whereas the former is part of individual maladjustment. Since the analyst is concerned with development of the personality it follows that the falsity of the statement will vary in significance according to its grid category

and the transformation of which it is a part. To illustrate: suppose the statement is, "the sun will rise tomorrow". If the patient is summarizing a weather forecast his statement is a form of notation or forecast. It is false because the sun does not rise; its employment is not to deny a fact but to explore possibilities. The category would be D3 or 4 according to the judgement of the person to whom the statement is made. If the statement has been made in analysis and is an expression of optimism it may be his transformation of feelings engendered by an interpretation he has just been given. If so, it is transformation denoted by Tp β in O. But if he means he is going out with his girl-friend its category is C3; it is an instance of hyperbole and the configuration of which it is a part is quite different from that of which the previous interpretation is a part. The words are the same, but the first example is D3 and 4 and the second C3. There is no intrinsic merit in establishing the category, but the attempt to do so forces clarification in the analyst's mind of what it is he is actually observing. For example: assuming the category to be C3 and that the girl is his friend it would follow that the link is L, the hyperbole an element in L (approximating to psychoanalytic theories of idealization) and the transformation a rigid motion transformation (approximating to psychoanalytic theories of transference).

Granting that the above is an adequate description of the analyst's transformation (Ta β) he may then enter on a second cycle of transformation in which the total statement is felt to be a denial of hostility. Ta β (cycle 1) then becomes Ta α (cycle 2). In the second cycle, Tp β = T α (cycle 2) = C3 cycle 2 = D2, and the statement – apparently loving idealization – is a denial of hostility to the analyst. The hyperbole is then a projection of the patient's hostility. This entirely alters the configuration, for the patient's transformation Tp β now appears to be a projective transformation, intended to rid himself of his hostility to the analyst, and approximates to the Kleinian theory of projective identification.

It is said that a discipline cannot properly be regarded as scientific until it has been mathematized, and I may have given the impression – by adumbrating a Lewis Carol mathematics for analysis – that I support this view, and in doing so risk the proposal of a premature mathematization of a subject which is not sufficiently mature for such a procedure. I shall therefore draw attention to some features of mathematical development which have not hitherto been adequately

considered psychoanalytically. As an illustration I shall use the description, earlier in this chapter, of the transition from the dark and formless Godhead of Meister Eckhart to the 'knowable' Trinity. My suggestion is that an intrinsic feature of the transition from the 'unknowability' of infinite Godhead to the 'knowable' Trinity is the introduction of the number 'three'. The Godhead has become, or been, mathematized. The configuration which can be recognized as common to all developmental processes whether religious, aesthetic, scientific or psychoanalytic is a progression from the "void and formless infinite" to a 'saturated' formulation which is finite and associated with number, e.g. 'three' or geometric, e.g. the triangle, point, line or circle. Associated with this is the need for a geometric or numerological component in effecting a transformation, e.g. in the model of the transformation of marbles on one tray to the marbles on the second tray. To what extent does this represent an essential link in the ability to effect transformations from experience of reality into knowledge of its manifestations from K to O? The transition from sensibility to awareness, of a kind suitable to be the foundation of action, cannot take place unless the process of change, T α, is mathematical though perhaps in a form that has not been recognized as such.[1]

I shall not discuss the topic here except in the resemblance of numeration to pre-conception (row D). It differs in that the problem seems to spring from a sense of 'infinite' space, time, number which is then made finite. Confronted with the unknown, "the void and formless infinite", the personality of whatever age fills the void (saturates the element), provides a form (names and binds a constant conjunction) and gives boundaries to the infinite (number and position). Pascal's phrase, "*Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie*" can serve as an expression of intolerance and fear of the 'unknowable' and hence of the unconscious in the sense of the undiscovered or the unevolved.

The bearing on psychoanalysis and interpretation of what I have said may seem obscure. It is this: the beginning of a session has the configuration already formulated in the concept of the Godhead.

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[1]A simple example of this is seen when an attempt is made to communicate, by means other than a full analysis, what a psychoanalysis is, so that rules for its practice can be formulated: 'five times' a week and for '50' minutes are readily 'won' from the ineffable experience.

From this there evolves a pattern and at the same time the analyst seeks to establish contact with the evolving pattern. This is subject to his Transformation and culminates in his interpretation Ta β. I am aware of the problems I have left without attempting an approach to their solution; some of these I hope to attempt later. In this book I draw attention to a few of the problems which present themselves in analytic material and offer suggestions for clarifying first, observation and then, assessment of what has been observed.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME VI

Californian swimming pool
Watercolour painting by WRB

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VOLUME VI

Edited by Chris Mawson

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KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume VI): 978–1–78220–234–9

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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G Scientific Deductive System	G1	G2	G3	G4			
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*Later changed to 'Inquiry'. See 'The Grid' (1971) (Volume X, p. vii).

MEMORY AND DESIRE

1965

‘Memory and Desire’ was given without notes and without a pre-circulated version of the paper at a Scientific Meeting at the British Psychoanalytical Society on Wednesday 16 June 1965, but it was never published. In 2014, a recording of the 1965 presentation was found, which I transcribed. I am indebted to the Archivist of the British Psychoanalytical Society, Joanne Halford, for making the recording available to me to transcribe. The paper was published in the May 2014 issue of the *Bulletin of the British Psychoanalytical Society* (for Members, Candidates and Guests of the Society only).

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

> Even the simple act which we describe as 'seeing someone we know' is, to some extent, an intellectual process. We pack the physical outline of the creature we see with all the ideas we already formed about him, and in the complete picture of him which we compose in our minds those ideas have certainly the principal place. In the end . . . each time we see the face or hear the voice it is our own ideas of him which we recognize and to which we listen.
>
> Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past: Swann's Way*

Bion's original presentation of his ideas on memory and desire, given on 16 June 1965 at a Scientific Meeting of the British Psychoanalytical Society, was not published at the time because he gave it without notes, apologizing to his audience at the beginning and undertaking to provide a written version at some point. He said that if he had written down at that stage what he wanted to say about the two terms of the title that were the subject of his paper, he felt it would have made little sense. He preferred to speak it before expressing it in written language. In 1967 he published the bare bones of the paper as a two-page article, "Notes on Memory and Desire", in the *Psychoanalytic Forum*; it was reprinted in *Melanie Klein Today, Volume 2: Mainly Practice* (1988), edited by Elizabeth Spillius, and was also appended at the end of the 1994 edition of Bion's *Cogitations*. When Bion presented that cut-down, gnomic account, several analysts took part in the discussion of it, but only Bion's responses were published at the time. It is notable that in response to questions concerning the role of one of the terms he addresses in the paper, memory, Bion made a distinction between the kind of memory that interferes with analytic receptivity and a different kind, more akin to a suddenly recalled dream, which "swims into view". For this phenomenon Bion preferred the term *evolution*.

There are many references in Bion's work to the principles he articulated in such a condensed way in his brief, pithy "Notes on Memory and Desire". There is an extended treatment of the ideas in *Attention and Interpretation* (e.g., see the section 'Reality sensuous and psychic', p. 242, this volume).

Partly because the 1967 account was so brief, but also for other more complicated factors, the deep connection to Freud's thought on the subject of dreams, on psychoanalytic method, and on the nature of the ego-functions underlying memory and attention was not evident to many of those whose first reaction to Bion's presentation was one of rejection. Bion's ideas on the occluding effects of reliance in the analytic situation of memory and desire remain controversial in some quarters today, so the publication here of the original 1965 recording is valuable as it contains Bion's first presentation of these ideas, which were so important to him in his work and in his conception of a psychoanalytic attitude. I have written a longer introduction to this paper because of its important place in Bion's thinking and because of the many serious misunderstandings to which the short and pithy 'Notes on Memory and Desire' has given rise. One such source of misunderstanding is the emphatic and rather uncharacteristically dogmatic tone of parts of the 1965 presentation. In a paper presented to the British Psychoanalytical Society in 1967 on Negative Capability (later to form the basis of Chapter 13 in *Attention and Interpretation*, this volume), and which is a companion paper to 'Memory and Desire', Bion toned down this assertion and put it forward only as a suggestion for those experienced analysts who wished to try out the suspension of memory and desire as an experiment.

I think it is of particular interest that in the 1965 paper, Bion mentions the analogy of 'artificial blinding' to which Freud referred in his letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé on 25 May 1916 (in E. L. Freud, 1961). Although in the letter Freud referred to the act of writing when he said, "I have to blind myself artificially in order to focus all the light on one dark spot, renouncing cohesion, harmony, rhetoric and everything which you call symbolic", it is clear that he was referring to psychoanalytic attention itself – the conditions necessary for the evenly suspended attention that permits the analyst to "'turn his own unconscious like a receptive organ towards the transmitting unconscious of the patient" (Freud, 1912e, p. 115).

In his 25 May 1916 letter, Freud next refers directly to scotopic vision:

> . . . for my eyes, adapted as they are to the dark, probably can't stand strong light or an extensive range of vision.

The importance of this reference, with its hint of a psychoanalytic version of an easily disrupted Purkinje Shift,[1] is significant for Bion's discussion of memory and desire in relation to Freud's own conjectures regarding the role of consciousness as a sense organ for the apprehension of psychic qualities. Freud (1900a) had suggested, essentially, that there were two 'sensory surfaces' or envelopes feeding awareness, one receiving impressions of external reality through the senses and the other sensitive to impressions emanating endogenously:

> . . . excitations from the periphery of the whole apparatus, the perceptual system; and in addition to this, it can receive excitations of pleasure and unpleasure, which prove to be almost the only psychical quality attaching to transpositions of energy in the inside of the apparatus" (Freud, 1900a, p. 574)

It is sometimes forgotten that Bion meant his comments about the importance of divesting oneself of past knowledge of the patient and of one's desires for his betterment to be understood not only in the context of Freud's recommendations, but also with the apophatic principle described by John Keats as 'Negative Capability' and termed by André Green in its application to psychoanalysis as 'the work of the negative'. Bion marked in his copy of *The Writings of St John of the Cross* the following passages, and he labelled them as being relevant to his ideas on memory and desire. In order to appreciate the particular use to which Bion was applying these principles, it is important to note that where there are references in such writings to God, or the 'Godhead', Bion is abstracting the term for use in his formulations in the realm of psychoanalysis to bring out what he feels are detectable underlying patterns common to both domains:

> All these sensory means and exercises of the faculties must be left behind and in silence. . . . As a result one has to follow this method of disencumbering, emptying, and depriving the faculties of their natural rights and operations to make room for the inflow and

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[1]The Purkyně effect or shift is what underlies dark adaptation in visual perception. It is named after the Czech anatomist Jan Evangelista Purkyně, who in 1819 discovered the principles at work. Purkyně reasoned that the eye has not one but two systems adapted to see colours, one for bright overall light intensity, and the other for dusk and dawn. The Purkyně effect occurs at the transition between primary use of the photopic (cone-based) and scotopic (rod-based) systems.

> illumination. . . . If a person does not turn his eyes from his natural capacity, he will not attain to so lofty a communication; rather, he will hinder it. If it is true that the soul must journey by knowing God through what He is not, rather than through what He is, it must journey, insofar as possible, by way of the denial and rejection of natural and supernatural apprehensions. This is our task now with the memory. We must draw it away from its natural props and capacities and raise it above itself (above all distinct knowledge and apprehensible possession) to supreme hope in the incomprehensible. . . . The annihilation of the memory in regard to all forms (including the five senses) is an absolute requirement. . . . This union cannot be wrought without a complete separation of the memory from all forms. . . . Once he has the habit . . . he no longer experiences these lapses of memory in matters concerning his moral and natural life. ['The Ascent of Mt Carmel', Book 3, Chap. 2, #2; in Kavanaugh & Rodriguez, 1964]

Where the mystical thinkers were attempting to find terms for the objects of *their* contemplation, which they did – in the examples selected by Bion for his purposes – by considering what God was *not*, Bion is attempting to use an analogous process for contemplating the non-sensuous psychic reality of psychoanalysis. Bion thought that the problems in attending to the evolution of the transference often stem from there being a surfeit of ideas and theories, as well as an encumbrance of memories and desires.

Caper (1998) has pointed out that Bion's expositions of memory and desire and his concept of O have been misunderstood by some analysts as signs of Bion having turned to mysticism, but the formulations that Bion takes from mystical thinkers and applies to his formulations of container–contained (♀♂), the domain of O, and memory and desire constitute "a psychoanalytic model of mysticism, not a mystical model of psychoanalysis" (p. 420).

Finally, it is valuable to have available here the original 1965 paper "Memory and Desire" in order to appreciate properly the linkages left out in the writing of his peremptory 1967 "Notes on Memory and Desire", as well as offering further material that illuminates his discussions of psychoanalytic technique elsewhere in his work. It serves a similar bridging function in relation to his discussions in *Attention and Interpretation* and "Notes on Memory and Desire", as does his *Cogitations* in relation to the papers of the 1960s.

Memory and Desire

What I want to do this evening is something which is rather different from a scientific paper; it is a discussion of the subject in which I am interested, and I hope that it will interest you. The first point I would make is this: It is a paper about an event that hasn't taken place yet. The remarks I am making are addressed specifically to analysts who are seeing a patient tomorrow, or the day after. I think it would be helpful to focus not so much on what I am saying as on tomorrow's session; the one you are going to have tomorrow with the particular patient.

Now, to turn to the title of the paper: These two terms – memory and desire – I intend to use as what I have called elsewhere terms which bind a constant conjunction.[1] By a constant conjunction I mean that in certain circumstances you might notice that certain elements kept on turning up constantly conjoined – that you think, for example, that there is fur, claws, whiskers, and you bind the lot by saying "Cat" – the object of that being that once you have bound this constant conjunction you can then set about researching, as superficially or as deeply as you choose, into what you mean by this term. It is rather different from the ordinary views which are held philosophically about abstraction. I am really suggesting that you start with the unknown, that you note a constant conjunction, that you bind it by a term which is virtually meaningless, and then you proceed to investigate what you mean by that term – for the rest of your life if you are so inclined.

The first term, memory: the constant conjunction which I wish to bind by that is very much, probably, what we all understand by

[1]For example, *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* [Volume V].

that term in ordinary conversation. I think one might say that it also includes the ideas which Freud expresses when he speaks of Notation and of its relation to memory in the paper on the two principles of mental functioning[1].

It is also related to what we ordinarily mean when we talk about cases that we have seen, in scientific papers and elsewhere, and describe what we consider to be accounts of what took place. I think it is probably also the kind of thing that we try, at various times in our careers, to make notes about – so that we shall be able to know, or to remember, what has taken place in sessions, and then be able to report on them and to refer to these notes and so on. That, roughly speaking, is what I mean by the use of the term memory.

Similarly with regard to desire – again, it is a meaning which most of us are aware of in our ordinary conversation – I mean by it something rather positively covetous, as it were; something that one wants to have. It has a certain similarity to memory, in that one could say about memory that you tend to remember various things which you like to possess, and in this sense memory itself is very often used as if it were a container in which one keeps these objects that one desires.

I think that the term Desire is also – and I wish to include in it – something which Freud speaks of as wish-fulfilment and the expression of wishes in dreams; it is similar to that.

When we go into this matter further – and I am talking now specifically of the way in which I use these terms – the elements about which I am concerned are, really, sensuous images. That is, both desires and memories are spoken of in terms which are derived from a background of sensuous experience. Let us say that here are things which you can touch, or feel, or smell, which are felt to have a shape or a form, and so on. The fact that they are expressed and stored in

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[1]Freud, S. (1911b),'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning', p. 220. ["Consciousness now learned to comprehend sensory qualities in addition to the qualities of pleasure and unpleasure which hitherto had alone been of interest to it. A special function was instituted which had periodically to search the external world, in order that its data might be familiar already if an urgent internal need should arise – the function of attention. Its activity meets the sense-impressions half way, instead of awaiting their appearance. At the same time, probably, a system of notation was introduced, whose task it was to lay down the results of this periodical activity of consciousness – a part of what we call memory" (1911b, p. 220). *Ed.*]

terms of this kind also means that they are very closely related to the primitive background of senses, and very frequently to a phase in development in which the pleasure–pain principle is dominant. The consequence is that the terms in which these things are remembered or in which they are desired are suitable to objects which can be sensuously perceived and which can be regarded as painful or pleasant. Therefore the *scope* is relatively limited.

Now, I am aware that this is not the only meaning of memory; I am trying all the time to put a limit onto it, so it should apply to what I want to talk about, but for the sake of completeness I think that it is well for us to pay attention to the fact that one could say that even a mathematical formula can be used as a method by which you express or store a memory. I do not think, however, that when it comes to clinical work – when it comes to this session tomorrow – when one thinks of memory, that one is going to think of it in mathematical terms or anything like it. The terms will almost certainly be of this primitive kind, suitable for expressing sensuous experience; suitable for expressing experiences which are felt to be related either to pain or to pleasure.

The other elements which I want to touch on briefly I have thought of in terms of the Grid[1] which I drew up, in which one axis states, as it were, the genetic phase of a particular element that one is trying to categorize, and, on the other hand, the vertical axis, which expresses the use to which it is put. It is quite obvious that there can be highly developed formulations – thoughts, theories, ideas, even mathematical formulations – as I have said, which can be used in a highly sophisticated way; I am not concerning myself with that, for the reasons I have already given – because what I am concerned with are the terms in which we usually think about our cases.

At this point perhaps I ought to make clear that I have always been sceptical about what are called 'clinical accounts'. I have felt that they are, after all, only versions of what took place: they are transformations of what was a real experience. Most of us are critical, for various reasons, of a clinical description. I have felt increasingly disinclined even to pretend to give a clinical account of what takes place, because even if one is simply concerned with simplifying the events of a complicated situation, the distortion is really terrific.

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[1][See p. vii, this volume. *Ed.*]

Nevertheless, as analysts we do know – and I think it is borne in on us more and more as experience builds up – that we really do deal with *something*; that the psychoanalytic experience, however sceptical we may be, is really an emotional experience and it really exists, even if we shall never know or be in a position to give even an approximately correct description of what takes place. For this reason, I think – and find it most useful to do so – of any clinical description as being by nature of a pictorial representation, or, shall we say, a sensuous representation (because I am thinking of what takes place in an analytic situation). I transform that situation into visual images and then a further transformation into verbal formulations, such as those with which we are familiar here. These transformations are of a kind in which one gets an increasing degree of sophistication, but the most comprehensible – the most easy to grasp – and therefore the reason why one frequently is asked, 'Can you give an example?', 'Can you illustrate this?', 'Can you give me a clinical account which matches this?', is because it is much easier to be able to grasp either a visual presentation or a verbalization of that visual presentation.

Now, while there is a gain in communicability of such a formulation, there is a loss of accuracy – for the reasons that I have given: one is using terms which come from a sensuous background to describe this, and there are other reasons with which I am not bothering tonight, but which are known to all of us through the experience of our own analysis.

My point is that this reality which we all know about, which we feel is unmistakeably borne-in on us in the course of analytic work, is something which cannot really be properly expressed, because if you take, shall we say, an anxiety state, most of us would expect to be able to recognize anxiety when we [meet] it,[1] but you can't smell it; it hasn't got a shape; you can't touch it; and so on. And by the time you *can* represent what is going on – in the terms which we ordinarily use – a very considerable development has taken place. The event itself – the thing itself, anxiety itself – has been transformed in a very striking way by the time you use a word like 'anxiety'.

This brings me to the point that any verbal description, any notes that we may make, practically any formulations are, really,

[1][On the tape: "most of us would expect to be able to recognize anxiety when we saw it"; for reasons that will be evident, 'saw' has been amended to 'meet'. *Ed.*]

distortions. I am not talking now about pathological states; I am not talking about this subject as it occurs looked at from the point of view of psychopathology, or from the point of view of the patient. I am considering it simply from the point of view of each one of us who has a patient to see tomorrow. Therefore, I am not concerning myself with either of these questions as being psychopathological manifestations, because on this I think that we all are in general agreement: it is considered to be absolutely essential, at least in our Society, that people should be analysed, and that we do not know of any better way of looking after this problem than by insisting that people should be analysed in order to deal with it.

What I am concerned with here is something much more conscious and under conscious control. I am concerned with the problem of what one should do in order to be ready for, and in condition for, the session tomorrow.

It is well known, in other realms, that it is possible to be in training. To take a trivial example: if someone is playing squash, or tennis, it is not felt to be advisable that they should play static ball games such as golf. Similarly, I am suggesting that there should be a consideration besides this matter of psychopathology – the matters dealt with by analysis and so forth – of what is the desirable state of affairs if you are a psychoanalyst and you have got a patient to see tomorrow. What can be done in the way of keeping in training?

Now, I want to remind you of the conventional view which crops up where there is a tendency to feel that it is important to remember what takes place in an analysis; that it is important to find some method by which you record it – to write notes or use a recording machine and so forth – and the more critical the situation becomes – the more cause you have for anxiety about any patient – the more important it is felt to be to be able to remember what took place today in that patient's analysis, what took place yesterday, and so on. The view that I am wanting to put is that this view is entirely mistaken. And not only mistaken, but positively bad for your analytic work.

With regard to desire, in which I want to include things like thinking 'How nice it will be when the session is over'; or 'How nice it will be when the Summer comes' – all ideas of that kind, including (and this is an important point) 'How nice it would be to cure the patient' – there is, as you know, a great deal of discussion as to what the aim of analysis is. I think that in fact it is a mistaken preoccupation, although

a very interesting one, for an analyst *while he is analysing*. I think that the desire to cure the patient should have no place whatsoever in the consulting room, whatever place that it has in the make-up of the analyst or in his philosophical life; because, in my opinion, nothing will throw your judgement out more than to be concerned with trying to remember what the patient or you yourself have said, or wanting to cure the patient, or to entertain any other desire.

In my experience I find nearly always that the wish to remember what the patient said, or any desire to cure the patient, invariably seems to me to crop up in the situation, and in a formulation, that is intended to keep at bay and to keep out of mind certain other feelings.

I think that the point is brought home by those extremely brilliant (one might almost say) psychoanalysts – the psychotic patient – who, when he is concerned to break the link between the analyst and himself, will do his best to stimulate the analyst to remember something – that you will get floods of evocative words – and do his best to stimulate in the analyst a desire, if only a desire to get rid of him. This is because the stimulation of either of those two will virtually destroy the analyst's judgement. If the patient is successful in his aim, your judgement disappears. Therefore – harking back to tomorrow's session – what I would like to say is that you should spend your time banishing any memory of the patient whatsoever, in preparation for the session, and any aim or ambition as regard to his cure. I do not mean by this that forgetting is a good thing – that is just as bad as remembering. I think that it is something which is a positive discipline. I think it is a matter which you will find is extremely difficult, and you have only got to think of it for a moment to see how inherently improbable it is.

But so long as we are as we are – human beings – we shall entertain desires and we shall have memories. The view that I want to put is that our difficulty as analysts is not that we have such bad memories, or that we are deficient in a desire to cure our patients, but, on the contrary, is the intrusively powerful nature of these memories which, as I think you will realize, is quite compatible with views that Freud himself put forward with regard to the prominence in analysis of memories.

What I am suggesting, then, is that an effort is required which is an actual discipline, difficult to achieve; it cannot simply be achieved simply by contenting yourself with the fact that you have forgotten –

that is not good enough. It is a matter of trying to get out of the habit of remembering things, and trying to get out of the habit of desiring or wanting anything *while you are predominantly engaged on your work.* I am not expressing views about this as a philosophy of life or anything; it is simply an attempt to promulgate an actual rule – as if one could make rules for psychoanalytic training. This is the kind of rule that I would like to make.

I would like to stress once more that it is very different from the view that we are all used to – the view that we fall back into very easily: the more critical the situation, the more we try to remember something or other, even if it is only an appropriate theory – the direct contrary of what I think is desirable.

The consequences of this, insofar as I can speak of them, insofar as I am acquainted with them myself, are peculiar. I do not know how far I can go in an attempt to describe them. But one of the things about it is that in order to see clearly one really needs to be pretty well blind – metaphorically and literally. It is really a sort of positive lack of anything in one's mind, if one can put it like that; that the darker the spot[1] that you wish to illuminate, the darker you have to be – you have to shut out all light in order to be able to see it. Only in that way is it possible to get the conditions in which a real object – but one which is formless and not in any way appreciable to what we ordinarily regard as the senses – emerges, evolves, and becomes possible for us to be aware of.

If one can approximate to this situation, then I think that after a time it really does seem as if it is much clearer, as if one quite felt quite unmistakeably that what one was witnessing was, for example, anxiety, or hostility, and so forth.

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[1][Bion here is following Freud, who wrote in a letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé on 13 May 1924: "I know that in writing I have to blind myself artificially in order to focus all the light on one dark spot, renouncing cohesion, harmony, rhetoric and everything which you call symbolic, frightened as I am by the experience that any such claim or expectation involves the danger of distorting the matter under investigation, even though it may embellish it. Then you come along and add what is missing, build upon it, putting what has been isolated back into its proper context. I cannot always follow you, for my eyes, adapted as they are to the dark, probably can't stand strong light or an extensive range of vision" (in E. L. Freud, 1961). He made this link to Freud's letter explicit in the discussion following the presentation of his 1967 'Notes on Memory and Desire' (see later, this volume). *Ed.*]

I said that I did not want to deal at all here with psychopathology, but just as an aside I would like to suggest that this view also perhaps gives an idea of what the infant or the child has to put up with in dealing with quite real things – real experiences – but which cannot be expressed beyond by saying, "I feel I've got a tummy ache". That is the kind of vocabulary, those are the sensuous terms that have to be employed in order to describe a thing which is in no way represented by that at all. There is a quite striking phrase in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930a) where Freud, having given a description – a sort of model of the mind – then says that the striking thing about this, the thing you can really learn from it, is the utter inadequacy of a pictorial representation to provide a model for the mind. I think that this really sums up very well indeed what I am trying to say – namely, the fact that we are dealing with things which are real enough, which are absolutely real, even from earliest infancy on, but which cannot be expressed except in the kind of vocabulary which is quite unfitted for it by its derivation and characteristics.

When it comes to the actual progress of the analysis, I have found that it is very extraordinary – the way in which the experience, as it evolves in the analytic situation, is, over and over again, recognizable. That, over and over again, with the ordinary theories of analysis – whatever your school may be, whatever your private bent of mind may be, and the theories that you may hold – how much easier it becomes to be able to appreciate that what is happening in the consulting room is an actual approximation to one or other of the theories that you know, no matter how little you may feel that you know about psychoanalysis or psychoanalytic theories. It is extraordinary how much one does know, and how often the theories that have already been discovered which are a commonplace of psychoanalytic literature, swim into view, so to speak, irresistibly, because of what is happening in the consulting room. But the first, essential thing here is to be able to get into the state of mind in which these things which are not open to sensuous apprehension are nevertheless possible to apprehend.

The order in which this happens, however, seems to be different. I would not want to try to explain in what way it is different, but certainly it seems to me that a change takes place. There *is* a coherence about it, there *is* a respect in which the totality of the analysis hangs together, there *is* a way in which the pieces of the jigsaw can

be seen to have a configuration which bears a relationship to the whole – even when you do not know what the whole is – but the order in which those events appear seems to me to be different when one tries to do analysis in this way, rather than in other ways with which one is familiar.

A further point is that I think it is quite a frightening way of doing it. For one thing, the cultural background to which we belong is the sort of background where, if anything went wrong, and you found yourself in a Court of Law or a Coroner's Court, it would be assumed as a matter of course that you really know something about your patient: that you know that your patient is married, has four children, say, and so on. And indeed, one feels that that is something one ought to know about. Now this is the dilemma: if you know that, and if you remember that, then it may take you quite a long time to appreciate the fact that your patient is talking in a way which is quite appropriate to his not being married at all, nor having any children. And the knowledge, the memory, that he is married and has children will easily distort one's view and interfere with one's judgement of the situation in which the interpretations are appropriate to his being unmarried and having no children, while one is tending to wish to make interpretations which would make allowance for the other facts. That is a crude example, but it is, roughly speaking, one aspect of it. On the other hand, there is a feeling that if it emerged that you did not even know that your patient was a married man, how very odd this would look, and what a queer light it would cast on any view of your professional competence, in the cultural background in which you belong.

One cannot do analysis on those terms, but at the same time I think that one cannot really do analysis on terms in which one is unaware of the risks that one is running and of the price that one has to pay if one is going to do analysis properly. If I am right in saying that this is *a* way of doing analysis properly, then, at the same time, one is going to pay the price of this in anxiety. So I think that there *is* an increase in anxiety; I do not think that one could say that it is an undesirable increase in anxiety; on the contrary I think, again, that it probably would mark the division between those who practise psychoanalysis and those who talk about it.

If you are a psychoanalyst, if you are seeing a patient tomorrow, then you are seeing that patient in a particular emotional situation:

not only in the consulting room but in the cultural situation, the cultural background. Therefore, it is important for the analyst to be both the analyst and also a member of the society, so that he is exposed to the emotional experiences and states of mind of the society to which he belongs. It is, however, as I say, somewhat disconcerting and at first not at all pleasing.

Again, with regard to the patient the situation is different, because what one is concerned to do, among other things, is to be able to observe the operation of his memories and of his desires. I think that it makes it very much easier when one keeps out of one's own mind these particular elements of memory and desire, because then it becomes possible to be able to 'see' what is operating in the patient's mind and what is actually going on in the analytic session.

I raised the point a little while back about the transformation. I would like to revert again to that for a moment. Perhaps I can express it best in this way: If you see a painting of a cornfield, most of us in this particular culture would recognize it for what it was. That must mean that there is something which is invariant – that there is something about the actual cornfield and there is something about the piece of canvas with the paint disposed on its surface which remains unaltered and which makes recognition possible. Another example, as you know, is that if you wish to represent a circular pond you have to draw an ellipse; if you wish to represent a path with parallel borders you have to represent it with lines which meet at a point.

What we are witnessing in an analytic session I don't think can ever *be* the real experience; we do not know what that is, but what we do know is the experience by the time it has been transformed – by the patient – into various forms of verbal representation. There is no reason why it should not be other representations except that analytically we usually conduct it in terms of verbal communication, but of course, as child analysts know, there are other methods of communication as well. If one ever analyses somebody who is by nature a musician, I think that it isn't a long time before you find yourself up against somebody who is opposed to your whole method of expression, that there is a feeling that if he were to be allowed to play the piano then he could say what he thinks, and considers that he is being restricted to a feeble sort of method of communication such as conversation. So in this way the number of transformations that we have to deal with are really very considerable. Again, when you are presented

with a verbal account by a patient, one could make a parallel to this by saying that you might have to look at the painting – say Constable's *Hay Wain* – and you can regard that as being a record of a hay wain, that that's what it is, very simply: It is about a hay wain. Now that is not really good enough for the analyst, because if you stick to that then you stick to this state of affairs where you know *about* analysis, and you know *about* the patient – you know that the patient is married and so forth. But what you don't know is the patient. There has, therefore, got to be a quite different transformation.

Now, this other transformation is, I think, of a different sort of category altogether. It is to do with the actual emotional reality of the situation with which we are dealing. When you get onto that, then I think you are in difficulties because you are using language which is suitable for talking *about* something, but that is not a language which is necessarily suitable for an experience in which something is happening, a dynamic emotional experience which is not open to sensuous observation.

The final point, then, that I want to make is that as a prelude to this state of affairs where you are actually having to deal with, to psychoanalyse (whatever that may mean), a state of mind, these special steps have to be taken and they have to be steps of this nature, where the question of desires and the question of memory have to be dealt with as definite matters of discipline – the banishment of them from the mind.

CATASTROPHIC CHANGE

1966

‘Catastrophic Change’ was presented at a Scientific Meeting of the British Psychoanalytical Society on 4 May 1966. It was published in 1966 in the *Bulletin of the British Psychoanalytical Society, 5*.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

On 4 May 1966, Wilfred Bion presented to a Scientific Meeting of the British Psychoanalytical Society his paper 'Catastrophic Change', which had been pre-published – unlike his 1965 presentation, 'Memory and Desire' – in the Bulletin of that Society, for members to consider and to bring with them for discussion. As was frequently the case, his spoken version of his ideas differed considerably from the written one, to the clear irritation of some of his colleagues, one of whom had prepared lengthy arguments in advance.

His spoken talk was short and to the point – an introduction only to the ideas put forward in the paper, on the assumption that everybody present had read it; he had wanted to allow plenty of time for a full discussion.

Bion introduced his topic by speaking about a pattern he had noticed that, as he put it, kept turning up. He emphasized that he was not putting forward a new theory but was describing and exploring an observable pattern, a configuration, that keeps on cropping up, both inside and outside the consulting room. At the end of the discussion Bion reiterated that detecting the underlying pattern was only the beginning of theorizing about it and its relationships to other phenomena, and that the status of the container–contained configuration, and ideas associated with it, were provisional: a model rather than a theory.

Bion gave four descriptions of ways in which the pattern he had observed manifested and the different forms it took in different contexts and at various levels of analysis. Something contains something else, and (a) simply houses it; (b) exerts confining, damaging influence or crushing force upon it; or (c) protects and stimulates its growth. In his paper these are referred to in terms borrowed from biology: *commensal*

(etymologically: coexisting, sitting at the same table), *parasitic*, and *symbiotic*.

Bion observed the configuration as a constant conjunction, meaning elements which are observed to arise together reliably. The constantly conjoined elements he bound with a name, container–contained, making use of terminology and an instance of a pattern that he had retained from reading a 1925 paper by Carl Jung, 'Marriage as a Psychological Relationship'. Jung had used the term to contemplate the situation of one marital partner possessing a more complex personality than the other, with the less complicated partner feeling 'contained' or encapsulated by that of the other. Bion saw this as but one example of the underlying pattern that he wanted to explore further; in 'Catastrophic Change', and earlier in his treatment of the configuration in *Learning from Experience* (1962), Bion stated that he wished to retain the meaning of the male and female elements in sex, but not be restricted to it.

The following extract, from the transcription of the recording of the discussion at the Scientific Meeting devoted to discussing the paper, is included here because it illustrates so well both a valid criticism of Bion's mode of exposition of his ideas and an equally valid and interesting defence of it.

> *Donald Meltzer:*
>
> Now, when I listen to Dr Bion, I get drunk with a kind of delight because everything he says is so new, and so exciting, and I want to really express my resentment at this sort of drunkenness that he induces in me, and complain about how he does it, and why I think he shouldn't; and I want to agree with Dr Winnicott too, in that the chink is just where masterful chink detectors find it – it is when Dr Bion does not really condescend to inform us how it is linked with the things we have ordinarily been thinking, that he promotes in us a kind of excitement that takes us off, into new channels without providing us with an Anchorage, and seems to me it affects us as if he were announcing messianic ideas. Now, it seems to me that it is necessary to grasp what he's talking about in terms of the history of psychoanalysis; and particularly I was struck by the anomaly of his wondering how it linked with the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, because it seems to me that it has a very clear link. In the history of Melanie Klein's work, for instance, it starts with the investigation of the genetic problems, the early phase of the Oedipus complex, it then went on to this tremendous advance – I think the first advance in the economic aspect of metapsychology – the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, and this took her back

into dynamic problems, connected with the discovery of projective identification, and that led her into a new investigation of instinct and the elaboration of the problem of envy, and this is the way it goes – it goes metapsychologically, from one area of metapsychology to another, and Dr Bion is now taking us back to the problem of structure.

Now as soon as I can recognize it, that he is taking us the next logical step from the advances posed by 'Envy and Gratitude' (Klein, 1957), I stop being drunk and begin being really puzzled and worried about the quality of my work, and wonder what's wrong with it, that needs to be improved by what Dr Bion talking about. Now of course I don't know, but it has something to do with structure of the mental apparatus. It seems to me that Dr Bion is talking about the kind of things that I have found myself, in times of worrying about, such as, where are the objects? Does the ego contain the objects, or does an object contain the ego? Or does the self contain them all? Really, what is the structure of the mental apparatus, and what is the significance of the continual getting in and out of one another that goes on within the different elements of the structure of the mental apparatus.

Later in the discussion:

Elliott Jaques:

I only want to make one point: I believe that an inference can be drawn from what Dr Bion has said to us tonight for interpretive work – that is, the significance of what he's saying is that the ability of the analyst to apprehend, to appreciate the essence of the patient and his verbalizations at any particular moment is a function of the various relationships between the contained and the container, so that a correct interpretation, so to speak, would therefore be one which, in Dr Bion's terms, a symbiotic relationship pertains at the moment prior to the interpretation, and as Dr Bion pointed out to me when I discussed this with him, also at the moment after the interpretation, so that the patient with the analyst can proliferate and grow. Now the ways in which the analyst does this, and may develop the skill to do this, more effectively would make for a very important study, and I wondered if – in answer to Dr Meltzer's point, Dr Bion wouldn't say that you can only learn this, paradoxically, by giving up trying to understand the links between the known and the unknown beforehand.

Dr Bion:

To take up the point that Dr Meltzer made just now: I agree about this, and this is why when I spoke about the need to avoid the use of either memory or to allow desire, as it were, also to develop, it was

> because I felt that it got between oneself and the patient; that there is something peculiar about the operations of what are normally understood as memory and desire which leave one particularly unfitted to intuit what is actually happening in the session, and I think it is related to this question of the anchorage, in that if you try to do this, then I think you will have an unpleasant and anxious experience, in which you feel you lose your anchorage; and one is constantly trying to find it; one is constantly trying to fall back on something or other like a cure or something of that sort, something with which one is familiar, as a protection against what is really an unpleasant situation, a situation in which anything may happen. The patient that you see tomorrow is a patient you've never seen before – why? because if you have seen them before, the problem has been dealt with. If he hasn't understood what you have said to him – if you haven't been able to introduce him to himself – it will turn up again, and what one wants to do is to deal with it in the form in which it turns up again, and not in the form in which one thought it turned up at some predetermined occasion which one has probably forgotten or imperfectly remembered anyway. Therefore, it is important to see the patient tomorrow as if the patient has never been seen; it is a very difficult thing: It is much easier to talk about than to do; and the difficulty is made worse by this fact that one loses one's anchorage, and it's a nasty feeling, as you'll soon find out if you try that and if you have any success in trying it.
>
> Now, with regard to this feeling of excitement – well, the point is that this subject is actually an exciting subject. And I think it is something that we all object to . . .

Essentially this part of the discussion relates to two forms of the relationship between the pattern of existing knowledge and the impact of new perceptions or ideas. Meltzer, with his comment on mental 'anchorage', emphasizes the desire for *apperception*.

According to Johann Friedrich Herbart [1776–1841], apperception is the process through which a collection of presentations becomes structured by the accretion of new elements, from the direction of sensuous reality or from thoughts. In this process, there is an important quantum of reassurance stemming from the sum of antecedent experience, which compensates for the unsettling experience of new, unassimilated experience.

Apperception is thus a term for all mental processes in which a presentation is brought into connection with an already existing and systematized mental structure and can thereby be classified, explained, understood. A later formulation by William James [1842–1910], based

on that of Herbart, is: "To unite and assimilate a new perception to a mass of ideas already possessed, and thereby to comprehend and interpret it."

Bion's formulations, on the other hand, stimulate the requirement of the reader or listener for Negative Capability, in which the links to a body of pre-existing knowledge – described in the paper as both possessed and protected by a conservative containing group (and by a corresponding part of the mind) called the 'Establishment' – are suspended. Bion quotes in *Attention and Interpretation* (p. 327, this volume) Keats's use of the term 'Negative Capability' as it features in a letter the poet wrote to his brothers:

> . . . several things dove-tailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously – I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason. [Keats, 1817]

In his recommendations on memory and desire, Bion is suggesting that the analyst tolerates the feelings consequent upon letting go, temporarily, of those facts and reasons forming the reassuring structure of existing theories and accepted facts, for the purpose of being receptive to new organizations of experience. This is what he has termed, borrowing from Henri Poincaré, a 'selected fact' – essentially, a fact that seems to select itself.

Parthenope Bion Talamo (1981) put it in the following terms:

> This Selected Fact is one which the thinking individual recognizes as unexpectedly harmonizing all the other scattered facts – it is one of them, but it allows the thinker to 'see' the meaning which had previously not been visible.

In his 1967 'Commentary' in *Second Thoughts* on the preceding chapters in it, Bion wrote:

> The analyst must discern the underlying pattern by a process of discrimination and selection. If the account given is a selection made to demonstrate the correctness of the original selection, it is clearly worthless. Only if the original experience is a genuine evolution of a psychoanalytic realization, i.e. a precipitation of coherence by a "selected fact", does the writer's conscious discrimination and selection become legitimate as a method of representation. [p. 172, this volume]

In his contribution to the discussion (above), Meltzer highlighted the characteristic disorientation precipitated by communications in which explanatory 'anchoring' links, which allow *apperception* of the underlying pattern, are absent.[1] By referring to a sense of 'drunkenness', he is conveying the 'heady' effects of combined excitement and irritation that, according to Bion, have to be tolerated in analysis and in clinical thinking of a particular kind, and the fact that the usefulness of doing so can be explored by the practising analyst if he wishes to.

A slightly amended and expanded version of 'Catastrophic Change' was published as Chapter 12 of *Attention and Interpretation: A Scientific Approach to Insight in Psycho-Analysis and Groups* (1970), which is included in this volume. A line-by-line comparison of the two texts is provided as Appendix C in Volume XV.

[1]André Green, in his review of Bion's *Cogitations* (see Volume XI), made a similar point, and he welcomed the notes forming *Cogitations* as supplying some of the missing links in Bion's earlier formulations.

Catastrophic Change

In this paper I describe a configuration which constantly recurs in psychoanalysis. Although I may resort to formulations which appear to be descriptions of events in psychoanalysis or history, I do not claim for them the status of historical narrative. They are what I call C category elements, descriptions made up of sensuous images derived from a background of experience or reported experience reassembled for my purposes. I shall give no psychoanalytic interpretations; these should be given only by the psychoanalyst in the course of a psychoanalysis when the facts which are to be interpreted are available and when he only is available to give them.

Description 1. This consists of two signs ♂ and ♀ which I call the contained and the container. The use of male and female symbols is deliberate but must not be taken to mean that other than sexual implications are excluded. These signs designate a relationship between ♀ and ♂: The link may be commensal, symbiotic, or parasitic.

Description 2. A word contains a meaning; conversely, a meaning can contain a word – which may or may not be discovered. This could be represented as the word (♀) containing the meaning (♂). Or *vice versa*, the meaning (♀) containing the word (♂). The relationship is established by the nature of the link. A constant conjunction of elements in a psychoanalysis can be bound by the attribution to it of a word, or a theory or other formulation. The word by which it is bound can have such a powerful pre-existing penumbra of associations that it squeezes the meaning out of the constant conjunction it is supposed to mark. Conversely the constant conjunction can destroy the word, theory, or other formulation which the formulation is intended to

'contain'. Thus ♀♂ can be so powerful that they destroy the meaning I want them to contain. Conversely the conjunction they are to represent may be so powerful that the sign cannot contain it. Equally the link may be symbiotic or commensal. Describing it in yet other C category terms: a man is attempting to express such powerful feelings that his capacity for verbal expression disintegrates into a stammer or becomes a meaningless and incoherent babble of words.

Description 3. The container (♀) extracts so much from the contained (♂) that the contained is left without substance. A psychoanalysis is so long continued that the patient can get no further meaning from it. A converse example would be the continuation until the patient had no more patience, tolerance, fortitude or money left. The container can squeeze everything 'out of' the contained. Conversely the 'pressure' may be exerted by the contained so that the container disintegrates. An illustration would be the word used as a metaphor until finally the genetic background is lost and the word loses its meaning. (See Fowler's *Modern English Usage* [2nd edition] for illustrations.)

Description 4. The marriage *in* which the sexual relationship ♀♂ plays such a part that there is *no room* for any of the other activities in which the married couple might engage. Conversely, the other (i.e. 'other than sexual') activities play such a part that there is *no room* for sexual fulfilment. (The metaphors used in this description exemplify the outside–the inside, container–contained, ♀♂ pattern).

Expansions of 1–4

Memory may be represented by ♀ or ♂. Thus regarding it as the container ♀ it is filled with 'memories' derived from sensuous experience. The sensuous background is dominant and 'memories' with such a background are tenacious. The memory ♀ is therefore saturated. The analyst who comes to a session with an active memory is therefore in no position to make 'observations' of mental phenomena because these are unknown and cannot be sensuously apprehended. Anxiety is known to us all but it has no shape or smell, colour or sound. An obtrusion of memory therefore obstructs intuition of the unknown phenomena. But, it may be said, do not analysts remember, and ought they not to remember, what has been said? There is certainly

something which has often been called 'remembering' and which is essential to psychoanalytic work. But this must be sharply distinguished from what I have been calling memory. I want to make a distinction between (1) remembering a dream or having a memory of a dream and (2) the experience of the dream in which it seems to float into the mind as if it were a whole which was at one moment absent and at the next present. This experience, which I consider to be part of an evolution of the emotional reality of the session, is often called a memory, or remembering a dream, but is to be sharply distinguished from the dream remembered or the experience of remembering it. Indeed what I am describing is a good example of the meaning ♀ in which is embedded the unknown word or formulation ♂, for what I would like would be to find a word that most people would regard as appropriate to represent the meaning I want to convey. The term 'memory' I shall use with its ordinary conversational meaning and it represents something I consider to be out of place in the psychoanalyst's conduct of a psychoanalysis. A patient's close relatives are burdened with memories which make them quite unreliable judges of the patient's personality and unfit to be the patient's analyst.

So far I have examined the configuration as it appears in the limits of words themselves. I shall not spend time in detailed examination of its appearance in more complex formulation except to indicate the degree of its persistence. The psychoanalytic situation would be expected to evoke examples of the configuration and it does so. But it is also a situation in which it is likely that difficulties will arise for both analysand and analyst in finding methods of communication. Conversely there will be emotional experiences to be conveyed or represented, some of great intensity. It is likely therefore that we shall find in the subject matter instances of the configuration I mention and the same configuration in the psychoanalytic procedure designed to deal with it. Thus we arrive at another description.

Description 5. The patient will be at a loss to convey his meaning or, the meaning he wishes to convey will be too intense to express properly, or the formulation will be so rigid that he feels that the meaning conveyed is devoid of any interest or vitality. Similarly the interpretations given by the analyst, in this instance ♂, will meet with a reception from the patient which, by an apparently co-operative response of repeating the interpretation for confirmation, he deprives

of meaning by compression or denudation. Which it is will depend on whether the link between ♀ and ♂ is commensal, symbiotic or parasitic. Failure to observe or demonstrate the point may produce an apparently inexplicable lack of progress in what is outwardly a progressive analysis. The clue lies in the observation of the fluctuations which make the analyst at one moment ♀ and the analysand ♂ and at the next reverse the roles. At the same time as this pattern is observed – worked out in words or persons – there must also be noted which link is operating, commensal, symbiotic or parasitic.

Expansions of 1–5

The more familiar the analyst becomes with the configuration of events, which I represent by the relationship between ♀ and ♂, the more often and the more readily will observe them. There is a difference between ♀ and ♂ which is I hope sufficiently clear to make it possible to distinguish between events in the session which approximate to these two representations. The essential experience for the analyst is not the reading of this paper but the matching of the real event in the psychoanalysis which approximates to these formulations. Aided by the frequent references made by patients and himself to events which occur 'in analysis' or 'in the past' or 'inside' or 'outside', it should be easy to recognize with increasing frequency the realizations to which these signs relate. The recognition of the category of link which is operating may be more difficult unless a lead-in can be obtained by considering the kind of event which takes the place of ♀ or ♂. Thus an extremely greedy patient may want to obtain as much as he can from his analysis while giving as little as possible: we should expect this to show itself by frequent events in which the container was denuding the contained object and vice versa. The patient might show that he made enormous demands on his family but resented doing anything for it. Many patients might show behaviour of this kind on relatively rare occasions but some might show it in many activities and in striking degree as, for example, by habitual incoherence while demanding great precision of interpretation from the analyst. This kind of patient cannot well be described in terms of narrative recording actual events, first, because any such formulation is suspect for reasons I have given in discussing memory,

and, second, because it is impossible to predict what form his greed will take. Therefore the psychoanalyst, who may have such a patient, or a patient showing such patterns of behaviour relatively rarely, or anything between these extremes, needs formulations of theory that enable him to have as wide as possible a spectrum of observation so that these configurations do not pass unnoticed. If these formulations are too abstract they lack body. Therefore I give them body by using C category description but these are liable to produce so great a penumbra of association that the formulations become saturated and narrow the analyst's perspicacity.

Before leaving the expansion of descriptions 1–5 it will be as well to look at claustrophobia, agoraphobia and acting-out as illustrations of the appearance of the configuration. Acting-out, as it is ordinarily understood, takes place 'in' the analysis and the analysis is then itself a part of acting-out. In claustrophobia the patient identifies himself with an object which is inside a container. An ability to see the ♀♂ configuration in both these states reveals the relationships between one element and another of the patient's personality which otherwise would remain unknown. When a patient can be said to be acting-out the analysis is 'in' a situation of which the boundaries are unknown. If the behaviour characterized as 'acting-out' is brought to the analysis it can be accompanied by claustrophobic symptoms in the patient. The coherence of these symptoms may not be detected if the underlying configuration is not realized. As this last point touches on group behaviour I shall make my next description a formulation in terms of history. As I intend to broaden the scope of the configuration the description will appear to be complex but its complexity will be less if it is borne in mind that the description has the same fundamental configuration even if at first sight it appears that this is not so. It may help if I explain that new ideas may appear to be presented in this description; their novelty or otherwise is a function of the reader's personality and must not be supposed to inhere in the communication.

Description 6. From time to time men appear in history who are variously described as mystics or men of genius. Some attract notice as outstanding personalities but some must be supposed to attract virtually no attention because the conditions for their existence are not propitious. A similar fate attends upon ideas. A study of these

conditions may at some time be carried out but I am only concerned here to formulate their existence. The idea which I consider to be a counterpart of the mystic or genius I shall call the 'messianic idea'. The idea that is messianic may be confused with the idea that he, she or it is the Messiah. The person I shall call 'the mystic'; the idea I shall call 'the messianic idea'. I shall use the terms 'mystic' and 'genius' as interchangeable.

Mystics have appeared in all religions, at all times, in all places and in all centres of scientific discussion. Such persons 'contain' the 'messianic idea', or the 'messianic idea' may 'contain' the person who is sought to incarnate, represent or manifest the Messiah in a manner analogous to the meaning which is felt to 'contain' the word which is to represent its. (See Expansion 1–4 and Description 2.)

The society in which the mystic appears has been described by Nietzsche as a body whose function it is to produce a genius. I shall adopt this view as part of my formulation. But I consider it also to be the function of the society to make the mystic or the messianic idea available to the members of the group. This is done by laws (in society), dogma (in religion), rules or laws (in mathematics or science). The governing body of the society I shall call the Establishment. The counterpart of this in the domain of thought would be the pre-existing disposition or pre-conception.

The mystic makes direct contact with, or – as with certain Christian mystics (one of whom, Meister Eckhart, I shall mention again) – is at one with, God. This is not possible for the ordinary member of the group. Hence the need for the Establishment to pronounce dogmatically, make laws or rules, by which the advantages of the mystic's communion with God or ultimate truth or reality may, as it were, be shared at one remove by the ordinary members. This the Establishment may fail to do either by lack of discrimination which loads to the furtherance of false views or by rigid adherence to an existing framework which sets up a parasitic link between mystic and group, ♂ and ♀. The life is then squeezed out of the mystic or messianic idea, or the society is disrupted. This brings me to catastrophic change and my next description.

Description 7. The conflict between the mystic and his group is exhibited in its most exaggerated, and therefore most easily studied, form in the account of Jesus and his relationship with the group. He

himself claimed, in a manner typical of many mystics, that his teachings were in conformity with the existing Establishment: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" (Matthew 5. 17. A.V.).

This claim is often associated with an awareness of the disruptive force which is being brought to bear upon the group from within. It was a charge which St. Augustine felt obliged to refute four centuries later in *The City of God* when the sack of Rome by Alaric was attributed to the pernicious influence of Christians and their doctrines. The mystic does not necessarily claim to conform to the group. He may appear in the guise of a destroyer from within or without. He does not claim peaceable intentions or methods.

It would be possible to make a distinction between the nihilistic mystic who disrupts the community which is his own creation and the creative mystic who appears to eschew violent methods particularly against his own group. We need not trouble about these claims because I wish to stress the disruptive quality of the mystic, whether he claims to be disruptive or not, for it is this disruptive quality which is associated with the group's hostility to the mystic and vice versa. It is, furthermore, the quality which I wish to emphasize in this description.

The reaction of the Establishment is to prevent the disruption and this it does as follows: It can load the mystic with such honours that he sinks without a trace. This is expressed in the biblical illustration by the temptation in the wilderness where the rewards of conformity are clearly stated. Conformity can be renunciation of the messianic ideas, or acceptance of the role of the messianic idea. Alternatively, the mystic can be destroyed and an attempt made to ensure the same fate for his ideas.

The failure of the rabbinical directorate had disastrous consequences for this group. The functions of containment – I use the word with its military implication of one force containing another – had to be assumed by the split factions of the group, one ostensibly against, and the other for, Jesus. Gradually a fresh group was formed and a fresh Establishment to contain the mystic, or rather the messianic idea. The Jewish group learned to handle the mystic with consequences which were less disastrous for itself. The Christian group, though finding a different solution of the problem, achieved a similarly satisfactory result. Neither system was free from recurrences of

the problem. One Christian Establishment restored the disruptive structure and ensured its continuity by taking over the festivals of paganism and thus mollifying the hostility which might otherwise have followed the loss of holidays and feasts which were beloved and valued. The theme could be stated as bigger and brighter paganism with gods refurbished and rejuvenated as saints and devils. (Milton expresses this very clearly in his representation of Pandemonium in Books I and III of *Paradise Lost*.)

The problems of the Christian Establishment developed even in the lifetime of Jesus. The first were: delineation of the borders of the group, selection and training, and stabilization of the hierarchy.

To take the last point first: In the account in Mark's Gospel, Chapter 10, v. 35–45, the problem was clearly posed by James and John with their request for status. In his reply Jesus seems to suggest a kind of initiation or test, but the alacrity with which the two accept the conditions makes it hard to know what the initiation was, though it is clear that Jesus regarded its performance as beyond them. He also adumbrates a change in the function of the Establishment as it existed amongst the Gentiles of that time. The proposal put forward by James and John seems to be for status, and status appears to be a substitute for qualification. The point is that their desires were to be satisfied, as it were, 'ex officio'. The reply given by Jesus seems to indicate that the 'position' achieved *ex officio* was an alternative the pair produced to undergoing the experience of the mystic himself. In this respect the rejected solution meets one of the requirements of society, namely, to make the fruits of the mystic's work available to ordinary members who do not have the mystic's qualifications for atonement with the deity.

The problem of membership of the group and how to decide whether a man was to call himself a Christian or not also arose early. Characteristically it hinged on the question of the therapeutic efficiency of the Christian and his brand of Christianity. The problem was brought to a head through the apparently successful therapeutic effects obtained by persons who were not qualified members of the group (Mark 9. 38). In the instance quoted the criterion proposed by Jesus seems to be the successful cure and its attribution by the therapist to Jesus. The issues involved are: membership of the group as itself being a symbol of status; status – expressed by the locution, "In

Thy name" as a therapeutic agent; therapeutic result as a criterion of membership of the group. The solution was empirical but it accepted the criterion of therapeutic efficiency. For the time being the test of membership seems to be two-fold, namely, medical or therapeutic and capacity for achieving results. This last requirement always seems to have been something of a nightmare throughout history. It might be described as a demand that the group leader should (1) be able to foretell the future, (2) render adequate someone alleged to have been adequate in the past, and (3) guarantee continued adequacy to all future contingencies.

The Christian hierarchy soon found itself faced by the same problems that had defeated the rabbinical directorate. The same forces were involved: on the one side the need to control the messianic idea and make it available to ordinary people through dogmatic formulation, and on the other side the messianic idea or its incarnation perpetually breaking through the barriers intended to control it and threatening to disrupt the society in which it became manifest. The Reformation was a spectacular example of this but only one of many such. (See Knox on *Enthusiasm*.)

Expansion of 6–7

I have used for my 6 and 7 descriptions material familiar to all, for a configuration which is repeated in many forms and at many times.

It is not limited to religious societies, or therapeutic societies, or artistic societies, or scientific societies, but – as far as my limited experience can tell – is discernible in all societies. My intention, however, is not to express any opinion upon the nature of diverse groups. I must remind the reader that I am not purporting to write history but to formulate a pattern in picturesque C category terms. That is to say, to represent a configuration in terms which will give body to an idea which might otherwise seem to be a meaningless elaboration of abstractions. Naturally I suppose that people other than psychoanalysts would profit from a recognition of the configuration and the underlying group to which one suspects that it belongs. But here I am concerned only as an analyst with the configuration as it might be discerned by other analysts. Descriptions 6 and 7 must therefore

not be supposed to have a sociological or political application but to be by way of fables or mythological constructs (C category) which, if formulated with greater precision and sophistication, represent a pattern to which the human personality would be found to approximate. The fable, constructed in terms of the group, must be regarded as a pictorialization of man's inner world. For those familiar with Kleinian theory my description can be seen as a dramatized, personified, socialized and pictorialized representation of the human personality. It may clarify my procedure to contrast this pictorial view with accepted morphology of classical analysis. The theory formulated in terms of ego, super-ego, and id differs in two respects: first, it is an F category formulation whereas the pictorialized formulation I am representing verbally is a C category formulation – primitive and based on sensuously derived terminology; second, it is a theory of which the realization that approximates to it is to be found in psychopathology and psychomorphology. The realization approximating to the C category formulation is to be found in material which is superficial and easily accessible to the conscious. Its unconscious roots are to be discovered through psychoanalytic investigation.

The Messianic idea

The nature of the messianic idea can be only very approximately represented by the C category formulations I have been using. In addition to Jesus I shall speak of Meister Eckhart and Isaac Luria. They represent in different ways the problem of reconciling the messianic idea and the Establishment. The rabbinical directorate appears to have learned caution so that when it had to adjust to the Lurianic doctrine and to the injuries which Lurianic doctrine was alleged by its opponents to have inflicted on Judaism, it did not contribute to an explosion. Luria for his part insisted on his conservatism and related all he said to older authorities. Significantly he left no writings and when questioned by a disciple about his reasons for not setting out his teaching in book form he replied, "It is impossible, because all things are inter-related: I can hardly open my mouth to speak without feeling as though the sea burst its dams and overflowed. How then shall I express what my soul has received, and how can I put it

down in a book?"[1] Meister Eckhart wrote extensively but the obscurity of his writing and perhaps the matter led to the condemnation as heretical of some 28 propositions from his later writings. The main question seems to centre on his forthright statements of identity with the deity – "We are transformed and changed into God".[2] The fate of Jesus himself has been crucifixion as a criminal on the one hand and deification on the other. Both Isaac Luria and Jesus were alike in being followed by a proliferation of hagiographical biography, much of it, in the instance of Jesus, not being included in the canon. It is not necessary to pursue this topic for my prevent purpose but it can be followed in detail in *Enthusiasm* by R. A. Knox. The common features are the containment of the messianic idea in the individual, the containment of the messianic individual in the group and the problem for the Establishment that is concerned with the group on the one hand, and the messianic idea and individual on the other. It is now necessary to return to the word.

Description 2 (cycle 2). If it were necessary to express descriptions 6 and 7 by one word a choice could be made from terms such as 'religion' or 'Christianity' or 'God'. If none of these term is considered suitable an attempt could be made to find the suitable terms by introspection. This attempt is a search in the mind for the term supposed to exist or it is a search in the meaning for the term; the latter is an instance of the meaning containing the word. The difficulties attendant on finding the word are described in the terms used by Poincaré searching for a mathematical formula, or by Luria in the passage quoted above. A better idea of the problem is obtained by substituting the term 'statement' for 'word' and including in its definition any act of expression whatsoever. In C category terms the problem is analogous to that of the sculptor finding his form in the block of his material, the musician finding the formula of musical notation within the sounds he hears, the man of action finding the actions which represent his thoughts. One of the peculiarities of this discussion lies in its being an example of the problem being discussed. It is an attempt

[1]G. Scholem (1955), *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Thames and Hudson), p. 254.

[2]See J. Coplestone (1958–1963), *History of Philosophy*, Vol. VI, p. 193.

to find a verbal formulation to which psychoanalytic realizations approximate. I restate the problem thus: psychoanalysis, the thing-in-itself, existed. It remained for Freud to reveal the formulation embedded in it. Conversely, once formulated by Freud it remains for others (including Freud himself) to discover the meaning of the conjunction bound by his formulation.

It is necessary to postulate 'thinking' without supposing a thinker to be essential. I shall not at this point try to explain why. All thinking and all thoughts are true when there is no thinker. In contrast to this, for lies and falsities a thinker is absolutely necessary. In any situation where a thinker is present the thoughts when formulated are expressions of falsities and lies. The only true thought is one which has never found an individual to 'contain' it.

The messianic ideas may be supposed to have a counterpart, the absolute truth, to which a thinker is not necessary: this I shall mark by a sign O. Falsity is the characteristic of thought within an individual, or thought within a container. It follows that all thought as it is ordinarily known, that is as an attribute of the human being, is false, the problem associated with it being the degree and nature of the falsity. The lie is a falsity associated with 'morals'.

The messianic idea is a term representing O at the point at which its evolution and the evolution of a thinker intersect. The mystic, as seen in descriptions 6 and 7, is a thinker who claims the capacity for direct contact with O. The degree of falsity depends on whether the relationship with O is commensal, symbiotic or parasitic.

Commensal. The thought O and the thinker exist quite independently of each other. There is no reaction, or, as we should say ordinarily – identifying ourselves with the thinker – the truth has not been discovered though it 'exists'.

Symbiotic. The thought and the thinker correspond and modify each other through the correspondence. The thought proliferates and the thinker develops.

Parasitic. Thought and thinker correspond but the correspondence is category 2, meaning that the formulation is known to be false but is retained as a barrier against a truth which is feared as annihilating to the container or *vice versa*. The falsity proliferates until it becomes the lie. The barrier of the lie increases the need for the truth and *vice versa*.

The commensal position changes when thought and thinker approximate. In more usual terms, a critical situation arises when a 'discovery' threatens. It is commonly said that messianic hopes were more than usually active at the birth of Jesus, and it is a matter for remark that often more than one investigator seems to be approaching a discovery at the time when a discovery is made. The resistance of the thinker to the unthought thought is characteristic of category 2 thinking. The crucial problem appears to be the relative strength of the messianic idea and the personality who is to 'contain' it. We must therefore reconsider the personality. To do this I shall use the descriptions 6 and 7 as pictorial representations (C category) of the parts composing the totality of the individual, not the group. I am assuming that the reader keeps in mind existing theories of personality structure. It is not to be supposed that they are to be abandoned or even modified by what follows. Existing theories are F category formulations; what takes place in the consulting room is an emotional situation which is itself the intersection of an evolving O with another evolving O. The description I am giving is, as it has been through this paper, a C category formulation intended to bridge the gap between a unique event on the one hand and a generalized F category formulation on the other.

Description 3 (cycle 2). The messianic idea clothes itself, or is clothed, in a great variety of forms. There is no reason why it should not take any form, and yet there appears to be great difficulty for form and idea to achieve a symbiotic or commensal relationship. Therefore I shall not succeed in this description in finding a formulation by which I can convey my meaning to the reader. At most I can find a sign pointing him to the consulting room or other domain where he may intuit it for himself. Similarly I can direct him to seek out and carefully observe the word 'cure' when he hears it pronounced; for 'within' this word he may be able to intuit the messianic idea. He should allow his attention to dwell on formulations in which he himself is described in positive terms; for 'within' these statements he may be able to intuit the 'contained' messianic idea. Whether the statement appears outwardly to be representing a summer holiday or a car or a person or a state – in time he should be able by degrees to intuit the messianic idea with sufficient frequency to be persuaded of its reality and his ability to feel its presence.

When I said I might find a sign pointing the reader 'to the consulting room or other domain' I was deliberately restricting the field of search to provide a 'container' wherein the search might be pursued without too much difficulty. In this way the reader might experience the ineffable relatively quickly. Yet it is doubtful whether intuition of a constant conjunction occurring in the domain of psychic reality can ever be said to be attainable quickly or easily unless it is by virtue of exceptional capacity. It must be accepted therefore that there can be no short-cut for the psychoanalyst. He can hope that years of experience may enable him to intuit the messianic idea when he sees it or recognize that this hope is a formulation containing the messianic idea.

The idea that the messianic idea is contained within the analysis, or that descriptions 6 and 7 can be used as C category statements or formulations of the individual personality, implies that the personality can be represented by a ♀♂ relationship and that the personality has a ♀♂ relationship with a psychoanalysis. Such a formulation is useful if it assists the psychoanalyst to intuit, in the course of a psychoanalysis, a personality external to the psychoanalysis which is present in the analysis only by 'hearsay'. The patient becomes little more than a voice reporting that the messianic idea is abroad. I mention it as a typical complexity of the ♀♂ relation which is significant for its bearing on phenomena named collectively as 'acting-out'. I wish to relate these phenomena to beta-elements lying outside the domain of thought proper and only appearing to belong to it because they are represented 'in' the analysis by C3 statements made by the analysand.

The psychoanalyst and his analysand therefore appear to be excluded from domain of action and confined within the domain of thought in such a way that they are not in a position to pursue their psychoanalytic aims by psychoanalytic means. What then *are* their psychoanalytic aims?

Psychoanalytic practice shows that the motives for any human activity are numerous and complex. They are derived from a background of sensuous desires; as fast as one is demonstrated it is apparent that further desires lie unknown. The aims of the psychoanalytic couple are arrived at by conjecture and formulated, at least as far as the analysand is concerned, in terms representative of sensuous experience. Even the objects of curiosity are formulated in terms suitable

to a sensuous background. Insofar as the desires can be stated they will be sensuous desires and sensuous aims – the over-riding aim being to keep alive. Without exception these aims and desires are not relevant to psychoanalysis. Nor have they proved relevant either to Judaism or Christianity. It is true that their place has not been taken by any formulations which are more satisfactory. So long as thinking is regarded as subordinate to the senses there is no difficulty. If thinking is a primary activity the *aims* of contemplation or meditation are presumed to exist because thinking is associated with its genetic history as subordinate to muscular activity, and muscular activity is presumed to have an aim in accord with the dominance of the pleasure principle.

It is possible that the vacuity, produced by the subordination of sensuous aims to growth of a capacity for contemplation or meditation, was filled in the course of his teaching by Jesus. But as his teaching was subjected to the twin pressures I have described – namely, annihilation by physical destruction on the one hand, and divine honours on the other – we do not know what such a solution might have been. In practice the problem is shelved as thinking remains a function subordinate to the satisfaction of sensuous desires as a means to physical survival.

The consequence is that psychoanalysis is saddled with an aim which, according to their various desires, is attributed to it by both analyst and analysand. Both are debarred from fulfilling their aim when the aim is pursued in the domain of action and the analysis is confined to the domain of thought in which thought is the only means of fulfilment. The 'conflict' is between action and thought, the counter-part – in descriptions 6 and 7 – being the conflict expressed in St. Augustine's refutation of the responsibility of Christianity for the Fall of Rome. In the individual the demands for action and sensuous gratifications associated with physical survival conflict with the demand for mental 'activity'. The latter cannot justify itself in terms comprehensible to the former. The former cannot justify itself to the latter, for its apparatus of sensuous fulfilment is irrelevant to the domain of thought.

I have used the term 'conflict', in describing action and thought as a reminder of the accepted view. The object of using ♀♂ is to differentiate the states of containment which, as with thought and action, prevent conflict by containing thought and containing action

in a mutually exclusive commensal state. In this condition thought and action do not modify each other but persist commensally in the same personality. Actions which appear to be compulsive are in reality beta-elements confined to the domain of action and thus insulated against thoughts which are confined to the domain of thought – which includes psychoanalysis. Similarly thoughts are within the domain of thought and cannot be influenced by beta-elements confined within the domain of action. An apparent exception, not real, is provided by C3 elements in thought which appear to bring A category into the realm of thought but are only C category *records* of action; there is no conflict.

The domains of thought and action are so close, when the musculature used in talking is involved with beta-elements, that the distinction between them becomes confused. The same confusion arises if intolerance of frustration leads to a substitution of thought for action. The associated omnipotence of thought obstructs the proper use of the musculature, as a feeling of helplessness stimulated by ineffectual muscular action is often the genetic base of omnipotence: when one is active the other is present.

In the previous paragraphs I have given examples of ♀♂ associated with inside and outside: (1) the personality, (2) the analytic situation, (3) domain of action, (4) domain of thought. Although such instances have a psychological value in giving body to a formulation which might otherwise lack it, their use is bad if it encourages the reader to expect further instances instead of consulting his practice to provide them. According to his background a patient will name various objects as containers, such as 'his mind', the 'unconscious', the 'nation' and many others as 'contained', such as his projections, his money, his ideas. The objects are innumerable but the relationships are not.

The individual always displays some aspect of his personality which is stable and constant even though it may sometimes be very difficult to detect in the welter of evidence for instability; it may appear only in the regularity with which the patient attends his sessions. In this stability will be found the counterpart of what, in descriptions 6 and 7, I have called the Establishment. It will be maintained with great tenacity as the only force likely to contain the counterpart of the messianic idea. Reciprocally the messianic idea is the only force likely to withstand the pressures of the counterpart in

the individual of the Establishment. Fears of megalomanic identification with the messianic idea are associated with an inability to be at one with the omnipotent Father. The counterpart of the Establishment in the individual is not related to father or mother but can be related to fragments of both.

In the ♀♂ configuration, decision is synonymous with selection for inclusion or exclusion. Thus the psychoanalyst has to decide whether to include or exclude himself from various groups, to include or exclude a patient from his practice, to include or exclude a given interpretation, to include or exclude given associations, ideas, experiences and so forth. The Establishment of the group has to decide to include or exclude certain individuals. The personality decides to include or exclude certain characteristics or, failing that, to include or exclude awareness of their existence. Dislike of the onus of decision, or of awareness of responsibility for the decision, contributes to the formulation of selection-procedures by which selection, like dogma, laws of science, are made to act as substitutes for judgement or scapegoats for the guilt attendant on overtly acknowledged exercise of responsibility.

The configuration to which I have drawn attention can be seen to have a penumbra of associations which retain an illuminating function in the circumstances on which they are brought to bear. At other times the light they shed distorts by over-emphasis of the past – and therefore irrelevant – elements, and occlusion of the unknown – and therefore relevant – elements. Once the constancy of the configuration is recognized its nature can be assessed and related to psychoanalytic theory. Reciprocally, theory can be reformulated when it requires readjustment.

The primitive formulation of ♀♂ in C category terms of breast and mouth, penis and vagina, has the simplicity of all C category formulations. Although descriptions 6 and 7 appear more complex, they too share the stamp of all C category formulations. Both appear to differ from the configuration represented by the Kleinian theory of paranoid-schizoid and depressive position interplay. I am unwilling to accept this apparent cleavage though I cannot suggest any satisfactory formulation which would display the underlying harmony. The approach to its discovery may lie through investigation of the disruptive effect of creative synthesis. Or, to put it in C category terms, the relationship between the mystic and his group.

SECOND THOUGHTS: SELECTED PAPERS ON PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

1967

Second Thoughts: Selected Papers on Psycho-Analysis was first published in 1967 by William Heinemann Medical Books, London; it was reprinted in 1984 by Karnac Books, London.

Chapter 2, 'The Imaginary Twin': Membership paper read to the British Psychoanalytical Society, 1 November 1950.

Chapter 3, 'Notes on the Theory of Schizophrenia': Paper read in the Symposium 'The Psychology of Schizophrenia' at the 18th International Psycho-Analytical Congress in London on 28 July 1953. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 35* (1954): 113–118. A slightly different version appeared as 'Language and the Schizophrenic' in M. Klein, P. Heimann, & R. Money-Kyrle (Eds.), *New Directions in Psycho-Analysis*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1955, pp. 220–239.

Chapter 4, 'The Development of Schizophrenic Thought': *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 37* (4–5, 1956): 344–346.

Chapter 5, 'The Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-Psychotic personalities': Paper presented at a Scientific Meeting of the British Psychoanalytical Society on 6 October 1955. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 38* (Parts 3–4, 1957): 266–275.

Chapter 6, 'On Hallucination': *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 39* (1958): 341–349.

Chapter 7, 'On Arrogance': Paper read before the 20th Congress of the International Psycho-Analytical Association, Paris, July–August 1957. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 39* (1958): 144–146.

Chapter 8, 'Attacks on Linking': *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 40* (1959): 308–315.

Chapter 9, 'A Theory of Thinking': Published as 'The Psychoanalytic Study of Thinking', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 43* (1962): 306–310.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Introducing his 1967 compilation, Bion wrote, "Now the time has come to reprint old papers, I find that the change in my views about psychoanalytic method makes me unwilling to let them go out without showing what that change is. For those who want the papers as they were originally printed, here they are, but I have added a commentary which involves an evolutionary change of opinion."

In publishing these clinically centred papers from the period 1950 to 1962, which have vital connections with the formulations to be found in the works that followed – *Learning from Experience*, *Elements of Psycho-Analysis*, *Transformations* and *Attention and Interpretation* – Francesca Bion suggested the addition of a numbering system (numerals in bold type before each section of each paper) – continuous across the eight papers – to facilitate a discussion of the shifts in his ideas published in the final section, the 'Commentary'. This reported Bion's 'evolutionary change of opinion' on various matters.

It is because of this that *Second Thoughts* appears here as an exception to the chronological structure of the *Complete Works*, since it makes sense to keep the papers together and to retain the numbering system that facilitates an understanding of the 'Commentary'.

Much of the clinical work informing these papers is from the analyses of patients in psychotic states of mind. Bion discussed his ideas concerning the relationship between what he observed in these cases, and the work of Melanie Klein, with Hanna Segal and, at length, with Herbert Rosenfeld. These two Kleinian colleagues were also accumulating clinical experience of analysing psychotic and borderline patients using an unmodified psychoanalytic technique.

The first chapter, the paper 'The Imaginary Twin', was Bion's Membership paper. It was first read to a Scientific Meeting of the British

Psychoanalytical Society on 1 November 1950, four months before Bion met Francesca McCallum, who was to become his wife. She reports that the original version of 'The Imaginary Twin' paper showed no sign of having been properly edited – certainly not by Bion himself, who, with few exceptions, did not re-read anything that he had written. No copy of the original paper has been found to date.

The other papers were prepared for the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* and required less editorial intervention. I shall not review the individual papers here.

A particularly important matter is discussed by Bion in 'Attacks on Linking'. Melanie Klein had, in her original formulation of the process of projective identification, emphasized pathological forms of splitting (many of which she felt remained to be discovered) and excessive projective identification. Bion introduced the notion of a normal degree of projective identification, which – in moderated conjunction with introjective identification – formed the foundation for normal mental growth. It is in this paper that Bion first describes what was to become his container–contained model:

> When the patient strove to rid himself of fears of death which were felt to be too powerful for his personality to contain, he split off his fears and put them into me, the idea apparently being that if they were allowed to repose there long enough they would undergo modification by my psyche and could then be safely reintrojected. [p. 147]

Bion considered the potentially disastrous consequences of a primary object felt to *deny* the infant this normal degree of projective identification. He presents clinical descriptions of a patient who, he came to feel from the evidence of his countertransference, had been denied the formative experience of a container for his more extreme fear and confusion; the patient appeared to have felt that this normal use of the mechanism had been obstructed, and refused, by his object. There had been no person to meet the expectation of a container – the essential helper whose attention would *contain* the projected part of himself felt to be dying, suffer the impact of it, reduce the fear to manageable proportions, and (eventually) return to the infant that part of itself rendered more tolerable to the infant's psyche. Bion states that, in his reconstruction, the patient's mother had needed to understand and experience the child's need, not only for her presence but for her to orient herself to her

baby who was frightened of dying, and *to take this into herself*, and to feel the dread of it. Bion was putting this forward not as causative in the patient's problems, but as a crucial environmental factor. Bion saw that what would be of likely prognostic importance for such patients would be (a) that the analyst would have a capacity to bear and to understand this problem in the transference-countertransference, and (b) that problems of envious resentment arising from the analyst's capacity to do so could be worked with.

The 'Commentary' shows the evolution of Bion's clinical thinking since the original papers. Looking back at his papers and some of his notes, he shares with the reader – who is assumed to have some familiarity with these matters – his awareness of the limitations of referring back to his earlier writings:

> A special instance of the problem of communication between the psychoanalyst writing and the psychoanalyst reading, of which I have been reminded by preparing these papers for publication, arises when the writer and the reader is the same man. Here, one might suppose, are the perfect conditions for communication. Yet in the days when I used to write elaborate notes on my sessions with patients, I found that I was no more successful when the interval between writing and reading was relatively short than I do now when the interval is measured in years. At first I thought I could easily understand notes dashed off at speed, a squiggle here, an exclamation mark there, sometimes an interpolated conjecture or comment on my own feelings on what was happening. I will not say they were meaningless when I came to read them, but they did not convey the meaning I hoped to find. They resembled nothing so much as a sleepy note that I sometimes tried to make to pin down what I felt to be an important dream for study in the morning. [p. 165]

In a collegial manner he shares his feeling that he 'tolerates' many of his earlier formulations because he cannot find a more successful way of expressing himself – "what they communicate may not be worth communicating; conversely, what was, in the psychoanalytic experience, worth communicating may not in fact have been communicated".

In his commentary on the papers, Bion singles out the axiom he uses as a central heuristic device in his later formulations on thinking. For this axiom he uses the shorthand term, 'thoughts without a thinker'. Bion explores the consequences for a theory of thinking which stem from considering the existence of thoughts independent of the mind

that houses them. He clearly was convinced of the value of working from this position:

> The ramifications of this attitude, more clearly discerned if the psychoanalyst postulates "thoughts without a thinker", are so considerable that I require another book to attempt elucidation. Inadequate though this formulation is, I hope it will help the reader to find the continuation of the developments which I have tried to sketch out in these papers.
>
> I would warn against the phrase "empirically verifiable data" . . . I do not mean that experience 'verifies' or 'validates' anything. This belief as I have come across it in the literature of the philosophy of science relates to an experience which enables the scientist to achieve a feeling of security to offset and neutralize the sense of insecurity following on the discovery that discovery has exposed further vistas of unsolved problems – 'thoughts' in search of a thinker. [p. 202]

Second Thoughts

Selected Papers on Psycho-Analysis

1

Introduction

It is customary to find in a book of collected papers on psychoanalysis, a number of case histories; this book is no exception. Ostensibly there is an account of the patient's history, some detailed reports of sessions with the patient's associations and the interpretations the analyst has given. It has always seemed to me that such reports are open to the objection that the narrative and the interpretations given are only two different ways of saying the same thing, or two different things said about the same fact. With the years my suspicion has ripened into conviction. I have attempted to formulate this conviction in three books, *Learning from Experience*, *Elements of Psycho-Analysis*, and *Transformations*, each one carrying the discussion a little further and making the formulations more precise.

Now the time has come to reprint old papers, I find that the change in my views about psychoanalytic method makes me unwilling to let them go out without showing what that change is. For those who want the papers as they were originally printed, here they are, but I have added a commentary which involves an evolutionary change of opinion. I do not regard any narrative purporting to be a report of fact, either of what the patient said or of what I said, as worth consideration as a 'factual account' of what happened. In the first place, I do not attribute to memory the significance it is usually given. The fact of involuntary distortions is so well established by psychoanalysis itself that it is absurd to behave as if our reports were somehow exempted from our own findings. Memory is born of, and only suited to, sensuous experience. As psychoanalysis is concerned with experience that is not sensuous – who supposes that anxiety has shape, colour or smell? – records based on perception of that which is

sensible are records only of the psychoanalytically irrelevant. Therefore in any account of a session, no matter how soon it may be made after the event or by what means, memory should not be treated as more than a pictorialized communication of an emotional experience. The accounts of cases in this book, though sincerely supposed by me at the time to be factually correct (I exclude alterations made and acknowledged on account of discretion), should now be regarded as verbal formulations of sensory images constructed to communicate in one form what is probably communicated in another; for example, as psychoanalytic theory, either in the same paper or in some part of psychoanalytic literature. If this seems a harsh reassessment, I reply that progress in psychoanalytic work will cease unless this reassessment is seen to be essential; it should be the jumping-off point for a new attitude to scientific work – others no less than our own.

2

The imaginary twin

1. The patient from whose analysis I draw most of my material had had many years of psychotherapy which ended when the therapist advised leucotomy. In view of a shocking family history and the strains to which the patient had been subjected in early childhood the doctor who referred him thought the outlook bad.

2. The patient had a sister 18 months older than himself who died of a disease, from which both suffered, when the patient was one year old; both had severe diarrhoea during the course of the illness.

3. The family associated closely with their neighbours whose children, two girls, one two years younger than my patient, the other seven years younger, were his only playmates until he was ten. The younger died in an asylum before the war; the other still survives but in a state of incurable insanity, supposedly schizophrenia.

4. Disunited parents complicated his childhood. This was spent abroad in a country which was developing its football and other sports, so that when it was discovered that he was an athlete, and intelligent, the way seemed clear for a popular and successful career. But the family fortunes deteriorated and the domestic relationships with them, until at thirteen the boy had had a breakdown from which he made no adequate recovery though he returned to, and has continued in, work. His mother died after years of chronic and painful illness, when he was 17; the father, many years later. His circumstances were further complicated at the time of his mother's death by the need to leave his native land and start afresh here.

5. When he came to me I saw a man of 43, just under 6 feet in height, of wiry build, sallow complexion and dull expressionless features: by profession a teacher. The discussion of his difficulties was

perfunctory, carried on for his part in monosyllabic listlessness. He agreed without enthusiasm to give analysis a trial.

6. My account of the next two years must necessarily be compressed. The central theme of the analysis was contamination: he had to protect his head from the pillow by resting his head on his hand; he could not shake hands; he felt that he contaminated the bath on which he relied to give him a feeling of cleanliness, and that it contaminated him back again.

7. He feared that he drank too much; he wondered if his penis was erect; he could not bear to have someone sitting behind him on a bus; it was equally contaminating if he sat behind someone.

He began to wonder if he felt sexual with his students; before long suspicion turned to certainty, and this made him feel unclean.

In his associations a big part was played by phantasied therapeutic injections which he had given, only to fear that his needle might not have been properly sterilized.

8. During the whole of the first two years, I had great difficulty in being able to determine, from his reactions, what validity to assign to my interpretations. I did, on two widely separated occasions, hear, from an extra-analytic source, that the patient was said to be greatly improved. I, myself, saw no improvement; nor was I able to remark, what I now believe to be true, that a change began to manifest itself in him at the end of this period. Till that time his intonation had been uniformly drained of emotion and his statements correspondingly difficult to interpret, for they almost always had the ambiguous character which admitted of different meanings if one considered them now with one emotional content, now with another.

9. There was plenty of oedipal material, produced on a most superficial level, which I duly interpreted, to meet with a perfunctory response or none at all.

My awareness of a change in the analysis developed over a period of some three months. At first it seemed as if my interpretations were only meeting with more than usually stubborn indifference, and then as if I was a parent issuing ineffectual exhortations and warnings to a refractory child. In due course I pointed this out to him and a change, not easily formulated, occurred. There was still the dreary monotone of associations but there was now a quality which derived from what I can best describe as the rhythm of his associations. It was as if two quite separate co-existent scansions of his material were possible.

One imparted an overpowering sense of boredom and depression; the other, dependent on the fact that he introduced regularly spaced pauses in the stream of his associations, an almost jocular effect as if he were saying "Go on; it's your turn".

10. Examining the matter still further, I noticed that the associations were all stale associations inviting a stale response. If I broke the rhythm, he showed signs of anxiety or irritability; if I continued to give the interpretations, which it now became clear he both invited and expected, there emerged a sense of having reached a dead-end. I was not surprised when he said to me in the early part of the next session, that he felt the treatment was getting nowhere and was doing no good: did I think, he very reasonably asked, that it was worthwhile going on?

11. I replied that though estimations of progress in analysis were difficult to make there was no reason why we should not accept his evaluation as correct. But, I added, before we pass on to consider what should be done about it, we need to know what is meant by treatment. It might mean psychoanalysis; in which case it would appear that some other method of approach to his problems would have to be sought. A perhaps more obvious meaning would be, psychoanalysis as practised by me, in which case the remedy would lie in a change of analyst rather than a change of method. There was, however, yet another possibility. We had already had reason to suppose that alleviation of symptoms was sometimes achieved by factors incidental to analysis; for example, the sense of security obtained from feeling there was someone to go to. It was possible that he was unconsciously referring to some factor of that kind.

12. There was a silence, and since we have now reached the point at which I must introduce the topic to be discussed, I shall take this opportunity to place before you some details of the analysis of the previous years, which are necessary for an understanding of what follows.

These details were not at the time important, but belonged rather to the periphery of the main stream of his associations. They derived from the point at which he introduced some new episode or anecdote that he was recounting. Thus he would say about some story that it had been told him by his homosexual brother-in-law. Or else that it was while visiting such and such a friend that he experienced particularly distressing symptoms. His circle of acquaintances was very

great and as the theme of the analysis derived from the content of the story, I had no reason to pay much attention to the various characters thus casually mentioned. It is to this aspect of his associations, now become central and not peripheral, that I must retrospectively turn.

13. He would say, "I was thinking of talking to Mr X and telling him that etc., etc." One day my attention was arrested by some peculiarity of phraseology, or maybe it was the somewhat improbable character of the remark, and I asked if he meant he had actually said whatever it was he told me. "Oh, no", he replied, "I am just imagining it!" It then turned out that many conversations introduced by the phrase, "I was thinking of talking to "Mr X" or "Mrs Y" were imaginary conversations although not by any means all of them. I had mentioned then that it sounded as if no clear distinction was being made between the real and the imaginary, but at the time this feature had not the importance that it was now about to assume.

Among the characters to whom he had spoken, whether in fancy or fact, a considerable part was played by a man of his profession, of similar age, with the same symptoms as himself, married and with a family. He resided still on the Continent, worked full hours and with such success that no one even suspected he had any illness. This man was able to travel freely which my patient could not. My patient would seem to contrast himself unfavourably with him.

There was, as I have said, the homosexual brother-in-law, a man of the same age, perhaps stouter, but definitely homosexual and with an incestuous attraction, perhaps even relationship, with my patient's wife.

There was a man with whom my patient played tennis; of this character I heard no more than that he played tennis. There were a number of students of his, psychological cases he would remark, that had sent him other students. There was even one who had sent him a psychological case and he had wondered if he had realized that he was a psychological case when he sent him. (The ambiguity in the use of the relative pronoun is not a failure in grammar but rather a masterly expression of the patient's ability to convey much information, too much information, concisely).

There was an unpleasant colleague, whom he had known as a child and who had been contemporaneous with him in school, and now taught close by, who occasionally looked after his students, but

he was so unscrupulously thrusting that my patient proposed not to use him again.

14. Let us now return to the patient whom we left silent after my summary of the issues confronting him before he could make a decision about treatment: I asked him what he was thinking about.

He replied that he was thinking about a woman with rheumatic pain. "She's always complaining about something or other and I thought", he said, "that she's very neurotic. I just advised her to buy some amytal and packed her off."

This, I said, was probably a compact description of the treatment he was having from me, treatment of which he doubted the efficacy. My interpretations were felt by him to be vague complaints to which he paid scant attention; his associations were many of them stale associations employed more for the soporific effect they shared with amytal than for their informative value, and designed to keep me employed without bothering him. But, I added, we should also consider how this situation was rendered tolerable for himself; I drew his attention to peculiarities in his behaviour, notably the rhythm of 'association–interpretation association', which indicated that I was a twin of himself who supported him in a jocular evasion of my complaints and thus softened his resentment. He could identify himself with any one of the three roles.

His response was striking. His voice changed and he said, in a depressed tone, that he felt tired and unclean. It was as if, in a moment, I had in front of me, unchanged in every respect the patient as I had seen him at the first interview. The change was so sudden as to be disconcerting. What on earth, I wondered, had happened to the twin and the complaining parent? It was as if he had swallowed them and was suffering the consequences.

That was the end of the session. When I had recovered from my surprise, I remembered that we had often had reason to suppose that he felt he had a poisonous family inside him, but that was the first occasion on which I had had quite such a dramatic exhibition of himself in the act of introjecting objects.

15. At the next session, the patient reported that he had had a terrifying dream. It was this: he was driving in a car and was about to overtake another. He drew level with it and then instead of passing it kept carefully abreast of it. The rival car slowed down and

stopped, he himself conforming to its movements. The two cars were thus parked side by side. Thereupon the other driver, a man much the same build as himself, got out, walked round to his door and leaned heavily against it. He was unable to escape as, by parking his car near to the other, he had blocked egress from the far door, while the figure blocked egress from his door. The figure leered menacingly at him through the window. He woke in terror, to remain filled with anxiety throughout the waking day.

16. I interpreted the dream thus: the menacing figure was myself who was also the imaginary twin of which he had last spoken at the previous session. The twin was imaginary because my patient had prevented the birth of the twin – there was in fact no twin. His use of a twin as a means of alleviating anxiety was therefore illegitimate and the twin was determined that he, the patient, should not now be born or, to put it in other words, achieve freedom or independence. He was thus shut in, both by the twin and by his own act in parking his car so near the twin's car. The analysis had been the car from which I had not been allowed to emerge as a real being; the dream showed his fear that in the previous session I had become alive only to block his escape from analysis by using me as a personification of the bad part of himself from which he wished to be dissociated.

17. There now followed a period in which the prominent features of the analysis were exhibitions of introjection and projection, splitting, and, not least, personification of the split-off portions of his personality. In a sense there was nothing new about all this, but as at the same time his analysis became far more integrated and his fear of his mechanisms less pronounced, we were the more able to see them clearly for what they were. In retrospect, I could see how much the anxiety produced by interpretations, made before the emergence of the twin, derived not only from the content of his associations, but from the mere fact that I was drawing attention to his intra-psychic processes.

18. One result of the increased. integration of his analysis was that I was able to see that certain of his associations announced the theme around which the work, probably of several sessions, would centre. I shall take advantage of this fact to confine the discussion to two associations only, leaving the reader to assume that the material on which I based my interpretations was infinitely more copious than this necessarily compressed account would suggest.

19. The first association was produced before a week-end when he was going away to stay with friends. Week-end holidays, and even annual holidays, had not been thought of as possible until some six months previously when he had taken his first holiday for many years, but they had now become fairly regular occurrences. He said, "I am leaving a locum in charge of my students: he is not very experienced – the same age as myself but I don't feel sure he will be able to cope. There is a girl who may become ill and she may have to be admitted to hospital. That would be fairly straightforward except that you have to know the ropes a bit or you may not get the child into hospital. Usually I have an arrangement with a doctor I know well by which he helps when I am away, but this has been mucked up by a misunderstanding."

From the subsequent working through of this, it emerged that I had been the person who had messed up the understanding between the two doctors by my interpretation of the twin and the consequent forcing back into himself of the twin. The locum was a split-off portion of himself lacking in some essential qualities and in particular the ability to introduce the girl into hospital. I suggested that the part of himself that he left in charge of the girl was a genitally impotent part.

20. After the week-end he told me that the locum had made a mess of things and had frightened one of the parents. My patient felt you had to be very careful what you said to parents and the locum had made her anxious by talking too openly about her child's illnesses. The result was that she wanted him in future and not the locum; he felt it was hardly worth employing a locum because you only had to do the work yourself anyway. In reply to a question of mine he agreed that even before the week-end he had worried about the locum. So, in a sense, the employment of the locum had not relieved him of any anxiety or responsibility. He objected that the parent made a lot of demands on him and half implied that she was sexually attracted to him.

I interpreted that I was the parent who complained about being left in charge of the inexperienced locum. As a result of his leaving me in charge of his inexperienced self I, in turn, had been able to say things which had very much upset him. His anxiety was that if he came to me as an experienced man, that is to say potent, then I made demands on him, particularly sexual demands, which he felt unable to meet.

21. He shifted uneasily on the couch and became tense; after a moment he replied, "I feel curled up and I am afraid that if I stay like this I shall have cramp. If I stretch out I shall become rigid and touch the pillow and contaminate it and get contaminated back again. I feel as if I were in the womb".

I said that the uterus here represented the limitations he felt he imposed upon himself by being compelled to come as the locum. We had throughout his analysis seen that he feared that with him violence and aggression took the place of sexuality. The fear of his aggression, closely linked in his mind with faeces, caused him to retreat to a position in which he felt constrained and confined and thus secure from the hatred that a less cramped position would release. In fact all that happened was that he resented more than ever a relationship which imposed these limitations on him. We might take it that his association indicated that he had retreated into the womb and feared being born; but it was necessary to consider what this meant in present terms; I suggested that it meant that he could not rely on the use to which he would put his capacity if he permitted himself to develop by reuniting the various splits in his personality – particularly in allowing hatred to return as a part of himself in his relationship with me. Nor did he feel sure of my response to this. He feared that if he were to have a relationship with me, both of us being experienced, it would be bound to issue in mutual hatred.

22. The session ended: and that night he had a dream with which he started the next session. I will only give a portion of it: a man had presented him with a bill and then left the house. The bill was far too large; he followed to expostulate but the man rapidly disappeared, disregarding my patient's attempts to arrest his attention by tapping him on the shoulder. My patient felt overwhelmed with rage such as he had never felt before and awoke in terror. I reminded him of the previous session and his fear of what would happen if he left his cramped curled up position – this was the split-off hatred of me, and the demands, financial and otherwise, that I and the analysis made upon him.

He went on to speak of a psychiatrist whom he had met that day. The man had during the war been on a Board which my patient attended for re-categorization on psychiatric grounds but he had not recognized my patient. My patient had questioned him and elicited that he treated patients and considered some 50 sessions enough. My

patient formed a very poor opinion of him and decided that he could never have done anything for my patient's troubles had he tried to cure them in 50 sessions. During this overtly friendly questioning he had felt an intense hatred of him. My patient added that he still felt tense. I said that he was comparing me favourably with the psychiatrist, but the incident was produced as a warning of the interrogation to which I would be subjected were our roles reversed.

23. By this time, his relationship with me had become altogether more realistic and he showed every sign of cooperating in the investigation of his problem. It was possible, as it had never been before, to question him about details and to ask for an expansion of his associations whenever it seemed necessary for a clearer grasp of the material he was presenting.

He now commenced a series of associations in which he emerged as sending various students for opinion to consultations with a specialist.

The next association was the second of this kind: he said, "I have a student whose eye has become infected; an eye man said he thought it was an infection. Anyway nothing could be done about it, but her father said he wanted another opinion, so I had to send her to another eye man and now I have got landed with a whole lot of work I don't want to do; she's a nuisance. I have to give a whole series of interviews. The second eye man doesn't think it's much different clinically from what the first eye man says, but he thinks it's worth doing something. The first man didn't think it worth bothering and that is why her father thought him a bit slack I suppose. Anyhow I have to do this now. She must get a blood test done to see if she has syphilis. She should have done it before".

24. This association may be considered as the starting point of an investigation which illuminated two problems: first, the unconscious material that it expressed and, second, the manner in which the patient was able to bring this material into consciousness.

As his analysis unfolded it was possible to demonstrate that his association, with its subsequent variations, compactly expressed the following themes:

1. I was the first eye man who said, in effect, that the injured girl was an internal object, infected by the bad objects inside him, for which nothing could be done. I was also the second eye man who said

that the girl was injured by his faeces, spirochaetes and bacilli, all varieties of bad penes, for whom nothing could be done but for whom he would have to do it just the same. He would have to cure her with his penis, since I would not repair damage done by him and it was his object in any case; and he would have to cure her without any pleasurable gain. I was also the eye surgeon who threatened him with castration. He had spent some anxious hours on correspondence to see that no question of jealousy or friction marred the relationship between the two eye men and between them and himself. So the twins were to be brought into harmonious co-operation.

2. The first, passive, eye man represented his previous psychotherapeutic experiences which had left him and his objects more or less in peace. The second eye man was psychoanalysis that was giving him increased insight, and seducing him into genital sexuality and the threatening situation that went with it.
3. The first, passive, eye man was the mother, and the second, active, eye man the father whom he tried to harmonize by his correspondence with both.

25. I will now consider the light his analysis threw on the second problem – the manner in which the patient brought this material into consciousness.

My first point is that with his association we are back again on the theme of contamination. The girl has an infection, be it tubercular, syphilitic, or obscure. He himself noted spontaneously that he had not mentioned, although in the actual case it had been canvassed, the possibility of diabetes. We were thus rehearsing a topic which had already been well tested, as it were orally, in the past 2½ years of analysis, but which was now to be re-investigated by other means.

The consultation of two eye men indicated an ocular method of investigation. Furthermore, a modification of the twin theme, the two eye men, was again in evidence.

26. The result of this re-investigation had been increase of hope, but also of fresh burdens and responsibilities; amongst these was the possibility of genital sexuality, a further essay in the oral sexuality which he had neglected, withdrawal of blood, possibly contaminated, from the object, and the giving of injections.

The eye men, particularly the second, also represented the reinforcement of the investigating weapons by something like intellect: they were supposed to know more than himself.

Throughout this period it was clear that I was felt to be present and indeed my presence was even regarded as necessary. But I was not to interfere. Any interpretation which had in it the least tincture which the patient could interpret as an incursion into the realms of diagnosis and treatment was resented; but I could be myself, not just a twin to be fashioned into a shape he desired. If I observed the manifestations presented to me by my patient in the consulting room in terms of play therapy with a child, then I could consider the two eye men as parts of his body, possibly his two eyes that were to be harmonized into binocular vision. The injured girl was some object, recovered from his inside, which was to be subjected to the scrutiny of both his eyes and a developing intellect, a scrutiny thus exercised on an externalized object.

The results of this scrutiny were not altogether reassuring, for one thing the two eye men were not completely harmonized, for another the diagnosis remained obscure, or, in other words, the intellect had not solved the problem, and finally, there had been foreshadowed the imposition of further and burdensome responsibilities, namely a revision of oral sexuality and an exploration of genital sexuality. At this last point, I noticed that he had begun to call the eye man an eye surgeon. When I drew his attention to this, he said the surgeon had not thought an operation necessary.

I was not surprised when at the next session another student had to be sent for a consultation, this time to an ear, nose and throat surgeon, and again at the request of the father. In recounting this episode, he expressed persecutory feelings towards the ear, nose and throat man. A retreat to auditory, olfactory and oral levels had taken place. I interpreted that his advance had been felt to be impossible to sustain and that he felt persecuted not only for the reasons already educed but also because psychoanalysis, a method that involved examining his problems with all his senses, including sight and intellect, was far more burdensome than psychotherapy; it involved (1) painful co-ordination, which he had not been able to accomplish (2) the acceptance by himself of all the splittings of his personality which he had personified and externalized (3) the imposition of responsibilities

which he could not shoulder and (4) the threatened punishment of castration which he could not sustain. I reminded him of the dream of the painter who presented too large a bill, and said that I was thus the object of his hatred both because I was imposing on him these responsibilities and punishments, and forcing him to retreat to levels which he had already found unendurable. I pointed out to him that it looked, since he said the ear, nose and throat surgeon had agreed that his treatment was correct, as if all levels indicated that he was responsible and should restore the injured object.

27. I told the patient that we must consider that the one component that remained unaltered, whatever happened, was his conscience and that this seemed so exacting that he was driven by it from one frightening and demanding situation to another.

The patient's oscillations helped him to try out his methods of reality testing by enabling him to compare his findings in oral and ocular phases. The injured object had been very thoroughly explored on an oral level before being submitted for scrutiny by the "eye men". Nevertheless the change to the eye men aroused great anxiety and tension because, instead of simply solving the problem of the injured object, they revealed the presence of the Oedipus situation which he could not tolerate. The subsequent succession of advances and regressions served the purpose of enabling him to strengthen the ego; he could therefore deal with the Oedipus situation, now become emotionally powerful which it never was before the emergence of the imaginary twin. I have already remarked on the way in which the analysis seemed to have no effect whatever on oedipal material of the early phase. At this point in his analysis there seemed to go together an increase of confidence in his methods of reality testing, in reality, and in his ego.

28. I have now completed my account of all the clinical material I propose to present from the analysis of this patient. In the discussion that follows I shall have to refer to associations from two other patients, and in order to keep the material distinct I propose to call the patient of whom I have so far spoken, A, and the other two B and C respectively.

The first point I would discuss is the mastery and confidence displayed by patient A in his use of the mechanisms of introjection, projection, splitting and the personification of his splits. His reactions contrasted, during the period I have described, with those of patient

B, a real twin and a more disturbed personality, who resorted to phantasies of an identical twin, phantasies which seemed intended to serve the same functions as A's imaginary twin. This patient seemed always to be struggling with the intractability of his material. Introjected objects were described as cubes of burnished steel: he complained during sessions of pain in mouth, stomach and anus. Sustenance had to be drawn through a hair-fine tube, and the associations by which he strove to obtain relief in analysis were tenuous and fitful to match. His real twin seemed as intractable as material for phantasy as food appeared to be for sustenance. Patient A personified his splits with such success that in some sessions, as I have said, one might almost imagine one's self watching a session of play therapy with a child. B seemed to feel as inadequately equipped for the exploration of intrapsychic tensions as he did for contact with reality and I could not help feeling that A, particularly in the sessions devoted to the consultants, when he seemed able to tolerate my presence as a person in my own right, was demonstrating, by his personifications, his attempt to bridge the gulf to reality, and displaying, in doing so, one factor that contributed to hopefulness about the outcome of his analysis. In his testing of reality the patient was also testing, apparently with growing confidence in the results, his mechanisms for testing reality.

29. In this respect he seems to me to differ from patient C, whose association, which I shall now give, indicated no such confidence either in reality or in his means for testing it. He told me, after returning to analysis from hospital – where his treatment by deep X-ray therapy had been canvassed only to be rejected on the grounds that it might be dangerous, on account of possible destruction of genital function – that he had been next to a patient who was being transfused with blood, the donor of which was his cousin. The cousins had mothers who were twin sisters, he said, and added, reflectively, that his sister had twins. His doctor, he went on, had the same name as the doctor who had treated him some time previously when he had been abroad and suffered from indigestion. He paused; and then said one of his eyes was weak. Furthermore, if he used this eye alone he saw double. His defect in vision could be corrected with glasses but he hated wearing his glasses, which in fact did correct his sight, because they made him feel cross-eyed. I made the interpretation that the two cousins were parents in intercourse whom he wished to destroy with his penetrating, sadistic, X-ray gaze and that he felt in consequence

that his genitality was menaced by the destructive scrutiny of the parents. He replied with an all-embracing pun, 'I am unreliable'. No sooner had he said it than he began to complain of indigestion, expressed his fears of having to return to hospital and spent the rest of the session in fears about his food. This patient frequently complained that it was equally disturbing whether he concluded that his observations were correct, in which case the reality was terrifying, or whether he concluded they were incorrect, in which case his mental state was terrifying. His pun indicated that, unlike A, he felt he could not rely on his instruments of investigation, the eye and all it stood for, the parents that his eye revealed, and the ego that had to incorporate the result of the investigation. He, like A, regressed to an oral level.

30. I now turn to a session with the patient B whom I mentioned earlier. He said: "I saw your last patient I think. I came early and have been waiting. Last night my twin kept me up all night telling me some long-winded rigmarole the way these people do. I was wanting to go to my bed all the time. Thanks to psychoanalysis I can see right through the mind of the man who works at the next table to mine. I can laugh at him."

I interpreted that the twin was my last patient who had kept him out with his rigmarole. But he could laugh at him now as he knew what he must be feeling now he was excluded.

B went on, "My lab. man likes using the ordinary microscope but I prefer the binocular. There's no doubt at all you can see far better. Mind you he partly agrees with me. I've just been thinking how much better treatment you can get when you have more money and that of course makes you better."

I said psychoanalysis or myself gave him binocular vision. As a result he had more knowledge, and increased knowledge was felt to bring healing.

He went on, "Life is very complicated. You just go and make things difficult for me."

I replied, "You are now feeling that the better vision that two eyes give you, analysis being one of them, shows you more than poor monocular vision; it makes you realize life is very complicated and difficult. It has made you see the other patient who comes to me."

He continued: "I could not eat my lunch. It looked very nice but it made me feel sick."

I replied, "Your eyes made you think when you saw the other patient was here that the analysis was very nice. Now you find it is poisoning you and you do not feel able to take it. There is a feeling that the other patient's rigmarole, as you called it, is something he has left behind to poison you."

He continued: "Of course the binocular microscope is very difficult to use at first. You have to learn how to use it and then it is much better than the ordinary one."

I replied, "You are feeling that if you use your analysis to see right through people to laugh at them you have not learned to use it properly, and then others you look at attack you back again."

31. Subsequent analysis showed that the doubt he had about his ability to use the binocular microscope straight away was partly based on his fear that it might make a very small twin look like a very big father. At the time of this association he was not prepared to see a father and a mother together although his association showed that such a scene might be revealed – if his instruments of investigation, and ability to use them, improved. This warning too was implicit in the statement that I made things very difficult for him. His claim that he possessed psychoanalytic insight indicated that I was in the role of the identical twin – this patient's imaginary twin.

The session I have described indicated to me that B had now reached a point where interpretations of myself as the identical twin had become possible. Up to this point oedipal material, though quite apparent was, as with A in the early phase, on a superficial level and interpretations had little effect. His statements about the need to become skilled in the use of the binocular microscope indicate a growing sense of reality towards his means of establishing contact, and growing confidence in his ability to explore intra-psychic tensions, whereas all through the earlier part of his analysis I had come into the picture again and again as his brain that had to do his exploration for him; and this brings me to the next point I wish to discuss. How was it that with A, the emergence of the imaginary twin was so important? And if it was so important, why had the phenomena associated with it remained peripheral, and not central, for so long?

The answer I suggest is that the imaginary twin goes back to his very earliest relationship and is an expression of his inability to tolerate an object that was not entirely under his control. The function of the imaginary twin was thus to deny a reality different from himself.

With this denial of external reality there co-existed his inability to tolerate the internal psychic realities, and a great deal of work had to be done before any increase in tolerance occurred. As his fears of his psychic mechanisms decreased, it became possible for him to allow their presence to manifest itself by a movement of their representation in his stream of associations into a more central position. Only when I had been able to demonstrate how bad I was on all levels of his mind did it become possible for him first to recognize his mechanisms of splitting and personification and then to employ them, as it were in reverse, to establish the contact which they had originally been used to break. After the demonstration of the imaginary twin I began to be allowed existence as a real person and not a thing created by himself until the point, already mentioned, when I felt I was allowed to exist more or less passively watching his play, and finally as a consultant. In the session I have described with B, despite some appearances to the contrary, I was still only an identical twin.

32. I have left till last two speculations which pose questions I do not propose to attempt to answer. The first concerns the personification of splits to which I have drawn attention. Is it possible that the capacity to personify splittings of the personality is in some way analogous to a capacity for symbol formation to which Mrs Klein has drawn attention in her paper 'The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego' (1930b); had it a similar value in the development of A in the period I have attempted to describe?

My second question is concerned with the part played by vision in these three patients' associations. In each of them it seems to be linked with the development of intellect, witness the consultant in A, myself as the brain with B, and in a similar role, though I had no time to bring it in, with C, and in each with the emergence of genital sexuality and the Oedipus situation. Furthermore, each patient in his individual way seemed to have similar problems that obtruded themselves almost as if concerned with vision itself. A stressed how much work he had thrust upon him to keep the relationship with the two eye men harmonious; B compared the merits of monocular and binocular microscopes; C the need for glasses to correct his sight. Each seemed to feel that new burdens had been imposed; A by the second eye man, B by myself making things difficult for him, and C by saying the glasses made him feel cross-eyed.

In each case I have mentioned, the visual power has represented the emergence of a new capacity for exploring the *environment:* it has been possible to show that in this respect the analysis was being felt as an addition to the patient's armoury for investigation and was likely therefore to be reactivating emotions associated with very early advances in psychological development that had a similar effect in increasing capacity. The increase of power was felt to demand an increase in intellectual grasp.

33. In each case the newly achieved powers were used to solve an already existing problem, but were found to reveal still other problems that demanded solution. Thus A, who seemed preoccupied with the problem of an internal injured object, and brought to bear on it his fresh powers, found himself threatened by the relationship between father and child. B showed the same development expressed in terms of the discovery of a by no means identical twin that had a relationship with a mother. C likewise – but in terms of a cousin being transfused with the blood of another.

All three patients seemed to feel that the problem had been there all the time but that its revelation had depended on increased capacity for awareness.

The regression in each case could thus be stated as being away from (1) the increase in capacity produced by psychological development; (2) the phenomena brought into awareness by the increased capacity; (3) the physiological development, associated with the psychological development which revealed the relationship between the external parents.

In each case I had the impression that the patient felt that sight produced problems of mastery of a new sense organ. This had its counterpart in a feeling that development of the psyche, like development of visual capacity, involved the emergence of the Oedipus situation. With A, the change from a perfunctory and superficial treatment of the Oedipus situation to a struggle to come to terms with an emotionally charged Oedipus complex was extremely striking.

I have found it impossible to interpret the material presented to me by these patients as a manifestation of purely psychological development divorced from any concurrent physical development. I have wondered whether the psychological development was bound up with the development of ocular control in the same way that

problems of development linked with oral aggression co-exist with the eruption of teeth. If this is so, we would have to ask ourselves if these psychological developments, ushering in the Oedipus complex, come close to the first four months in the individual's life. The relevance of this to assessment of the correctness or otherwise of Mrs Klein's view of the earliness of the oedipal phase is obvious; if the experience of other observers appears to confirm my impressions, it may provide incidental reasons for favouring an early date for the pre-oedipal phase.

3

Notes on the theory of schizophrenia

A. Introduction

34. In this paper I shall discuss the schizophrenic patient's use of language and the bearing of this on the theory and practice of analysis. At a later date I shall acknowledge my indebtedness to, and discuss the views of, the psychoanalysts who have contributed to the growth of my own views. I cannot do that now, but I must make it clear for the better understanding of what I say that, even where I do not make specific acknowledgement of the fact, Melanie Klein's work occupies a central position in my view of the psychoanalytic theory of schizophrenia. I assume that the explanation of terms such as 'projective identification' and the 'paranoid' and 'depressive positions' is known through her work.

By approaching the subject through consideration of verbal thought I run the risk of appearing to neglect the nature of the schizophrenic's object relations. I must therefore emphasize now that I think that the peculiarity of the schizophrenic's object relations is the outstanding feature of schizophrenia. The importance of the points that I wish to make lies in their capacity to illuminate the nature of this object relationship of which they are a subordinate function.

35. The material is derived from the analysis of six patients; two were drug addicts, one an obsessional anxiety state with schizoid features, and the remaining three schizophrenics all of whom suffered from hallucinations which were well in evidence over a period of between four and five years of analysis. Of these three, two showed marked paranoid features and one depression.

I did not depart from the psychoanalytic procedure I usually employ with neurotics, being careful always to take up both positive and negative aspects of the transference.

B. Nature of the observation on which interpretations are based

Evidence for interpretations has to be sought in the counter-transference and in the actions and free associations of the patient. Counter-transference has to play an important part in analysis of the schizophrenic, but I do not propose to discuss this to-day. I shall therefore pass on to the patient's free associations.

C. Schizophrenic language

36. Language is employed by the schizophrenic in three ways; as a mode of action, as a method of communication, and as a mode of thought. He will show a preference for action on occasions when other patients would realize that what was required was thought; thus, he will want to go over to a piano to take out the movement to understand why someone is playing the piano. Reciprocally, if he has a problem the solution of which depends on action, as when, being in one place, he should be in another, he will resort to thought – omnipotent thought – as his mode of transport.

At the moment I want to consider only his use of it as a mode of action in the service either of splitting the object or projective identification. It will be noted that this is but one aspect of schizophrenic object relations in which he is either splitting or getting in and out of his objects.

The first of these uses is in the service of projective identification. In this the patient uses words as things or as split-off parts of himself which he pushes forcibly into the analyst. Typical of the consequences of this behaviour is the experience of a patient who felt he got inside me at the beginning of each session and had to be extricated at the end of it.

Language is again employed as a mode of action for the splitting of his object. This obtrudes when the analyst becomes identified with internal persecutors, but it is employed at other times too. Here are two examples of this use of language: the patient comes into the room, shakes me warmly by the hand, and looking piercingly into my eyes says, "I think the sessions are not for a long while but stop me ever going out." I know from previous experience that this patient has a grievance that the sessions are too few and that they interfere with his free time. He intended to split me by making me give two

opposite interpretations at once, and this was shown by his next association when he said, "How does the lift know what to do when I press two buttons at once?"

My second example has wide implications, which I cannot take up here, because of their bearing on insomnia. The technique depends on the combination of two incompatible elements thus: the patient speaks in a drowsy manner calculated to put the analyst to sleep. At the same time he stimulates the analyst's curiosity. The intention is again to split the analyst, who is not allowed to go to sleep and is not allowed to keep awake.

You will note a third example of splitting later on when I describe a patient splitting the analyst's speech itself.

To turn now to the schizophrenic's difficulties with language as a mode of thought, here is a sequence of associations all in one session, but separated from each other by intervals of four or five minutes.

I have a problem I am trying to work out. As a child I never had phantasies.

I knew they weren't facts so I stopped them. I don't dream nowadays.

Then after a pause he went on in a bewildered voice, "I don't know what to do now." I said, "About a year ago you told me you were no good at thinking. Just now you said you were working out a problem – obviously something you were thinking about."

Patient. "Yes."

Analyst. "But you went on with the thought that you had no phantasies in childhood; and then that you had no dreams; you then said that you did not know what to do. It must mean that without phantasies and without dreams you have not the means with which to think out your problem." The patient agreed, and began to talk with marked freedom and coherence. The reference to the inhibition of phantasy as a severe disability hindering development supports Melanie Klein's observations in her paper, 'A Contribution to the Theory of Intellectual Inhibition'.

37. The severe splitting in the schizophrenic makes it difficult for him to achieve the use of symbols and subsequently of substantives and verbs. It is necessary to demonstrate these difficulties to him as they arise; of this I shall shortly give an example. The capacity to form symbols is dependent on:

1. The ability to grasp whole objects.
2. The abandonment of the paranoid-schizoid position with its attendant splitting.
3. The bringing together of splits and the ushering in of the depressive position.

Since verbal thought depends on the ability to integrate, it is not surprising to find that its emergence is intimately associated with the depressive position which, as Melanie Klein has pointed out, is a phase of active synthesis and integration. Verbal thought sharpens awareness of psychic reality and therefore of the depression which is linked with destruction and loss of good objects. The presence of internal persecutors, as another aspect of psychic reality, is similarly unconsciously more recognized. The patient feels that the association between the depressive position and verbal thought is one of cause and effect – itself a belief based on his capacity to integrate – and this adds one more to the many causes of his hatred of analysis, already well in evidence, which is, after all, a treatment which employs verbal thought in the solution of mental problems.

The patient at this stage becomes frightened of the analyst, even though he may concede that he feels better, but, and this is where the kernel of our problem lies, he shows every sign of being anxious to have nothing whatever to do with his embryonic capacity for verbal thought. That is felt to be better left to the analyst; or, as I think it more correct to say, the analyst is felt to be better able than he to harbour it within himself without disaster. The patient seems, despite all the work done, to have reverted to the use of language that I have described as characteristic of the schizophrenic before analysis. He has greater verbal capacity but prefers to employ it as he did when it was slight.

D. Development of capacity for verbal thought

38. To explain why the patient is so chary of using his increased capacity, I must report an experience which seems to have peculiar significance for him. The patient said to me, "I am a prisoner of psychoanalysis"; later in the session he added, "I can't escape". Some months later he said, "I can't get out of my state of mind". A mass

of material, to which quotations cannot do justice, had accumulated over a period of three years to give the impression that the patient felt unable to escape from a prison which seemed sometimes to be me, sometimes psychoanalysis and sometimes his state of mind which is a constant struggle with his own internal objects. He thus shows the same attitude to verbal thought as he has to his potency and his equipment for work and love.

The problem to which I am addressing myself can best be understood if it is seen to appertain to the moment when the patient feels he has effected his escape. The escape appears to contribute to the patient's feeling which he occasionally reports, that he is better; but it has cost him dear. The same patient said, "I have lost my words", and meant by this, as further analysis disclosed, that the instrument with which he had effected his escape had been lost in the process. Words, the capacity for verbal thought, the one essential for further progress, have gone. On expansion it appears that he thinks he has reached this pass as a penalty for forging this instrument of verbal thought and using it to escape from his former state of mind; hence the unwillingness I described to use his greater verbal capacity except as a mode of action.

Here now is the example I promised you when I was speaking of the difficulty that schizophrenic splitting caused in the formation of symbols and the development of verbal thought. The patient was a schizophrenic who had been in analysis five years; I describe some essentials of two sessions. I must warn you that compression has compelled me to leave out many repetitive formulations which in fact would mitigate the baldness of the interpretations as I report them here. I think interpretation should be in language that is simple, exact and mature.

Patient. I picked a tiny piece of skin from my face and feel quite empty.

Analyst. The tiny piece of skin is your penis, which you have torn out, and all your insides have come with it.

Patient. *I* do not understand . . . penis . . . only syllables.

Analyst. *You* have split my word "penis" into syllables and it now has no meaning.

Patient. I don't know what it means, but I want to say, "If I can't spell I cannot think".

Analyst. The syllables have now been split into letters; you cannot spell – that is to say you cannot put the letters together again to make words. So now you cannot think.

The patient started the next day's session with disjointed associations and complained that he could not think. I reminded him of the session I have described, whereupon he resumed correct speech; thus:

Patient. I cannot find any interesting food.

Analyst. You feel it *has all been eaten up.*

Patient. I do not feel able to buy any new clothes and my socks are a mass of holes.

Analyst. By picking out the tiny piece of skin yesterday you injured yourself so badly you cannot even buy clothes; you are empty and have nothing to buy them with.

Patient. Although they are full of holes they constrict my foot.

Analyst. Not only did you tear out your own penis but also mine. So to-day there is no interesting food – only a hole, a sock. But even this sock is made of a mass of holes, all of which you made and which have joined together to constrict, or swallow and injure, your foot.

This and subsequent sessions confirmed that he felt lie had eaten the penis and that therefore there was no interesting food left, only a hole. But this hole was now so persecutory that he had to split it up. As a result of the splitting, the hole became a mass of holes which all came together in a persecutory way to constrict his foot.

This patient's picking habits had been worked over for some three years. At first he had been occupied only with blackheads, and I shall quote from Freud's description of three cases, one observed by himself, one by Dr Tausk and one by R. Reitler, which have a resemblance to my patient. They are taken from his paper, 'The Unconscious' (Freud, 1915e).

Of his patient Freud said, "he has let himself withdraw from all the interests of life on account of the unhealthy condition of the skin of his face. He declares that he has blackheads and that there are deep holes in his face which everyone notices". Freud says he was working out his castration complex on his skin and that he began to

think there was a deep cavity wherever he had got rid of a blackhead. He continues: "The cavity which then appears in consequence of his guilty act is the female genital, i.e. stands for the fulfilment of the threat of castration (or the phantasy representing it) called forth by onanism". Freud compares such substitute formations with those of the hysteric, saying, "A tiny little hole such as a pore of the skin will hardly be used by an hysteric as a symbol for the vagina, which otherwise he will compare with every imaginable object capable of enclosing a space. Besides, we should think that the multiplicity of these little cavities would prevent him from using them as a substitute for the female genital".

Of Tausk's case he says, "in pulling on his stockings he was disturbed by the idea that he must draw apart the knitted stitches, i.e. the holes, and every hole was for him a symbol of the female genital aperture".

Quoting Reitler's case, he says the patient "found the explanation that his foot symbolized the penis; putting on the stocking stood for an onanistic act".

I shall now return to my patient at a session ten days later. A tear welled from his eye and he said with a mixture of despair and reproach, "Tears come from my ears now".

This kind of association had by now become familiar to me, so I was aware that I had been set a problem in interpretation. But by this time the patient, who had been in analysis some six years, was capable of a fair degree of identification with the analyst and I had his help. I shall not attempt a description of the stages by which the conclusions I put before you were reached. The steps were laborious and slow even though we had the evidence of six years' analysis on which to draw.

It appeared that he was deploring a blunder that seemed to bear out his suspicion that his capacity for verbal communication was impaired. It seemed that his sentence was but another instance of an inability to put words together properly.

After this had been discussed it was seen that tears were very bad things, that he felt much the same about tears which came from his ears as he did about sweat that came from the holes in his skin when he had, as he supposed, removed blackheads or other such objects from the skin. His feeling about tears from his cars was seen

to be similar to his feeling about the urine that came from the hole that was left in a person when his penis had been torn out; the bad urine still came.

When he told me that he couldn't listen very well I took advantage of his remark to remind him that in any case we needed to know why his mind was full of such thoughts at the present juncture, and I suggested that probably his hearing was felt to be defective because my words were being drowned by the tears that poured from his ears.

When it emerged that he couldn't talk very well either I suggested that it was because he felt his tongue had been torn out and he had been left only with an ear.

This was followed by what seemed to be a completely chaotic series of words and noises. I interpreted that now he felt he had a tongue but it was really just as bad as his ear – it just poured out a flow of destroyed language. In short it appeared that despite his wishes and mine we could not, or he felt we could not, communicate. I suggested that he felt he had a very bad and hostile object inside him which was treating our verbal intercourse to much the same kind of destructive attack which he had once felt he had launched against parental intercourse whether sexual or verbal.

At first he seemed to feel most keenly the defects in his capacity for communication or thought, and there was a great deal of play with the pronunciation of tears (teers or tares) the emphasis being mostly on the inability to bring together the objects, words, or word pronunciation, except cruelly. But at one point he seemed to become aware that his association had been the starting-point for much discussion. Then, "Lots of people" he murmured. On working this out in turn it appeared that he had swung away from the idea that his verbal capacity was being irretrievably destroyed by the attacks to which our conversation was being subjected, to the idea that his verbal communication was extremely greedy. This greed was ministered to by his splitting himself into so many people that he could be in many different places at once to hear the many different interpretations which I, also split into "lots of people", was now able to give simultaneously instead of one by one. His greed, and the attacks on verbal communication by the internal persecutors, were therefore related to each other.

39. Clearly this patient felt that splitting had destroyed his ability to think. This was the more serious for him because he no longer

felt that action provided a solution for the kind of problem with which he was struggling. This state is equated by the patient with "insanity".

The patient believes he has lost his capacity for verbal thought because he has left it behind inside his former state of mind, or inside the analyst, or inside psychoanalysis. He also believes that his capacity for verbal thought has been removed from him by the analyst who is now a frightening person. Both beliefs give rise to characteristic anxieties. The belief that he has left it behind has, as we have seen, helped to make the patient feel he is insane. He thinks that he will never be able to progress unless he goes back, as it were, into his former state of mind in order to fetch it. This he dare not do because he dreads his former state of mind and fears that he would once more be imprisoned in it. The belief that the analyst has removed his capacity for verbal thought makes him afraid of employing his new-found capacity for verbal thought, lest it should arouse the hatred of the analyst and cause him to repeat the attack.

From the patient's point of view the achievement of verbal thought has been a most unhappy event. Verbal thought is so interwoven with catastrophe and the painful emotion of depression that the patient, resorting to projective identification, splits it off and pushes it into the analyst. The results are again unhappy for the patient; lack of this capacity is now felt by him to be the same thing as being insane. On the other hand, resumption of this capacity seems to him to be inseparable from depression and awareness, on a reality level this time, that he is 'insane'. This fact tends to give reality to the patient's phantasies of the catastrophic results that would accrue were he to risk re-introjection of his capacity for verbal thought.

It must not be supposed that the patient leaves his problems untouched during this phase. He will occasionally give the analyst concrete and precise information about them. The analyst's problem is the patient's dread, now quite manifest, of attempting a psychoanalytic understanding of what they mean for him, partly because the patient now understands that psychoanalysis demands from him that very verbal thought which he dreads.

So far I have dealt with the problem of communication between analyst and schizophrenic patient. I shall now consider the experience the patient has when he lives through the process of achieving sufficient mastery of language to emerge from the "prison of

psychoanalysis", or state of mind in which he previously felt himself to be hopelessly enclosed. The patient is apparently unaware of any existence outside the consulting room; there is no report of any external activity. There is merely an existence away from the analyst of which nothing is known except that he is "all right" or "better" and a relationship with the analyst which the patient says is bad. The intervals between sessions are admitted and feared. He complains that he is insane, expresses his fear of hallucination and delusion, and is extremely cautious in his behaviour lest he should become insane.

The living through of the emotions belonging to this phase leads to a shift towards higher valuation of the external object at the expense of the hallucinated internal object. This depends on the analysis of the patient's hallucinations and his insistence on allotting to real objects a subordinate role. If this has been done the analyst sees before him the ego and more normal object relations in process of development. I am assuming that there has been an adequate working through of the processes of splitting and the underlying persecutory anxiety as well as of reintegration. Herbert Rosenfeld has described some of the dangers of this phase. My experiences confirm his findings. I have observed the progress from multiple splits to four and from four to two and the great anxiety as integration proceeds with the tendency to revert to violent disintegration. This is due to intolerance of the depressive position, internal persecutors, and verbal thought. If splitting has been adequately worked through the tendency to split the object and the ego at the same time is kept within bounds. Each session is then a step in ego development.

E. Realization of insanity

40. One of the penalties of attempting to clarify the complex phenomena of the schizophrenic patient's relationship with his objects is that if the attempt is successful it is delusively misleading. I would now redress the balance by approaching the phenomena I have already described from a rather different angle. I wish to take up the story at the point at which the splits are brought together, the patient escapes from his state of mind and the depressive position is ushered in. In particular I wish to draw attention to this concatenation of events when it is suffused by the illumination achieved through

the development of a capacity for verbal thought. I have made it clear that this is a most important turning-point in the whole analysis. You may therefore have formed the impression that at this point the analysis enters into calm waters. It is necessary therefore that I should leave you with no illusions about this.

What takes place, if the analyst has been reasonably successful, is a realization by the patient of psychic reality; he realizes that he has hallucinations and delusions, may feel unable to take food, and have difficulty with sleep. The patient will direct powerful feelings of hatred towards the analyst. He will state categorically that he is insane and will express with intense conviction and hatred that it is the analyst who has driven him to this pass. The analyst ought to expect concern for the patient's welfare to drive the family to intervene and he must be prepared to explain an alarming situation to them. He should strive to keep at bay surgeons and shock therapists alike while concentrating on not allowing the patient for a single moment to retreat either from his realization that he is insane or from his hatred of the analyst who has succeeded, after so many years, in bringing him to an emotional realization of the facts that he has spent his whole life trying to evade. This may be the more difficult because, when the first panic begins to subside, the patient himself will begin to suggest that he feels better. Due weight must be given to this, but care must be taken to prevent its being used to delay investigation in detail of the ramifications in the analytic situation of the changes brought about in the patient's object relationships by the realization of his insanity.

F. Results

41. I am not yet prepared to offer any opinion about the prospects of treatment except to say that two of the three schizophrenics of whom I am speaking are now earning their living. I believe that if the course I have indicated above is followed there is reason to anticipate that the schizophrenic may achieve his own form of adjustment to reality which may be no less worthy of the title of 'cure' because it is not of the same kind as that which is achieved by less disordered patients. I repeat that I do not think that any cure, however limited, will be achieved if, at the point I have tried to describe to you, the

analyst attempts to reassure the patient and so undoes all the good work that has led to the latter's being able to realize the severity of his condition. At this point an opportunity, which must not be lost, has been created for exploring with the patient what it means to do analytic or any other kind of work when insane.

The experiences I have described to you compel me to conclude that at the onset of the infantile depressive position, elements of verbal thought increase in intensity and depth. In consequence the pains of psychic reality are exacerbated by it and the patient who regresses to the paranoid-schizoid position will, as he does so, turn destructively on his embryonic capacity for verbal *thought* as one of the elements which have led to his pain.

4

The development of schizophrenic thought

42. In this paper, which must be regarded as a preliminary announcement, I do three things:

(i) I discuss the point at which the psychotic personality diverges from the non-psychotic; (ii) I examine the nature of that divergence; and (iii) I consider the consequences of it. Experience at the Congress at Geneva showed that the attempt to give clinical illustrations in a paper as compressed as this produced far more obscurity than illumination. This version is accordingly restricted to theoretical description.

The conclusions I arrive at were forged in analytic contact with schizophrenic patients and have been tested by me in practice. That I arrived at some degree of clarification, I owe mainly to three pieces of work. As they occupy a key position in this paper I shall remind you of them.

First: Freud's description, which I referred to in my paper at the London Congress of 1953 [chapter 3], of the mental apparatus called into activity by the demands of the reality principle and in particular of that part of it which is concerned with conscious awareness of sense impressions. Second: Freud's tentative suggestion, in *Civilization and Its Discontents* [1930a], of the importance of the conflict between life and death instincts. The point was taken up and developed by Melanie Klein, but Freud seemed to recede from it. Melanie Klein believes

that this conflict persists throughout life, and this view I believe to be of great importance to an understanding of the schizophrenic. Third: Melanie Klein's description of the phantasied sadistic attacks that the infant makes on the breast during the paranoid-schizoid phase, and her discovery of Projective Identification. Projective Identification is a splitting off by the patient of a part of his personality and a projection of it into the object where it becomes installed, sometimes as a persecutor, leaving the psyche from which it has been split off correspondingly impoverished.

Schizophrenic disturbance springs from an interaction between (i) the environment, and (ii) the personality. In this paper I ignore the environment and focus attention on four essential features of schizophrenic personality. First is a preponderance of destructive impulses so great that even the impulses to love are suffused by them and turned to sadism. Second is a hatred of reality which, as Freud pointed out, is extended to all aspects of the psyche that make for awareness of it. I add hatred of internal reality and all that makes for awareness of it. Third, derived from these two, is an unremitting dread of imminent annihilation. Fourth is a precipitate and premature formation of object relations, foremost amongst which is the transference, whose thinness is in marked contrast to the tenacity with which it is maintained. The prematurity, thinness, and tenacity are pathognomic and are alike derived from dread of annihilation by the death instincts. The schizophrenic is preoccupied with the conflict, never finally resolved, between destructiveness on the one hand and sadism on the other.

Transference

The relationship with the analyst is premature, precipitate, and intensely dependent. When the patient broadens it under pressure of his life or death instincts, two concurrent streams of phenomena become manifest. First, projective identification, with the analyst as object, becomes over-active with the resulting painful confusional states such as Rosenfeld has described. Second, the mental and other activities by which the dominant impulse, be it life instincts or death instincts, strives to express itself, are at once subjected to mutilation

by the temporarily subordinated impulse. Driven by the wish to escape the confusional states and harassed by the mutilations, the patient strives to restore the restricted relationship; the transference is again invested with its characteristic featurelessness. Whether the patient walks straight past me into the consulting room as if scarcely aware of my presence, or whether he displays an effusive, mirthless bonhomie, the restricted relationship is unmistakable. Restriction and expansion alternate throughout the analysis.

The divergence

43. To sum up; ignoring the effect of the external environment, the schizophrenic personality depends on the existence in the patient of four features; (i) a conflict that is never decided between life and death instincts; (ii) a preponderance of destructive impulses; (iii) hatred of external and internal reality; (iv) a tenuous but tenacious object relationship. This peculiar endowment makes it certain that the schizophrenic patient's progression through the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions is markedly different from that of the non-psychotic personality. This difference hinges on the fact that this combination of characteristics leads to a massive resort to projective identification. It is therefore to projective identification that I now turn, *but my examination of it is restricted to its deployment by the schizophrenic against all that apparatus of awareness that Freud described as being called into activity by the demands of the reality principle.*

Divergence of psychotic from non-psychotic personality

44. I spoke of Melanie Klein's picture of the paranoid-schizoid position and the important part played in it by the infant's phantasies of sadistic attacks on the breast. Identical attacks are directed against the apparatus of perception from the beginning of life. This part of his personality is cut up, split into minute fragments, and then, using the projective identification, expelled from the personality. Having thus rid himself of the apparatus of conscious awareness of internal and

external reality, the patient achieves a state which is felt to be neither alive nor dead.

This apparatus of conscious awareness is intimately connected with verbal thought and all that provides, at the early stage of which I speak, the foundations of its inchoation. Projective identification of conscious awareness and the associated inchoation of verbal thought is the central factor in the differentiation of the psychotic from the non-psychotic personality. I believe it takes place at the outset of the patient's life. These sadistic attacks on the ego and on the foundations of inchoate verbal thought, and the projective identification of the fragments, make certain that from this point on there is an ever-widening divergence between the psychotic and non-psychotic parts of the personality until at last the gulf is felt to be unbridgeable.

Fate of the expelled fragments

45. In so far as the destruction is successful, the patient experiences a failure in his capacity for perception. All his sense impressions appear to have suffered mutilation of a kind which would be appropriate had they been attacked as the breast is felt to be attacked in the sadistic phantasies of the infant. The patient feels imprisoned in the state of mind he has achieved and unable to escape from it because he feels he lacks the apparatus of awareness of reality, which is both the key to escape and the freedom itself to which he would escape. This sense of imprisonment is intensified by the menacing presence of the expelled fragments within whose planetary movements he is contained. The nature of this imprisonment will become clearer with the discussion of the fate of these expelled fragments, to which I now turn.

In the patient's phantasy the expelled particles of ego lead to an independent and uncontrolled existence outside the personality, but either containing or contained by external objects, where they exercise their functions as if the ordeal to which they have been subjected has served only to increase their number and to provoke their hostility to the psyche that ejected them. In consequence the patient feels himself to be surrounded by bizarre objects whose nature I shall now describe.

The particles

46. Each particle is felt to consist of a real external object which is encapsulated in a piece of personality that has engulfed it. The character of this complete particle will depend partly on the character of the real object, say a gramophone, and partly on the character of the particle of personality that engulfs it. If the piece of the personality is concerned with sight, the gramophone when played is felt to be watching the patient; if with hearing, then the gramophone when played is felt to be listening to the patient. The object, angered at being engulfed, swells up, so to speak, and suffuses and controls the piece of personality that engulfs it: to that extent the particle is felt to have become a thing. Since these particles are used by the patient as if they were prototypes of ideas – later to become words – this suffusion of the piece of personality by the contained but controlling object leads the patient to feel that words are the actual things they name, and so to the confusions (described by Segal) that arise because the patient equates but does not symbolize.

Consequences for the patient

47. The patient now moves, not in a world of dreams, but in a world of objects which are ordinarily the furniture of dreams. These objects, primitive yet complex, partake of qualities which in the non-psychotic are peculiar to matter, anal objects, senses, ideas, superego, and the remaining qualities of personality. One result is that the patient strives to use real objects as ideas, and is baffled when they obey the laws of natural science – not those of mental functioning.

Associated with projective identification is the psychotic personality's inability to introject. If he wishes to take in an interpretation, or bring back these objects I have been describing, he does so by projective identification reversed, and by the same route. This situation was neatly summed up by the patient who said he used his intestine as a brain. When I said he had swallowed something, he replied, "The intestine doesn't swallow." Dr Segal has described in her paper, which I had the good fortune to see before the Congress, some of the patient's vicissitudes in the depressive position (Segal, 1956); I would now add that, thanks to this employment of projective identification,

he cannot synthesize his objects: he can only agglomerate and compress them. Further, whether he feels he has had something put into him, or whether he feels he has introjected it, he feels the ingress as an assault, and a retaliation by the object for his violent intrusion into it.

Repression

48. It will be clear that where the non-psychotic personality, or part of the personality employs repression, the psychotic has employed projective identification. Therefore there is no repression, and what should be his unconscious is replaced by the world of dream furniture in which I have described him as moving.

Verbal thought

49. The inception of verbal thought which I described as appertaining to the depressive position is gravely disturbed because it is that which synthesizes and articulates impressions and thus is essential to awareness of internal and external reality; for that reason it is subject to continuing attacks such as I have described.

Further, excessive projective identification in the paranoid-schizoid position prevented smooth introjection and assimilation of sense impressions and consequently the establishment of the firm base of good objects on which the inception of verbal thought depends.

An attempt to think involves bringing back to control, and therefore to his personality, the expelled particles and their accretions. Projective identification is therefore reversed and the concomitant agglomeration and compression lead to highly compact speech, the construction of which is more appropriate to music than the articulation of words as used for non-psychotic communication.

Moreover, since, as we have seen, these particles share the qualities of things, the patient can feel he is being split by their re-entry. Again, since these particles include pieces of conscious awareness of sense impressions, the senses are felt to become painfully compressed and acute to an intolerable degree. The patient can be seen to be in the grip of extremely painful, tactile, auditory, or visual hallucinations. Depression and anxiety being subject to the same mechanism

are similarly intensified till the patient is compelled to deal with these emotions in the way that Segal has described.

Conclusion

50. Experience of these theories in practice has convinced me that the treatment of the psychotic personality will not be successful until the patient's destructive attacks on his ego, and his substitution of projective identification for repression and introjection, have been worked through. I further consider that even in the severe neurotic there is a psychotic personality that has to be dealt with in the same way before success is achieved.

5

The differentiation of the psychotic from the non-psychotic personalities

51. The theme of this paper is that the differentiation of the psychotic from the non-psychotic personalities depends on a minute splitting of all that part of the personality that is concerned with awareness of internal and external reality, and the expulsion of these fragments so that they enter into or engulf their objects. I shall describe this process in some detail and shall then discuss its consequences and how they affect treatment.

The conclusions were arrived at in analytic contact with schizophrenic patients and have been tested by me in practice. I ask your attention for them because they have led to developments in my patients which are analytically significant and not to be confused, either with the remissions familiar to psychiatrists, or with that class of improvement that it is impossible to relate to the interpretations given or to any coherent body of psychoanalytic theory. I believe that the improvements I have seen deserve psychoanalytic investigation.

52. I owe my clarification of the obscurity that pervades the whole of a psychotic analysis mainly to three pieces of work. As they are crucial for understanding what follows I shall remind you of them. First: Freud's description (1911b), to which I referred in my paper to the London Congress of 1953 [chapter 3], of the mental apparatus called into activity by the demands of the reality principle and in particular of that part of it which is concerned with the consciousness attached to the sense-organs. Second: Melanie Klein's (1928) description of the phantasied sadistic attacks that the infant makes on the breast during the paranoid-schizoid phase. Third: her discovery of projective identification (Klein, 1946).

By this mechanism the patient splits off a part of his personality and projects it into the object where it becomes installed, sometimes

as a persecutor, leaving the psyche, from which it has been split off, correspondingly impoverished.

53. Lest it be supposed that I attribute the development of schizophrenia exclusively to certain mechanisms apart from the personality that employs them, I shall enumerate now what I think are the preconditions for the mechanisms on which I wish to focus your attention. There is the environment, which I shall not discuss at this time, and the personality which must display four essential features. These are: a preponderance of destructive impulses so great that even the impulse to love is suffused by them and turned to sadism; a hatred of reality, internal and external, which is extended to all that makes for awareness of it; a dread of imminent annihilation (Klein, 1946), and finally a premature and precipitate formation of object relations, foremost amongst which is the transference, whose thinness is in marked contrast with the tenacity with which they are maintained. The prematurity, thinness and tenacity are pathognomonic and have an important derivation in the conflict, never decided in the schizophrenic, between the life and death instincts.

54. Before I consider the mechanisms that spring from these characteristics I must dispose briefly of a few points that concern the transference. The relationship with the analyst is premature, precipitate, and intensely dependent; when (under pressure of his life and death instincts) the patient broadens the contact, two concurrent streams of phenomena become manifest.

First, splitting of his personality and projection of the fragments into the analyst (i.e. projective identification) becomes overactive, with consequent confusional states such as Rosenfeld (1952) has described. Second, the mental and other activities by which the dominant impulse, be it of life or death instincts, strives to express itself, are at once subjected to mutilation by the temporarily subordinated impulse. Harassed by the mutilations and striving to escape the confusional states, the patient returns to the restricted relationship. Oscillation between the attempt to broaden the contact and the attempt to restrict it continues throughout the analysis.

55. To return now to the characteristics I listed as intrinsic to the schizophrenic personality; these constitute an endowment that makes it certain that the possessor of it will progress through the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions in a manner markedly different from that of one not so endowed. The difference hinges on

the fact that this combination of qualities leads to minute fragmentation of the personality (particularly of the apparatus of awareness of reality which Freud described as coming into operation at the behest of the reality principle) and excessive projection of these fragments of personality into external objects.

I described some aspects of these theories in my paper to the International Congress of 1953 [chapter 3] when I spoke of the association of the depressive position with the development of verbal thought and the significance of this association for awareness of internal and external reality. In this paper I am taking up the same story at a much earlier stage, namely at the outset of the patient's life. I am dealing with phenomena in the paranoid-schizoid position which are associated, ultimately, with the inchoation of verbal thought. How this should be so will, I hope, presently emerge.

56. The theories of Freud and Melanie Klein to which I referred earlier must now be considered in more detail. Quoting his formulation in 'The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis' (1924e) – Freud defines one of the features distinguishing the neuroses from the psychoses as: "in the former the ego, in virtue of its allegiance to reality, suppresses a part of the id (the life of instinct), whereas in the psychoses the same ego in the service of the id, withdraws itself from a part of reality".

I assume that when Freud speaks of the allegiance of the ego to reality he is speaking of the developments he described as taking place with the institution of the reality principle. He said, "the new demands made a succession of adaptations necessary in the mental apparatus, which, on account of insufficient knowledge, we can only detail very cursorily". He then lists: the heightened, significance of the sense organs directed towards the outer world and of the consciousness attached to them; attention, which he calls a special function, which had to search the outer world in order that its data might be already familiar if an urgent inner need should arise; a system of notation whose task was to deposit the results of this periodical activity of consciousness which he describes as a part of that which we call memory; judgement which had to decide whether a particular idea was true or false; the employment of motor discharge in appropriate alteration of reality and not simply in unburdening the mental apparatus of accretions of stimuli; and finally, thought which he says

made it possible to tolerate the frustration which is an inevitable accompaniment of action by virtue of its quality as an experimental way of acting. As will be seen, I very much extend the function and importance of thought, but otherwise accept the classification of ego function, which Freud put forward as putative, as giving concreteness to a part of the personality with which this paper is concerned. It accords well with clinical experience and illuminates events which I would have found infinitely more obscure without it.

I make two modifications in Freud's description to bring it into closer relation with the facts; I do not think, at least as touches those patients likely to be met with in analytic practice, that the ego is ever wholly withdrawn from reality. I would say that its contact with reality is masked by the dominance, in the patient's mind and behaviour, of an omnipotent phantasy that is intended to destroy either reality or the awareness of it, and thus to achieve a state that is neither life nor death. Since contact with reality is never entirely lost, the phenomena which we are accustomed to associate with the neuroses are never absent and serve to complicate the analysis, when sufficient progress has been made, by their presence amidst psychotic material. On this fact – that the ego retains contact with reality – depends the existence of a non-psychotic personality parallel with, but obscured by, the psychotic personality.

57. My second modification is that the withdrawal from reality is an illusion, not a fact, and arises from the deployment of projective identification against the mental apparatus listed by Freud. Such is the dominance of this phantasy it is evident that it is no phantasy, but a fact to the patient, who acts as if his perceptual apparatus could be split into minute fragments and projected into his objects.

As a result of these modifications we reach the conclusion that patients ill enough, say, to be certified as psychotic, contain in their psyche a part of the personality prey to the various neurotic mechanisms with which psychoanalysis has made us familiar, and a psychotic part of the personality, which is so far dominant that the non-psychotic part of the personality, with which it exists in negative juxtaposition, is obscured.

One concomitant of the hatred of reality that Freud remarked is the psychotic infant's phantasies of sadistic attacks on the breast which Melanie Klein described as a part of the paranoid-schizoid

phase.[1] I wish to emphasize that in this phase the psychotic splits his objects, and contemporaneously all that part of his personality, which would make him aware of the reality he hates, into exceedingly minute fragments, for it is this that contributes materially to the psychotic's feelings that he cannot restore his objects or his ego. As a result of these splitting attacks, all those features of the personality which should one day provide the foundation for intuitive understanding of himself and others are jeopardized at the outset. All the functions which Freud described as being, at a later stage, a developmental response to the reality principle – that is to say consciousness of sense impressions, attention, memory, judgement, thought – have brought against them, in such inchoate forms as they may possess at the outset of life, the sadistic splitting eviscerating attacks that lead to their being minutely fragmented and then expelled from the personality to penetrate, or encyst, the objects. In the patient's phantasy the expelled particles of ego lead an independent and uncontrolled existence, either contained by or containing the external objects; they continue to exercise their functions as if the ordeal to which they have been subjected had served only to increase their number and provoke their hostility to the psyche that ejected them. In consequence the patient feels himself to be surrounded by bizarre objects whose nature I now describe.

58. Each particle is felt to consist of a real object which is encapsulated in a piece of personality that has engulfed it. The nature of this complete particle will depend partly on the character of the real object, say a gramophone, and partly on the character of the particle of personality that engulfs it. If the piece of personality is concerned with sight, the gramophone when played is felt to be watching the patient; if with hearing, then the gramophone when played is felt to be listening to the patient. The object, angered at being engulfed, swells up, so to speak, and suffuses and controls the piece of personality that engulfs it: to that extent the particle of personality has become a thing. Since these particles are what the patient depends on for use as the prototypes of ideas – later to form the matrix from which words should spring – this suffusion of the piece of personality by the contained but controlling object leads the patient to feel that

[1] 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms' (Klein, 1946).

words are the actual things they name and so adds to the confusions, described by Segal, that arise because the patient equates, but does not symbolize. The fact that the patient uses these bizarre objects for achieving thought leads now to a fresh problem. If we consider that one of the patient's objects in using splitting and projective identification is to rid himself of awareness of reality, it is clear that he could achieve the maximum of severance from reality with the greatest economy of effort if he could launch these destructive attacks on the link, whatever it is, that connects sense impressions with consciousness. In my paper to the 1953 International Congress I showed that awareness of psychic reality depended on the development of a capacity for verbal thought the foundation of which was linked with the depressive position. It is impossible to go into this now; I refer you to Melanie Klein's 1930 paper on 'The Importance of Symbol-formation in the Development of the Ego' and to the paper given to the British Psychological Society (1955) by H. Segal.[1] In this, Segal demonstrates the importance of symbol formation and explores its relationship to verbal thought and the reparative drives normally associated with the depressive position. I am concerned with an earlier stage in the same story. It is my belief that the mischief that becomes much more apparent in the depressive position has in fact been initiated in the paranoid-schizoid phase when the foundations for primitive thought should be laid, but are not, because of the overaction of splitting and projective identification.

59. Freud attributes to thought the function of providing a means of restraint of action. But he goes on to say, "It is probable that thinking was originally unconscious, in so far as it rose above mere ideation and turned to the relations between the object-impressions, and that it became endowed with further qualities which were perceptible to consciousness only through its connection with the memory traces of words" (1911b). My experiences have led me to suppose that some kind of thought, related to what we should call ideographs and sight rather than to words and hearing, exists at the outset. This thought depends on a capacity for balanced introjection and projection of objects and, *a fortiori*, on awareness of them. This is within the

[1]Paper on Symbol Formation read to the Medical Section of the British Psychological Society.

capacity of the non-psychotic part of the personality, partly because of the splitting and ejection of the apparatus of awareness I have already described, and partly for the following reasons.

Thanks to the operations of the non-psychotic part of the personality, the patient is aware that introjection is leading to the formation of the unconscious thought of which Freud speaks as "turned to the relations between object-impressions" I believe that it is this unconscious thought which Freud describes as turned to the relations between the object impressions which is responsible for the "consciousness attached to" the sense impressions. I am fortified in this belief by his statement twelve years later in the paper *The Ego and the Id* (1923b). In this he says, "that the question 'How does a thing become conscious?' could be put more advantageously thus: 'How does a thing become preconscious?' And the answer would be: 'By coming into connection with the verbal images that correspond to it'."

In my 1953 paper I said that verbal thought is bound up with awareness of psychic reality; this I also believe to be true of the early pre-verbal thought of which I am now speaking. In view of what I have already said of the psychotic's attacks on the whole mental apparatus responsible for consciousness of external and internal reality, it is to be expected that the deployment of projective identification would be particularly severe against the thought, of whatever kind, that turned to the relations between object-impressions; for if this link could be severed (or better still never forged) then at least consciousness of reality would be destroyed even though reality itself could not be. But in fact the work of destruction is already half done; the material from which thought is forged, in the non-psychotic by balanced introjection and projection, is not available to the psychotic part of the personality because the displacement of projection and introjection by projective identification has left him with only the bizarre objects I have described.

60. In fact, not only is primitive thought attacked because it links sense-impressions of reality with consciousness, but thanks to the psychotic's over-endowment with destructiveness the splitting processes are extended to the links within the thought processes themselves. As Freud's phrase regarding thought being turned to the relations between object-impressions implies, this primitive matrix of ideographs from which thought springs contains within itself links between one ideograph and another. All these are now attacked till

finally two objects cannot be brought together in a way which leaves each object with its intrinsic qualities intact and yet able, by their conjunction, to produce a new mental object. Consequently the formation of symbols, which depends for its therapeutic effect on the ability to bring together two objects so that their resemblance is made manifest, yet their difference left unimpaired, now becomes difficult. At a still later stage the result of these splitting attacks is seen in the denial of articulation as a principle for the combining of words. This last does not mean that objects cannot be brought together; as I shall show later when speaking of agglomeration, that is by no means true. Further, since that-which-links has been not only minutely fragmented but also projected out into objects to join the other bizarre objects, the patient feels surrounded by minute links which, being impregnated now with cruelty, link objects together cruelly.

To conclude my description of the fragmentation of the ego and its expulsion into and about its objects, I shall say that I believe the processes I have described to be the central factor, in so far as such a factor can be isolated without distortion, in the differentiation of the psychotic from the non-psychotic part of the personality. It takes place at the outset of the patient's life: the sadistic attacks on the ego and on the matrix of thought, together with projective identification of the fragments, make it certain that from this point on there is an ever-widening divergence between the psychotic and non-psychotic parts of the personality until at last the gulf between them is felt to be unbridgeable.

61. The consequences for the patient are that he now moves not in a world of dreams, but in a world of objects which are ordinarily the furniture of dreams. His sense impressions appear to have suffered mutilation of a kind which would be appropriate had they been attacked as the breast is felt to be attacked in the sadistic phantasies of the infant (Klein, 1928). The patient feels imprisoned in the state of mind he has achieved, and unable to escape from it because he feels he lacks the apparatus of awareness of reality which is both the key to escape and the freedom to which he would escape. The sense of imprisonment is intensified by the menacing presence of the expelled fragments within whose planetary movements he is contained. These objects, primitive yet complex, partake of qualities which in the non-psychotic personality are peculiar to matter, anal objects, senses, ideas and superego.

62. The diversity of such objects, dependent as it is on the sense by which they are suffused, prevents more than the cursory indication of their mode of genesis that I have given. The reaction of these objects to material for ideographic thought leads the patient to confound real objects with primitive ideas, and therefore to confusion, when they obey the laws of natural science and not those of mental functioning. If he wishes to bring back any of these objects in an attempt at restitution of the ego (and in analysis he feels impelled to make the attempt) he has to bring them back by projective identification in reverse and by the route by which they were expelled. Whether he feels he has had one of these objects put into him by the analyst or whether he feels he had taken it in, he feels the ingress as an assault. The extreme degree to which he has carried the splitting of objects and ego alike makes any attempt at synthesis hazardous. Furthermore, as he has rid himself of that-which-joins – his capacity for articulation – the methods available for synthesis are felt to be macilent; he can compress but cannot join, he can fuse but cannot articulate. The capacity to join is felt, as a result of its ejection, to have become, like all other expelled particles, infinitely worse than they were when ejected. Any joining that takes place is done with a vengeance, that is to say in a manner expressly contrary to the wishes of the patient at the moment. In the course of the analysis this process of compression or agglomeration loses some of its malignancy and then fresh problems arise.

63. I must now draw your attention to a matter that demands a paper to itself and therefore cannot be more than mentioned here. It is implicit in my description that the psychotic personality or part of the personality has used splitting and projective identification as a substitute for repression. Where the non-psychotic part of the personality resorts to repression as a means of cutting off certain trends in the mind both from consciousness and from other forms of manifestation and activity, the psychotic part of the personality has attempted to rid itself of the apparatus on which the psyche depends to carry out the repressions; the unconscious would seem to be replaced by the world of dream furniture.

64. I shall now attempt a description of an actual session; it is a clinical experience based on these theories rather than the description of an experience on which the theories are based, but I hope I shall

be able to indicate the material from previous sessions which led me to interpret as I did.

The patient at the time of this session, of which I describe a small part, had been coming to me for six years. He had once been as late as *forty-five* minutes, but had never missed a session; the sessions were never continued over time. On this morning he arrived a quarter of an hour late and lay on the couch. He spent some time turning from one side to another, ostensibly making himself comfortable. At length he said, "I don't suppose I shall do anything today. I ought to have rung up my mother." He paused and then said "No; I thought it would be like this." A more prolonged pause followed; then, "Nothing but filthy things and smells", he said. "I think I've lost my sight". Some twenty-five minutes of our time had now passed, and at this point I made an interpretation, but before I repeat it I must discuss some previous material which will, I hope, make my intervention comprehensible.

When the patient was manoeuvring on the couch I was watching something with which I was familiar. Five years earlier he had explained that his doctor advised an operation for hernia and it was to be assumed that the discomfort caused by the hernia compelled these adjustments. It was, however, evident that more was involved than the hernia and rational activity to increase his physical comfort. I had sometimes asked him what these movements were, and to these questions his reply had been, "Nothing". Once he had said, "I don't know". I had felt that "Nothing" was a thinly veiled invitation to me to mind my own business as well as a denial of something very bad. I continued, over the weeks and years, to watch his movements. A handkerchief was disposed near his right pocket; he arched his back – surely a sexual gesture here? A lighter fell out of his pocket. Should he pick it up? Yes. No. perhaps not. Well, yes. It was retrieved from the floor and placed by the handkerchief. Immediately a shower of coins spilled over the couch on to the floor. The patient lay still and waited. Perhaps, his gesture seemed to suggest, he had been unwise to bring back the lighter. It had seemed to lead to the shower of coins. He waited, cautiously, furtively. And finally he made the remark I have reported. It reminded me of his descriptions, not given in any one session but produced over many months, of the tortuous manoeuvres through which he had to go before he

went to the lavatory, or went down to breakfast, or telephoned to his mother. I was quite used to recalling many of the free associations which might easily be appropriate to the behaviour he displayed on this as on many other mornings. But these were now my associations, and once when I had tried to make use of such material in an interpretation that is exactly the reply lie had made. One interpretation I remembered which had met with some success. I had pointed out that he felt much the same about these movements as he had about a dream he had told me – he had no ideas about the dream and he had no ideas about the movements. "Yes", he had agreed, "that's so". "And yet", I replied, "you once had an idea about it; you thought it was the hernia". "That's nothing", he replied, and had then paused, almost slyly I thought, to see if I had grasped the point. So, "Nothing is really a hernia", I said. "No idea", he replied, "only a hernia." I had been left feeling that his "no idea" was very like the "no ideas" about the dreams or the movements, but for that session at least I could get no further. In this respect the movements and the dreams were very fair instances of mutilated attempts at co-operation, and this too was something to which I had drawn his attention.

65. It may have occurred to you, as it often had to me, that I was watching a series of miniature dramatic presentations, preparations for a baby's bath or feed, or a change of nappies, or a sexual seduction. More often it would be correct to say that the presentation was a conglomeration of bits out of a number of such scenes, and it was this impression that led me finally to suppose that I was watching an ideomotor activity, that is to say a means of expressing an idea without naming it. From this it was a short step to think of it as the kind of motor activity which Freud had described as characteristic of the supremacy of the pleasure principle. For, in so far as I was watching psychotic phenomena, the patient could not be acting in response to awareness of external reality; he was exhibiting the kind of motor discharge which Freud said, "had served to unburden the mental apparatus of accretions of stimuli, and in carrying out this task had sent innervations into the interior of the body (mien expressions of affect)." It was this impression which returned to me when the patient said, "I don't expect I shall do anything today." It was a remark that could refer to the likelihood of his producing any material for interpretation or, equally, to the likelihood that I would

produce any interpretations. "I ought to have rung up my mother" could mean that his failure to do so was being visited upon him by the punishment of not being able to do any analysis. It also meant that his mother would have known what to do about it – she could get associations out of him or interpretations out of me; something depended on what his mother meant to him, but on this point I was really in the dark. She had come in to the analysis as a simple working-class woman who had to go to work for the family; this view was entertained with the same degree of conviction that stamped his statements that the family were extremely wealthy. I was vouchsafed glimpses of her as a woman with such multitudinous social engagements that scant time was left her to satisfy the needs either of the patient, who was her eldest son, her eldest daughter, two years older than the patient, or the remainder of the family. She had been spoken of, if anything so inarticulate could be described as speech, as devoid of common sense or culture, though in the habit of visiting art galleries of international fame. I was left to infer that the bringing up of her children was ignorant and painstaking in the extreme.

I may say that at the time of which I write I knew little more of his real mother than would be known by a person who had rid himself of his ego in the way I have described as typical of the psychotic personality. Nevertheless I had these impressions, and others which I omit, and on them I based my interpretations. The patient's responses to these interpretations were outright rejection as either quite inadmissible because wrong, or accurate but improperly arrived at in that I must have been using his mind (really his capacity for contact with reality) without his permission. It will be observed that he thereby expresses a jealous denial of my insight.

66. When the patient said, after a pause, that he knew it would be like this, I felt on fairly sure ground in assuming that it was I who was unlikely to do anything in that session and that his mother was some person or thing who could have enabled him to deal with me more satisfactorily. This impression was strengthened by the next association.

If the theories I have described are correct, then, in any given situation, the patient who is ill enough, as this one was, to have achieved certification, has two main problems to solve, one appertaining to the non-psychotic part of the personality and one to the psychotic

part. With this particular patient, at this particular juncture, the psychotic personality and its problems still obscured the non-psychotic personality and its problems. Nevertheless, as I hope to show, the latter were discernible in the material. The non-psychotic personality was concerned with a neurotic problem, that is to say a problem that centred on the resolution of a conflict of ideas and emotions to which the operation of the ego had given rise. But the psychotic personality was concerned with the problem of repair of the ego, and the clue to this lay in the fear that he had lost his sight. Since it was the psychotic problem that obtruded I dealt with that, taking his last association first. I told him that these filthy things and smells were what he felt he had made me do, and that he felt he had compelled me to defecate them out, including the sight he had put into me.

The patient jerked convulsively and I saw him cautiously scanning what seemed to be the air around him. I accordingly said that he felt surrounded by bad and smelly bits of himself including his eyes which he felt he had expelled from his anus. He replied: "I can't see:" I then told him he felt he had lost his sight and his ability to talk to his mother, or to me, when he had got rid of these abilities so as to avoid pain.

67. In this last interpretation I was making use of a session, many months earlier, in which the patient complained that analysis was torture, memory torture. I showed him then that when he felt pain, as evidenced in this session by the convulsive jerks, he achieved anaesthesia by getting rid of his memory and anything that could make him realize pain.

Patient. "My head is splitting; maybe my dark glasses."

Some five months previously I had worn dark glasses; the fact had, as far as I could tell, produced no reaction whatever from that day to this, but that becomes less surprising if we consider that I, wearing dark glasses, was felt by him as one of the objects to which I referred when describing the fate of the expelled particles of ego. I have explained that the psychotic personality seems to have to await the occurrence of an apt event before it feels it is in possession of an ideograph suitable for use in communication with itself or with others. Reciprocally, other events, which might be supposed to have immediate significance for the non-psychotic personality, are passed

by because they are felt to be significant only as ideographs serving no immediate need. In the present instance the problem created by my wearing dark glasses was obscured in the non-psychotic part of the personality because the psychotic part of the personality was dominant: and in that part of the personality the event was merely significant as an ideograph for which it had had no immediate need. When at last the fact obtruded in analysis it had the appearance, superficially, of being perhaps some kind of delayed reaction, but such a view depends on the supposition that the association of the dark glasses was an expression of neurotic conflict in the non-psychotic part of the personality. In fact it was not a delayed expression of a conflict in the non-psychotic part of the personality but, as I shall show, the mobilization of an ideograph needed by the psychotic part of the personality for an immediate repair of an ego damaged by the excessive projective identification that I have described. Such obtrusions of fact, originally passed by in silence, must then be regarded not so much as significant because their appearance is delayed, but because they are evidence of activity in the psychotic part of the personality.

Assuming then that the dark glasses here are a verbal communication of an ideograph, it becomes necessary to determine the interpretation of the ideograph. I shall have to compress, almost I fear to the point of risking incomprehensibility, the evidence in my possession. The glasses contained a hint of the baby's bottle. They were two glasses, or bottles, thus resembling the breast. They were dark because frowning and angry. They were of glass to pay him out for trying to see through them when they were breasts. They were dark because he needs darkness to spy on the parents in intercourse. They were dark because he had taken the bottle not to get milk but to see what the parents did. They were dark because he had swallowed them, and not simply the milk they had contained. And they were dark because the clear good objects had been made black and smelly inside them. All these attributes must have been achieved through the operation of the non-psychotic part of the personality. Added to these characteristics were those that I have described as appertaining to them as part of the ego that has been expelled by projective identification, namely their hatred of him as part of himself he had rejected. Making use of these accretions of analytic experience, and

still concentrating on the psychotic problem, that is to say, the need to repair the ego to meet the demands of the external situation, I said,

Analyst. Your sight has come back into you but splits your head; you feel it is very bad sight because of what you have done to it.

Patient (moving in pain as if protecting his back passage). Nothing.

Analyst. It seemed to be your back passage.

Patient. Moral strictures.

I told him that his sight, the dark glasses, were felt as a conscience that punished him, partly for getting rid of them to avoid pain, partly because he had used them to spy on me, and on his parents. I could not feel I had done justice to the compactness of the association.

It will be observed that I have not been able to offer any suggestions as to what might be stimulating these reactions in the patient. This is not surprising, for I am dealing with a psychotic problem, and since the psychotic problem as opposed to the non-psychotic problem is precisely related to the destruction of all the mental apparatus that brings awareness of stimuli from reality, the nature and even existence of such stimuli would not be discernible. However, the patient's next remark gave it.

Patient. The weekend; don't know if I can last it.

This is an instance of the way in which the patient felt he had repaired his capacity for contact and could therefore tell me what was going on around him. It was a phenomenon by now familiar to him and I did not interpret it. Instead I said,

Analyst. *You* feel that you have to be able to get on without me. But to do that you feel you need to be able to see what happens around you, and even to be able to contact me; to be able to contact me at a distance, as you do your mother when you ring her up; so you tried to get your ability to see and talk back again from me.

Patient. Brilliant interpretation. (With a sudden convulsion) O God!

Analyst. *You* feel you can see and understand now, but what you see is so brilliant that it causes intense pain.

Patient (clenching his fists and showing much tension and anxiety). I hate you.

Analyst. When you see, what you see – the week-end break and the things you use darkness to spy on – fills you with hate of me and admiration.

It is my belief that at this point the restoration of the ego meant that the patient was confronted with the non-psychotic problem, the resolution of neurotic conflicts. This was supported by the reactions in the following weeks, when he would display his inability to tolerate the neurotic conflicts stimulated by reality and his attempt to solve that problem by projective identification. This would be followed by attempts to use me as his ego, anxieties about his insanity, further attempts to repair his ego and return to reality and neurosis; and so the cycle would repeat itself.

68. I have described this portion of a session in detail because it can be used to illustrate a number of points without burdening the reader with a number of different examples of association and interpretation. I have regretfully had to exclude some striking and dramatic material, because to include it without including a quite overwhelming mass of description of day-to-day mundane analysis with its load of sheer incomprehensibility, error and so forth would produce an entirely misleading picture. At the same time I do not wish to leave any doubt that the approach I am describing is one which in my opinion is producing striking results. The change that took place in this patient during the weeks when I was able to demonstrate the interplay I have just described, was of a kind that I believe any analyst would accept as worth the name of psychoanalytic improvement. The patient's demeanour softened: his expression became much less tense. At the beginnings and ends of sessions he met my eyes and did not either evade me or, what with him had been a common event, focus beyond me as if I were the surface of a mirror before which he rehearsed some inner drama, a peculiarity that had often helped me to realize that I was not a real person to him. Unfortunately these phenomena are not easy to describe and I cannot dwell on the attempt; for I wish to draw attention to an improvement

which I found, and still find with other patients, both surprising and baffling. As it touches the main theme of this paper I can deal with it by returning to the theoretical discussion that I interrupted to introduce my clinical example.

69. If verbal thought is that which synthesizes and articulates impressions, and is thus essential to awareness of internal and external reality, it is to be expected that it will be subjected, on and off throughout analysis, to destructive splitting and projective identification. I described the inception of verbal thought as appertaining to the depressive position; but the depression that is proper to this phase is itself something to which the psychotic personality objects and therefore the development of verbal thought comes under attack, its inchoate elements being expelled from the personality by projective identification whenever depression occurs. In her paper to the International Congress of 1955,[1] Hanna Segal described the manner in which the psyche deals with depression; I would refer you to that description as apposite to that part of the depressive position which I here include in the discussion of the development of verbal thought. But I have said that in the even earlier phase, the paranoid-schizoid position, thought processes that should be developing are in fact being destroyed. At this stage there is no question of verbal thought but only of inchoation of primitive thought of a preverbal kind. Excessive projective identification at this early stage prevents smooth introjection and assimilation of sense impressions and so denies the personality a firm base on which the inception of pre-verbal thought can proceed. Furthermore, not only is thought attacked, as itself being a link, but the factors which make for coherence in thought itself are similarly attacked so that in the end the elements of thought, the units, as it were, of which thought is made up, cannot be articulated. The growth of verbal thought is therefore compromised both by the continuing attacks I have described as typical of the depressive position, and by the fact of the long history of attacks on thought of any kind that precedes this.

The attempt to think, which is a central part of the total process of repair of the ego, involves the use of primitive pre-verbal modes

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[1]['Depression in the Schizophrenic', read at the 19th International Psycho-Analytical Congress, Geneva, 24–28 July, 1955. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 37* (1956): 339–343. *Ed.*]

which have suffered mutilation and projective identification. This means that the expelled particles of ego, and their accretions, have to be brought back into control and therefore into the personality. Projective identification is therefore reversed and these objects are brought back by the same route as that by which they were expelled. This was expressed by a patient who said he had to use an intestine, not a brain, to think with, and emphasized the accuracy of his description by correcting me when, on a subsequent occasion, I spoke of his having taken in something by swallowing it; the intestine does not swallow, he said. In order to bring them back, these objects have to be compressed. Owing to the hostility of the rejected function of articulation, itself now an object, the objects can only be joined inappropriately, or agglomerated. I suggested in my clinical example that the dark glasses were an instance of this kind of agglomeration of bizarre objects which were the product of projective identification of the ego. Furthermore, that owing to the patient's inability to distinguish between such objects and real objects, frequently he had to wait for appropriate events to provide him with the ideograph his impulse to communicate required, and that this case was a reciprocal of this – namely an instance of the storing of an event not on account of its neurotic significance but on account of its value as an ideograph. Now this means that this particular use of dark glasses is fairly advanced: for one thing, the storage of such an event for use as an ideograph approximates to Freud's description of a search for data, so that they might be already familiar, if an urgent inner need should arise, as a function of attention as one of the aspects of the ego. But it also shows, albeit in this instance in a somewhat rudimentary form, a skilful agglomeration which is successful in conveying meaning. Now the surprising, and even disconcerting, improvement of which I spoke touches this point of skilful agglomeration; for I have found not only that patients resorted more and more to ordinary verbal thought, thus showing an increased capacity for it and increased consideration for the analyst as an ordinary human being, but also that they seemed to become more and more skilful at this type of agglomerated rather than articulated speech. The whole point about civilized speech is that it greatly simplifies the thinker's or speaker's task. With that tool, problems can be solved because at least they can be stated, whereas without it certain questions, no matter how important, cannot even be posed. The extraordinary thing is the *tour de force* by which primitive

modes of thought are used by the patient for the statement of themes of great complexity. And I find it significant that his ability to do this improves concurrently with more welcome advances. I say more welcome because I have not yet satisfied myself that it is right to ignore the content of an association because dealing with it would keep the analyst talking at infinitely greater length than the patient. What, for example, is the correct interpretation of the content of 'moral strictures'? And having decided that, what is the correct procedure? For how long is one to continue the elucidation?

The particles which have to be employed share, as we have seen, the qualities of things. The patient seems to feel this as an additional obstacle to their re-entry. As these objects which are felt to have been expelled by projective identification become infinitely worse after expulsion than they were when originally expelled, the patient feels intruded upon, assaulted, and tortured by this re-entry even if willed by himself. This is shown, in the example I gave, by the convulsive movement of the patient and by his striking reaction to the "brilliant" interpretation. But this last also shows that the senses, as part of the expelled ego, also become painfully compressed on being taken back, and this is often the explanation of the extremely painful tactile, auditory, and visual hallucinations in the grip of which he seems to labour. Depression and anxiety, being subject to the same mechanism, are similarly intensified until the patient is compelled to deal with them by projective identification, as Segal described.

CONCLUSION

70. Experience of these theories in practice has convinced me that they have a real value and lead to improvements which even psychoanalysts may feel to deserve stern testing and scrutiny. Conversely, I do not think real progress with psychotic patients is likely to take place until due weight is given to the nature of the divergence between the psychotic and non-psychotic personality, and in particular the role of projective identification in the psychotic part of the personality as a substitute for regression in the neurotic part. The patient's destructive attacks on his ego and the substitution of projective identification for repression and introjection must be worked

through. Further, I consider that this holds true for the severe neurotic, in whom I believe there is a psychotic personality concealed by neurosis as the neurotic personality is screened by psychosis in the psychotic, that has to be laid bare and dealt with.

6

On hallucination

71. Descriptions of hallucinations with which I am acquainted lack the precision necessary to afford material for psychoanalytic interpretation. In this paper I describe some detailed observations of hallucination and the results that followed. I hope to persuade you that such observation of the hallucinatory processes is essential and rewarding.

The content of the paper is narrowly circumscribed and much material excluded which would be helpful to perspicuity. I must indicate two important categories of facts which suffer under this limitation. First, all the material is derived from the practical application of the theories I put forward in my paper 'Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-Psychotic Personalities' [chapter 5]. I am compelled to assume the reader's acquaintance with them and the acknowledgements I then made of my indebtedness to the work in this field of Melanie Klein and her co-workers. Second, I must emphasize that the clinical descriptions though disguised, come from the analysis of a patient who has been, but now is not, under certificate diagnosed as schizophrenic. Light was shed on the case by experiences with two other patients in analysis who have also been under certificate with the same diagnosis. I hope that the rest of the paper will yield the bare minimum of fact necessary for comprehension, for I shall now turn at once to the clinical descriptions.

72. The patient has arrived on time and I have asked for him to be called. As he has been with me in analysis for some years and a great deal of work has been done, I am not surprised when he appears without further ado, though such unceremonious progression has not always been the rule. As he passes into the room he glances rapidly at me; such frank scrutiny has been a development of the past six months and is still a novelty. While I close the door he goes to the

foot of the couch, facing the head pillows and my chair, and stands, shoulders stooping, knees sagging, head inclined to the chair, motionless until I have passed him and am about to sit down. So closely do his movements seem to be geared with mine that the inception of my movements to sit appears to release a spring in him. As I lower myself into my seat he turns left about, slowly, evenly, as if something would be spilled, or perhaps fractured, were he to be betrayed into a precipitate movement. As I sit, the turning movement stops as if we were both parts of the same clockwork toy. The patient, now with his back to me, is arrested at a moment when his gaze is directed to the floor near that corner of the room which would be to his right and facing him if he lay on the couch. This pause endures perhaps for a second and is closed by a shudder of his head and shoulders which is so slight and so rapid that I might suppose myself mistaken. Yet it marks the end of one phase and the start of the next; the patient seats himself on the couch preparatory to lying down.

He reclines slowly, keeping his eye on the same corner of the floor, craning his head forward now and then as he falls back on to the couch as if anxious not to become unsighted. His scrutiny, as if he feared the consequences of being detected in it, is circumspect.

He is recumbent at last; a few more surreptitious glances and he is still. Then he speaks: "I feel quite empty. Although I have eaten hardly anything, it can't be that. No, it's no use; I shan't be able to do any more today." He then relapses into silence.

So far this session differs little from many others. I hardly know when I began to notice, amongst the varying forms of opening, the features to which I have drawn attention in this account. The pattern must often have been there, though overlaid, as it seemed to me at the time, by other features that required more urgent interpretation. The gradual obtrusion, through constant repetition, of a pattern of behaviour which, when I recognized it, seemed already to be familiar, was a common experience with this patient. For the present I wish to discuss one aspect only of the features that have a bearing on hallucination.

When the patient glanced at me he was taking a part of me into him. It was taken into his eyes, as I later interpreted his thought to him, as if his eyes could suck something out of me. This was then removed from me, before I sat down, and expelled, again through his eyes, so that it was deposited in the right-hand corner of the room

where he could keep it under observation while he was lying on the couch. The expulsion took a moment or two to complete. The shudder I have described was the sign that the expulsion was completed. Then, and only then, was the hallucination in being. I do not suggest that all this was revealed to me through the patient's behaviour in this series of sessions. It had emerged gradually over the years until finally it was borne in on me, and the patient in due course confirmed it, that he felt his sense organs to expel as well as to receive. This I put forward as the first step in the comprehension of hallucinatory phenomena: if the patient says he sees an object it may mean that an external object has been perceived by him, or it may mean that he is ejecting an object through his eyes; if he says he hears something it may mean he is ejecting a sound – this is not the same as making a noise; if he says he feels something it may mean tactile sensation is being extruded, thrown off by his skin. An awareness of the double meaning that verbs of sense have for the psychotic sometimes makes it possible to detect an hallucinatory process before it betrays itself by more familiar signs.

To turn now to the content of the hallucination: what is it? First, I confine my attention to the object supposedly deposited in the corner of the room: I am led to it because, judging by his glances, that is what most exercises the patient's mind. Evidently it is an hostile object: its extrusion has emptied the patient: its presence threatens him and makes him fear he will be able to make no further use of the session. The nature of his inspection of it and such meaning as lies easily accessible on the surface of his disjointed phrases tell me that much.

But in addition, I have in mind the end of the previous day's session. The patient had been hostile and afraid that he would murder me. I was able to show him that he was splitting off painful feelings, mostly envy and revenge, of which he hoped to rid himself by forcing them into me. There the session ended. Melanie Klein has described how this mechanism produces problems for the patient by engendering fear of the analyst who now is a container of a bad part of himself. I was familiar with this sequence in this patient's analysis, so I was prepared to find that a session ending in this way would overflow into the next. And so it did; developments in the session I am describing showed I was correct to interpret his behaviour as an attempt to remove from me these bad aspects of himself before he attempted the main business of the session, the ingestion of cure.

73. Hallucinations and the fantasy of the senses as ejecting as well as receiving, point to the severity of the disorder from which the patient is suffering, but I must indicate a benign quality in the symptom which was certainly not present earlier. Splitting, evacuatory use of the senses, and hallucinations were all being employed in the service of an ambition to be cured, and may therefore be supposed to be creative activities. To contrast this experience with similar episodes earlier will help to illuminate both. First, the late experience has a coherence, a degree of integration, which was quite lacking in any early session. Even the disjointed sentences yield an impression without much difficulty: the bizarre automaton-like synthesis of physical movement in which patient and analyst are geared together like clockwork toys does bring two objects together even though the relationship has been denuded of life. The splitting is akin to that described by Melanie Klein as a separation of the bad breast from the good breast, of love from hate. This patient had attempted to bring objects together at least three and a half years before this. They were brought together with such violence that fission and fusion were adumbrated in terms of atomic explosions. Finally, the splitting with which I have been familiar through the whole analysis has been altering its character until, in the example I have given, it is achieved with a degree of gentleness, and a regard for psychic structure and function, which makes it doubtful whether an appellation that is justified by the historical development of the patient's analysis is any longer justified by the intrinsic nature of the activity. Freud used the terms "splitting" and "dissociation" indifferently (1893c), but it seems to me that the phenomena which I have observed in this and other severely disturbed patients are best described by the term "splitting" as it is used by Melanie Klein, leaving the term "dissociation" free to be employed where a more benign activity is being discussed. The original splitting processes evinced by this patient were violent, intended to produce minute fragmentation and deliberately aimed at effecting separations which run directly counter to any natural lines of demarcation between one part of the psyche, or one function of the psyche, and another. Dissociation, on the other hand, appears to be gentler and to have respect for natural lines of demarcation between whole objects, and indeed to follow those lines of demarcation to effect the separation; the patient who dissociates is capable of depression. Dissociation also appears to me to betray dependence

on the pre-existence of elementary verbal thought, as indeed Freud's statement[1] that, "it is the common popular idea of the organs and of the body in general that is at work in the hysterical paralyses" would seem to indicate. Where I wish to stress the developmental aspect of the activity in the history of the patient's analysis I shall continue to use the term splitting: where I wish to speak of a benign process related to the non-psychotic part of the personality I shall speak of dissociation.

I hope it is now clear that I am speaking of a psychotic patient who has achieved a stage of development in which creative impulses are discernible and can even be detected as motives in mental mechanisms which at the beginning of his analysis appeared to be wholly subservient to wishes to destroy.

I did not on this occasion give the patient the explanations I have given here, for, as I have said, he was by this time familiar with the fact that he was not sure whether any given sensation was a sign that something was being taken in by him or a sign that something had been, or was being, expelled by him. It may give an idea of some of the difficulties of interpretation if I recount an episode from one of the early sessions in which the nature of the hallucinatory experience was becoming more evident. I had drawn the patient's attention to the fact that when he said, with every evidence of persecutory anxiety, "Tears are coming to my eyes", he meant that these tears were coming into his eyes from outside and were going to blind him. He thereupon sat up and stared at the opposite wall with much the same demeanour and bearing that he exhibited in the course of the expulsion of an object into the right-hand corner of the room that I have been describing. When, as it appeared to me, the evacuation was complete, he said, "A man told me it was good to be depressed." I was pretty sure that I was the man and that that is what he had heard me say, but I felt I lacked any supporting evidence that would make an interpretation on those lines relevant, and said, You are seeing that man in front of you now, I think." He replied, "It's all gone dark. I can't see.

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[1]Freud (1893c), p. 170. [This is not quoted absolutely accurately. Freud wrote: ". . . what is in question in hysterical paralysis, just as in anaesthesia, etc., is the everyday, popular conception of the organs and of the body in general." *Ed.*]

I'm shut in." This response may appear to be as puzzling as it did to me, until I realized that the patient felt, when psychotic mechanisms were in the forefront of his mental activity, that the same mechanisms and modes of thought were being employed by me. Thanks to familiarity with this fact, I was able to realize that the patient thought I must have seen the man who was visible to him. As I have explained elsewhere, the bizarre objects with which the psychotic part of the personality feels itself to be surrounded when projective identification is over-active, are always compounded of a variety of elements of which one is a part of the personality of the patient himself. If, therefore, I had seen the man, a part of the patient's personality which was mingled with this object, had been sucked into me through my eyes. It will be realized that I am describing in some detail the clinical manifestation of the confusional states which have been described by Melanie Klein and confirmed by Herbert Rosenfeld. I therefore told him that he felt that a part of himself had been greedily swallowed up by my eyes, which had taken in not only the man he saw, but also a bit of himself.

To return to the session which I am using as the main source of my clinical material for this paper: I resume my description from the point where I had interpreted the hallucinatory activity as an attempt to deal with the dangerous parts of his personality. I have said that the patient relapsed into silence after his disjointed sentences. While I gave my interpretation he made jerky convulsive movements which were confined mostly to the upper part of his body. Each syllable that I uttered seemed to be felt by him as a stabbing thrust from me. I pointed this out and said that he felt a very bad thing was being violently intruded into him, partly by me, who he thought was trying to get rid of the object he had left inside me, and partly by himself in spite of the precaution he had taken by hardly eating anything. His greed remained, though he no longer wished to be greedy, because it was now felt to be independent of any control by himself.

I did not explain my reference to greed because I assumed that the patient was by this time familiar, through work which we had previously done, with the fact that he often used his eyes as organs of ingestion so that his greed could be satisfied, though his object strove to preserve itself by denying him physical contact. In this instance my assumption proved correct, but in fact I have often found that such

assumptions, which if successful enable me to preserve the interpretation from being overburdened with detail, have proved to be beyond the patient's grasp until his capacity for integration is developed.

The convulsive movements stopped and he said, "I have painted a picture." His subsequent silence meant that the material for my next interpretation was already in my possession.

74. The lineaments of the picture that he has painted must be sought in the totality of material of which my interpretation so far has illuminated only one aspect, namely that which I adumbrated as centring on the bad object which he had withdrawn from me and immediately deposited in the right-hand corner of the room. My task, therefore, was to consider all the events of the session up to this point, as if it were a palimpsest in which I must detect another pattern whose outline was confused with that which I had already revealed in my interpretation. Before I passed on to a consideration of this pattern, I interpreted to the patient an aspect of this situation to which I draw your attention. It is that the patient is playing a dominant role, and expressing, with an unusual degree of urgency and force, a belief in his capacity to communicate matters, which he feels to be worthwhile, to a person whom he thinks likely to be receptive of them. But, I said, I was in addition a part of the picture which he had painted when he made himself and myself into two automata in a reciprocal but lifeless relationship. He replied, "The wireless next door kept me awake last night."

I knew that strong persecutory feelings were associated by him with all electrical apparatus, and I said he felt attacked by the electricity which he felt was like the life and sex which he had removed from the two objects which he had pushed out of himself when he painted his picture. He said, "Quite right" and then remarked that he did not know what would happen after the session, which in fact ended at this point.

This session, like some others which achieved a similar degree of integration, was called by the patient a 'good' session, and to some extent this may be accepted as a gratifying confirmation of a judgement I was myself disposed to make. But I had noticed that such sessions were followed with great consistency by 'bad' sessions, that is, sessions in which the patient seemed to return to an apparently uncooperative state of mind and produced material which I, as likely as not, found it almost impossible to interpret. His preoccupation

with what would occur after the session was partly due to his own realization of this. He disliked the prospect of losing what he now recognized as an agreeable state of mind, namely, that which accompanied his awareness of co-operation. Work on this had revealed a number of contributory causes, such as: hatred and envy of analyst or patient, or the collaboration of both, for a successful creative achievement; a method of expiating guilt at benefiting; or expiation of guilt at having engaged in what, being a friendly co-operation, was to the patient a sexual act. In the session I have described, this last point might be expected to apply with peculiar force and cogency, especially in view of the implication in my interpretation that a sexual bond, though denied, was to be supposed to exist.

In fact the session following did have many of the features of the so-called 'bad' session, though my reason for reporting it is for the light it shed on our problems – not because of the lack of it. I find the description of such a session very difficult, because it is not possible to make notes, however soon after a session, of long passages of verbalization whose meaning, if any, eluded me. I am prepared to vouch for a reasonable degree of accuracy in my report of behaviour that I was able to interpret.

The patient came in, gave me a swift glance, waited till I reached my chair, and then lay down without further ado. He said tonelessly: "I don't know how much I shall be able to do today. As a matter of fact I got on quite well yesterday." At this point I felt his attention began to wander and he faltered in his speech. This kind of opening was quite familiar as a prelude to the bad session. He went on: "I am definitely anxious. Slightly. Still I suppose that does not matter." Rapidly becoming more incoherent, he continued, "I asked for some coffee. She seemed upset. It may have been my voice. but it was definitely good coffee too. I don't know why I shouldn't like it. When I passed the mews I thought the walls bulged outwards. I went back later but it was all right." There was more that I cannot attempt to reconstruct. He continued to speak hesitatingly, with minor pauses, for some five or more minutes. On the whole the sample I have given is fairly representative of the material, except that the reference to the coffee and the mews had by this stage in the analysis a good many associations for the patient and me, but the subsequent material had no associative value that I knew of, whatever it might mean to him.

75. As I have said, this kind of behaviour was familiar to me. It had been the rule in the early stages of analysis and was common after 'good' sessions, but I must say more of this now to clarify the nature of the problem confronting me in this session. Although it is not apparent in the account I have given, this patient was capable of coherent verbal expression. Within the last year he had on one occasion shown me that he was capable of making a psychoanalytic review of some emotional experience he had been through with good insight into his state of mind and good understanding of the analytic work done in the previous years of analysis. It had been in response to an interpretation which he seemed to take as a slight on his understanding, but it had shown that he had in fact learned much and could use it. Nothing could be in greater contrast than the state of mind revealed in that outburst and the state of mind which he usually presented and with which he was confronting me in the session I now describe. It seemed as if all the interpretations I had ever given needed to be given all over again, but it was equally obvious that these interpretations would tell him nothing new. Indeed, his response to the interpretation I did give him showed that my suspicion was correct. I pointed out that he was showing me how 'much' he could do, but without regard to the quality. He replied that he had placed his gramophone on the seat, which was his way of indicating that my interpretation combined the characteristics of a recording with which he was familiar and a defecation. I had reason, very shortly after that, to suppose that this response was far more than a mere criticism.

I was unwilling to repeat interpretations that I felt reasonably sure he could make for himself, but nevertheless there were borderline instances where I felt repetition was called for. The effect of these interpretations was not encouraging to further efforts of the same kind. I felt I had exhausted my supply of explanations and was more exercised with the possible causes of the patient's return to a pattern of behaviour which seemed to disprove the efficacy of any analytic approach to his problems. Something must have happened, but what? I drew his attention to the fact that he was having what he often called a 'bad' session and that there must be a reason. He seemed to accept the fact but offered no explanation, nor could I detect any in his material. The one reason that did not occur to me but which, in the light of later events, might have led me to some

illumination of the material, was the possibility that he had had a dream. He had begun occasionally to report dreams to me. It was a comparatively recent development, some three or four months only, but in the absence of associations I had not felt able to make much headway beyond a few somewhat obvious suggestions such as that he felt it was something important to tell me, or that I would be the kind of person who understood them.

76. I cannot say now what it was in the session that first made me realize that the patient was hallucinated. It may have been that he was so manipulating the analysis and myself that I felt I was no longer an independent object, but was being treated by him as an hallucination. My suspicion was that when he said he had placed his gramophone on the seat, he was denying me life and independent existence in the analytic chair and treating my interpretations as auditory hallucinations. I did not immediately interpret this, but said that it appeared that he was reactivating a state of mind which, we must assume, had now become important to him to preserve as a good object. His response to this was to move his head and eyes as if my words were visible objects which were passing over his head to become impacted on the opposite wall. This behaviour was familiar from an early stage, and indeed I had seen it in other patients. Rodriguez reports similar behaviour in a psychotic child.[1] On previous occasions I had interpreted his behaviour to mean that he saw my words as things and was following them with his eyes. He had shown relief, almost amounting to amusement, and he appeared to agree that my words were seen as evacuated objects like bits of faeces. It had seemed to me then that the hallucination had a reassuring quality in that my interpretations, felt as persecutory objects, were seen to be passing harmlessly overhead. I said that he was again seeing objects passing overhead and reminded him of the previous occasion. This time he became anxious, and he said, "I feel quite empty. Better to close my eyes." He remained silent and very anxious and then said, somewhat apologetically I thought. "I have to use my ears. I seem to hear things all wrong." This association brought to my mind that he was not observing a direct relationship between me and the opposite wall, as I had supposed to be the case on earlier occasions. My interpretation was being taken in by his ears, but in a way which he

[1][In all likelihood the work Bion mentions here is Rodriguez (1968). *Ed.*]

felt to be "all wrong" – that is to say, cruelly and destructively. If so, the interpretations were being taken in and transformed by his ears and ejected by his eyes. This seemed so extraordinary that it was a moment or two before the explanation flashed upon me. I gave it in the following interpretation: "You", I said to him, "are feeling that your ears are chewing up and destroying all that I say to you. You are so anxious to get rid of it that you at once expel the pieces out of your eyes." I reminded him that when he had wished greedily to take something in, he did so through his eyes because his eyes could reach a long way to things he could not possibly touch with his mouth. I went on, "You are now using your eyes for the opposite reason – that is to say, to throw these broken up bits of interpretation as far away from yourself as you possibly can." He seemed extremely frightened, yet there was relief in his voice when he agreed. I drew his attention to his fear. He replied that he felt too weak to go on, "I am fading out." I suggested that he was afraid of me because he felt he was destroying me as well as my interpretations, and was also afraid because he could not get enough interpretations to cure him. This interpretation enabled him to go on with his associations; they were similar to those at the beginning of the session, yet there was a difference. He said that he had seen a painting in D; it had a penis in it. He complained that he had ruined a painting by making it pretty instead of ugly. He then said, "All sounds turn into things I see around me." I interpreted that he was again turning my interpretations into sounds and then evacuating them through his eyes, so that he now saw them as objects surrounding him. He replied, "Then everything around me is made by me. This is megalomania." After a pause he said, "I like your interpretation very much." In parenthesis, I must add that from this time onward I was able to recognize how very common it was for the patient, when he received an interpretation which for some reason was unwelcome, to give evidence of becoming hallucinated. He would strain forward on the couch as if looking at something in a far corner of the room. It became clear that these were frequent repetitions of the mechanism I have been describing. I shall suggest later some of the implications of this substitute for denial.

77. At this point his associations became less coherent. Unfortunately, I cannot report this material with any accuracy for reasons which I hope will be apparent. The associations seemed to consist of parts of sentences, disjointed references to what I assumed to be

actual events, and a certain amount of material which had a meaning for me because it had appeared in other sessions. For an appreciable time my attention dwelt on this parade of associations to the exclusion of a peculiar accompaniment of running commentary on how he was feeling. As this obtruded, I became aware of a pattern which went like this: association, association, association, "definitely a bit anxious", association, association, "yes, slightly depressed", associations, "a bit anxious now", and so on. His behaviour was striking, but the session came to an end without my being able to formulate any clear idea of what was going on. I said that we did not know why all his analytic intuition and understanding had disappeared. He said "Yes" commiseratingly, and if one word can be made to express, "and I think that your intuition must have gone too", then his "Yes" did so on this occasion.

He started the next session in the matter-of-fact tone that he employed on the rare occasions when he spoke rationally and coherently. "I had a peculiar dream", he said, "it was a day or two ago." His voice became depressed during the course of this short communication, and by the end of it I felt that all trace of the matter-of-fact tone had gone. "You were in it", he added. It was clear that I was not going to hear any more about this dream, at any rate for the present, and that there were going to be no associations to it. I was not unduly disturbed by this because I had already been led to some conclusions about the nature of psychotic dreams. I had noticed that much work was needed before a psychotic patient reported a dream at all, and that when he did so he seemed to feel that he had said all that was necessary in reporting the fact that he had dreamt. I felt that I was expected to say something. I was not clear why the patient called his experience a dream, and in what way he distinguished it from other experiences which, though variously described by him to me, seemed to be hallucinations. I came to the conclusion that the patient meant that it was something that happened to him at night, when he was in bed. and probably when he was asleep. I felt that the 'dreams' shared so many characteristics of the hallucination that it was possible that actual experiences of hallucination in the consulting room might serve to throw light on the psychotic dream. It is a short step from what I have already said about hallucinations to suppose that when a psychotic patient speaks of having a dream, he thinks that his perceptual apparatus is engaged in expelling something, and that

the dream is an evacuation from his mind strictly analogous to an evacuation from his bowels. A patient cannot report a dream until much analytic work has been done, and he cannot have done that analytic work without feeling that if he, as it were, passes a dream, he must at some time have taken that dream in. In short, to the psychotic a dream is an evacuation of material that has been taken in during waking hours. Much development must take place before the psychotic dream becomes sufficiently coherent to be communicable at all. Before that, I doubt whether its connexion with objects perceived is ever made. After that, I think it always is. Bearing this in mind, an approach to understanding the patient's dream becomes simpler. There is still a point: why does the patient say he had a peculiar dream? I hoped the session would throw light on this. In the meantime I said that this dream, together with the 'good' session, had been the cause which we had not found for reactivation of the state of mind in the 'bad' session. He replied, "I was mad." He had described these states of mind before, when hallucinations, splitting, projective identification and confusion were dominant, as "mad" or "insane". I made no observation on this, but used the term 'mad' myself whenever it served as a rapid method of referring to this complex state. I did so now. "You seem to feel", I said, "that you are mad when you are denying my interpretations by taking them in and getting rid of them at once. You must have felt that they have something to do with the peculiar dream. Why are you moving like that?"

My question was prompted by a series of convulsive twitchings of his chest. He said he did not know. "My thoughts go too quickly."

78. Whenever the patient had exhibited this kind of action, at least in the latter stages of his analysis, I had been reminded of Freud's description of motor activity, before the establishment of the reality principle, as not directed to alteration of the environment but to an unburdening of "the mental apparatus of accretions of stimuli." I said it was his way of showing his feelings. "Like smiling", he replied. His movements then ceased, and he began a series of associations which seemed to have the same characteristics as those I described as occurring at the latter end of the previous session. Still wondering why the dream should be regarded by the patient as peculiar, I listened to his disjointed associations with the running commentary to me of "anxious", "slightly anxious", and "depressed". After some time I thought I discerned a pattern. It was as if his stream

of associations were by way of being a prolonged evacuation; some were merely disjointed phrases, others far more articulate. Although I could not be sure, I thought that his report of anxiety was associated with the more fragmented material, his report of depression with such parts as tended to be articulated wholes. I therefore said, "Your dream has frightened and upset you because when I came into it you felt I was a real person whom your mind had swallowed up and was losing while you slept. It made you think that during your analysis you must have been greedily destroying a real person and not just a thing." He at once began to talk quite rationally about a visit that he planned to make to see his brother. I drew his attention to the change in his behaviour since I had made the interpretation about his dream. He replied, "What dream?" And then, as if to cover up his bewilderment, said, "Oh yes: I think I must have forgotten", but in fact I did not have the impression he had recalled the dream. A little later he said he felt he had made some progress, but felt very depressed, he did not know why.

Work during the next fortnight convinced me that my suspicions about his dream, and the interpretations I based on them, were substantially correct. I was confirmed in my impression that the appearance of whole objects in dreams and elsewhere, is at one and the same moment a sign of progress and a forerunner of depression which may reach a dangerous intensity if its source is not elucidated. The 'peculiarity' of the dream to the psychotic is not its irrationality, incoherence, and fragmentation, but its revelation of objects which are felt by the patient to be whole objects, and therefore fit and proper reason for the powerful feelings of guilt and depression which Melanie Klein has associated with the onset of the depressive position. Their presence is felt to be evidence that real and valued objects have been destroyed. However, the immediate oscillation to fragmentation does not, as I have shown in my account of the stream of associations with a running commentary on the patient's feelings, afford any true relief, because it merely substitutes persecutory anxiety for the dread depression.

There are two dangerous features in the situation I am describing. Rosenfeld has pointed out how a patient who brings fragments together to make a whole object can be so disturbed by the cohesion of the fragments that an immediate explosive fragmentation follows. I supported his findings in my paper, 'Notes on the Theory

of Schizophrenia' [chapter 3], and would now bring forward the events I then described for comparison with this less explosive yet dangerous alternation I am now describing. The danger here lies in the possibility of suicide, on the one hand or, on the other, a return to the paranoid-schizoid position that is characterized by a secondary fragmentation which is imposed on the already severe primary fragmentation that Melanie Klein has described as characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position. It seems as if the patient, regressing from the depressive position, turns with increased hatred and anxiety against the fragments that have shown their power to coalesce, and splits them with great thoroughness; as a result we have a danger of a fragmentation so minute that reparation of the ego becomes impossible, and the prospects of the patient correspondingly hopeless.

I regard this phase of advance to, and retreat from, the depressive position as critical, not least because the danger of suicide is liable to obscure the significance of the retreat to the paranoid-schizoid position, and in particular the fact that secondary splitting is an inherent factor in the retreat and one which, if not detected and interpreted, is liable not merely to jeopardize promising developments of the analysis, but also to reverse the whole process and usher in a deterioration from which no recovery is possible.

79. Understanding of the material demands reference to certain collateral phenomena. During the period when this work that I have been describing was done, the patient was complaining that he could not distinguish between what was real and what was unreal, that he did not know whether something was an hallucination or not. In my paper on the 'Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-psychotic Personalities' [chapter 5], I described one of the consequences of the excessive use of projective identification as a state in which the patient felt he was surrounded by bizarre objects compounded partly of real objects and partly of fragments of the personality – and in particular those aspects of the personality listed putatively by Freud as being in the course of normal development called into being under the dominance of the reality principle. Amongst these aspects of the personality was the patient's capacity for judgement. The patient's complaint that he could not distinguish the real from the unreal was one of the consequences of this expulsion from his psyche, by the mechanism of projective identification, of his capacity for judgement. From the theory I then propounded it would be natural to suppose

that amongst these bizarre objects it should be possible to trace something analogous to a capacity for judgement. From my experience I am persuaded that these particular bizarre objects are to be found in what ordinarily are described as the patient's 'delusions'. In his paper 'Constructions in Analysis' (1937d), Freud suggests that delusions may be the, "equivalents of the constructions which we build up in the course of an analytic treatment-attempts at explanation and cure . . .", though he points out that under the conditions of a psychosis they are bound to be ineffectual. It appeared to me, during this period of the analysis, that the patient's delusions had this aspect, and that some of his delusions were attempts at employing bizarre objects in the service of therapeutic intuition. If so, it may afford a definition of the relationship, between delusion and hallucination.

80. The hallucinatory experiences which I have been describing seem to approximate more closely to what Freud described as hysterical hallucinations than the psychotic hallucinations which were exclusively in evidence in the earlier phases of the analysis. I would say that the development of this difference was directly related to an increase in the patient's capacity to tolerate depression.

A differentiation of two types of hallucination – hysterical and psychotic – could be referred to a difference in content. The hysterical hallucination contains whole objects and is associated with depression; the psychotic hallucination contains elements analogous to part-objects. Both types are to be found in the psychotic patient.

I conclude this paper by drawing attention to certain features of it on which I have done work that cannot be communicated at this juncture.

First, the patient's fear of committing murder owes much of its intensity to his belief that he has already been guilty of it. The reasons for this belief emerge in associations of which I have given one example in the charade-like episode, when he was coupled with myself, so that both appeared as lifeless automatons. It will be remembered that there he was guilty of removing a life which then becomes a persecutory object, the radio that embodies electricity, sex, and life itself. The episode shows how guilt is evaded by resort to persecution by the life that has been destroyed.

Second, this fear of making a murderous attack is intensified by the patient's awareness of the extent to which he is dominated by a state of mind and feeling appropriate to that phase of development

which Freud described as under the sway of the pleasure principle. He suggested that in that phase the patient's actions are not directed towards a change in the environment, but are intended rather to unburden the psychic apparatus of accretions of stimuli and therefore correspond to muscular movements of the kind involved in changes of mien and expression.

Let us suppose that in this state of mind the patient feels an impulse to express feelings of love towards a girl whom he regards as a prospective mate: furthermore, that he feels obstructed in this aim by the presence of feelings of impotence together with feelings of hatred and envy towards the sexual parents who are thought by him to possess, and to deny him the use of, the potent breast or penis that makes the possessor potent in the expression of love. In this state he is dominated by feelings of impotence, envy, and a hatred which is further strengthened by a sense of frustration and inability to tolerate the frustration. Over all is the sense of obstructed love. At once the need becomes imperative, in the service of expression of the feelings of love for his object, to disburden his psyche of destructive hate and envy. The lack of any impulse to alter the environment, together with the wish for speed that is associated with the inability to tolerate frustration, contribute to forcing a resort to muscular action of the kind characteristic of the phase of dominance by the pleasure principle; for experience has shown the patient that action of that kind achieves its purpose far more swiftly than action directed to alteration of the environment. The unburdening of the psyche by hallucination, that is by the use of the sensory apparatus in reverse, is reinforced by muscular action which may best be understood as being an extremely complex analogue of a scowl; the musculature does not simply change the expression to one of murderous hate, but gives effect to an actual murderous assault. The resultant act must, therefore, be understood as an ideo-motor activity, and is felt by the patient to appertain to that class of phenomena that I have described as creating bizarre objects. He does not feel he has altered his environment, but lie does feel that he is now free to love his object without any conflicting feelings of impotence, hatred or envy. Such relief is short-lived. This description is an approximation to the state of mind of which the patient is dreadfully aware in the non-psychotic part of his personality; it contributes to his fear of any progress that might lead him to form loving attachments which would give rise to desires to express his love, and from

that to intolerance of the frustration preserved by the existence of his destructive impulses, and from that to being overwhelmed by the psychotic part of his personality – in which only he can find mechanisms that hold promise of instantaneous solution of the problems presented by the existence of unwanted emotions. The danger which the patient fears is, therefore, one he has good reason to fear. It can be stated in analytic terms as follows:

He wishes to love, but feeling incapable of frustration he resorts to a murderous assault, or a token assault, as a method of disburdening his psyche of the unwanted emotions. The assault is but the outward expression of an explosive projective identification by virtue of which his murderous hatred, together with bits of his personality, is scattered far and wide into the real objects, members of society included, by which he is surrounded. He now feels free to be loving, but is surrounded by bizarre objects each compounded of real people and things, destructive hatred, and murderous conscience. The picture is further complicated because, although it is true to say the patient feels free to love, at least in intention, the violence of the explosion also leaves him denuded of his feelings of love.

81. From all that I have said it may now be seen that in the event of the patient making an actual assault, a complex situation has arisen, and that this situation can for simplicity of description be resolved into the following elements:

(a) The patient's resort to an omnipotent fantasy as a means towards loving his object.

(b) An external manifestation, which in fact, though not by the patient's intent, affects the environment and incidentally gives the analyst his material on which he bases his interpretations.

(c) In extreme cases, a reaction of society to the external manifestation, which is itself complex and compounded, amongst other elements, of psychotic reactions typical of unconscious collusion in receiving the projective identifications of one of its members.

(d) The resort to projective identification as a substitute for repression[1] implies a weakness of a capacity for denial, and this is shown by the resort to destructive attacks upon the perceptual apparatus, and by the use of perceptual apparatus. of which he is in fact unable to

[1]Referred to in 'Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-Psychotic Personalities', first presented on 6 October 1955 [chapter 5].

rid himself, for expulsion of unwanted stimuli as they are received. The attempt to rid himself of his perceptual system leads to compensatory hypertrophy of sense impressions, e.g. Lord Adrian's distant perception.[1]

(e) The danger that, in the course of the analysis, the patient will become incurable through an unanalysed retreat from the depressive position to the paranoid-schizoid position, in the course of which secondary splitting will be imposed upon the primary splitting intrinsic to his original experience of the paranoid-schizoid position; the danger lies in the minute fragmentation which results from this renewal of splitting and the impossibility thereafter of effecting any reparation.

(f) The relation of depression to the appearance of what the patient feels to be whole objects in material expelled from his personality.

(g) The analyst's need to appreciate that the presence of hallucinations is much more frequent than is realized, and depends upon the fact that, the senses being two-way, an object may be to the patient an excretion, or, as we should say, an hallucination, rather than something existing independently of himself A striking example of this is presented when the patient sees double with one eye.

(h) The relation of over-action of expulsion to megalomania.

82. This summary list may serve to indicate the possibilities for further research which are opened up by attempting that close and detailed observation of hallucinations for which I hope I have made a case.

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[1][A reference to the classical theory of sensory coding derived from Lord Adrian's (1934) early concepts of sensory coding. Lord Edgar Douglas Adrian (1889–1977) received the Nobel Prize for Physiology in 1932. *Ed*.]

7

On arrogance

83. In this paper I propose to deal with the appearance, in the material of a certain class of patient, of references to curiosity, arrogance and stupidity which are so dispersed and separated from each other that their relatedness may escape detection. I shall suggest that their appearance should be taken by the analyst as evidence that he is dealing with a psychological disaster. The meaning with which I wish to invest the term 'arrogance' may be indicated by supposing that in the personality where life instincts predominate, pride becomes self-respect, where death instincts predominate, pride becomes arrogance.

Their separation from each other and the lack of evidence of any relatedness is evidence that a disaster has occurred. To make clear the connection between these references, I shall rehearse the Oedipus myth from a point of view which makes the sexual crime a peripheral element of a story in which the central crime is the arrogance of Oedipus in vowing to lay bare the truth at no matter what cost.

84. This shift of emphasis brings the following elements into the centre of the story: the sphinx, who asks a riddle and destroys herself when it is answered; the blind Tiresias, who possesses knowledge and deplores the resolve of the king to search for it; the oracle that provokes the search which the prophet deplores; and again the king who, his search concluded, suffers blindness and exile. This is the story of which the elements are discernible amongst the ruins of the psyche to which the scattered references to curiosity, arrogance, and stupidity have pointed the way.

I said that these references are significant in a certain class of patient; the class to which I refer is one in which psychotic mechanisms are

active and have to be analytically uncovered before a stable adjustment can be achieved. In practice, analysis of such a patient may seem to follow the patterns with which we are familiar in the treatment of the neuroses, but with the important difference that improvement in the patient's condition does not appear to be commensurate with the analytic work that is done. To recapitulate, the analyst who is treating an apparently neurotic patient must regard a negative therapeutic response together with the appearance of scattered, unrelated references to curiosity, arrogance and stupidity, as evidence that he is in the presence of a psychological catastrophe with which he will have to deal.

85. It may be supposed that an approach to the problem is provided by the emergence in the analysis of one of these references, and this is in fact the case. It is important that reference to any of these three qualities should be treated by the analyst as a significant event demanding investigation and provoking more than usually stubborn resistances. Unfortunately the problem is complicated by a fact which must be already evident – the analytic procedure itself is precisely a manifestation of the curiosity which is felt to be an intrinsic component of the disaster. As a consequence, the very act of analysing the patient makes the analyst an accessory in precipitating regression and turning the analysis itself into a piece of acting out. From the point of view of successful analysis, this is a development that should be avoided. Yet I have not been able to see how this can be done. The alternative course is to accept the acting out and regression as inevitable, and if possible to turn it to good account. This, I believe, can be done, but it involves detailed interpretation of events that are taking place in the session. These events are active displays of the mechanisms of splitting, projective identification, and the related subsidiary phenomena of confusional states, depersonalization and hallucination, which have been described by Melanie Klein, Segal, and Rosenfeld as part of the analysis of psychotic patients.

86. In this phase of the analysis, the transference is peculiar in that (in addition to the features to which I have drawn attention in previous papers) it is to the analyst as analyst. Features of this are his appearance, and that of the patient in so far as he is identified with the analyst as, by turns, blind, stupid, suicidal, curious, and arrogant,

but I shall have more to say later about the qualities of arrogance. I must emphasize that at this stage the patient would appear to have no problems other than the existence of the analyst himself; furthermore, that the spectacle presented is one, to borrow Freud's analogy, similar to that of the archaeologist who discovers in his field-work the evidences, not so much of a primitive civilization, as of a primitive catastrophe. In analytic terms that hope must be that the investigations which are being carried out will issue in the reconstitution of the ego. This aim is, however, obscured because this analytic procedure has become an acting out of destructive attacks launched against the ego, wherever it is discerned; that is to say, the ego whether it appears manifest in the patient or the analyst. These attacks closely resemble the description given by Melanie Klein of the infant's fantasied attacks on the breast.

87. If we now turn to consider what there is in reality that makes it so hateful to the patient that he must destroy the ego which brings him into contact with it, it would be natural to suppose that it is the sexually orientated Oedipus situation, and indeed I have found much to substantiate this view. When reconstitution of the ego has proceeded sufficiently to bring the Oedipus situation into sight, it is quite common to find that it precipitates further attacks on the ego. But there is evidence that some other element is playing an important part in provoking destructive attacks on the ego and its consequent disintegration. The key to this lies in the references to arrogance which I promised to explore further.

Briefly, it appears that overwhelming emotions are associated with the assumption by the patient or analyst of the qualities required to pursue the truth, and in particular a capacity to tolerate the stresses associated with the introjection of another person's projective identifications. Put into other terms, the implicit aim of psychoanalysis to pursue the truth at no matter what cost is felt to be synonymous with a claim to a capacity for containing the discarded, split-off aspects of other personalities while retaining a balanced outlook. This would appear to be the immediate signal for outbreaks of envy and hatred.

88. I propose now to devote the remainder of this paper to description of the clinical aspect of the material which I have so far approached theoretically. The patient in question did not at any time behave in a way which in my view would warrant a diagnosis of

psychosis; he had, however, displayed the features I have mentioned, namely, scattered references to curiosity, arrogance, and stupidity together with what I felt was an inadequate therapeutic response. At the period with which I deal, the significance of these features had become clear and I had been able to give him some insight into their relatedness and the increasing frequency with which they appeared in the forefront of his material. He described his behaviour in the sessions as mad or insane, and he showed anxiety at his inability to behave in a way which his experience of analysis had shown him to be helpful in furthering analytic progress. For my part I was impressed by the fact that for several sessions at a time he seemed to be devoid of the insight and judgement which I knew from previous experience that he possessed. Furthermore, the material was almost entirely of the kind with which I was familiar in the analysis of psychotic patients. That is to say, projective identification was extremely active, and the patient's states of confusion and depersonalization easy to detect and frequently in evidence. For a matter of some months sessions were taken up entirely with psychotic mechanisms to an extent which made me wonder how it was that the patient was apparently continuing his extra-analytic life without, as far as I knew, any material change for the worse.

89. I shall not describe this stage further, as it does not differ from previous accounts of work with the psychotic patient. I wish to concentrate on that aspect of the analysis which relates to a particular form of internal object.

In its simplest form this material appeared in sessions when the patient's associations lacked coherence and consisted of 'sentences' which were remarkably deficient in one or the other aspect of the grammar of conversational English. Thus, a significant object might be mentioned, but there would be no pronoun or verb, or a significant verbal form would appear such as "going skating", but there would be no mention of who was supposed to be doing this or where, and so on in an apparently inexhaustible number of variations. The establishment of an analytically potent relationship by means of verbal communication thus seemed to be impossible. Analyst and patient together formed a frustrated couple. This in itself was not new, and on one occasion, during a relatively lucid session, the patient himself observed that the method

of communication was so mutilated that creative work was impossible, and he despaired of the possibility that any cure would come about. He was already quite familiar with the sexual anxiety inherent in such conduct, so it seemed reasonable to suppose that some progress would follow, and it was the more surprising that this did not in fact happen; the anxiety of the patient increased. I was eventually forced to assume, on theoretical grounds, that progress had taken place and that there was a change in his behaviour which I was failing to observe. With this assumption in mind I attempted to cast about for some revealing clue which would indicate what this change might be. In the meantime the sessions continued much as before. I remained at a loss until one day, in a lucid moment, the patient said he wondered that I could stand it. This gave me a clue: at least I now knew that there was something I was able to stand which he apparently could not. He realized already that he felt he was being obstructed in his aim to establish a creative contact with me, and that this obstructive force was sometimes in him, sometimes in me, and sometimes occupied an unknown location. Furthermore, the obstruction was effected by some means other than mutilation or verbal communications. The patient had already made it clear that the obstructing forces or object were out of his control.

90. The next step forward occurred when the patient said that I was the obstructing force, and that my outstanding characteristic was "that I could not stand it". I now worked on the assumption that the persecuting object that could not permit any creative relationship was one that "could not stand it", but I was still not clear what "it" was. It was tempting to assume that "it" was any creative relationship which was made intolerable to the persecuting object through envy and hate of the creative couple. Unfortunately this did not lead any further because it was an aspect of the material which had already been made clear without producing any advance. Therefore the problem of what "it" was still awaited solution.

Before I discuss this problem further, I must mention a feature of the material which had led up to this point, because it contributes to an understanding of the next step. During the whole of the period I have been describing, references to curiosity, arrogance, and stupidity became more frequent and more obviously related to each other. The

stupidity was purposeful, and arrogance – not always called by that name – was sometimes an accusation, sometimes a temptation, and sometimes a crime. The cumulative effect of these references was to persuade me that their relatedness depended upon their association with the obstructive object. Curiosity and stupidity waxed or waned together; that is to say, if curiosity increased, so did the stupidity. I therefore felt some gain in knowledge of the character of the obstructive force. What it was that the object could not stand became clearer in some sessions where it appeared that in so far as I, as analyst, was insisting on verbal communication as a method of making the patient's problems explicit, I was felt to be directly attacking his methods of communication. From this it became clear that when I was identified with the obstructive force, what I could not stand was the patient's methods of communication. In this phase my employment of verbal communication was felt by the patient to be a mutilating attack on *his* methods of communication. From this point onwards, it was only a matter of time to demonstrate that the patient's link with me was his ability to employ the mechanism of projective identification. That is to say, his relationship with me and his ability to profit by the association lay in the opportunity to split off parts of his psyche and project them into me.

On this depended a variety of procedures which were felt to ensure emotionally rewarding experiences such as, to mention two, the ability to put bad feelings in me and leave them there long enough for them to be modified by their sojourn in my psyche, and the ability to put good parts of himself into me, thereby feeling that he was dealing with an ideal object as a result. Associated with these experiences was a sense of being in contact with me, which I am inclined to believe is a primitive form of communication that provides a foundation on which, ultimately, verbal communication depends. From his feelings about me when I was identified with the obstructive object, I was able to deduce that the obstructive object was curious about him, but could not stand being the receptacle for parts of his personality and accordingly made destructive and mutilating attacks, largely through varieties of stupidity, upon his capacity for projective identification. I, therefore, concluded that the catastrophe stemmed from the mutilating attacks made upon this extremely primitive species of link between the patient and analyst.

Conclusion

91. In some patients the denial to the patient of a normal employment of projective identification precipitates a disaster through the destruction of an important link. Inherent in this disaster is the establishment of a primitive superego which denies the use of projective identification. The clue to this disaster is provided by the emergence of widely separated references to curiosity, arrogance, and stupidity.

8

Attacks on linking

92. In a previous paper [chapter 5] I have had occasion, in talking of the psychotic part of the personality, to speak of the destructive attacks which the patient makes on anything which is felt to have the function of linking one object with another. It is my intention in this paper to show the significance of this form of destructive attack in the production of some symptoms met with in borderline psychosis.

The prototype for all the links of which I wish to speak is the primitive breast or penis. The paper presupposes familiarity with Melanie Klein's descriptions of the infant's fantasies of sadistic attacks upon the breast (Klein, 1935); of the infant's splitting of its objects; of projective identification – which is the name she gives to the mechanism by which parts of the personality are split off and projected into external objects – and finally, her views on early stages of Oedipus complex (Klein, 1928). I shall discuss phantasied attacks on the breast as the prototype of all attacks on objects that serve as a link, and projective identification as the mechanism employed by the psyche to dispose of the ego fragments produced by its destructiveness.

I shall first describe clinical manifestations in an order dictated not by the chronology of their appearance in the consulting room, but by the need for making the exposition of my thesis as clear as I can. I shall follow this with material selected to demonstrate the order which these mechanisms assume when their relationship to each other is determined by the dynamics of the analytic situation. I shall conclude with theoretical observations on the material presented. The examples are drawn from the analysis of two patients and are taken from an advanced stage of their analyses. To preserve anonymity I shall not distinguish between the patients, and shall introduce

distortions of fact which I hope do not impair the accuracy of the analytic description.

Observation of the patient's disposition to attack the link between two objects is simplified because the analyst has to establish a link with the patient and does this by verbal communication and his equipment of psychoanalytic experience. Upon this the creative relationship depends and we should therefore be able to see attacks being made upon it.

I am not concerned with typical resistance to interpretations, but with expanding references [in chapter 5] to the destructive attacks on verbal thought itself.

Clinical examples

93. The following examples describe occasions which afforded me an opportunity to give the patient an interpretation (which at that point he could understand) of conduct designed to destroy whatever it was that linked two objects together.

(i) I gave the patient an interpretation making explicit his feelings of affection and his expression of them to his mother for her ability to cope with a refractory child. He attempted to express his agreement with me, but although he needed to say only a few words his expression of them was interrupted by a very pronounced stammer which had the effect of spreading out his remark over a period of as much as a minute and a half. The actual sounds emitted bore resemblance to gasping for breath; gaspings were interspersed with gurgling sounds as if he were immersed in water. I drew his attention to these sounds and he agreed that they were peculiar, and suggesting the descriptions I have just given.

(ii) The patient complained that he could not sleep. Showing signs of fear, lie said, "It can't go on like this". Disjointed remarks gave the impression that he felt superficially that some catastrophe would occur, perhaps akin to insanity, if he could not get more sleep. Referring to material in the previous session I suggested that he feared he would dream if he were to sleep. He denied this and said he could not think because he was wet. I reminded him of his use of the term "wet" as an expression of contempt for somebody he regarded as feeble and sentimental. He disagreed and indicated that the state to which

he referred was the exact opposite. From what I knew of this patient I felt that his correction at this point was valid, and that somehow the wetness referred to an expression of hatred and envy such as he associated with urinary attacks on an object. I therefore said that in addition to the superficial fear which he had expressed, he was afraid of sleep because for him it was the same thing as the oozing away of his mind itself. Further associations showed that he felt that good interpretations from me were so consistently and minutely split up by him that they became mental urine which then seeped uncontrollably away. Sleep was therefore inseparable from unconsciousness, which was itself identical with a state of mindlessness which could not be repaired. He said, "I am dry now". I replied that he felt he was awake and capable of thought, but that this good state was only precariously maintained.

(iii) In this session the patient had produced material stimulated by the preceding week-end break. His awareness of such external stimuli had become demonstrable at a comparatively recent stage of the analysis. Previously it had been a matter for conjecture how much he was capable of appreciating reality. I knew that he had contact with reality because he came for analysis by himself, but that fact could hardly be deduced from his behaviour in the sessions. When I interpreted some associations as evidence that he felt he had been and still was witnessing an intercourse between two people, he reacted as if he had received a violent blow. I was not then able to say just where he had experienced the assault and even in retrospect I have no clear impression. It would seem logical to suppose that the shock had been administered by my interpretation and that therefore the blow came from without, but my impression is that he felt it as delivered from within; the patient often experienced what he described as a stabbing attack from inside. He sat up and stared intently into space. I said that he seemed to be seeing something. He replied that he could not see what he saw. I was able from previous experience to interpret that he felt he was 'seeing' an invisible object, and subsequent experience convinced me that in the two patients on whose analysis I am depending for material for this paper, events occurred in which the patient experienced invisible-visual hallucinations. I shall give my reasons later for supposing that in this and the previous example similar mechanisms were at work.

(iv) In the first twenty minutes of the session the patient made three isolated remarks which had no significance for me. He then said that it seemed that a girl he had met was understanding. This was followed at once by a violent, convulsive movement which he affected to ignore. It appeared to be identical with the kind of stabbing attack I mentioned in the last example. I tried to draw his attention to the movement, but he had ignored my intervention as he had ignored the attack. He then said that the room was filled with a blue haze. A little later he remarked that the haze had gone, but said he was depressed. I interpreted that he felt understood by me. This was an agreeable experience, but the pleasant feeling of being understood had been instantly destroyed and ejected. I reminded him that we had recently witnessed his use of the word "blue" as a compact description of vituperative sexual conversation. If my interpretation was correct, and subsequent events suggested that it was, it meant that the experience of being understood had been split up, converted into particles of sexual abuse and ejected. Up to this point I felt that the interpretation approximated closely to his experience. Later interpretations, that the disappearance of the haze was due to reintrojection and conversion into depression, seemed to have less reality for the patient, although later events were compatible with its being correct.

(v) This session, like the one in my last example, began with three or four statements of fact, such as that it was hot; that his train was crowded; and that it was Wednesday – this occupied thirty minutes. An impression that he was trying to retain contact with reality was confirmed when he followed up by saying that he feared a breakdown. A little later he said I would not understand him. I interpreted that he felt I was bad and would not take in what he wanted to put into me. I interpreted in these terms deliberately because he had shown in the previous session that he felt that my interpretations were an attempt to eject feelings that he wished to deposit in me. His response to my interpretation was to say that he felt there were two probability clouds in the room. I interpreted that he was trying to get rid of the feeling that my badness was a fact. I said it meant that he needed to know whether I was really bad or whether I was some bad thing which had come from inside him. Although the point was not at that moment of central significance, I thought the patient was attempting to decide whether he was hallucinated or not. This

recurrent anxiety in his analysis was associated with his fear that envy and hatred of a capacity for understanding was leading him to take in a good, understanding object in order to destroy and eject it – a procedure which had often led to persecution by the destroyed and ejected object. Whether my refusal to understand was a reality or an hallucination was important only because it determined what painful experiences were to be expected next.

(vi) Half the session passed in silence; the patient then announced that a piece of iron had fallen on the floor. Thereafter he made a series of convulsive movements in silence as if he felt he was being physically assaulted from within. I said he could not establish contact with me because of his fear of what was going on inside him. He confirmed this by saying that he felt he was being murdered. He did not know what he would do without the analysis as it made him better. I said that he felt so envious of himself and of me for being able to work together to make him feel better that he took the pair of us into him as a dead piece of iron and a dead floor that came together not to give him life but to murder him. He became very anxious and said he could not go on. I said that he felt he could not go on because he was either dead, or alive and so envious that he had to stop good analysis. There was a marked decrease of anxiety, but the remainder of the session was taken up by isolated statements of fact which again seemed to be an attempt to preserve contact with external reality as a method of denial of his phantasies.

Features common to the above illustrations

94. These episodes have been chosen by me because the dominant theme in each was the destructive attack on a link. In the first, the attack was expressed in a stammer which was designed to prevent the patient from using language as a bond between him and me. In the second, sleep was felt by him to be identical with projective identification that proceeded unaffected by any possible attempt at control by him. Sleep for him meant that his mind, minutely fragmented, flowed out in an attacking stream of particles.

The examples I give here throw light on schizophrenic dreaming. The psychotic patient appears to have no dreams, or at least not to

report any, until comparatively late in the analysis. My impression now is that this apparently dreamless period is a phenomenon analogous to the invisible-visual hallucination. That is to say, the dreams consist of material so minutely fragmented that they are devoid of any visual component. When dreams are experienced which the patient can report because visual objects have been experienced by him in the course of the dream, he seems to regard these objects as bearing much the same relationship to the invisible objects of the previous phase as faeces seem, to him, to bear to urine. The objects appearing in experiences which we call dreams are regarded by the patient as solid and are, as such, contrasted with the contents of the dreams which were a continuum of minute, invisible fragments.

At the time of the session the main theme was not an attack on the link but the consequences of such an attack, previously made, in leaving him bereft of a state of mind necessary for the establishment of a satisfying relationship between him and his bed. Though it did not appear in the session I report, uncontrollable projective identification, which was what sleep meant to him, was thought to be a destructive attack on the state of mind of the coupling parents. There was therefore a double anxiety: one arising from his fear that he was being rendered mindless, the other from his fear that he was unable to control his hostile attacks, his mind providing the ammunition, on the state of mind that was the link between the parental pair. Sleep and sleeplessness were alike unacceptable.

In the third example, in which I described visual hallucinations of invisible objects, we witness one form in which the actual attack on the sexual pair is delivered. My interpretation, as far as I could judge, was felt by him as if it were his own visual sense of a parental intercourse; this visual impression is minutely fragmented and ejected at once in particles so minute that they are the invisible components of a continuum. The total procedure has served the purpose of forestalling an experience of feelings of envy for the parental state of mind by the instantaneous expression of envy in a destructive act. I shall have more to say of this implicit hatred of emotion and the need to avoid awareness of it.

In my fourth example – the report of the understanding girl and the haze – my understanding and his agreeable state of mind have been felt as a link between us which could give rise to a creative

act. The link had been regarded with hate and transformed into a hostile and destructive sexuality rendering the patient–analyst couple sterile.

In my fifth example, of the two probability clouds, a capacity for understanding is the link which is being attacked, but the interest lies in the fact that the object making the destructive attacks is alien to the patient. Furthermore, the destroyer is making an attack on projective identification which is felt by the patient to be a method of communication. In so far as my supposed attack on his methods of communication is felt as possibly secondary to his envious attacks on me, he does not dissociate himself from feelings of guilt and responsibility. A further point is the appearance of judgement, which Freud regards as an essential feature of the dominance of the reality principle, among the ejected parts of the patient's personality. The fact that there were two probability clouds remained unexplained at the time, but in subsequent sessions I had material which led me to suppose that what had originally been an attempt to separate good from bad survived in the existence of two objects, but they were now similar in that each was a mixture of good and bad. Taking into consideration material from later sessions, I can draw conclusions which were not possible at the time; his capacity for judgement, which had been split up and destroyed with the rest of his ego and then ejected, was felt by him to be similar to other bizarre objects of the kind which I have described in my paper, 'Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-psychotic Personalities' [chapter 5]. These ejected particles were feared because of the treatment he had accorded them. He felt that the alienated judgement – the probability clouds – indicated that I was probably bad. His suspicion that the probability clouds were persecutory and hostile led him to doubt the value of the guidance they afforded him. They might supply him with a correct assessment or a deliberately false one, such as that a fact was an hallucination or vice versa; or would give rise to what, from a psychiatric point of view, we would call delusions. The probability clouds themselves had some qualities of a primitive breast and were felt to be enigmatic and intimidating.

In my sixth illustration, the report that a piece of iron had fallen on the floor, I had no occasion for interpreting an aspect of the material with which the patient had by this time become familiar. (I should perhaps say that experience had taught me that there were

times when I assumed the patient's familiarity with some aspect of a situation with which we were dealing, only to discover that, in spite of the work that had been done upon it, he had forgotten it.) The familiar point that I did not interpret, but which is significant for the understanding of this episode, is that the patient's envy of the parental couple had been evaded by his substitution of himself and myself for the parents. The evasion failed, for the envy and hatred were now directed against him and me. The couple engaged in a creative act are felt to be sharing an enviable, emotional experience; he, being identified also with the excluded party, has a painful, emotional experience as well. On many occasions the patient, partly through experiences of the kind which I describe in this episode, and partly for reasons on which I shall enlarge later, had a hatred of emotion, and therefore, by a short extension, of life itself. This hatred contributes to the murderous attack on that which links the pair, on the pair itself, and on the object generated by the pair. In the episode I am describing, the patient is suffering the consequences of his early attacks on the state of mind that forms the link between the creative pair and his identification with both the hateful and creative states of mind.

In this, and the preceding illustration, there are elements that suggest the formation of a hostile persecutory object, or agglomeration of objects, which expresses its hostility in a manner of great importance in producing the predominance of psychotic mechanisms in a patient; the characteristics with which I have already invested the agglomeration of persecutory objects have the quality of a primitive, and even murderous, superego.

Curiosity, arrogance, and stupidity

95. In my paper 'On Arrogance' [chapter 7] I suggested that Freud's analogy of an archaeological investigation with a psychoanalysis is helpful if it is considered that we are exposing evidence not so much of a primitive civilization as of a primitive disaster. The value of the analogy is lessened because in the analysis we are confronted not so much with a static situation that permits leisurely study, but with a catastrophe that remains at one and the same moment actively

vital and yet incapable of resolution into quiescence. This lack of progress in any direction must be attributed in part to the destruction of a capacity for curiosity and the consequent inability to learn, but before I go into this I must say something about a matter that plays hardly any part in the illustrations I have given.

Attacks on the link originate in what Melanie Klein (1948) calls the paranoid-schizoid phase. This period is dominated by part-object relationships. If it is borne in mind that the patient has a part-object relationship with himself as well as with objects not himself, it contributes to the understanding of phrases such as "it seems" which are commonly employed by the deeply disturbed patient on occasions when a less disturbed patient might say "I think" or "I believe". When he says "it seems" he is often referring to a feeling – an "it seems" feeling – which is a part of his psyche and yet is not observed as part of a whole object. The conception of the part-object as analogous to an anatomical structure, encouraged by the patient's employment of concrete images as units of thought, is misleading because the part-object relationship is not with the anatomical structures only but with function, not with anatomy but with physiology, not with the breast but with feeding, poisoning, loving, hating. This contributes to the impression of a disaster that is dynamic and not static. The problem that has to be solved on this early yet superficial level, must be stated in adult terms by the question, "What is something?" – not the question, "Why is something?", because "why" has, through guilt, been split off. Problems, the solution of which depends upon an awareness of causation, cannot therefore be stated, let alone solved. This produces a situation in which the patient appears to have no problems except those posed by the existence of analyst and patient. His preoccupation is with what is this or that function of which he is aware, though unable to grasp the totality of which the function is a part. It follows that there is never any question why the patient or the analyst is there, or why something is said or done or felt, nor can there be any question of attempting to alter the causes of some state of mind. Since "what?" can never be answered without "how?" or "why?", further difficulties arise. I shall leave this on one side to consider the mechanisms employed by the infant to solve the problem "what?", when it is felt in relation to a part-object relationship with a function.

Denial of normal degrees of projective identification

96. I employ the term 'link' because I wish to discuss the patient's relationship with a function rather than with the object that subserves a function; my concern is not only with the breast or penis or verbal thought, but with their function of providing the link between two objects.

In her 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms' (1946) Melanie Klein speaks of the importance of an excessive employment of splitting and projective identification in the production of a very disturbed personality. She also speaks of "the introjection of the good object, first of all the mother's breast" as a "precondition for normal development". I shall suppose that there is a normal degree of projective identification, without defining the limits within which normality lies, and that associated with introjective identification this is the foundation on which normal development rests.

This impression derives partly from a feature in a patient's analysis which was difficult to interpret because it did not appear to be sufficiently obtrusive at any one moment for an interpretation to be supported by convincing evidence. Throughout the analysis the patient resorted to projective identification with a persistence suggesting it was a mechanism of which he had never been able sufficiently to avail himself; the analysis afforded him an opportunity for the exercise of a mechanism of which he had been cheated. I did not have to rely on this impression alone: there were sessions which led me to suppose that the patient felt there was some object that denied him the use of projective identification. In the illustrations I have given, particularly in the first (the stammer) and the fourth (the understanding girl and the blue haze) there are elements which indicate that the patient felt the parts of his personality that he wished to repose in me were refused entry by me, but there had been associations prior to this which led me to this view.

When the patient strove to rid himself of fears of death which were felt to be too powerful for his personality to contain, he split off his fears and put them into me, the idea apparently being that if they were allowed to repose there long enough they would undergo modification by my psyche and could then be safely reintrojected. On the occasion I have in mind the patient had felt, probably for reasons

similar to those I give in my fifth illustration (the probability clouds), that I evacuated them so quickly that the feelings were not modified, but had become more painful.

Associations from a period in the analysis earlier than that from which these illustrations have been drawn, showed an increasing intensity of emotions in the patient. This originated in what he felt was my refusal to accept parts of his personality. Consequently he strove to force them into me with increased desperation and violence. His behaviour, isolated from the context of the analysis, might have appeared to be an expression of primary aggression: the more violent his phantasies of projective identification, the more frightened he became of me. There were sessions in which such behaviour expressed unprovoked aggression, but I quote this series because it shows the patient in a different light – his violence a reaction to what he felt was my hostile defensiveness. The analytic situation built up in my mind a sense of witnessing an extremely early scene. I felt that the patient had experienced in infancy a mother who dutifully responded to the infant's emotional displays. The dutiful response had in it an element of impatient, "I don't know what's the matter with the child." My deduction was that, in order to understand what the child wanted, the mother should have treated the infant's *cry* as more than a demand for her presence. From the infant's point of view she should have taken into her, and thus experienced, the fear that the child was dying. It was this fear that the child could not contain. He strove to split it off together with the part of the personality in which it lay and project it into the mother. An understanding mother is able to experience the feeling of dread, that this baby was striving to deal with by projective identification, and yet retain a balanced outlook. This patient had had to deal with a mother who could not tolerate experiencing such feelings and reacted either by denying them ingress, or alternatively by becoming a prey to the anxiety which resulted from introjection of the infant's feelings. The latter reaction must, I think, have been rare denial was dominant.

To some this reconstruction will appear to be unduly fanciful; to me it does not seem forced and is the reply to any who may object that too much stress is placed on the transference to the exclusion of a proper elucidation of early memories.

In the analysis a complex situation may be observed. The patient feels he is being allowed an opportunity of which he had hitherto

been cheated; the poignancy of his deprivation is thereby rendered the more acute and so are the feelings of resentment at the deprivation. Gratitude for the opportunity coexists with hostility to the analyst as the person who will not understand and refuses the patient the use of the only method of communication by which he feels he can make himself understood. Thus the link between patient and analyst, or infant and breast, is the mechanism of projective identification. The destructive attacks upon this link originate in a source external to the patient or infant, namely the analyst or breast. The result is excessive projective identification by the patient and a deterioration of his developmental processes.

I do not put forward this experience as the cause of the patient's disturbance; that finds its main source in the inborn disposition of the infant as I described it in 'Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-psychotic Personalities' [chapter 5]. I regard it as a central feature of the environmental factor in the production of the psychotic personality.

Before I discuss this consequence for the patient's development, I must refer to the inborn characteristics and the part that they play in producing attacks by the infant on all that links him to the breast, namely, primary aggression and envy. The seriousness of these attacks is enhanced if the mother displays the kind of unreceptiveness which I have described, and is diminished, but not abolished, if the mother can introject the infant's feelings and remain balanced (Klein, 1957); the seriousness remains because the psychotic infant is overwhelmed with hatred and envy of the mother's ability to retain a comfortable state of mind although experiencing the infant's feelings. This was clearly brought out by a patient who insisted that I must go through it with him, but was filled with hate when he felt I was able to do so without a breakdown. Here we have another aspect of destructive attacks upon the link, the link being the capacity of the analyst to introject the patient's projective identifications. Attacks on the link, therefore, are synonymous with attacks on the analyst's, and originally the mother's, peace of mind. The capacity to introject is transformed by the patient's envy and hate into greed devouring the patient's psyche; similarly, peace of mind becomes hostile indifference. At this point analytic problems arise through the patient's employment (to destroy the peace of mind that is so much envied) of acting out, delinquent acts and threats of suicide.

Consequences

97. To review the main features so far: the origin of the disturbance is twofold. On the one hand there is the patient's inborn disposition to excessive destructiveness, hatred, and envy: on the other the environment which, at its worst, denies to the patient the use of the mechanisms of splitting and projective identification. On some occasions the destructive attacks on the link between patient and environment, or between different aspects of the patient's personality, have their origin in the patient; on others, in the mother, although in the latter instance and in psychotic patients, it can never be in the mother alone. The disturbances commence with life itself. The problem that confronts the patient is: What are the objects of which he is aware? These objects, whether internal or external, are in fact part-objects and predominantly, though not exclusively, what we should call functions and not morphological structures. This is obscured because the patient's thinking is conducted by means of concrete objects and therefore tends to produce, in the sophisticated mind of the analyst, an impression that the patient's concern is with the nature of the concrete object. The nature of the functions which excite the patient's curiosity he explores by projective identification. His own feelings, too powerful to be contained within his personality, are amongst these functions. Projective identification makes it possible for him to investigate his own feelings in a personality powerful enough to contain them. Denial of the use of this mechanism, either by the refusal of the mother to serve as a repository for the infant's feelings, or by the hatred and envy of the patient who cannot allow the mother to exercise this function, leads to a destruction of the link between infant and breast, and consequently to a severe disorder of the impulse to be curious on which all learning depends. The way is therefore prepared for a severe arrest of development. Furthermore, thanks to a denial of the main method open to the infant for dealing with his too powerful emotions, the conduct of emotional life, in any case a severe problem, becomes intolerable. Feelings of hatred are thereupon directed against all emotions including hate itself, and against external reality which stimulates them. It is a short step from hatred of the emotions to hatred of life itself. In 'Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-psychotic Personalities' I stated that this hatred results in a resort to projective identification of all the

perceptual apparatus including the embryonic thought which forms a link between sense impressions and consciousness. The tendency to excessive projective identification when death instincts predominate is thus reinforced.

Superego

98. The early development of the superego is affected by this kind of mental functioning in a way I must now describe. As I have said, the link between infant and breast depends upon projective identification and a capacity to introject projective identifications. Failure to introject makes the external object appear intrinsically hostile to curiosity and to the method, namely projective identification, by which the infant seeks to satisfy it. Should the breast be felt as fundamentally understanding, it has been transformed by the infant's envy and hate into an object whose devouring greed has as its aim the introjection of the infant's projective identifications in order to destroy them. This can show in the patient's belief that the analyst strives, by understanding the patient, to drive him insane. The result is an object which, when installed in the patient, exercises the function of a severe and ego-destructive superego. This description is not accurate applied to any object in the paranoid-schizoid position because it supposes a whole-object. The threat that such a whole-object impends contributes to the inability, described by Melanie Klein and others (Klein, 1946, 1948; Rosenfeld, 1952; Segal, 1950), of the psychotic patient to face the depressive position and the developments attendant on it. In the paranoid-schizoid phase the bizarre objects composed partially of elements of a persecutory super-ego which I described in 'Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-psychotic Personalities' are predominant.

Arrested development

The disturbance of the impulse of curiosity on which all learning depends, and the denial of the mechanism by which it seeks expression, makes normal development impossible. Another feature obtrudes if the course of the analysis is favourable; problems which

in sophisticated language are posed by the question "Why?" cannot be formulated. The patient appears to have no appreciation of causation and will complain of painful states of mind while persisting in courses of action calculated to produce them. Therefore when the appropriate material presents itself the patient must be shown that he has no interest in why he feels as he does. Elucidation of the limited scope of his curiosity issues in the development of a wider range and an incipient preoccupation with causes. This leads to some modification of conduct which otherwise prolongs his distress.

Conclusions

99. The main conclusions of this paper relate to that state of mind in which the patient's psyche contains an internal object which is opposed to, and destructive of, all links whatsoever from the most primitive (which I have suggested is a normal degree of projective identification) to the most sophisticated forms of verbal communication and the arts.

In this state of mind emotion is hated; it is felt to be too powerful to be contained by the immature psyche, it is felt to link objects and it gives reality to objects which are not self and therefore inimical to primary narcissism.

The internal object which in its origin was an external breast that refused to introject, harbour, and so modify the baneful force of emotion, is felt, paradoxically, to intensify, relative to the strength of the ego, the emotions against which it initiates the attacks. These attacks on the linking function of emotion lead to an over-prominence in the psychotic part of the personality of links which appear to be logical, almost mathematical, but never emotionally reasonable. Consequently the links surviving are perverse, cruel, and sterile.

The external object which is internalized, its nature, and the effect when so established on the methods of communication within the psyche and with the environment, are left for further elaboration later.

9

A theory of thinking

100. In this paper I am primarily concerned to present a theoretical system. Its resemblance to a philosophical theory depends on the fact that philosophers have concerned themselves with the same subject matter; it differs from philosophical theory in that it is intended, like all psychoanalytic theories, for use. It is devised with the intention that practising psychoanalysts should restate the hypotheses of which it is composed in terms of empirically verifiable data.

In this respect it bears the same relationship to similar statements of philosophy as the statements of applied mathematics bear to pure mathematics.

The derived hypotheses that are intended to admit of empirical test, and to a lesser extent the theoretical system itself, bear the same relationship to the observed facts in a psychoanalysis, as statements of applied mathematics, say about a mathematical circle, bear to a statement about a circle drawn upon paper.

This theoretical system is intended to be applicable in a significant number of cases; psychoanalysts should therefore experience realizations that approximate to the Theory.

I attach no diagnostic importance to the Theory though I think it may be applicable whenever a disorder of thought is believed to exist. Its diagnostic significance will depend upon the pattern formed by the constant conjunction of a number of theories of which this theory would be one.

It may help to explain the Theory if I discuss the background of emotional experience from which it has been abstracted: I shall do this in general terms without attempting scientific rigour.

101. It is convenient to regard thinking as dependent on the successful outcome of two main mental developments. The first is the development of thoughts; they require an apparatus to cope with them. The second development therefore, is of this apparatus that I shall provisionally call thinking. I repeat – thinking has to be called into existence to cope with thoughts.

It will be noted that this differs from any theory of thought as a product of thinking, in that thinking is a development forced on the psyche by the pressure of thoughts – not the other way round. Psychopathological developments may be associated with either phase or both; they may be related to a breakdown in the development of thoughts, or a breakdown in the development of the apparatus for 'thinking' or dealing with thoughts, or both.

'Thoughts' may be classified, according to the nature of their developmental history, as pre-conceptions, conceptions or thoughts, and finally concepts; concepts are named and are therefore fixed conceptions or thoughts. The conception is initiated by the conjunction of a pre-conception with a realization. The pre-conception may be regarded as the analogue in psychoanalysis of Kant's concept of "empty thoughts". Psychoanalytically the theory that the infant has an inborn disposition corresponding to an expectation of a breast may be used to supply a model. When the preconception is brought into contact with a realization that approximates to it, the mental outcome is a conception. Put in another way, the pre-conception (the inborn expectation of a breast, the a priori knowledge of a breast, the "empty thought") when the infant is brought into contact with the breast itself, mates with awareness of the realization and is synchronous with the development of a conception. This model will serve for the theory that every junction of a preconception with its realization produces a conception. Conceptions therefore will be expected to be constantly conjoined with an emotional experience of satisfaction.

I shall limit the term 'thought' to the mating of a preconception with a frustration. The model I propose is that of an infant whose expectation of a breast is mated with a realization of no breast available for satisfaction. This mating is experienced as a no-breast, or 'absent' breast inside. The next step depends on the infant's capacity

for frustration: in particular it depends on whether the decision is to evade frustration or to modify it.

If the capacity for toleration of frustration is sufficient, the 'no-breast' inside becomes a thought, and an apparatus for 'thinking it' develops. This initiates the state, described by Freud in his 'Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911b), in which dominance by the reality principle is synchronous with the development of an ability to think, and so to bridge the gulf of frustration between the moment when a want is felt and the moment when action appropriate to satisfying the want culminates in its satisfaction. A capacity for tolerating frustration thus enables the psyche to develop thought as a means by which the frustration that is tolerated is itself made more tolerable.

If the capacity for toleration of frustration is inadequate, the bad internal 'no-breast' that a personality capable of maturity ultimately recognizes as a thought, confronts the psyche with the need to decide between evasion of frustration or of its modification.

Incapacity for tolerating frustration tips the scale in the direction of evasion of frustration. The result is a significant departure from the events that Freud describes as characteristic of thought in the phase of dominance of the reality principle. What should be a thought, a product of the juxtaposition of pre-conception and negative realization, becomes a bad object, indistinguishable from a thing-in-itself, fit only for evacuation. Consequently the development of an apparatus for thinking is disturbed, and instead there takes place a hypertrophic development of the apparatus of projective identification. The model I propose for this development is a psyche that operates on the principle that evacuation of a bad breast is synonymous with obtaining sustenance from a good breast. The end result is that all thoughts are treated as if they were indistinguishable from bad internal objects; the appropriate machinery is felt not to be an apparatus for thinking the thoughts, but an apparatus for ridding the psyche of accumulations of bad internal objects. The crux lies in the decision between modification or evasion of frustration.

102. Mathematical elements, namely straight lines, points, circles and something corresponding to what later becomes known by the names of numbers, derive from realizations of two-ness as in breast and infant, two eyes, two feet and so on.

If intolerance of frustration is not too great modification becomes the governing aim. Development of mathematical elements, or

mathematical objects as Aristotle calls them, is analogous to the development of conceptions.

If intolerance of frustration is dominant, steps are taken to evade perception of the realization by destructive attacks. In so far as pre-conception and realization are mated mathematical conceptions are formed but they are treated as if indistinguishable from things-in-themselves and are evacuated at high speed as missiles to annihilate space. In so far as space and time are perceived as identical with a bad object that is destroyed, that is to say a no-breast, the realization that should be mated with the pre-conception is not available to complete the conditions necessary for the formation of a conception. The dominance of projective identification confuses the distinction between the self and the external object. This contributes to the absence of any perception of two-ness since such an awareness depends on the recognition of a distinction between subject and object.

The relationship with time was graphically brought home to me by a patient who said over and over again that he was wasting time – and continued to waste it. The patient's aim is to destroy time by wasting it. The consequences are illustrated in the description in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* of the Mad Hatter's tea-party – it is always four o'clock.

Inability to tolerate frustration can obstruct the development of thoughts and a capacity to think, though a capacity to think would diminish the sense of frustration intrinsic to appreciation of the gap between a wish and its fulfilment. Conceptions, that is to say the outcome of a mating between a pre-conception and its realization, repeat in a more complex form the history of pre-conception. A conception does not necessarily meet a realization that approximates sufficiently closely to satisfy. If frustration can be tolerated the mating of conception and realizations whether negative or positive initiates procedures necessary for learning by experience. If intolerance of frustration is not so great as to activate the mechanisms of evasion, and yet is too great to bear dominance of the reality principle, the personality develops omnipotence as a substitute for the mating of the pre-conception or conception, with the negative realization. This involves the assumption of omniscience as a substitute for learning from experience by aid of thoughts and thinking. There is therefore no psychic activity to discriminate between true and false. Omniscience substitutes for the discrimination between true and false a dictatorial

affirmation that one thing is morally right and the other wrong. The assumption of omniscience that denies reality ensures that the morality thus engendered is a function of psychosis. Discrimination between true and false is a function of the non-psychotic part of the personality and its factors. There is thus potentially a conflict between assertion of truth and assertion of moral ascendancy; the extremism of the one infects the other.

103. Some pre-conceptions relate to expectations of the self. The pre-conceptual apparatus is adequate to realizations that fall in the narrow range of circumstances suitable for the survival of the infant. One circumstance that affects survival is the personality of the infant itself. Ordinarily the personality of the infant, like other elements in the environment, is managed by the mother. If mother and child are adjusted to each other projective identification plays a role in the management through the operation of a rudimentary and fragile reality sense; usually an omnipotent phantasy, it operates realistically. This, I am inclined to believe, is its normal condition. When Melanie Klein (1946, p. 102) speaks of "excessive projective identification", I think the term *excessive* should be understood to apply not only to the frequency with which projective identification is employed, but to excess of belief in omnipotence. As a realistic activity it shows itself as behaviour reasonably calculated to arouse in the mother feelings of which the infant wishes to be rid; if the infant feels it is dying it can arouse fears in the mother that it is dying. A well-balanced mother can accept these and respond therapeutically: that is to say in a manner that makes the infant feel it is receiving its frightened personality back again but in a form that it can tolerate – the fears are manageable by the infant personality. If the mother cannot tolerate these projections, the infant is reduced to continued projective identification carried out with increasing force and frequency. The increased force seems to denude the projection of its penumbra of meaning. Reintrojection is effected with similar force and frequency. Deducing the patient's feelings from his behaviour in the consulting room, and using the deductions to form a model, the infant of my model does not behave in a way I ordinarily expect of an adult who is thinking: it behaves as if it felt an internal object with the characteristics of a greedy vagina-like 'breast' has been built-up, stripping of its goodness all that the infant receives or gives, leaving only degenerate objects. This internal object starves its host of all understanding that is

made available. In analysis such a patient seems unable to gain from his environment and therefore from his analyst. The consequences for the development of a capacity for thinking are serious; I shall describe only one – namely precocious development of consciousness. (By consciousness I mean, in this context, what Freud described as a "sense-organ for the perception of psychic qualities".[1]

104. I have described previously (at a Scientific Meeting of the British Psychoanalytical Society) the use of a concept of alpha-function[2] as a working tool in the analysis of disturbances of thought. It seemed convenient to suppose an alpha-function to convert sense data into alpha-elements, and thus provide the psyche with the material for dream thoughts and hence the capacity to wake up or go to sleep, to be conscious or unconscious. According to this theory consciousness depends on alpha-function, and it is a logical necessity to suppose that such a function exists if we are to assume that the self is able to be conscious of itself in the sense of knowing itself from experience of itself. Yet the failure to establish between infant and mother a relationship in which normal projective identification is possible, precludes the development of an alpha-function and therefore of a differentiation of elements into conscious and unconscious.

The difficulty is avoided by restricting the term 'consciousness' to the meaning conferred on it by Freud's definition. Using the term in this restricted sense it is possible to suppose that this consciousness produces "sense-data" of the self but that there is no alpha-function to convert them into alpha-elements and therefore permit of a capacity for being conscious or unconscious of the self. The infant personality by itself is unable to make use of the sense-data, but has to evacuate these elements into the mother, relying on her to do whatever has to be done to convert them into a form suitable for employment by the infant as alpha-elements.

The limited consciousness defined by Freud (that I am using to define a rudimentary infant consciousness) is not associated with an unconscious. All impressions of the self are of equal value; all are conscious. The mother's capacity for reverie is the receptor organ for the infant's harvest of self-sensation gained by its conscious.

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[1]["But what part is there left to be played in our scheme by consciousness, which was once so omnipotent and hid all else from view? *Only that of a sense-organ for the perception of psychical qualities"* (Freud, 1900a, p. 615). *Ed.*]

[2][See *Learning from Experience* (1962): Volume IV, p. 270. *Ed.*]

A rudimentary conscious could not perform the tasks that we ordinarily regard as the province of consciousness, and it would be misleading to attempt to withdraw the term 'conscious' from the sphere of ordinary usage where it is applied to mental functions of great importance in rational thinking. For the present I make the distinction only to show what happens if there is a breakdown of interplay through projective identification between the rudimentary consciousness and maternal reverie.

Normal development follows if the relationship between infant and breast permits the infant to project a feeling that it is dying into the mother and to reintroject it after its sojourn in the breast has made it tolerable to the infant psyche. If the projection is not accepted by the mother the infant feels that its feeling that it is dying is stripped of such meaning as it has. It therefore reintrojects not a fear of dying made tolerable, but a nameless dread.

The tasks that the breakdown in the mother's capacity for reverie have left unfinished are imposed on the rudimentary consciousness; they are all in different degrees related to the function of correlation.

The rudimentary consciousness cannot carry the burden placed on it. The establishment internally of a projective-identification-rejecting object means that instead of an understanding object the infant has a wilfully misunderstanding object – with which it is identified. Further, its psychic qualities are perceived by a precocious and fragile consciousness.

105. The apparatus available to the psyche may be regarded as fourfold:

1. *Thinking*, associated with modification and evasion.
2. *Projective identification*, associated with evasion by evacuation and not to be confused with normal projective identification (para 100 on "realistic" projective identification).
3. *Omniscience* (on the principle of *tout savoir tout condamner*).
4. *Communication*.

Examination of the apparatus I have listed under these four heads shows that it is designed to deal with thoughts, in the broad sense of the term; that is, including all objects I have described as conceptions, thoughts, dream thoughts, alpha-elements and beta-elements, as if they were objects that had to be dealt with (a) because they in

some form contained or expressed a problem, and (b) because they were themselves felt to be undesirable excrescences of the psyche and required attention – elimination by some means or other – for that reason.

106. As expressions of a problem it is evident they require an apparatus designed to play the same part in bridging the gap between cognizance and appreciation of lack, and action designed to modify the lack as is played by alpha-function in bridging the gap between sense-data and appreciation of sense-data. (In this context I include the perception of psychic qualities as requiring the same treatment as sense-data.) In other words, just as sense-data have to be modified and worked on by alpha-function to make them available for dream thoughts etc., so the thoughts have to be worked on to make them available for translation into action.

Translation into action involves publication, communication and common sense. So far I have avoided discussion of these aspects of thinking although they are implied in the discussion, and one at least was openly adumbrated; I refer to correlation.

Publication in its origin may be regarded as little more than one function of thoughts, namely making sense-data available to consciousness. I wish to reserve the term for operations that are necessary to make private awareness (that is, awareness that is private to the individual) public. The problems involved may be regarded as technical and emotional. The emotional problems are associated with the fact that the human individual is a political animal and cannot find fulfilment outside a group and cannot satisfy any emotional drive without expression of its social component. His impulses, and I mean all impulses and not merely his sexual ones, are at the same time narcissistic. The problem is the resolution of the conflict between narcissism and social-ism. The technical problem is that concerned with expression of thought or conception in language, or its counterpart in signs.

This brings me to communication. In its origin communication is effected by realistic projective identification. The primitive infant procedure undergoes various vicissitudes including, as we have seen, debasement through hypertrophy of omnipotent phantasy. It may develop, if the relationship with the breast is good, into a capacity for toleration by the self of its own psychic qualities, and so pave the way for alpha-function and normal thought. But it does also develop

as a part of the social capacity of the individual. This development, of great importance in group dynamics, has received virtually no attention; its absence would make even scientific communication impossible. Yet its presence may arouse feelings of persecution in the receptors of the communication. The need to diminish feelings of persecution contributes to the drive to abstraction in the formulation of scientific communications. The function of the elements of communication, words and signs, is to convey either by single substantives or in verbal groupings, that certain phenomena are constantly conjoined in the pattern of their relatedness.

An important function of communication is to achieve correlation. While communication is still a private function, conceptions, thoughts and their verbalization are necessary to facilitate the conjunction of one set of sense-data with another. If the conjoined data harmonize, a sense of truth is experienced and it is desirable that this sense should be given expression in a statement analogous to a truth-functional-statement. The failure to bring about this conjunction of sense-data, and therefore of a common-sense view, induces a mental state of debility in the patient as if starvation of truth was somehow analogous to alimentary starvation. The truth of a statement does not imply that there is a realization approximating to the true statement.

We may now consider further the relationship of rudimentary consciousness to psychic quality. The emotions fulfil a similar function for the psyche to that of the senses in relation to objects in space and time. That is to say the counterpart of the common-sense view in private knowledge is the common emotional view; a sense of truth is experienced if the view of an object which is hated can be conjoined to a view of the same object when it is loved, and the conjunction confirms that the object experienced by different emotions is the same object. A correlation is established.

107. A similar correlation, made possible by bringing conscious and unconscious to bear on the phenomena of the consulting room, gives to psychoanalytic objects a reality that is quite unmistakeable even though their very existence has been disputed.

10

Commentary

The distortions in "The Imaginary Twin" of the patient's past are designed to prevent him or anyone who knew him from thinking it referred to him. Such aims underestimate the power of rumour and suspicion.

If the distortions are judged effective, the narrative must be regarded as fiction. If the narrative were a work of art it might be reasonable to regard it as more nearly representative of truth than any literal transcription; but this psychoanalyst is not an artist. Expectations that the record represents what actually took place must be dismissed as vain.

The first paragraph is evocative; the reader is invited to appreciate the serious nature of the illness of the patient, the state of mind of one who has been advised to consider a severe brain operation, the pessimism and despair of one who has had so many years of unsuccessful treatment. The reader is prepared for the triumph of psychoanalysis in contrast with the patient's previous misfortunes under psychotherapy.

Paragraphs **2** and **3** are factually inaccurate;[1] the statements in the two paragraphs are representations of facts to which the realization did approximate closely. I thought this was true then; I think it is true now. What importance should be ascribed to these statements, one in the paper, made within months of the experience; the other in this book, made twenty years after?

It is usual to think that a report written within an hour or so of the events it is supposed to describe has a special 'built-in' validity and superiority over the account written many months or even years

[1]Numbers in bold refer to numbered paragraphs in preceding pages.

later. I shall suppose simply that they are two different accounts of the same event without any implication that one is superior to the other. A technique is needed which will reveal the nature of the contrasting stories and of the contrasting elements in them. Historians are familiar with the uses of 'contemporary' history and history written sufficiently long after the event for 'passions to have cooled' and perspective to have matured. A psychoanalyst will require some more precise definition of the realities behind these distinguishing formulations.

The need for discretion means that certain facts are replaced by falsifications intended to make no material difference to the account of the emotional tensions which were part of the patient's environment. I have now no doubt that this idea is quite fallacious, for the substitution is made in accordance with certain pre-conceptions derived from the experience of psychoanalysing the patient. The emotional background from which this account derives must include my ideas of what he told me, my interpretations, and my interpretations of the results of the encounter. When I wrote this I believed I was giving a factual account of the patient's behaviour together with a factual account of my interpretations – based partly on my beliefs about the meaning of psychoanalytic theory – followed by a factual account of the consequences of the interpretations. It seems to me now that it is more nearly accurate to regard this and all other articles written by me (for those are the articles of which I have most intimate knowledge) as consisting of statements of varying quality. For example, in paragraph **5** the statement is a verbal formulation of a visual image. Reading it now after seventeen years, I am able to receive a visual impression which up to a point reminds me of something that cannot be sensuously grasped – depression. The phrase "monosyllabic listlessness", coming in the context of the rest of the paragraph, makes me suppose now that the patient was depressed, but it is not the same to say he was depressed, as to describe him as being listless and monosyllabic. This is the crux of the situation; for the more unobstructed the relationship that the psychoanalyst has with his patient, the more subtle it is. It is an ineffable experience. The psychoanalyst's interpretation must be of a state of mind which it is the more difficult to describe in sensuous terms the more he aspires to be accurate.

In the psychoanalysis itself it is not so difficult to formulate an interpretation as it is here. To start with, the patient knows, because

he is present, what the psychoanalyst is talking about. The same qualities inhere in the psychoanalyst's interpretation as in the association. Therefore the communication between the psychoanalyst and the patient has not the same difficulties as those existing in the written communication between psychoanalyst and reader.

The experience of the patient's communication and the psychoanalyst's interpretation is ineffable and essential. The communication of this quality plays a vital part in any interpretation given to the psychotic patient. The patient's reaction to the interpretation often depends more on this quality of the interpretation than on its verbal meaning. Thanks to the nature of the psychotic transference, the fate of the verbal meaning hangs on the patient's reaction to the tone of the interpretation.

Now the sensuous image, C category in the Grid,[1] gives body to the description in paragraph **5**. If I tried to formulate it in more precise terms as the scientist can with his mathematical formulae, the communication degenerates into verbal jugglery. Yet more precise formulation is required if the reader is to have an accurate idea of the association that had to be interpreted. How is the communication between the psychoanalyst reading and the psychoanalyst writing to be made at least as effective as the communication between analyst and analysand? What has to be communicated is real enough; yet every psychoanalyst knows the frustration of trying to make clear, even to another psychoanalyst, an experience which sounds unconvincing as soon as it is formulated. We may have to reconcile ourselves to the idea that such communication is impossible at the present stage of psychoanalysis. Transformations of the psychoanalytic experience into formulations which effect communication between psychoanalyst and reader, remains an activity to be pursued. Some may wish to transform it into group terms, some into mathematical, scientific or artistic terms. Some may be satisfied to perfect interpretations in the context of the psychoanalytic session. No psychoanalyst will be content to leave things as they are.

A special instance of the problem of communication between the psychoanalyst writing and the psychoanalyst reading, of which I have been reminded by preparing these papers for publication, arises when the writer and the reader is the same man. Here, one

[1][See p. vii, this volume. *Ed.*]

might suppose, are the perfect conditions for communication. Yet in the days when I used to write elaborate notes on my sessions with patients, I found that I was no more successful when the interval between writing and reading was relatively short than I do now when the interval is measured in years. At first I thought I could easily understand notes dashed off at speed, a squiggle here, an exclamation mark there, sometimes an interpolated conjecture or comment on my own feelings on what was happening. I will not say they were meaningless when I came to read them, but they did not convey the meaning I hoped to find. They resembled nothing so much as a sleepy note that I sometimes tried to make to pin down what I felt to be an important dream for study in the morning. The squiggles remained: the dream had gone. I found I could not make better interpretive use of them than of squiggles I made on the spot while fully awake. So it is with this paper here. I am not unappreciative of the account; If it were some other psychoanalyst's report I would think it quite good. But as it is, I do not recognize the patient or myself.

This sort of experience led me to try a number of experiments in note taking, including some, perhaps the most convincing, which were intentionally subjective reports on my feelings about the day's work. A card index served to find references to patients so that I might scrutinize the material quickly if I should wish to be reminded of his or her psychoanalytic history. This I thought helpful – once or twice. I have the same feeling now, for example, on reading paragraphs **8–11**, but I am not sure in what way this was a helpful experience then, or is helpful now. Finally I abandoned note taking altogether, but that was not till some years after the first paper was written. My reasons for doing so cannot be simply or comprehensively stated. One reason, relevant in this immediate context, was my growing awareness that the most evocative notes were those in which I came nearest to a representation of a sensory image; say an event visually recalled (for example see **5**). The evocation however was not of the past but of interpretations wise after the event. In short the value of the notes lay not in their supposed formulation of a record of the past but in their formulation of a sensory image evocative of the future. The notes did not make it possible to remain conscious of the past but to evoke expectations of the future. Using the Grid I have tentatively constructed for this purpose, the statements made in my notes are better categorized as C4 than as C3.

In the Grid these two categories appear close together. It is common in everyday life to hear of two people whose views are said to be "poles apart"; it is but one expression of mental 'distance'. The visual image of the Grid suggests that these categories are neighbours and are we then to assume there is some corresponding 'closeness' in the relationship of the *objects represented* by the Grid? In the context of this discussion I am arguing that the actual value of the formulation categorized as C3 is in fact 'far from' the real value represented by C¢. Would the Grid be more nearly representative of the realizations it is intended to categorize if these categories were differently spaced on the paper? The notes I am discussing can be said to belong to categories which are similar or close in that, if they purport to be records of the past, their object is to evoke memories presumed to be unconscious because they have been forgotten or suppressed or repressed: if they are to evoke ideas about the future, they are to evoke prophecies or conjectures about what has not yet happened. The distance between the two, measured not in space but in time, might be infinitely small or infinitely large. Again, if my note tells me 'what happened' in yesterday's session and makes me think of what is shortly going to happen in today's, can the 'distance' between these two ideas be measured by the time that has elapsed between the two sessions? Perhaps it would be better not to think of it as distance in space or time between the ideas, but rather in terms of difference relative to some scale with an entirely different genetic background from that of physical space or physical time. For further consideration – in what useful sense can it be said that the mind 'travels' from earth to the nearest quasar with the 'speed of thought'?

For psychoanalysts these are not ideas but practical questions; consider the importance of the analyst's or patient's ability to grasp an idea very 'slowly' or very 'fast'. A patient may see the meaning of an interpretation so quickly that the analyst is surprised to find a moment later that the patient has apparently no understanding of what has been said to him. The speed of his thought makes him able to closure the statement being discussed before he has had time to understand it. The terms in which I am describing this are all modelled on sensuous experience of a sensible background. The model serves to illuminate many phenomena in psychoanalysis, but the light that these models shed (this one included) is fitful and their

inadequacy is easily apparent. The analyst needs models which are quickly constructed, widely applicable, robust. Those we use now are short-winded; they serve well enough up to a point, but that point is quickly reached and from it the analyst can see nothing but darkness beyond. That, in my opinion, is what is wrong with these papers on which I am commenting. I comment on them because their defect is not peculiar to these papers but to the method of which they are typical. The problem is to transform formulations such as 'time', 'distance', 'space', so that the re-formulation is not so abstract that it becomes verbal jugglery and not so impacted with meaning that growth is obstructed.

The analyst's note on a session may be far from a record of what took place, yet near to anticipation of a future development. Scientific training seems to suppose that capacity for anticipation is a desirable attribute and worth developing. It appears important for the analyst to be able to predict his patient's attempt at suicide, or conversely, his probable improvement. Let us examine this supposition more closely.

If it is supposed that the analyst must anticipate his patient's suicide, it means no more than that the analyst should be able to entertain as wide a spectrum of thought and feeling, pleasant or unpleasant, as is possible. The idea that his patient might commit suicide is only one particular instance of the painful thoughts which the analyst must be capable of sustaining; otherwise he will be deflected from doing the work he exists to do and which no one else can do, namely to analyse. If analysing the impulse to suicide cannot change the patient's impulse, prevention, say by hospitalization, will certainly not do so. Others have to fulfil different roles in such a contingency; they may believe that the analyst should fulfil these other tasks, but their beliefs may have disagreeable consequences for the analyst in a position to know that his function is to psychoanalyse. He is under pressure, isolated and vulnerable, subjected to the temptation to abandon his role and assume one which, however unfitted he may be for it, conforms to the accepted conventions and preconceptions of the group. If he does so, the analysis is hopelessly compromised: the patient loses his analyst and gains a doubtfully valuable auxiliary.

The above arguments apply with equal cogency to the supposition that the patient might become a psychoanalyst – a supposition which

the analyst should be able to consider.[1] If he can entertain a spectrum of possibilities, from the suicide of his patient to his survival as a robust and stable personality, the analyst should be able to analyse each as it appears in the context of the analysis. The rock on which the analysis comes to shipwreck is the obtrusion of the memories and desires of the psychoanalyst; of this point I shall have occasion to speak later.

At **12** a retrospective glance at the analysis begins. It is not my intention to question the accuracy of the description, but to use it to illustrate my present view. The account as it stands could be a description of either memory or evolution; they need to be distinguished.

As the report of a memory it purports to describe my 'memory' of what I now call an 'evolution', namely, the coming together, by a sudden precipitating intuition, of a mass of apparently unrelated incoherent phenomena which are thereby given coherence and meaning not previously possessed. This I distinguish from the reports of the story told by the homosexual brother-in-law. That element, and others like it, I class as 'memories' together with recollections somewhat deliberately and painstakingly recalled, as for example when a patient pieces together a dream he thinks he has had. In contrast is a dream which is recalled suddenly, as if in a single whole. Or perhaps similarly lost as a single whole. This experience resembles the phenomenon of transformation of the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position. I have in the past drawn attention to a striking description of the experience given by H. Poincaré in his *Science and Method* (1914).

The event described in **13** would do very well as an illustration of an 'evolution'. From the material the patient produces, there emerges, like the pattern from a kaleidoscope, a configuration which seems to belong not only to the situation unfolding, but to a number of others not previously seen to be connected and which it has not been designed to connect. I do not now regard the pattern of the 'imaginary twin' as of any central importance, though I have found it illuminating for some aspects of the analysis of an only child. It is then very often a particular fact of the more general pattern of splitting. The patient of whom I wrote was not an only child, but circumstances

[1]For important comments touching training analysis see D. Meltzer on 'The Relation of Anal Masturbation to Projective Identification' (1966).

led him to feel so. At the outset of his career, any psychoanalyst must find his own way and come upon well-known and well-established theories through experiences of his own realizations. It is clear that the realization which approximates to a theory he has learned will be unique, and may therefore appear to be so different from the theoretical formulation that he cannot recognize the bearing of the one upon the other. By contrast he will force a theory to fit a realization because it is difficult for an inexperienced analyst to tolerate doubt and uncertainty which he imagines that a more experienced analyst – probably his own – would not have.

There can be no harm in errors of this kind: 'original discoveries' of the already well-known, and 'confirmation' where none would be found if clinical flair were mature. It becomes fatal to good analysis if premature application of a theory becomes a habit which places a screen between the psychoanalyst and the exercise of his intuition on fresh and therefore unknown material.

The dream reported in **15** was, I think, as nearly in the patient's words as is possible. I assumed that it was correctly reported by the patient, correctly remembered by me, and correctly transcribed. There is no doubt that this convenient assumption is false. It remains none-the-less convenient and most analysts, including myself, will continue to use it for most occasions. It is not always convenient and the modern trends in psychoanalytic practice will make these assumptions misleading unless they are used with circumspection. Failure to recognize the point at which an assumption, known to be false but convenient, becomes inconvenient as well as false, leads to deflections of psychoanalytic practice into an impasse where pessimism reigns. I make this dream and the reports in **16–20** the subject of critical comment not because I have changed my views on the value of what I reported then, but because I require a jumping-off point for the exposition of something else now.

As I 'remember' it, the dream was reported by the patient in vivid terms. The report given in **15** recalled the episode, when I read it, in such 'complete' fashion that I regard it as having 'evolved' in the course of the actual reading. This is in contrast with my experience on re-reading **16**.

I 'remembered' that in my opinion my interpretation was a good one – 'correct', as I would then have said, and I 'remember' that the experience of dream and interpretation had the same convincing

quality of reality at the time. The description in **16** cannot 'evolve' anything now as the description in **15** can. I do not attribute this to the inferior quality of **16** but to a difference in kind in the nature of the two formulations. I find myself unable to be impressed either with the truth or falsity of the interpretation. With **15** I experience an 'evolution' of emotional experience now; with **16,** I experience nothing but a sense of manipulation of theories.

As I participated in the reported experience, I know there was no deliberate or conscious falsification. I also know that the formulation of **16** was as good as taking pains could make it. Even making allowance for personal defects in powers of description, the real problem arises in the lack of apparatus for recording the only part of an analytic session that is worthy of record. Occasionally, as in **15**, something can be recorded adequately enough to lead to an evolution when the reader is the analyst. Psychoanalytic literature has meaning for one or two readers of a particular article at most; it must be the dreariest and most unrewarding scientific literature for the others.

If this dreariness adequately represented the realization, no great harm would follow: psychoanalysis would disappear, with other pseudo-sciences. To anyone who has experienced the reality of psychoanalysis, the possibility of such an outcome of faulty communication is tragic.

The formulations of **17** differ in kind from those of **15** or **16**. They are descriptions of events in terms which are themselves theoretical formulations of psychoanalytic intuitions. They are therefore removed from the world of emotional experience in a way in which the dream description of **15** is not, although, as we have already seen, the description in **15** is a description of a description of something alleged by the patient to have happened while he slept. As a practising analyst, I tolerate for the present the misgivings to which such an insecure foundation gives rise. I think the insecurity should be noticed but disregarded till it becomes relevant. The difference in kind between **15** and **16**, and then again **17** and **19–20** is no longer tolerable because the nature of the work today does not permit lack of discrimination between realizations which are so different from each other. The verbal formulation of the dream in **15** is relatively tolerable; it can be regarded as category C3. The descriptions in **16–20** cannot be so regarded. They lack the immediacy which gives body to

the description in **15**. Similarly, except to a few analysts, the formulations of **17** become theoretical statements of psychoanalytic intuitions which are vulnerable because they lack 'body' on the one hand and scientific rigour on the other.

I tolerate the formulations of **17–18** because I do not see my way to producing anything better, but their value is debatable. What they communicate may not be worth communicating; conversely, what was, in the psychoanalytic experience, worth communicating may not in fact have been communicated.

The position with regard to **18–20** is more complex. I cannot now say to what extent the account given represents fairly what took place. I know that in intention it does, but psychoanalytic experience shows how misleading such an impression can be. Furthermore, I have since learned that no amount of psychoanalysis can insure the analyst against distortion of his material, though his distortions may become less crude than they were before he was analysed.

The account **18–20** is therefore subject to unconscious distortion of the kind present in psychoanalysis. Moreover the account is written with conscious aim to 'illustrate' what I thought I had learned from the analytic experience. The need to 'illustrate' the theme means that an attempt is made to represent the experience in terms of sensuous experience – C category terms. Description in such terms avoids the danger of manipulation of jargon, but it introduces dangers which are as great though different. First, the terms cannot represent the psychoanalytic experience which they purport to describe, but only a sensuous experience of physical fact supposedly analogous to the mental experience. The account **18–20** is a transformation[1] of an emotional experience into a verbal formulation of a sensuous experience (**19**). This is perhaps the most direct representation in the whole account **18–20**.

In ordinary extra-analytic experience, rigorous scrutiny would be irrelevant; possibly it would be irrelevant in most psychoanalytic experience. It is irrelevant to the man in this paper, but not in the analyses of patients whose sense of reality is disturbed. It is essential to understand the nature of the analyst's formulations of his experience of reality to obtain a grasp of the nature of the patient's formulations of his experience of reality, and thus compare the two.

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[1]See *Transformations* [Volume V].

The descriptions in the last paragraph of **19,** or the whole of **20,** do not make clear how much the reader is to suppose that the account is a direct intuition of what was taking place, and how much a report of selected facts. The analyst must discern the underlying pattern by a process of discrimination and selection. If the account given is a selection made to demonstrate the correctness of the original selection, it is clearly worthless. Only if the original experience is a genuine evolution of a psychoanalytic realization, i.e. a precipitation of coherence by a "selected fact", does the writer's conscious discrimination and selection become legitimate as a method of representation.

In the passages discussed, there is a further complication because I had deliberately to falsify the facts to make identification of the patient impossible. This I achieved but at the cost of an account which I now consider worthless. It fails to represent the realization I wanted to depict and it fails to explain the interpretations given.

This leads to the dilemma of psychoanalytic communication as it is at present. The report of a session (that is, the psychoanalytic realization) must be a literal and incomprehensible jumble, or it must be an artistic representation. The former need not detain us: the latter, assuming the requisite degree of artistic capacity in the analyst, implies a transformation during which selection and ordering of the material takes place. The interpretation given the patient is a formulation intended to display an underlying pattern. It therefore is itself similar to the mathematical formula as described by Poincaré (1914, p. 30). It is also similar to some aspects of a painting, sculpture or musical composition. At their best these formulations make us aware of a coherence and order where, without them, incoherence and disorder would reign.

In practice, the psychoanalyst does not possess the conditions, even if he has the attributes, for artistic creation – unless we suppose that a capacity for conversational expression can be sublimed into a minor ephemeral art. He can however give an interpretation, and the patient experiences the realization to which the interpretation purports to approximate. When it comes to psychoanalytic communication, the reader does not have the advantage of the patient. He depends on a verbal transformation of the psychoanalytic experience which has been formulated by the same person as the one who has made the interpretation in the terms he chooses to report.

There is nothing new in the criticism of lack of objectivity in psychoanalysis, and I am not proposing to waste time on it. I wish to consider a few of the defects which are loosely combined under this general head, in particular what the difference is supposed to be between the penultimate and ultimate paragraphs of **20**. To me the supposed report of what occurred is simply a not very good C3 formulation. That is to say, in order to convey to the reader an impression of the psychoanalytic experience (which cannot in fact be seen or smelled or heard, for one is not listening to what the *patient* thinks he is saying), a description is given in terms of what *can* be sensuously experienced. No wonder psychoanalytic interpretations give rise to scepticism.

Although no one doubts the reality of, say anxiety, it cannot be sensuously apprehended. In psychoanalytic practice, we are not concerned with crude examples even of anxiety; two analysts might disagree over a patient pouring out intense overt hostility to the analyst. He could be supposed by one to be driven by anxiety, and by the other to be showing persecutory fear. The more experienced and sensitive the analyst, the more readily he experiences the non-sensuous phenomena unfolding before him. He should therefore be able to communicate something that is at present ineffable. There should be a significant difference between the formulation of what is alleged to have happened and the formulation purporting to be an interpretation. What is the significant difference between what was expressed in the analytic session and the interpretation of it given by the analyst?

Psychoanalytic discussion often takes the form of comparing what the patient has said with the interpretations which were, or might have been, given. In addition to the objection that the psychoanalytic communication is two versions of the same observation, the psychoanalytic discussion demonstrates the futility of comparing association with interpretation. Associations are infinite in number and so are interpretations; it is therefore idle to discuss matching the one to the other. This is particularly the case since the report on the associations of the patient is a transformation, and the transformation introduces a distortion which cannot be allowed for. The distortion due to the personality of the psychoanalyst does not remain constant between the association he reports and the interpretation he gives of his reported

association. A student will sometimes report an interpretation which told the patient almost nothing more than the association has already stated. In such a case, analysts consider the interpretation defective. There are occasions when the interpretation may be almost verbally identical with the association, yet, because the analyst is lending his authority to confirmation of the patient's statement, the interpretation produces significant change. It is therefore clear that nothing can be learned by a comparison of association and interpretation, but may be learned by a comparison of the nature of the interpretation with the nature of the association.

In **22** part of a dream is reported. There are two words, "rage" and "terror", which, if it is assumed that they are correctly used, represent and communicate psychic reality. The context in which they are used is a verbal transformation of a visual image. Together with the terms "rage" and "terror" they evoke a powerful impression even now when I do not remember with any certainty the occasion reported. In this respect it is different from the reported interpretation which makes no impact; I do not doubt that it represents what I said at the time. Its lack of impact is not surprising because the interpretation is formulated in F6 terms. That is, the formulation is sophisticated and is intended to be the mental counterpart of action. It is intended as a psychoanalytic action. Like all F, G, H categories, it tends to come over as a meaningless manipulation of technical terms. This is precisely the danger to be anticipated with all sophisticated formulations. It is brought out by the report in **31**; the interpretations leave a sense of meaningless verbal manipulations. They lack permanence or durability; in this respect they differ from aesthetic statements.

At the time of the interpretation, this problem does not arise because analyst and analysand are able to compare the interpretation with the facts it purports to interpret. The reader cannot do this and no amount of description, however skilful, and no interpretation, however apposite, can make up for the reader's lack of the experience to which they relate.

If the psychoanalytic situation is accurately intuited – I prefer this term to 'observed' or 'heard' or 'seen' as it does not carry the penumbra of sensuous association – the analyst finds that ordinary conversational English is surprisingly adequate for the formulation of his interpretation. Further, the emotional situation serves to make the interpretation comprehensible to the analysand – although

resistances require some modification of this latter statement as too optimistic.

As a result, interpretations which, when read, appear unlikely to effect a useful purpose, are in practice efficacious. Since it is important to understand the process of psychoanalytic growth, the failure to communicate the non-sensuous experience on which the interpretation is based is a major misfortune of analytic practice at its present stage of development. I suspect it also contributes to the somewhat futile controversy about psychoanalytic theories; the argument should illuminate *what* theory has been applied to *what* realization. In fact, it does not do so because no one has discovered a method by which this vital relationship between interpretation and the realization can be communicated. Even in **15** I was not able to make the relationship clear; still less in **23–24.**

Account **26** reports considerable psychoanalytic mobility. The patient is able to move from one psychological state to another with some freedom. I do not now remember him to have felt 'better', or to have used any terms which expressed some idea of 'cure' or 'disease'. This was in conformity with his pessimistic and sceptical attitude, but did not give any impression that depression was central. He seemed, even while he was speaking of referring his students to medical men, never to be consciously concerned with himself as a patient requiring cure. He must have been the first patient to make me wonder whether the idea of cure was not introducing an irrelevant criterion in psychoanalysis. This point will be considered again later. For the present I would draw attention to the contrast presented to psychoanalytic mobility by the moral rigidity noted at the opening of **27**. I shall have more to say of this later.

At the end of **29** and the beginning of **31**, I describe the problem produced by a growth of intuition. I did not then know how common this experience is. In the paper, 'Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-Psychotic Personalities' [chapter 5], there is an illustration of an increase of intuition and the danger it represents for the individual's growth. The theme is developed more fully in 'Catastrophic Change'[1] in which I explain that it is part of a widespread

[1]*Bulletin of the British Psychoanalytical Society*, No. 5, 1966. [See earlier, this volume. This was republished, with very few changes, as Chapter 12 in *Attention and Interpretation*, which is also in this volume. *Ed.*]

configuration. I shall leave that topic to discuss the use of terms such as 'widespread', 'superficial', used in the second paragraph of **30**, and others drawn from realizations of physical space.

Freud's model for the mind, illustrated by diagram,[1] is based on a realization of physical space; the linear representation helps to strengthen an impression which has not so far appeared to create any difficulties. It has facilitated understanding and discovery; but these models are inadequate for the investigation of patients whose orientation in space and time is faulty. If such faults are to be understood, the model used to investigate them must be one to which the realization approximates more closely than it does to the model used by the patient. If a patient behaves as if he is unaware of the passage of time and the analyst regards the passage of time and the failure to observe it as important, he needs to know how the difference of attitude has arisen. Of what is the analyst aware and how does he come to be aware of it? Does 'time' 'pass'? If it does not, then it is absurd to expect the patient to be aware of its 'passage'. Most people accept that there is a realization which is adequately represented by the formulation, 'time is passing'; but a psychotic patient may not be aware of that realization and may not behave as if the formulation 'time is passing' represents a realization of any significance. Would he accept the significance of the realization if it were represented by a formulation to which the realization approximated more closely? As it stands, the statement, 'time is passing' is made up of words derived from sensuous experience and is a verbal formulation in category C terms. Briefly, to grasp the nature of the patient's departure from 'normal' it is necessary to have an idea of 'normal', which is not itself a departure from normal. Analysts frequently speak of 'early' and 'late' phases of mental life. The discussion of episodes in the analysis as reactivations or reminiscences, of breast experiences, implies an awareness of a dimension of time and suggests that some element which obtrudes has a history. Sometimes this may be expressed as having a 'place' in time or a 'place' in space – 'superficial' or 'deep'.

I have accepted this convention, but a problem arises when the analyst finds, as I have done, reason to question the usefulness of an interpretation based on acceptance of the convention. The

[1][Bion may have been referring to the diagram on p. 24 of *The Ego and the Id* (1923b). *Ed.*]

complexity of the problem is increased when it becomes clear with certain patients that measurements of time and space are based on psychic reality – not physical space or time; both measurements are possible only to the patient capable of tolerating frustration because both are derived from measures of frustration. If the patient cannot tolerate frustration, he prevents the development of any apparatus which measures it. Thus, if he is so many years or so many minutes from his objective, he annihilates space or time which measure his frustration. The development of more sophisticated usages of this capacity, such as measurement of time or space, is thus prejudiced. A state is produced in which the patient is unwilling to admit awareness of distance or time. Ordinarily this does not matter, but when I came to consider the nature of memory and desire, I realized that they were the 'past' and 'future' of the same impulse. This led to the awareness of a need to readjust ideas over too extensive an area for the mental comfort of the analyst. His experience is, in this respect, paralleled by the patient (see **32**).

Progress in psychoanalysis is inseparable from a need to tolerate the painful concomitants of mental growth of which the immediate revelation of further problems requiring solution is not the least. The importance of this will become clearer with time; even analysts seem to be unaware of the expanding nature of their universe, partly because it is difficult to be aware of movement when the participant is closely engaged with detail, partly because the implications of psychoanalysis cannot be grasped at this early stage in its history. If my suspicion that this is so is found by experience to be correct, the difficulties of the patient, adumbrated in **32**, are significant for both analysand and analyst when growth is taking place. For the analyst, the problem presents itself for solution not only by the analysand but by the analyst as part of his own growth. He may develop contemporaneously with his patient, or independently, or not at all. In the latter case, the future of his practice or of himself is no part of analysis though it may be a part of the sociology of the practice of psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytic problem is illustrated by the difficulties to be faced on re-publication of 'Notes on the Theory of Schizophrenia' [chapter 3]. As I judge now, the description given is a sound representation of the clinical realizations which it purports to describe. It represents fairly the experience from which they are derived; it points adequately to future recurrences. In terms of Grid categories (which

I had not at that time elaborated) they are C3 elements intended to represent psychoanalytic realizations, C1 statements defining experiences of the psychoanalyst, and D4 formulations pointing to future contingencies. Yet continuing experience of psychoanalysis makes dissatisfaction with the paper inevitable. So it must be with any experience accompanied by growth; the valuable experience becomes outdated. The problem is to decide whether an experience which is illuminating can be communicated to another analyst, and if so whether the communication is worth making or receiving; to this there can be no answer other than that obtained by making the attempt. Unfortunately, the time required for making the communication, for gaining experience which seems worth communication, and for receiving communications made by others, is so great that doubts of the value of the venture become intimidating. Neither can reliance be placed on hostile criticism, as the ineffable nature of psychoanalysis makes it unlikely that so-called impartial criticism has any value beyond serving as an indication of the climate of opinion in which the analyst works. This may be summed up by saying that the analyst's work is lonely work, that the only companion he has is his patient, and his patient is by definition unreliable.

Nevertheless the patient comes for analysis and no one can compel him to do this. There is therefore reason to suppose that even in the most hostile patient there is an impulse to co-operate. It is therefore of importance to know what significance is to be attached to this impulse. The nature of the problem is apparent when the patient is suicidal, or anxious to do as much injury as he can to the analyst, or to those who have his welfare at heart. The time, money and effort involved in psychoanalysis make it a useful weapon for the patient who has such an aim. If the analysand harbours such aims, it is evident that the analyst must be clear in his mind about *his* aims for being an analyst. An ambition to help the patient is inadequate, quickly grasped by him and swept into his system of attack. If the analyst has formulated any other aim he is no better off – the patient can detect and demolish it. In **35** I have used commonly accepted terms to formulate a diagnosis (F1 in Grid categories). They have a backward-looking value and probably convey a meaning to the reader. The problem of schizophrenic thought and language includes the problem of the language that the analyst is to employ in discussing it.

None of the terms used in **35** represents the state of mind of the destructive patient I want to portray. Yet the description is a representation to which some psychoanalytic experiences approximate. What then am I to think when I meet with these terms when used by others or, as in this instance, by myself? Looking back on it, it may be that all drug addicts, schizophrenics and obsessional patients should be suspect on the grounds that their destructive impulses approximate in varying degrees to the extreme I have described. A more useful supposition is that the analyst should regard the terms used in **35**, and others like them, as binding constant conjunctions, leaving the analyst to determine what the constantly conjoined elements are. In the instance postulated the significance for the analyst is not the nature of the constantly conjoined elements, but their intensity. This is true when envy, hate, sex, love are encountered. For the practising analyst the terms used in **34** are almost useless and I would now use them with circumspection. The patients in whom the difficulties described occur are important for the degree to which destructive ambitions are active. If the analyst could assess 'degree' it would be as important as his ability to assess quality. The realizations of psychoanalysis are not however such that terms like quality and quantity can be used without considering their sensuous background. The measurement of frustration (to which I refer in a forthcoming book[1]) may offer an approach to the solution of this problem. The models which an analyst is compelled to use at the present stage of psychoanalytic development, contribute to the difficulties of assessing quantity. A model is not the same size as the realization; it derives its value partly from that very fact. It is communicatively valuable to refer to a patient's greed for 'the breast'; but the his problem may arise not from his greed for 'the breast', but from his greed for what he considers the world is able to yield him.

This alteration in scale from 'breast' to 'world' can be an unobserved but outstanding feature of the communication as it is received by the patient, though of minor importance to the analyst who makes it. The reduction in scale may make the model illuminating in every respect except one – as a measure of quantity.

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[1][*Attention and Interpretation* (especially chaps. 2 and 12) – see later, this volume. *Ed.*]

I do not propose any alteration of my formulations in **36** and **37**. They do not satisfy me, but any changes now would be made without the support of current experience. They have most value if the reader will regard them as verbal formulations of C category elements. To me they are not reports on what took place – they are verbal representations of visual images which portray an emotional state of the writer at the time of writing. As stimulants to thought in the reader, they could be useful to certain types of reader; therefore I re-publish them; I do not wish to minimize the importance of formulations which, in their time, served to represent experiences that contributed to the development of the patient and myself. If they had this merit once, they may possess it still.

The last paragraph of **38** is a formulation which represents a realization that is recurrent. Together with **39** it contains elements of a configuration which is common in the mental sphere of groups and individuals. The recurrence of the configuration, though on each occasion associated with known psychoanalytic theories, leads one to feel there must be an underlying group to which all the configurations and associated theories belong. The instance cited is one example of a relationship (which I have discussed more fully since[1]) between container and contained denoted by the sign ♀ ♂ . The sexual model implied serves to direct the observer's attention to a constantly recurring pattern; the diversity of the elements in its composition being indicated by being 'in a group', 'in a person', 'in analysis', 'acting out', 'in a statement, word or expression', and so forth. It has been objected that, for example, 'acting out' is merely a verbal peculiarity of an English translation. I am not, however, referring to verbal expressions but to a *configuration* which may appear in a verbal formulation or in a realization, in a visual image or an emotional experience in one language but not in another; in one patient's conscious but not in another's; sometimes conscious, sometimes not; sometimes in thought, sometimes in action. The important element is that the configuration should be recognized whenever it appears. When emotional experiences betray the pattern, it may have a peculiar significance, but for the present I want to stress only the importance of recognizing the configuration wherever it appears. These words I write are supposed to 'contain' a meaning, but the verbal expression can be so formalized, so rigid, so

[1][Chapter 27 of *Learning from Experience*. See Volume IV. *Ed.*]

filled with already existing ideas that the idea I want to express can have all the life squeezed out of it. On the other hand, the meaning I wish to express may have such force and vitality, relative to the verbal formulation in which I would strive to contain it, that it destroys the verbal container. The result then is not a compact communication but an incoherence; or, to take another instance, a disrupted group or society, or a group leader manqué. Psychoanalysis itself provides an outstanding example of such a force, idea or individual in tension with its container, verbal formulation, or society.

The whole of **39** (which I have suggested is most conveniently dealt with as a C category element) brings into focus a problem which is of interest for the future of psychoanalysis. I have regarded C category elements as being the stuff from which the scientific use of models derives. One advantage of the model is that it does not commit the analyst to the formal rigidity of a theory, but presents him with a tool which he can discard when it has served its purpose. This may be soon, or only after a considerable lapse of time and after many experiences of the usefulness of the model. The use of models in the physical sciences is easily understood to be valuable because the material which has to be dealt with has a sensuous background, or at least derives at a few removes from such a background. The sensuous component, which is by definition an aspect of C category elements to which those elements owe their expository value, is precisely the quality which lays the psychoanalytic model open to misunderstanding: it reproduces an aspect of the original experience, the realization about which the communication is made, in a new medium. The model should display the invariants depicted in the new medium which are supposed to be discerned in the realization, but the psychoanalytic realization is not discerned by any of the physical senses known to the biologist. Freud, in his seventh chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, speaks of consciousness as the sense organ of psychic reality. It is not necessary to be an analyst to be persuaded of the realization approximating to the term 'anxiety'. Anxiety does not smell, it has no shape, colour, or other sensuous attribute. This is true of every psychoanalytic realization. The matters with which we deal are real beyond question, but have to be described in terms that from their nature introduce distortion.

The matters discussed in **39** require a model. There is no satisfactory psychoanalytic model; the nearest approach to the functions of a

model is made by the patient when he speaks of the hole, the cavity left in the skin when a blackhead is removed. This model did not help him to solve his problem, or he would not have come for analysis. The patient's problem is not the therapeutic measures required for a skin complaint; it is his feeling that his 'mental boundary' has lost an important part of itself through his destructive attack on it. He is now attacked by the 'hole' which is the part of his mental skin which was residual after he had wrought his destruction. As a model, the statement I have just formulated is inferior in sensuously phrased visual imagery to what the patient said. What then is the matter with his model that he failed to come to a solution? What is the matter with *mine*? Is it that it is implausible and imprecise? In practice the defect of my model can be overcome because the matter to which reference is being made is, at the time of discussion, being experienced by both analyst and patient and all that is necessary is that the words employed should disclose an experience available to both, *while* it is available to both. But when, as at this moment when I write and the reader reads, there is no emotional experience to which appeal can be made, and the 'disclosure' which I as writer wish to make is of an event that has not yet taken place – of an experience which in my opinion the analyst reading this will be likely to have – the failure of the communication is fundamental, not incidental. The problem for which the psychoanalytic model is needed is similar to the problem which the mathematician solves when mathematics enables him to handle a problem in the absence of the objects. In the domain of the physical sciences, when the original problem does not permit the necessary experimentation and manipulation, a model can be built which will do away with the obstructive features while retaining the essentials of the problem unaltered – invariant.

In the problem adumbrated in **39**, a model is required because the two 'original realizations' do not exist: one, because it took place in circumstances which no longer exist, and, in so far as it exists at all, it only 'exists' in memory; the other, because it has not yet happened and, in so far as it exists at all, it only 'exists' in phantasy. Both 'originals' are therefore not available for direct investigation. Is there some form of model which can do for the psychoanalyst what models will do for the physical scientist? If such a mechanism were available it could be used to take the place of the formulation in **39**. I think it would do away with misunderstandings which the present

formulation invites. As it stands, it is a conglomerate of a number of different kinds of formulation, visual images, theories, statements which purport to be representations of factual events. Allowing for the fact that a more capable writer could correct some of these errors, I do not think that the capacity to write well is the issue. There needs to be a recognized formulation which is understood by all analysts to display the invariants in an event which is unconscious because obscured by memory, although it *has* happened, and an event which is manifest because disclosed by desire though it has not happened. Memory and desire may be regarded as past and future 'senses' of the same 'thing' (analogous to the mathematical concept of 'sense' and applying indifferently to time or space). Making use of sense in this way a formulation $\overleftarrow{\text{desire}}$ would have the same value as $\overrightarrow{\text{memory}}$, the former referring to an event that had happened and the latter referring to an event that had not happened, and therefore not usually described as being 'remembered'. A patient who could be described in terms of conversational English as 'remembering' something that had *not* happened would resemble a patient who was described as hallucinated. Conversely, the patient who did *not* remember what *had* happened, through the operation of $\overleftarrow{\text{desire}}$, or *remembered* what had *not* happened, through the operation of the same agency, should likewise be recognized as belonging to the same underlying group of 'hallucinosis'.

The concept of 'sense' which I have introduced has not been recognized in psychoanalytic practice, and the analyst's armoury has been correspondingly deficient in observations of omnipotence and omniscience. It is quite common for psychoanalytic students to observe patients whose references to God betray the operation of 'memories' of the father. The term 'God' is seen to indicate the scale by which the magnitude, wisdom and strength of the father is to be measured. If the psychoanalyst preserved an open mind to the mental phenomena unfolding in the psychoanalytic experience he would be free to appreciate the significance of 'sense' as I have described it above. As a consequence he would not be restricted to interpretations of God as displaying a distorted view of the father, but would be able to assess evidence, should it present itself, for supposing that the analysand was incapable of direct experience of God, and that experience of God had not occurred because it was made impossible by the existence of $\overleftarrow{\text{desires}}$ and $\overrightarrow{\text{memories}}$.

The experiences sketched out in **39** indicate the degree to which memory and desire obstruct the patient's relationship to an absent breast or penis on a level of mind, or at a time of life, when such an object would be so important as to evoke feelings analogous to what would in an adult be religious awe. This could be represented by desire. Taking the evidence in its other aspect, the sense memory, its significance would be its disclosure, to the extent to which the patient's relationship with God was disturbed by sensuously desired models (or C category elements) which prevented an ineffable experience by their concreteness and therefore unsuitability to represent the realization. In religious terms, this experience would seem to be represented by statements that the erring race or individual allowed itself to be beguiled by graven images, idols, religious statuary, or, in psychoanalysis, the idealized analyst. Interpretations should be given based on the recognition of desire, but not that they should be derived and given from recognition of the sense memory. The need for such appreciation and interpretation is far reaching. It would extend psychoanalytic theory to cover the views of mystics from the *Bhagavad Gita* to the present. The psychoanalyst accepts the reality of reverence and awe, and the possibility of a disturbance in the individual which makes atonement, and therefore an expression of reverence and awe, impossible. The central postulate is that atonement with ultimate reality, or O as I have called it to avoid involvement with an existing association, is essential to harmonious mental growth. It follows that interpretation involves elucidation of evidence touching atonement, and not evidence only of the continuing operation of immature relationship with a father. The introduction of 'sense' or 'direction' involves extensions of existing psychoanalytic theory. Disturbance in capacity for atonement is associated with megalomanic attitudes.

The patient discussed in **39** had an attitude to the persecuting holes which ultimately showed features we find in a religious attitude to idols. The analyst must contrast the attitude disclosed in the psychoanalytic experience with the attitude to his father, or his analyst, or the God that he is prepared to revere. In short the individual has, and retains, what religious people call a belief in God however much he denies it or claims to have become emancipated. The final relationship is permanent, though its formulation is subject to constant reformulation. Failure to recognize this vertex makes a balanced

view of individual or group impossible and lies at the root of the supposition that there is a 'negative therapeutic reaction'. I shall discuss its bearing on the analysand's realization of insanity.

In **40** the analysand shows anxiety and hostility to what he calls schizophrenia and his capacity to be aware of it. The psychotic patient is subject to powerful emotions and is able to arouse them in others – so at least it appears until the situation is examined more closely. The analysis of such a patient soon reveals a complex 'situation' rather than a complex patient. There is a field of emotional force in which the individuals seem to lose their boundaries as individuals and become 'areas' around and through which emotions play at will. Analyst and patient cannot exempt themselves from the emotional field. The analyst must be capable of more detachment than others because he cannot be an analyst *and* dissociate himself from the state of mind he is supposed to analyse. The analysand cannot dissociate himself from the state of mind he needs to have analysed; that is easier to understand if it is regarded as the state of mind of a group rather than of an individual but transcending the boundaries we usually regard as proper to groups or individuals.

The analyst who undertakes the psycho-analysis of a schizophrenic undergoes an experience for which he must improvise and adapt the mental apparatus he requires. He has one great advantage in his relationship with his analysand which he lacks in his relationship with his colleagues and others outside the experience – the analysand has the experience available to his intuition if he will permit the analyst to draw his attention to it. Those excluded from the analysis cannot gain from the analyst's formulations, because they are formulations dependent on the presence of the experiences being formulated. They are thus in the position analogous to one whose mathematical ability has not reached a point where it can deal with the problem of objects when the objects are not there. His position *vis-à-vis* the problem is similar to that of the man who has to experiment with the original object without the aid of an intervening model which he can manipulate. There is no brother with whom to work out problems of the relationship with a father. Or, as the religious man would say, there is nothing which can intercede for the individual with God. The lack of a counterpart to the model, the direct manipulation of the original, denies the analyst one of the tools required for his job, and contributes to the state of perpetual acting-out. This last is evidence

that the analyst is not – and cannot behave as if he were – dealing with models (verbal or otherwise) of his problem, but with the original itself. Analysis of the psychotic personality thus has a quality which makes it so different from the that of the non-psychotic personality. Conversely, the relationship with external reality undergoes a transformation parallel to the relationship with psychic reality which lacks an intervening (or 'interceding') model. There is no 'personality' intervening between the analyst and the 'unconscious'.

To sum up: the 'originals' are beyond inquiry without the aid of a model. The fact that neither original is in existence makes it essential that a model should somehow make allowance for, and deal with, this fact as part of the problem to be solved – a problem of the problem, so to speak – and as a feature that must itself be mirrored in the model.

Before leaving the discussion of 'sense' or 'direction', I must mention a mathematical feature of early stages in problem solving. The individual feels the problem is vast, or complicated, or otherwise out of reach. The model is an attempt to bring it into reach. When the individual is confronted with what, in comparison with himself, is an infinite number or quantity, he binds the 'innumerable' host by the name 'three' as soon as he has a feeling of 'threeness'. The 'infinite number' has now been made finite. A feeling of 'threeness' in himself has been 'bound' and what was infinity is now three. Infinity (or 'three') is the name for a psychological state and is extended to that which stimulates the psychological state. The same is true of 'three': it becomes the name for that which stimulates a sense of 'threeness'. 'Three' and 'infinity' are then instances of a peculiar form of model. They can be regarded as embodiments of a psychological state-like 'father'; or, like 'father', they can be regarded as relating to or disclosing an inescapable state of mind peculiar to the human being. From one vertex, 'three' binds a constant conjunction "won from the dark and formless infinite". It is a sign that precision has replaced imprecision. In what sense is 'three' precise and 'infinity' imprecise? Certainly not mathematically, because the mathematician strives to achieve a notation which, however inexact its genetic background, its role transplanted to a new domain is to convey the same meaning universally. In psychoanalysis precision is limited by the fact that communication is of that primitive kind which demands the presence of the object. Terms like 'excessive', 'hundreds of times', 'guilt', 'always', have a meaning provided that the object discussed is

present. In a discussion between analysts it is *not* present; intercourse between them will tend to jargon – that is, to an arbitrary manipulation of psychoanalytic terms. Even when that does not happen, it presents an appearance of happening. The criticism of psychoanalysis that it is not mathematical and cannot therefore be scientific is based on a misapprehension of the nature of the problem and the nature of the kind of mathematics employed. The subject matter with which psychoanalysis deals cannot employ any form of communication which can cater for the requirements of a problem in the absence of the problem. It cannot even employ models which would provide an adequate substitute for the original of the problem. This has misled even friendly critics, because the language used by analysts often bears a close resemblance to ordinary conversation. Similarly, statements made in ordinary conversation appear to say exactly the same thing as psychoanalysts do – often better. I have heard a lay participant in a discussion on psychoanalysis in a BBC programme suggest that Freud said nothing we did not know already. When one considers that Freud merely drew attention to the existence of sex, such a criticism seems to have a kind of lunatic truth. The reality of the psychoanalytic experience soon demonstrates the falsity of such a supposition. A statement made about a sexual experience, in the presence of the sexual experience as it shows itself in the transference, has a meaning which the same words in another and different context cannot have.

Before passing on to consider the differences between the psychotic and the non-psychotic personalities, I must make a brief reference to **41** in which results are discussed. I shall often refer to the topic because the progress of psychoanalysis has led to a departure from the state of affairs in which ideas of 'treatment', 'cure' and 'results' had any meaning.

Analysis of the psychotic affords an opportunity for seeing what it means to work when insane. A distinction should be made in the use of the terms 'psychotic' and 'insane'; an analysand can be psychotic and insane, and psychotic and sane. It is useful to consider one kind of psychoanalytic progress as being from insane psychosis to psychotic sanity. When I wrote this section I had not appreciated the extent to which ideas of cure, based on a background of sensuous experience and the pleasure principle, pervaded not only psychoanalysis but the whole domain of mental or spiritual life. Scrutiny

of the synoptic gospels will demonstrate the extent to which the religious approach to the domains of mental life activates the apparatus of expectation of 'cure' of 'painful' emotions and experiences in a way which would be appropriate to physical pain associated with physical relief and physical therapeutic measures. It did not require that St. Luke should be a doctor – this is plain from St. Mark's gospel – or that Freud's background was a training in physical medicine, to trigger off expectations of cure which are allied to a background of physical pain. It could be summed up: "There is a pain. It should be removed. Someone must remove it forthwith, preferably by magic or omnipotence or omniscience, and at once; failing that, by science". The conflict between the psychotic and non-psychotic personalities could be described as between a part of the personality which is religious and a part which is scientific. The contending views are alike in their bigotry. They are alike too in resembling contending personalities, success being marked by annihilation of the painful experience or awareness of it. Conversely, a sharpened awareness of painful emotional experiences would be a mark against the approach, scientific or religious, which was responsible. The analyst himself can act as if he embraced this view. It offers a simpler explanation and justification for the expense in time and money of psychoanalysis. Without it psychoanalysis becomes an activity which is hard to justify. Furthermore, it provides analyst and analysand with a 'memory' which gives both the sense of security that comes from a feeling that they are not engaged on any activity new to the human group.

In a paper to the British Psychoanalytical Society,[1] of which an abridged version has been published in the *Bulletin* of that Society, I drew attention to the recurrence of a certain configuration which I described as a relationship between container and contained (♀ ♂).

One manifestation of this relationship is in the stress between the 'establishment' of a group, and the 'mystic' who is a member of the group. The stress is found also in the relationship between an idea and the statement (verbal, pictorial, or artistic) that is intended to contain it. Psychoanalysis is itself such an idea: any formulation of it, or person entertaining it, or group (such as a psychoanalytic society) harbouring it, will show evidence of that stress. The abandonment of a protective shell of familiar ideas will expose the person or group

[1] ['Catastrophic Change', see earlier, this volume. *Ed.*]

who abandons it to the disruptive (even if creative) force of the 'contained' idea. Therefore 'memory' is kept in constant repair as a defensive barrier. Prominent amongst these 'memories' in a psychoanalytic Society is the idea of cure. It is a preconception in K; that is a preconception (Category D) which is not to mate with a conception as part of K activity, but is to mate with a 'memory' to become a saturated element (similar to a beta-element) to prevent growth or catastrophic change. The analyst must not be surprised to find he is himself as unwilling as his analysand or his group, to abandon the desire for cure or its idea. Nor can abandonment be achieved by an act of will. It is a short step from abandonment of 'cure' to the discovery of the reality of psychoanalysis and the unfamiliarity of the world of psychoanalytic experience. The 'desire' for cure is one example of precisely the desire that must, in common with all desires, not be entertained by a psychoanalyst. The reader will find evidence in these papers that though I had suspected, I had not grasped the importance of this point.

The temptation to desire cure is intensified because anyone successfully undergoing psychoanalysis has an experience which resembles the popular idea of 'cure'; it is supposed he is 'cured' as a result of psychoanalytic 'treatment'. The idea of 'results' should be similarly suspect because it derives from an attitude, common to physical scientists whose experience is related to sensuous impressions – though the intervention of apparatus sometimes conceals this fact. It would be ironical if an idea which the physicist is tending to discard should be taken up by psychoanalysts; we should be amongst the first to have realized the inadequacy of models in which results occupy a prominent place. In **11,** I say that good work will be undone if the analyst reassures the patient: today I do not think it requires a psychoanalyst to reassure the analysand because the analysand can obtain reassurance through the apparent resemblance of psychoanalysis to the model of physical treatment and cure. Generations of experience of physical illness and treatment have established a model, a 'memory', which acts automatically as a barrier against the intrusion of disturbing facts. Complaints against ineffectual psychoanalysis can be seen as the obverse of the comforting beliefs associated with models of treatment and cure.

Abandonment of memories and models derived from physical medicine involves experience of problems which the psychoanalyst

may regard as outside his province or capacity; often they appear to belong to disciplines to which his training has not extended. The psychoanalyst's experience of philosophical issues is so real that he often has a clearer grasp of the necessity for a philosophical background than the professional philosopher. The academic philosophic background and the realistic foreground of psychoanalytic experience approach each other; but recognition of the one by the other does not occur as often or as fruitfully as one might expect.

At the beginning of the paper on the 'Development of Schizophrenic Thought' (July 1955) [chapter 4], I report that the attempt to give clinical illustration was unsuccessful and that I restrict myself to theoretical description. The idea that the problem of communication would thereby be simplified I regard as optimistic. The clinical illustrations I regard as C category elements; they resemble reports of past events, transformations of visual images, models, but they cannot be described as any of these things because they do not satisfy psychoanalytic requirements. No solution lies in applying 'scientific' criteria as those are understood, but I cannot propose a better solution. Psychoanalysts who are not satisfied with the scientific quality of their work must look to themselves to produce better standards. The 'theoretical description' to which I thought to restrict myself is only the substitution of a sophisticated formulation for a formulation employing terms with a sensuous background. An experience about which I had no doubts sounds unconvincing to anyone without practical experience of psychoanalysis. Conviction cannot be carried even from one psychoanalyst to another unless their methods of working are extremely close. So far this has meant that two psychoanalysts share the same theoretical armoury and this involves the danger that the analyst sees what he wants to see. If two analysts are successful in minimizing the operation of memory and desire, they minimize the danger of collusion and increase the chance of sharing the same experience – 'seeing' the same mechanisms at work. The formulations used in this paper are verbal transformations of psychoanalytic intuitions.

Formulations of transference phenomena are unsatisfactory though correct as far as they go. In **41** I would now employ a geometrical formulation (H category) as a means of transforming the psychoanalytic experience into C category terms, that is into a visual image. To communicate the experience in psychoanalysis, I use a

sophisticated category (H) in a primitive way (C). In the paper I speak of the transference as if it were a linear link – a line without breadth, joining analyst and patient. But I see this now as changing constantly in the stress of the psychoanalysis so that the transference link, which at one moment is a line, at the next transforms itself into a plane. The psychoanalyst who is bound by the tenuous and tenacious line suddenly finds himself in contact with a 'monomolecular' surface or plane. The patient has a precise contact with the analyst, who finds his every fleeting mood reflected in the transference. Should he be irritated by the buzzing of a fly, or a noise in the street, or the impact of some grievous or dangerous communication about a patient or relative, the mood will be reflected. But so slight is the depth (or thickness of the planar transference) that there is no discrimination of quality of these moods. They have the same value; the buzzing fly or a serious and distracting piece of news, cast an equal reflection; both are observed by the patient, the one is of no greater and no less significance than the other. The transference change can be represented pictorially from 'the line without breadth' to 'the plane without depth'.

Some of the difficulty experienced by analysts arises when they allow the intuition achieved to languish and to be replaced by what they have learned from their analyst's theories and experience. This impulse is easily stimulated, and the habit once contracted is difficult to check; the effect on the analyst's intuition is first bad and then disastrous; if analysts permitted themselves the conditions necessary in order to 'see' what is happening the realizations of psychoanalysis would assert themselves and the differences between analysts touching what they observe would assume more modest proportions. The problem of acknowledging indebtedness to earlier work is not difficult if it is excluded from the mind of the analyst when at work with an analysand.

The psychotic patient's hostility to mental apparatus, his own or another's, that puts him in touch with reality should be matched with his attitude to psychic reality. He appears to be peculiarly aware of, and persecuted by, psychic reality. I would not stress any particular aspect of it, such as the confusional states, painful though they certainly are, but to the whole of psychic pleasure or pain. The problem is associated with the dominance of the pleasure–pain principle, as would be expected, but it achieves its peculiar quality because the

dominant pleasure–pain principle has to operate in the domain of endopsychic pleasure and pain. There is not therefore available the solution which is proper to problems of pleasure and pain which have their genesis in the world of external reality. It is as if the analysand felt he was required to deal with the kind of problem for which we now know psychoanalysis to be necessary at a time when at best he could only be expected to deal, in collaboration with a mother, with physical hunger. In other words, from the outset of life the patient feels his mental world requires special attention. This differs from having a *physical* endowment, say *physical* ill-health, which requires special attention.

With regard to the remaining sections of the paper, 44–50, descriptions are unlikely to lead to error if they are regarded as C category formulations and used by the reader as "disclosure models".[1] They are to be read, forgotten, but permitted to reappear, as part of the evolution peculiar to a particular psychoanalytic emotional situation. The comments in the conclusion (**50**) are related to a vertex in which 'cure' or 'improvement' appears as significant; at the time I did not recognize vertices, and had no reason for appreciating the inadequacy of the idea of 'cure'. My next paper shows clearly the extent to which I regarded this vertex as the only one. As it excludes many possibilities of which a psychoanalyst should be aware, I shall emphasize, by references to this paper, some of the disadvantages. In **51**, though I speak of developments 'which are analytically significant', I really meant that they were therapeutically significant.

I consider any idea that development is therapeutically significant as being of less importance than an idea that it is psychoanalytically significant. The development might be considered both therapeutically *and* psychoanalytically significant, but the latter idea I regard as of a different and more important category than the former. In the same paragraph I refer to improvements, but the 'improvement' must be in someone's opinion and according to some established (but unmentioned) standard. That assessment is useful in so far as it purports to measure change, however vaguely; but the assessment itself does not have the significance (still less the *only* significance) for psychoanalysis, in the sense that 'cure' and 'improvement' have a significance in the domain of physical medicine. Assessments of

[1]Ian T. Ramsey, *Models and Mystery* (Oxford University Press, 1964).

moral or social worth are borrowed from religion or morals or politics without consideration of their applicability to psychoanalysis. This is the more surprising in that the analysand's criteria are proper matters for investigation. I do not question the 'improvements'; I question the unquestioning acceptance of improvement as an aim or desire proper to a psychoanalyst. As I have said, there is no place for desire in psychoanalysis; there is no place for memory, as it is based on and inseparable from desires related to past activities different from psychoanalysis. A desire to be a good analyst obstructs *being* an analyst.

I would today not go further than my last sentence in **51**: "the improvements I have seen deserve psychoanalytic investigation". More than that imposes a standard of progress which precludes observation of the different standards of progress, their provenance and part in psychoanalysis.

The limited acknowledgements to previous work may seem surprising. It is an aspect of psychoanalytic work of which I have become more, not less, persuaded. A psychoanalyst needs a capacity to see the implications of both what his patients and his analytic predecessors say and not the quantity of ways in which they say it. The implications of Freud's paper 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911b) have been widely recognized by psychoanalysts, but this does not mean that they have been recognized by any particular psychoanalyst. Memory as usual offers a quick substitute, in appearance at least, for permitting an evolution to commence in the reader's mind. What I have said about the psychoanalytic sessions I consider applies to the *experience* of reading psychoanalytic work. Freud's paper should be read – and 'forgotten': only in this way is it possible to produce the conditions in which, when it is next read, it can stimulate the evolution of further development. There is time to do this only with the best papers; but only the best papers have the power to stimulate a *defensive* reading (of what the paper is about) as a substitute for experiencing the paper itself – what I have elsewhere[1] called Transformation under K, as contrasted with Transformation under O. The same comments hold for the papers of Melanie Klein that I have mentioned.

This view that psychoanalytic papers are to be treated as experiences which affect the development of the reader will not be subscribed

[1][*Transformations* – see Volume V. *Ed.*]

to by all psychoanalysts. I do not contend that it is a matter of conscious choice determined by the reader's wishes, but that certain books, like certain works of art, rouse powerful feelings and stimulate growth willy-nilly. As everyone knows, this was so with Freud.

As I have expanded this theme in my communication on 'Catastrophic Change',[1] I shall not pursue the matter further here. The works to which I have drawn attention here represent many hours of hard reading – which may not at first be apparent. I found them illuminating, but they have not been adequate; though my paper is inadequate I am still at a loss to suggest improvements beyond what I have said above about the psychotic transference; I therefore leave it as I wrote it. The views put forward in **58** are more fully dealt with in my paper 'Attacks on Linking' [chapter 8].

In **63–68**, I have given a description intended to represent the actual experience of a session. I think that the experience was exceptional; the patient was co-operative within the limits set by his mental state and he regarded himself in some sort as 'ill' and requiring 'treatment'. He also seemed to regard psychoanalysis as if it were treatment. I took this for granted as a reasonable view, but I think now that any view entertained by an analysand should be questioned. The psychoanalyst's tool is an attitude of philosophic doubt; it is of first importance to preserve such 'doubt', on which the analysis can be built. A patient making attacks on linking will show his dislike of the analyst's ability to preserve an attitude of doubt, and will make constant efforts to stimulate the analyst's desires and memory. The evidence of 'improvement' which impressed and pleased me was no part of psychoanalytic work.

This theme is embarked on at the end of **68** and discussed in **69**. When a patient is so disturbed that he earns a psychiatric diagnosis, it is not surprising that relatives, friends, the patient himself and the analyst tend to agree about 'treatment' and 'cure'. But the most disturbed patient can show flashes of intuition which are reminders of his mental life often lost to sight. Conversely, persons showing powerful insights are often attacked as mad. In the paper 'Catastrophic Change', I have drawn attention to one instance, well known in a Christian culture, and I pointed out a configuration in which this element is constantly repeated. It is necessary to be aware

[1][See earlier, this volume. *Ed.*]

of 'improvement' which may be denial of mystical qualities in the individual. The opposite error sees deep mental disturbance as evidence of genius. I leave that paper for further discussion, but repeat reasons for mistrusting 'cure' or 'improvement' – not because I doubt the existence of a realization which approximates to these terms, but because the tendency to equate psychoanalysis with 'treatment', and 'cure' with improvement, is a warning that the analysis is becoming restricted; limitation is being placed on the analysand's growth in the interest of keeping the group undisturbed. With the conclusion **70**, I have no quarrel in so far as it can be regarded as a plea for more psychoanalysis. Even so, I regard it as redundant, as psychoanalysis does not need anything that advertisement and political procedures can do for it. Conversely, those requiring the arts of the politician will not desire psychoanalysis.

When I wrote on hallucination, I thought 'independent' support for the diagnosis of schizophrenia important. Now it is more significant that these patients are able to inspire similar reactions in members of groups to which they belong. The more intimate associates (relatives chiefly and the patients themselves) wanted to claim that there was something wrong, but that the patients could not really be 'like that'; naturally what 'that' was, differed in the opinion of the doctors from what the relatives thought it was. I did not appreciate it at the time, but by making a psychoanalytic approach I was presupposing yet another 'that' that the patient was. I wanted support for the idea that I knew what the patient was; that the patient was what the medical profession said he was; that I agreed with the medical profession. I wanted to avoid the position in which it could be said that everyone knew what the patient was except myself and possibly, though not certainly, the patient. However that was soon the position in which *I did* find myself. As psychoanalyst I was committed to keeping an open mind, while feeling constant pressure, not least from myself, to take refuge in certainty. The patients showed themselves anxious to agree with an interpretation so as to build up a sense of security. Since I deprecate allowing rein to memory and desire, it is right to point out that exclusion of both exposes the analyst to the anxiety of being in a minority of one (possibly two when the patient throws in his lot with the analyst) by engaging on the analysis of such a patient.

Until co-operation evolves there is no question of 'observing hallucinations'. I do not believe this is possible if the analyst seeks the

comfort of co-operation from anyone other than the patient himself. The analyst's position is not improved *vis-à-vis* relatives, friends the medical profession and others able and willing to co-operate, by what seems to be an uncooperative and possibly arrogant attitude. Nevertheless, the analysis of a schizophrenic is done with the patient alone, or not at all.

The 'clinical' description, **72**, is open to the objections already raised against this class of report. The description is in terms appropriate to a sensuous experience. The experience had psychic reality which no one would dispute, but it was not represented by its sensuous reality. I cannot improve on the description I gave in that paper though it could not carry conviction to anyone who did not want to be convinced, and might well put a strain on the credulity of someone who did. What then is to be done? I conclude that in addition to agreed procedures, analysis of the analyst and so on, there must be a conduct of the analyst's mental life which precludes his slipping into bad mental habits. It would help to avoid errors if, as a first step, psychoanalysts treated what are considered usually to be reports of analytic experiences as 'models' similar to those used by physical scientists. Scientific method must be followed with caution to profit by Freud's demonstration of unconscious motives. Psychoanalytic observation of our own faults is liable to mask the weaknesses of existing scientific method, even when recognized by scientists. The scientific method of psychoanalysis should be turned on its defects of communication. This is either meaningful, but inappropriate to a non-sensuous experience, or so 'abstract' that it simulates but does not represent a non-sensuous experience. The choice appears as picturesque inaccuracy or jargon. It may appear pedantry to scrutinize the descriptions which we give of psychoanalytic experiences, but not when the discussion centres on hallucinations which are, as far as the patient is concerned, sensuous experiences. To the analyst they are not, for he does not hear or see what the hallucinated patient hears or sees, but he must interpret the events which he witnesses.

In **76** I mention my inability to report the 'events' that led me to think the patient was hallucinated. I still find it hard to offer suggestions for determining the point at which awareness occurs. A patient may, for example, be making a series of hostile allegations. This can be a simple expression of hostility, but it may be part of a splitting attack on the analyst. On one occasion, the patient had no fear of

hallucinations with which, he said later, he was quite familiar, but was using them as a weapon in his war with me. I do not consider here the *varieties of* experience with which the hallucinated patient confronts the analyst, but the analyst's experience of the patient's hallucination is usually a good example of what I mean by evolution. At one moment the facts appear to be a simple outpouring of hostility; suddenly they are transformed; the patient is experiencing hallucination. It is as if the analyst, whom the patient was attacking, had a 'skin' which floated off him and now occupied some position between the analyst and the patient. (It is characteristic that in this description I have to resort to spatial descriptions which have more 'body' than I like to give them, and are known by me to be inaccurate formulations.) The more experience an analyst has of psychotic phenomena, the less room he has for doubt of their reality. They 'evolve'; they are there and are replaced by a further 'evolution'. Fortunately for psychoanalysis, these events can be demonstrated between analyst and analysand, but unfortunately for the science they cannot be demonstrated *in the absence of the phenomena.* There is a curious parallel in the plight of the individual who cannot solve a problem of enumeration mathematically, but has to resort to manipulation of the objects to be numbered.

In this paper I have described the evacuatory function of hallucination as if it were the only one. I would now expect hallucinations and the 'use' to which they are being put to be constantly changing. The analyst needs to be in a position to 'intuit' hallucinations and ultimately the laws governing them and their changes. A rigid system cannot represent a changing realization. Ability to banish memory and desire is one of the conditions necessary for observation of hallucination. The moment an evolution takes place and reproaches directed at the analyst have been 'floated off' to an intermediate 'skin', the analyst must be able to 'intuit' and interpret it.

At **71**, I explain that existing descriptions of hallucinations are not good enough for practising analysts. The description I have just attempted may explain why I think analysts need to formulate their own descriptions. The transformation can be traced from hostile abuse of the analyst through its stages from fear of penetrating into him through violence of linear attack (and therefore confusion with him), to planar attack (the widespread, diffuse, unpenetrating associations) and thence to the 'floating-off' of the 'skin'. I am not optimistic

about making my meaning clear to the reader by such a description, but once he is in a position to experience the realization he will not have any doubts of its reality.

The analyst must not allow himself to be deflected from the vertex from which the emotional events, when they have evolved, become 'intuitable'. The study of hallucination is at its beginning, not its end. Time has confirmed the conjecture made at the end of **82**.

In **83** of the paper 'On Arrogance' [chapter 7], I rehearse the Oedipus myth by way of making clear a connection between curiosity, arrogance and stupidity; the connection cannot so easily be established in psychoanalytic practice. I found more difficulty when I was relying on memory to provide the links than I do today when I allow the analytic situation to evolve, and then interpret the 'evolution'. It is essential for the analyst and his analysand that the operation of curiosity itself should be demonstrated – not its name. It has been objected, for example, that 'acting out' is an English translation of a phrase used by Freud to mean something different from the meaning attributed to it in English. The confusion arises because the discussion is thought to centre on the representation of a realization and not on the realization: Or vice-versa, not about the term 'acting out', but about the phenomena represented by that term. In the same way, I am not talking of occasions when patients use the word "curiosity", but of curiosity itself. The distinction must be, but is not always, borne in mind. If it were, the reproach of jargon would not so often be levelled at, or incurred by, psychoanalysts.

I state in **88** that the person on whose analysis this study is based did not at any time behave as a psychotic; this comment is valid if ordinary psychiatric usage is accepted.

Melanie Klein believed that psychotic mechanisms could be found in all analysands, and should be uncovered if the analysis was to be satisfactory. With this I agree: there is no applicant for psychoanalysis who is without fear of the psychotic elements in himself and who does not believe he can achieve a satisfactory adjustment without having those elements analysed. One solution of this problem is particularly dangerous for those concerned with training. The individual seeks to deal with his fear by becoming a trainee, so that his acceptance can be taken as an authoritative declaration of immunity by those best qualified to know. He can proceed with the aid of his analyst to evade coming to grips with his fear, and terminate by

becoming a qualified analyst. His qualification is an ability, thanks to projective identification (in which he does not believe), to preen himself on freedom from the psychosis for which he looks down upon his patients and colleagues. The more psychosis, or even hallucinations, are psychoanalytically studied the more inadequate established ideas appear; as I have dealt with this development in greater detail in 'Catastrophic Change', I shall not discuss it here.

In **91**, the reference to the destruction of an important link is based on a number of observations, the cumulative effect of which led to the formulations in the paper, 'Attacks on Linking'. The ideas set out in it illuminate a number of situations which I did not have in mind when I wrote the paper. As I became able to observe the evolution of the psychoanalytic situation I was led to the frustrating aspects of memory and desire. Analysands stimulate both elements in the analyst as a method of destroying his link with the analysand. It is as if the patient were himself a psychoanalyst who discovered these elements and set about deliberately to stimulate them to destroy the link between the analyst and himself. Experience of attempting to exclude the operation of memory and desire has persuaded me of the value of doing so. The difficulty of successful exclusion makes it hard to define memory and desire with rigour, or to assess the nature of the sharpening of intuition associated with it. I regard the idea of causation, implicit throughout the paper, as erroneous; it will limit the perspicacity of the analyst if he allows this element in 'Attacks on Linking' to obtrude. The 'causal link' has apparent validity only with events associated closely in space and time. The fallacious nature of reasoning based on the idea of 'causes' is clearly argued by Heisenberg,[1] in terms which should evoke an understanding response in any psychoanalyst. Provided the analyst does not allow himself to be beguiled into searching for and proposing 'causes', except in conversational terms, the paper may stimulate enquiries of his own. The discovery of a 'cause' relates more to the peace of mind of the discoverer than to the object of his research.

This brings me to the problem of how the gap is to be bridged between reading the papers in this book and the psychoanalytic experience. My suggestion is that the papers should be read in the same conditions as those in which a psychoanalysis should be

[1] *Physics and Philosophy* (Allen & Unwin, 1958), p. 81.

conducted – without memory or desire. And then forgotten. They can be re-read; but not remembered. Such advice could be given with greater assurance if the nature of the communications, their status as formulations, were more certain. I have attempted to make that so by proposing that so-called clinical reports (supposedly F3) were regarded as C3-verbal transformations of sensory impressions. At this early stage, there is no adequate categorization which is likely to be more useful than popular repute.

The proper state for intuiting psychoanalytic realizations, which I have suggested in this review, can be compared with the states supposed to provide conditions for hallucinations. The hallucinated individual is apparently having sensuous experiences without any background of sensuous reality. The analyst must be able to intuit psychic reality which has no known sensuous realization. The hallucinated individual transforms and interprets the background of reality, of which he is aware, in different terms from those employed by the psychoanalyst. I do not consider that the hallucinated patient is reporting a realization with a sensuous background; equally I do not consider an interpretation in psychoanalysis derives from facts accessible to sensuous apparatus. How then is one to explain the difference between an hallucination and an interpretation of an intuited psychoanalytic experience? The charge is sometimes loosely and lightly made that psychoanalysts analysing patients who are psychotic are themselves psychotic. I would seek a formulation to represent the difference between the intuition (in my sense of the term) of a realization, which has no sensible component, and a hallucination of a realization which is similarly devoid of a sensible realization. The psychoanalyst has at least the opportunity which would allow him to contribute an answer; many supposedly sane and responsible people transform thoughts into actions which it would be charitable to call insane and are often, charitably, so called.

As a stimulus to further thought, I would draw attention to a peculiarity, known to all but not sufficiently regarded. Ordinarily the sense organs have their own objects of sense. It is true that the eye, subjected to pressure, will apparently 'see' light ('stars', according to pugilists). In the mental realm, the "sense organ of psychic reality" (to borrow a phrase from Freud) has no such limitation. It can indifferently appreciate all the counterparts of *all* the senses. The mental counterparts of smell, sight, etc., can *all* apparently be intuited by the

same apparatus. The issue is of practical importance to the analyst whose analysand says, "I see what you mean" when he has an hallucination, say, of being sexually assaulted; what *he* means is that the *meaning* of what the analyst said appeared to him in a visual form and *not* that he understood an interpretation. This is the kind of problem to which the last paper, 'A Theory of Thinking' [chapter 9], is an introduction.

The fact that thinking and talking play such an important part in psychoanalysis is so obvious that it is liable to escape attention. It does not, however, escape the attention of the patient who is concentrating his attacks on linking, and in particular the link between himself and the analyst; such a patient makes destructive attacks on the capacity of both analyst and himself to talk or think. If these attacks are to be properly understood, the analyst needs to be aware of the nature of the targets being attacked. The paper is an attempt to elucidate this. With my present experience I would lay more stress, in **98**, on the importance of doubting that a thinker is necessary because thoughts exist. For a proper understanding of the situation when attacks on linking are being delivered, it is useful to postulate thoughts that have no thinker. I cannot here discuss the problems, but need to formulate them for further investigation, thus: – Thoughts exist without a thinker. The idea of infinitude is prior to any idea of the finite. The finite is "won from the dark and formless infinite". Restating this more concretely, the human personality is aware of infinity, the 'oceanic feeling'. It becomes aware of limitation, presumably through physical and mental experience of itself and the sense of frustration. A number that is infinite, a sense of infinity, is replaced, say, by a sense of threeness. The sense that an infinite number of objects exists is replaced by a sense that only three objects exist; infinite space becomes finite space. The thoughts which have no thinker acquire, or are acquired by, a thinker.

In practice I have found this formulation, or something like it, a helpful approximation to psychoanalytic realizations. The patient who suffers from what used to be known as 'disturbances of thought' will provide instances showing that every interpretation the analyst gives is really a thought of his. He will betray his belief that papers or books written by others, including of course his analyst, were really filched from him. This belief extends to what in more usual patients appears as the Oedipal situation. In so far as he or she admits the facts

of parental intercourse, or verbal intercourse between the analyst and himself, he is simply a lump of faeces, the product of a couple. In so far as he regards himself as his creator, he has evolved out of the infinite. His human qualities (limitations) are due to the parents, by their intercourse, stealing him from himself (equated with God). The ramifications of this attitude, more clearly discerned if the analyst postulates "thoughts without a thinker", are so considerable that I require another book to attempt elucidation. Inadequate though this formulation is, I hope it will help the reader to find the continuation of the developments which I have tried to sketch out in these papers.

I would warn against the phrase, "empirically verifiable data", which I employ in **100**. I do not mean that experience 'verifies' or 'validates' anything. This belief as I have come across it in the literature of the philosophy of science relates to an experience which enables the scientist to achieve a feeling of security to offset and neutralize the sense of insecurity following on the discovery that discovery has exposed further vistas of unsolved problems – 'thoughts' in search of a thinker.

NOTES ON MEMORY AND DESIRE

1967

‘Notes on Memory and Desire’ was first published in 1967 in *Psychoanalytic Forum, 2* (No. 3). It was reprinted in 1994, by kind permission of John A. Lindon, MD, Editor, in *Cogitations* [New Extended Edition], edited by F. Bion (London: Karnac Books). It was also reprinted in 1988 in *Melanie Klein Today Vol. 2: Mainly Practice*, edited by E. Bott Spillius. (London: Routledge, pp. 17–21).

Notes on Memory and Desire

Memory is always misleading as a record of fact since it is distorted by the influence of unconscious forces. Desires interfere, by absence of mind when observation is essential, with the operation of judgement. Desires distort judgement by selection and suppression of material to be judged.

Memory and Desire exercise and intensify those aspects of the mind that derive from sensuous experience. They thus promote capacity derived from sense impressions and designed to serve impressions of sense. They deal, respectively, with sense impressions of what is supposed to have happened and sense impressions of what has not yet happened.

Psychoanalytic 'observation' is concerned neither with what has happened nor with what is going to happen, but with what is happening. Furthermore, it is not concerned with sense impressions or objects of sense. Any psychoanalyst knows depression, anxiety, fear, and other aspects of psychic reality, whether those aspects have been or can be successfully named or not. These are the psychoanalyst's real world. Of its reality he has no doubt. Yet anxiety, to take one example, has no shape, no smell, no taste; awareness of the sensuous accompaniments of emotional experience are a hindrance to the psychoanalyst's intuition of the reality with which he must be at one.

Every session attended by the psychoanalyst must have no history and no future.

What is 'known' about the patient is of no further consequence: it is either false or irrelevant. If it is 'known' by patient and analyst, it is obsolete. If it is 'known' by the one but not the other, a defence or grid

category 2 element (1,2) (see Grid, [p. vii, this volume]) is operating. The only point of importance in any session is the unknown. Nothing must be allowed to distract from intuiting that.

In any session, evolution takes place. Out of the darkness and formlessness something evolves. That evolution can bear a superficial resemblance to memory, but once it has been experienced, it can never be confounded with memory. It shares with dreams the quality of being wholly present or unaccountably and suddenly absent. This evolution is what the psychoanalyst must be ready to interpret.

To do this, he needs to discipline his thoughts. First and foremost, as every psychoanalyst knows, he must have had as thorough an analysis as possible; nothing said here must be taken as casting doubt on that. Second, he must cultivate a watchful avoidance of memory. Notes should be confined to matters that *can* be recorded – the programme of appointments is an obvious example.

Obey the following rules:

1. *Memory:* Do not remember past sessions. The greater the impulse to remember what has been said or done, the more the need to resist it. This impulse can present itself as a wish to remember something that has happened because it appears to have precipitated an emotional crisis: *no* crisis should be allowed to breach this rule. The supposed events must not be allowed to occupy the mind. Otherwise the evolution of the session will not be observed at the only time when it can be observed – while it is taking place.
2. *Desires:* The psychoanalyst can start by avoiding any desires for the approaching end of the session (or week, or term). Desires for results, 'cure' or even understanding must not be allowed to proliferate.

These rules must be obeyed *all* the time and not simply during the sessions. In time the psychoanalyst will become more aware of the pressure of memories and desires and more skilled at eschewing them.

If this discipline is followed, there will be an increase of anxiety in the psychoanalyst at first, but it must not interfere with preservation of the rules. The procedure should be started at once and not abandoned on any pretext whatever.

The pattern of analysis will change. Roughly speaking, the patient will not appear to develop over a period of time, but each session will be complete in itself. 'Progress' will be measured by the increased number and variety of moods, ideas, and attitudes seen in any given session. There will be less clogging of the sessions by the repetition of material that should have disappeared and, consequently, a quickened tempo within each session every session.

The psychoanalyst should aim at achieving a state of mind so that at every session he feels he has not seen the patient before. If he feels he has, he is treating the wrong patient.

This procedure is extremely penetrating. Therefore the psychoanalyst must aim at a steady exclusion of memory and desire and not be too disturbed if the results appear alarming at first. He will become used to it and he will have the consolation of building his psychoanalytic technique on a firm basis of intuiting evolution and NOT on the shifting sand of slight experience imperfectly remembered, which rapidly gives way not to experience, but to neurologically certain decay of mental faculty. The evolving session is unmistakable, and the intuiting of it does not deteriorate. If given a chance, it starts early and decays late.

The foregoing is a brief account distilled from putting the precepts advocated into practice. The theoretical implications can be worked out by each psychoanalyst for himself. His interpretations should gain in force and conviction – both for himself and his patient – because they derive from the emotional experience with a unique individual and not from generalized theories imperfectly 'remembered'.

DISCUSSANTS

The discussants commenting on this paper were: Thomas French, MD (Chicago, Illinois, USA); John A. Lindon, MD (Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.); Avelino González, MD (Mexico DF, Mexico); Marjorie Brierley, MBBS (Keswick, Cumberland, England); Herbert H. Herskovitz, MD (Bala-Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, USA).

AUTHOR'S RESPONSE

The discussants of my 'Notes on Memory and Desire' help to make it clear that some of the confusion arises through the ambiguity of the terms 'memory' and 'desire'. I realize that it would be helpful if I could distinguish between two different phenomena that are both usually and indifferently called 'memory'. This I have tried to do by speaking of one as 'evolution', by which I mean the experience where some idea or pictorial impression floats into the mind unbidden and as a whole. From this I wish to distinguish ideas that present themselves in response to a deliberate and conscious attempt at recall; for this last I reserve the term 'memory'. 'Memory' I keep for experience related predominantly to sensuous impressions: 'evolution' I regard as based on experience that has no sensuous background but is expressed in terms that are derived from the language of sensuous experience. For example, I 'see' meaning I intuit through the medium of a visual impression.

'Desire' should not be distinguished from 'memory', as I prefer that the terms should represent one phenomenon that is a suffusion of both. I have tried to express this by saying 'memory' is the past tense of 'desire', 'anticipation' being its future tense.

These definitory hypotheses have a limited value, and I suggest that every psychoanalyst should make up his mind for himself by simple experimentation as to what these terms represent. For example, he should school himself to avoid thinking of the end of the session, week, or term (having made previous provision for terminating the session at the correct time as a matter of administration), and when he has done this for a sufficient period without trying to hurry himself, make up his mind about what *he* would call 'Memory' and 'Desire'. When he has done this, he can proceed to the next stage of extending his suppressions of the experience he has discovered in this way. I must warn psychoanalysts that I do not think they should extend this procedure hurriedly or without discussion with other psychoanalysts with a view to consolidating each step before taking another.

This procedure seems to me to approximate a state which Freud described in a letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé, 25 May 1916: "I know that I have artificially blinded myself at my work in order to concentrate

all the light on the one dark passage." In my experience this procedure makes it possible to intuit a present 'evolution' and lay the foundations for future 'evolutions'. The more firmly this is done, the less the psychoanalyst has to bother about remembering.

I hope this makes clear some of the points to which Dr French objects, though I am doubtful whether this method should be used if he really feels that he is 'completely unable' to understand. Indeed, I would not 'desire' anyone to employ this approach unless, like Dr Lindon, he feels it has some meaning for him.

The experience that Dr Lindon describes appears to me to afford the foundation for exploring the whole question of psychoanalytic observation. I agree with his feeling that 'memory' and 'desire' are obstacles intervening between the psychoanalysts and the emotional experience of the session. When it is considered how little opportunity even five sessions a week affords the psychoanalyst, any obstacle to appreciation becomes serious.

Dr González draws attention to a defect of which I am very conscious. My own feeling is that my views have 'evolved', and although this must mean they have changed, I think the 'change' less significant than the 'evolution'.

I think the expressions he rightly quotes from *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* are wrongly framed, but wrong though the formulations now seem to me to be, they were good enough to lead me to my present formulations, which I think are better. In particular, I think the use of language based on the experience of the senses led me to fail to recognize that one does not in fact 'see' (feel, touch, smell, etc.) anxiety. I hope that my experience will be repeated by others who have tried to read these earlier formulations. If it is, I shall feel less remorseful.

I hope that my quotation from Freud will convince Dr Brierley that I am attempting to elaborate on the importance of rapport. I feel some unease if it is suggested that I am departing from psychoanalytic technique, not because I have any objection to innovation if it seems to be necessary, but because it is unlikely that the intuitions of experienced psychoanalysts can be lightly laid aside. I do hope, however, that the points I make may help psychoanalysts to think themselves into closer contact with the psychoanalytic experience.

Darwin expressed the view that judgement was inimical to observation, but, as Dr Brierley points out, the psychoanalyst has to formulate judgements while observations are being made. I hope the distinction I have tried to draw between 'evolution' and 'memory' may help to meet her objections. I believe it would go some way towards meeting Dr Herskovitz's objection to 'illogicalities'. I do in any case feel doubts about the value of a logical theory to represent the realizations of psychoanalysis. I think the 'logical' theory and the 'illogicalities' of the psychoanalytic experience should be permitted to coexist until the observed disharmony is resolved by 'evolution'.

ATTENTION AND INTERPRETATION: A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO INSIGHT IN PSYCHO-ANALYSIS AND GROUPS

1970

Attention and Interpretation: A Scientific Approach to Insight in Psycho-Analysis and Groups was published in 1970 by Tavistock Publications, London, and reprinted in 1984 by Karnac Books, London. It was included in *Seven Servants*, published in 1977 by Jason Aronson, New York.

Chapter 12, 'Container and Contained Transformed', is an amended version of 'Catastrophic Change', published in 1966 in the *Bulletin of the British Psychoanalytical Society, 5*.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

This work was published in 1970, when Bion had been living and working for two years in Los Angeles. As André Green (1973) suggested in his review of the book, readers who turn to this work hoping to find a definitive theory either of attention or of interpretation will be disappointed, the former term not even making an appearance in the book's index. Reflecting, however, on the definition of attention used by Bion and Freud, Green had a flash of realization: if the function of attention is, "periodically to search the outer world in order that its data might be already familiar if an urgent need should arise" (Freud, 1911b, p. 220), and "Its activity meets the sense impressions half way, instead of awaiting their appearance", then Bion's book could be understood as fulfilling just such a function – that of meeting the reader half-way. So, wrote Green, "Attention was not what was *in* the book, it was the book itself."

This is an interesting and accurate statement, and one that holds true specifically for *Attention and Interpretation* and generally in terms of Bion's overall project, which was to address the problem of "how to make the emotions which permeate the abstract formulations of psychoanalytical theories come alive for the reader or the listener" (Bion Talamo, 1981):

> This sort of problem has been present in Bion's work from *Second Thoughts* onwards, when he states that: "The subject matter with which psychoanalysis deals cannot employ any form of communication which can cater for the requirements of a problem in the absence of the problem." It seems to me that this statement implies Bion's desire to make the subject of the discussion emotionally present for the reader so that it is then possible to discuss it at once with an immediate awareness of the emotional aspects. [Bion Talamo, 1981, p. 626]

In *Attention and Interpretation* Bion encourages the capacities of patience and faith in the reader, as he did in *Learning from Experience*, and he produces a series of experiences that in their basic underlying structure resemble the operation of the concepts under discussion – something that has been remarked on by David Bell (2010), who likens the effect of Bion's writing to that of Wittgenstein:

> Bion is a writer who has an effect on his reader, and one that is most peculiar. It is as if the very thing that he discusses takes place in the act of reading him; there is a reflexivity in his writing. This seems also to be true of Wittgenstein, referred to by Stanley Cavell (1969), when he stated that in reading Wittgenstein one feels exposed to the peculiar experiences he describes. [Bell, 2010, p. 81]

André Green (1992), in his review of *Cogitations*, stated that Bion, "makes us witnesses to the process of the unfolding of his thought. We literally follow him." In this process Bion's formulations promote experiential realizations, particularly in those readers who have an opportunity to meet the phenomena in the analytic encounter – by being exposed to transference and countertransference phenomena – and in a concentrated form in work with patients whose thought and learning processes are disturbed. This is what Bion meant in his many references to aspects of the writing being particularly aimed at practising analysts.

Readers can find themselves experiencing – often some time afterwards – a coming-together of preconceptions (states of half-expectation) and impressions appropriate to them to form conceptions. This process Bion calls 'realization', and in Chapter 3, 'Reality sensuous and psychic', he warns the reader against "too great a regard" for what he has written, because to do so risks obstructing that experience of personal realization, in the analytic situation, of what Bion has been sketching out.

Bion's recommendations concerning memory and desire are elaborated in this book. His 1966 paper 'Catastrophic Change', which further describes his container–contained (♀♂) model, is repeated with only small amendments as Chapter 12.[1] These recommendations can be read in conjunction with his original exposition of the ideas in the 1965 presentation of his paper 'Memory and Desire' (this volume).

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[1]A line-by-line comparison of the two texts is provided in Appendix C of Volume XV.

Chapter 4 is headed, 'Opacity of memory and desire'. If we are to be strictly logical about the terms Bion is using here, there is a case for considering that the opacity is a characteristic not of memory and desire, but of *F* (Faith), with the interfering effects of memory and desire operating as 'effacing light' to the analyst's receptivity towards *F* as an aspect of what Bion indicates as 'O' (see below).

Two final points: First, a word about the complete title of the book – *Attention and Interpretation: A Scientific Approach to Insight in Psycho-Analysis and Groups*. The second part of the title tends, for brevity, to be left out when the book is quoted, but it does contain an important reference to Bion's correlation of group mentality and the inner world of the individual in analysis, to provide something that functions in an analogous manner to 'binocular vision'. In this correlation Bion felt that there existed the germ of a scientific function, as he stated in his introduction to *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers* (1961):

> I am impressed, as a practising psycho-analyst, by the fact that the psychoanalytic approach, through the individual, and the approach these papers describe, through the group, are dealing with different facets of the same phenomena. The two methods provide the practitioner with a rudimentary binocular vision. The observations tend to fall into two categories, whose affinity is shown by phenomena which, when examined by one method, centre on the Oedipal situation, related to the pairing group, and, when examined by the other, centre on the sphinx, related to problems of knowledge and scientific method. [p. 101]

Finally, an important aspect of *Attention and Interpretation: A Scientific Approach to Insight in Psycho-Analysis and Groups* is Bion's discussion of what he indicates as O.

Bion's O is one of the later ideas which undoubtedly has proved most off-putting to many British psychoanalysts. As Caper (1998) has pointed out, the notion, and Bion's exposition of it, lends itself to being understood as belonging to mysticism. A careful reading of Bion, however, allows us to see that it is an epistemological idea relating to *the limits of representation*.

One can see this notion, 'O', as representing the unknowable dimension of real life that lies behind what we can apprehend through the senses or articulate in language, and to which Wittgenstein was referring in his *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* (1922/1974, p. 7) when

he wrote, "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent", and which Bertrand Russell (1922) clarified in the following sentences from his introduction to that work:

> In order that a certain sentence should assert a certain fact there must, however the language may be constructed, be something in common between the structure of the sentence and the structure of the fact. This is perhaps the most fundamental thesis of Mr Wittgenstein's theory. That which has to be in common between the sentence and the fact cannot, he contends, be itself in turn *said* in language. It can, in his phraseology, only be *shown*, not said, for whatever we may say will still need to have the same structure. [p. x]

When Russell goes on to state the following, about Wittgenstein, we can see some links to Bion's use of Hume's (1896) term 'constant conjunction'[1] and that of 'invariant'. Russell writes:

> He compares linguistic expression to projection in geometry. A geometrical figure may be projected in many ways: each of these ways corresponds to a different language, but the projective properties of the original figure remain unchanged whichever of these ways may be adopted. These projective properties correspond to that which in his theory the proposition and the fact must have in common, if the proposition is to assert the fact. [p. xi]

Bion uses the deliberately empty sign 'O' to point towards this unspeakable and unknowable reality, which, he says, can be 'intersected with' but not grasped. Tempting though it is to attach words to it, such as 'Origin', or 'totality', as many have done, forming their own associations to the letter used by Bion, it probably makes more sense in approaching Bion's *meaning* to allow it to remain undeciphered, or simply to say that it refers to something like the 'suchness', or truth, of a situation, bearing in mind that this can never be known absolutely. This can be seen to be consistent with Bion's usage across many of his works and with the suggestion made earlier concerning the work of Wittgenstein on representability and the logical relations between a representation and the thing represented. As Bertrand Russell (1922) stated, the former and the latter must exhibit the same 'logical manifold',[2] which 'cannot be itself represented since it has to be in common between the fact and the picture' (p. xii).

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[1]With which Bion begins his 'Memory and Desire' (1965) paper,

[2]In Kantian terms, a *manifold* is the sum of the particulars furnished by sense *before* they have been unified by the synthesis of the understanding.

This inclusion of O in Bion's later work can be seen as being beyond the philosophical, beyond the assertion of the existence of the ineffable.

In *Attention and Interpretation* Bion argues for its relevance to the analytic situation, and I end this introduction with Green's (1973) view of the relevance of Bion's O to clinical thinking:

> This 'beyond the scope of knowledge' idea is essential not because it represents a limit to knowledge or because it leads us to take refuge in fundamental obscurity, but because it is the starting point of what there will be to know. If, from the beginning, we assign a place to an object we are in contact with through immediate knowledge – whatever reservations we might establish as to the mode of knowledge, saying, for instance, that it is cathected before it is perceived – we prematurely fill this object with some content which perhaps prevents us from following the sequence of states that will take place in our contact with the object. It is as essential for the assumptions of preconception as for that of the thing in itself that we keep an open mind as to the perspectives of transformation. In other words, it is important for the constant psychic component to appear as non-saturated so that we can follow the sequence of events that will lead us to the knowledge of the particular modes of saturation of the general form.
>
> From what we are able to know through the realizations which accomplish themselves by saturation, we will be able to evaluate how we came to accept the experience of going from the infinite to the finite, the non-formal to the formal, the unlimited to the limited. At one point or another, any preconception can be subjected to the impossibility of finding its realization. The development of thought depends on this non-realization, which engenders a form of limitation similar to that due to realization through the senses, but which in this case creates a counterpart of sensual experience in as much as it is associated with language. [Green, 1973, p. 117]

Attention and Interpretation

A Scientific Approach to Insight in Psycho-Analysis and Groups

1

Introduction

I doubt if anyone but a practising psychoanalyst can understand this book although I have done my best to make it simple. Any psychoanalyst who is *practising* can grasp my meaning because he, unlike those who only read or hear *about* psychoanalysis, has the opportunity to experience for himself what I in this book can only represent by words and verbal formulations designed for a different task. They were developed from a background of sensuous experience. Reason is emotion's slave and exists to rationalize emotional experience. Sometimes the function of speech is to communicate experience to another; sometimes it is to miscommunicate experience to another. Sometimes the object is to achieve access to, and permit access from, a good spirit; conversely, to deny access to a bad spirit. The vocabulary forged from such material serves, though inadequately, when, as in psychoanalytic practice, the object being studied is present. In mathematics, calculations can be made without the presence of the objects about which calculation is necessary, but in psychoanalytic practice it is essential for the psychoanalyst to be able to demonstrate as he formulates. This is not possible the moment the conditions for psychoanalysis, in the narrow technical sense, do not exist. Some of us have sought to extend psychoanalytic method so that it can be employed in a group setting. Such a development, if it can be done without mutilation of the fundamental character of psychoanalytic method, would initiate the change from private to public communication. Language does just that in the domain of sensible experience. Poetic and religious expressions have made possible a degree of 'public-ation' in that formulations exist which have achieved durability and extensibility. To say the same thing differently, the carrying power of the statement has been extended in time and in space. *Vixere*

fortes ante Agamemnona multi,[1] and *Not marble, nor the guilded monuments / Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme*[2] are expressions of that belief; they are interpretations of human experience. In his sphere the psychoanalyst's attention is arrested by a particular experience to which he would draw the attention of the analysand. To do this he must employ the Language of Achievement. That is to say, he must employ methods which have the counterpart of durability or extension in a domain where there is no time or space as those terms are used in the world of sense.

What I have said with regard to this book also applies to the psychoanalytic session; it is certainly my impression that the experience of psychoanalysis is supposed or intended to have an enduring effect. Unlike this book the session affords me and others an opportunity for drawing attention to the actual phenomena to which I think the analysand should attend, and this might reinforce the effect of my communication. A similar advantage seems to me to be available in a psychoanalytic approach to groups; it is possible to hope that the capacity of the artist, though useful, may not be essential to the psychoanalyst. Indeed, it may be a disadvantage in so far as the artist's capacity may enable him to provide, as Plato feared, a *substitute* for the truth.

In this book I have made a few tentative approaches to a matter which I think has not received proper attention in psychoanalysis, namely, lying. The disposition to lie may be regarded as a symptom of a severely disordered personality. It certainly contributes many difficulties to any attempt at a psychoanalytic approach, but on the other hand my experience of psychoanalysis makes me feel that the aptitude for lying, so universal that only a liar could disregard its all-pervading nature, has its own place as an object for study and is ignored at a dangerous cost to analyst and analysand. In short, I agree that it is often a symptom of a disordered personality but submit that it is not necessarily a contraindication for analysis. Here I can only indicate one or two aspects.

It is too often forgotten that the gift of speech, so centrally employed, has been elaborated as much for the purpose of concealing thought by dissimulation and lying as for the purpose of elucidating

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[1][Horace, Ode ix.25. *Ed.*]

[2]Shakespeare, Sonnet 55.

or communicating thought. Therefore, the Language of Achievement, if it is to be employed for elucidating the truth, must be recognized as deriving not only from sensuous experience but also from impulses and dispositions far from those ordinarily associated with scientific discussion. Freud, like others before him, felt the need to isolate himself – insulate himself? – from the group in order to work. This would mean insulating ourselves against the very material we should study. We should, therefore, re-orientate our views on such matters as rationalization and the employment of reason generally. The patient says, "Suddenly, just as I finished lunch he threw a mug of beer in my face without any warning. I kept my head and showed no resentment at all remembering what you had said about psychoanalysis. So it passed off without anyone noticing." Is he lying? Is he verbalizing a present hallucination? Matters of this kind are occurring throughout a psychoanalysis and demand correct assessment by the psychoanalyst. Yet we have not elaborated instruments – I have tried to do so with the Grid[1] – for making the assessment. I am not speaking of making the *interpretation* or of the many theories that facilitate the making of an interpretation; the Grid is of a different category altogether, analogous to a ruler in physical science, formed from a matrix of theories to aid observation and not as a substitute for observation. I commend to others a proper study of the lie and its differential diagnosis from phenomena which appear similar. The psychoanalyst must employ the Language of Achievement, but he must remember that the language was elaborated as much for the achievement of deception and evasion as for truth. This aspect is particularly clear when the prevalent emotional field is one of rivalry and hostility such as I have described, in group situations, as peculiar to the fight–flight basic assumption (*Experiences in Groups and Other Papers* [Volume IV, p. 148]). The individual is similarly affected by the *group* emotional situation. It is, therefore, impossible to give correct interpretations, save by accident, unless that *situation* is assessed. For example, drug addiction is exploited as a cover for psychosis, lying is often excused as an aspect of drug addiction, and vice versa.

Psychoanalysts should determine whether they are talking of means of communication, including verbal communications, as

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[1]See *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* [Volume V], where the Grid system is more fully discussed.

things-in-themselves or whether they are talking of other things-in-themselves which these communication elements, gestures, actions, silences, and verbal formulations, are being used to represent. The Grid is intended to remind the psychoanalyst that it is necessary to discriminate one element in his psychoanalytic experience from another and, in particular, to recognize that what matters is both the communication and the use to which it is being put. He must observe whether the presenting feature (or the feature to the obtrusion of which he wants to draw attention) is intended to further illumination or deception, and where in the genetic spectrum it belongs (primitive communication or sophisticated).

Although the Grid is unsatisfactory in its present form, it will not, I hope, mislead but lead to an improved version. I have used the following signs[1]:

T–transformation

Tα – the point from which the transformation starts

Tβ – the point at which the transformation is presumed to be complete

Ta – the psychoanalyst's transformation

Tp – the analysand's transformation

O – the experience (thing-in-itself)

Analogies are frequently used. The things used and what those things represent are dissimilar. It is supposed that a rifle and a penis are similar. But what should be exact is the *relationship* between the particular objects in the particular analogy and not the objects themselves. Thus: as the breast is to the baby's mouth so the surgeon's knife is to the X. In any particular instance the inexactitude of the *relationship* merits criticism and appraisal. The objects are faulty and to be condemned if they *are* similar. For example, 'The knife is to the fork as the knife is to the fork' is a 'non-analogy'. 'The eyes are to the mind as the mouth is to the food' is a correct analogy and draws attention to the matter that is to be observed, namely, the relationship between the two.

[1]Originally in *Transformations* [Volume V].

2

Medicine as a model

Most people think of psychoanalysis, as Freud did, as a method of treatment for a complaint. The complaint was regarded as similar to a physical ailment which, when you know what it is, has to be treated in accordance with the rules of medicine. The parallel with medicine was, and still is, useful. But as psychoanalysis has grown, so it has been seen to differ from physical medicine until the gap between them has passed from the obvious to the unbridgeable. For most purposes the similarity yields illuminating comparisons and models that facilitate discussion. But the more we see of psychoanalysis the more the models become inadequate to define, report, or apply psychoanalysis. Differentiation has meant that models which were illuminating have become opaque and often misleading even to psychoanalysts. Let us see why. We may start by discussing the obvious and simple reasons, though they will not remain either for long.

In physical medicine the patient may have a pain in his chest for which he can go to his doctor. To him he can explain its nature and its history and from him he can receive instructions to undergo further examination, say, by X-rays or microscopy, or certain forms of treatment. Or so it appears; later we may have reason to question this account. For the present it will serve to point the divergence of physical medicine and psychoanalysis.

Suppose the patient complained not of physical but of mental pain; no one doubts the existence of anxiety or sees any incongruity in seeking help to cure it. We find it necessary to differentiate between the pain of a broken leg and the pain, say, of bereavement; sometimes we prefer not to, but exchange mental for physical pain and vice versa. Physician and psychoanalyst are alike in considering that the disease should be recognized by the physician; in psychoanalysis

recognition must be by the sufferer too. The physician considers recognition of the pain subordinate to its cure; the psychoanalyst's view is expressed by Doctor Johnson's letter to Bennet Langton[1]: "Whether to see life as it is, will give us much consolation, I know not; but the consolation which is drawn from truth, if any there be, is solid and durable; that which may be derived from error must be, like its original, fallacious and fugitive."

The point that demonstrates the divergence most clearly is that the physician is dependent on realization of sensuous experience in contrast with the psychoanalyst whose dependence is on experience that is not sensuous. The physician can see and touch and smell. The realizations with which a psychoanalyst deals cannot be seen or touched; anxiety has no shape or colour, smell or sound. For convenience, I propose to use the term 'intuit' as a parallel in the psychoanalyst's domain to the physician's use of 'see', 'touch', 'smell', and 'hear'.

I shall now give three different formulations of the same episode occurring in the psychoanalysis of a woman. More could easily be given to demonstrate the problem of communication and publication that faces the psychoanalyst.

The patient produced an association to express, though in a disguised manner, her hostility to parents whose relationship to each other she represented as that between pander and whore. She intended also to evoke a response from the analyst such that he would be wrong whatever facet of a multi-dimensional association he selected for interpretation. Choice of dimension and interpretation could be 'proved' to reflect the analyst, not the analysand; he could hesitate impotently before the wealth of alternatives presented to him.

A version employing more analytically recondite Kleinian intuitional formulations: the patient was directing an attack on the analyst's psychoanalytic potency; the 'missile' was the association – which therefore is to be regarded as an object of Grid category A6. The characteristics of the association are either that it subjects the analyst's intuition to splitting because of his inability to formulate simultaneous expressions of diverse and possibly incompatible interpretations, or that it has the ability to compel the analyst, through the need to act, to adopt a moral standpoint for interpretation because the scientific

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[1][A quotation often drawn upon by Bion, and a favourite of Melanie Klein's. *Ed.*]

standpoint involves being 'split' between alternative interpretations. The close relationship between moral attitudes and action, as contrasted with thought or meditation, will be investigated later. The first problem is to choose what interpretation to give. Any one of many facets of the patient's statement may be noticed rather than any other. It can be considered as a statement or as a transformation; as multidimensional or multi-faceted; it could be represented by a visual image of a figure in which many planes meet or lines pass through a common point. I can represent it to myself by a visual image of a geometric solid with an infinite number of surfaces. It depends on a realization, derived from space, of sensuous experience. The attempt to externalize the visual image is restricted as if the representation by points and lines was itself a 'space' too restricted to 'contain' the visual image; thus, – has breadth whereas the *mental* visual image of a line or a point has not.

Projective identification has hitherto been formulated in terms derived from a realization of the ordinary man's, or woman's, idea of three-dimensional space. The usual Kleinian formulations depend on a visual image of a space containing all kinds of objects. Into these objects in this space it is supposed that the patients project parts of their personality that they have split off. Melanie Klein, who discovered this mechanism, considered it to be observable in psychotic and borderline psychotic patients. Later, she and her co-workers considered that the theory had a more extended application and that realizations approximating to it could be detected in neurotic and normal personalities. She stressed the degree of fragmentation and the distance to which the fragments were projected as a determining factor in the degree of mental disturbance the patient displayed in his contact with reality. With this view I agree; as my practice with disturbed patients increased, it became evident that more rigorous formulation of the theory was needed if the gap between representation and realization was to be bridged by the analyst's interpretation. This was brought home to me in circumstances adumbrated in *Learning from Experience* and *Elements of Psycho-Analysis*. I shall recapitulate briefly some of what I wrote then, and later in *Transformations*.

There are patients whose contact with reality presents most difficulty when that reality is their own mental state. For example, a baby discovers its hand; it might as well have discovered its stomach-ache, or its feeling of dread or anxiety, or mental pain. In most ordinary

personalities this is true, but people exist who are so intolerant of pain or frustration (or in whom pain or frustration is so intolerable) that they feel the pain but will not suffer it, and so cannot be said to discover it. *What* it is that they will not suffer or discover we have to conjecture from what we learn from patients who *do* allow themselves to suffer. The patient who will not suffer pain fails to 'suffer' pleasure and this denies him the encouragement he might otherwise receive from accidental or intrinsic relief. Where one patient would understand a word to mark a constant conjunction, this patient experiences it as a thing that is not there, and the thing that is not there, like the thing that *is* there, is indistinguishable from an hallucination. Since the term 'hallucination' has a penumbra of associations which would be inappropriate I have named these objects beta-elements.

These descriptions of how these objects appear to the patient and how they appear to me are intended to aid the reader's understanding, but are not sufficiently rigorous for use in practice. The formulations have the status of elements in Grid category C.

Suppose the patient is capable of tolerating frustration and pain: his story will differ in important respects from the above. To him the name represents a 'no-thing', but his capacity for toleration enables him to observe a constant conjunction, to bind it with a name or to use it when it has already been named. Patient A, for I shall now call the intolerant patient so, has then at his disposal beta-elements or bizarre objects and his case differs in this respect from patient B, as I now designate the second patient, who can tolerate and therefore name (even if the name is no more than a grunt or a yell) a constant conjunction and so investigate its meaning. Whether the beta-element or the bizarre object is to be classified as thought or not is a matter of scientific convenience which may be determined later. I suggest provisionally that all beta-elements are distinguished from elements that pervade the mental processes of patient B, by considering the latter to be thoughts and the former not. The most genetically primitive elements of thought I shall group together as alpha-elements, in distinction to beta-elements.

I shall now use the geometrical concepts of lines, points, and space (as derived originally not from a realization of three-dimensional space but from the realizations of the emotional mental life) as returnable to the realm from which they appear to me to spring. That is, if the geometer's concept of space derives from an experience of 'the

place where something was' it is to be returned to illuminate the domain where it is in my experience meaningful to say that 'a feeling of depression' is 'the place where a breast or other lost object was', and that 'space' is 'where depression or some other emotion used to be'.

I have pointed out that this space, these points, and these lines differ in one important respect, namely, that in the domain of mental visual images an infinite number of lines may pass through one point but, were I to attempt to represent such a visual image by point and lines on a piece of paper, there would be a finite number of lines. This limiting quality inheres in all realizations of three-dimensional space that approximate to the points, lines, and space of the geometer. It does not inhere in mental space until an attempt is made to represent mental space by verbal thought. I am thus postulating mental space as a thing-in-itself that is unknowable, but that can be represented by thoughts. In thought I include all that is primitive, including alpha- elements as I have so far described them. I exclude, arbitrarily by definition, beta-elements. Thoughts may be classed with the realizations of all objects approximating to the representations of three-dimensional space in this particular: they are intolerable to patient A because they share the frustrating quality of all realizations. Yet to the 'ordinary man' thoughts do not have this restrictive character until it is necessary to apply them to pre-verbal material. Material may be pre-verbal because the individual who seeks to verbalize it has not had sufficient experience of the material to observe a constant conjunction. He is in a state analogous to that seen in a number of similar configurations such as: having pain without suffering it; not understanding planetary movement because the differential calculus has not been invented; not being conscious of a mental phenomenon because it has been repressed; not knowing an event because the event has not occurred.

In all these situations the associated problems require thought for their solution. In all of them thought is restrictive and can be directly experienced as such as soon as an intuition demands representation for private communication. Since thought liberates the intuition there is conflict between the impulse to leave the intuition unexpressed and the impulse to express it. The restrictive element of representation therefore obtrudes in transformation $T\alpha \rightarrow T\beta$ of preverbal material. One man achieves the transformation; the other, who cannot tolerate

restriction, does not. He therefore forfeits the relief from frustration that thought, were he able to tolerate it, would give. The onset of the reality principle is thus imperilled. In my definition of thought, he will not generate alpha-elements and will not be capable of thought. Whatever substitute he finds for thought is not to be classified as thought. When I discuss psychotic verbalization this point will be considered again.

The failure of alpha-function, which should produce alpha-elements, involves the absence of mental visual images of points, lines, and space. Patient A therefore lacks equipment that would help him to map the realization of mental space. His position is analogous to that of the geometer who had to await the invention of Cartesian co-ordinates before he could elaborate algebraic geometry.

Now consider patient A confronted with an experience in which B would resort to projective identification as adumbrated by Melanie Klein. The restrictive character of reality and the dependence of projective identification on recognition of objects preclude projection of parts of the personality because there is no conception of containers into which the projection could take place. The explosive projection is therefore felt to take place in what is, to the analyst, the *realization* of mental space: a mental space that has no visual images to fulfil the functions of a co-ordinate system, either the 'faceted solid' or the multi-dimensional, multi-linear figure of lines intersecting at a point. The mental realization of space is therefore felt as an immensity so great that it cannot be represented even by astronomical space because it cannot be represented at all.

Paradoxically this explosion is so violent and is accompanied by such immense fear – hereafter referred to as psychotic fear or psychotic panic – that the patient may express it by sudden and complete silence (as if to go to an extreme as far as possible from a devastating explosion).

The ensuing state can be most easily expressed by using surgical shock as a model: in this the dilatation of the capillaries throughout the body so increases the space in which blood can circulate that the patient may bleed to death in his own tissues. Mental space is so vast compared with any realization of three-dimensional space that the patient's capacity for emotion is felt to be lost because emotion itself is felt to drain away and to be lost in the immensity. What may then appear to the observer as thoughts, visual images, and verbalizations

must be regarded by him as debris, remnants or scraps of imitated speech and histrionic synthetic emotion, floating in a space so vast that its confines, temporal as well as spatial, are without definition. The events of an analysis, spread out over what to the analyst are many years, are to A but the fragments of a moment dispersed in space. The distance in time separating one statement from another can be taken as a measure of the distance in space of one element from another in which all are contemporary. Thus A says he could buy no ice-cream. Six months later he says he cannot even buy ice-cream. Three days later he mentions his being too late to buy ice-cream: there was no ice-cream left. Two years later he says he supposes there was no ice-cream. Had I known, when the topic was mentioned first, what I know now I might have noted the time and place of the reference, but I did not know and therefore could not attend to this statement or note it. When I did, it was because of the obtrusive 'I scream' theme. It was later still that I grasped the significance of 'no – I scream'. By this time, I could make only the vaguest reference to previous appearances of the material. As it turned out this difficulty did not appear to matter and my interpretation was taken. Yet I would feel happier if I thought that my gain in experience could lead to earlier observation and use of the material. I now know that a violent attack had been delivered on a relationship in which the link between the two personalities had been 'I scream'. This had been destroyed and the place of the link 'I scream' had been taken by a 'no – I scream'. The 'I scream' link had itself previously been food, 'ice-cream', a 'breast', until envy and destructiveness had turned the good breast into an 'I scream'. In narrative form: he had been linked to his object by a good breast (he liked ice-cream). This he had attacked, possibly bitten it in actuality. The place of the breast as link was then taken by an 'I scream'. Further attacks made it a 'no – I scream'. The destruction of the link by explosion now took place in the domain of mental realization. Mental space being infinite, the fragments of the link are dispersed instantaneously over infinite space. The 'distance' between one piece and another is measured in time.[1]

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[1]The account I have just given is an example of taking Tpβ as my TaO, and by Taα proceeding to Taβ. Taβ is my attempt at a reconstruction of TpO, Tpα, Tpβ. When this degree of private communication has been attained, the problem becomes one of publishing it – formulating it in conversational English that the patient can understand (see *Transformations* [Volume V], p. 153).

The patient should be shown the evidence on which the interpretation is based; if the evidence is scattered sparsely over a period of years of acting-out, the problem of interpretation assumes serious proportions, because the medium in which the patient is effecting his transformation is not predominantly conversational English, but acting-out. The analysis may be regarded as one moment in time stretched out so that it becomes a line or surface spread out over a period of years – an extremely thin membrane of a moment. Regarded thus, the total analysis can be seen as a transformation in which an intense catastrophic emotional explosion O has occurred (elements of personality, link, and second personality having been instantaneously expelled to vast distances from their point of origin and from each other). This explosive event O is then transformed, in the medium of acting-out and by virtue of beta-elements, to Tpβ, in which space, being restrictive and not amenable to adequate formulation of distance between beta-elements, is replaced by the realization corresponding to time. Though there is no representation of mental space available to the patient and though the realization of three-dimensional space is too restrictive for a temperament intolerant of frustration, the realization of mental space, being unbounded, permits of a continuous and continuing expansion and separation of beta- elements. For the investigation of this mental state the patient cannot, but the analyst can, employ points, lines, and space. The geometer has used them for the investigation of three-dimensional space and, by the substitution of algebraic geometry for the figurative geometry of Euclid, has been able to extend his investigation to multi-dimensional space and leave Euclidean space to be used for psychological preparation for the non-Euclidean geometries now available. Can we similarly use the concepts of Euclidean geometry to get back to the emotional realizations from which I believe it originally sprang? The need is for a formulation so general that a multiplication of theories to meet a diversity of realizations bearing the same configuration is obviated, yet so precise that it will not cover configurations whose similarity is only apparent, or whose appearance of similarity is due to irrelevant C category visual imagery.

The impossibility of communication without frustration is so familiar that the nature of the frustration is forgotten. Most people are aware of it as a transient phenomenon experienced on relatively

few occasions. In psychoanalytic work the problems are more obtrusive than usual because the subject is novel and its difficulties are uncharted; difficulties become still more marked when the material to be communicated is pre- or non-verbal. The psychoanalyst can employ silences; he, like the painter or musician, can communicate non-verbal material. Similarly, the painter can communicate material that is non-visual and the musician material that is inaudible. The pre-verbal matter the psychoanalyst must discuss is certain to be an illustration of the difficulty in communication that he himself is experiencing. Ability to use points, lines, and space becomes important for understanding 'emotional space', for the continuance of the work and avoidance of a situation in which two inarticulate personalities are unable to release themselves from the bondage of inarticulation. This mutually sterile relationship provides a model for some relationships of the self with itself. When the relationship of the self with itself is of this kind, either the container or the contained must be destroyed. Finally, the individual cannot contain the impulses proper to a pair and the pair cannot contain the impulses proper to a group. The psychoanalytic problem is the problem of growth and its harmonious resolution in the relationship between the container and the contained, repeated in individual, pair, and finally group (intra- and extra-psychically).

Any definitory hypothesis, be it exclamation, name, theoretical system, or extended statement such as a book, has, and has always been recognized to have, a negative function. It must always imply that something *is*; equally it implies that something is *not*. It is therefore open to the recipient to infer one or other according to his temper. If the personality is incapable of tolerating frustration there seems to be no reason why he should not develop on the assumption that the definitory hypothesis means that something is. The statement is then allowed to become a pre-conception and the way is open for the unsaturated element to become saturated. But suppose that the inability to tolerate frustration is 'excessive': the personality may react against the statement, seeing only its negative implications and, in the extreme case, refusing to allow the statement, to him a 'nothing', even to exist. The attempt then is to annihilate the statement in its function of definitory hypothesis. A model would be the infant who cannot tolerate weaning because it is dominated by the *loss* of the

breast and who therefore cannot accept what it might have instead. The patient cannot tolerate the definitory hypothesis and therefore does not achieve the pre-conception (D4).

Knowledge of loss, of the negative aspect of the definition, of the 'thought' as a 'no-thing', is immediate; knowledge of gain, if any, has to wait upon the fruits of permitting the thought, or other statement, to be a pre-conception ($\Psi(\xi)$). Therefore 'excessive' inability to tolerate frustration is likely to obstruct development of pre-conception (D4 functions). 'Excessive' intolerance is likely to obstruct awareness of realizations. The 'no-thing' with its corresponding realization (of some object not present) will be liable to destruction, whereas 'hallucination' will be favoured for its immediacy. Another formulation of this is to say that the domain of realizations and all that might represent realizations is felt not to afford enough 'space' for freedom, whereas the domain of hallucination does. In passing, I must draw attention to the fact that the sense of loss in the definitory hypothesis and the sense of gratification in hallucination both depend on a restricted mental range. In both instances the reaction, of intolerance in one and gratification in the other, might be said to be associated with a short-sighted 'view'. Thought consequently is not seen as offering freedom for development, but is felt as a restriction; by contrast, 'acting-out' is felt to yield a sense of freedom. *A fortiori* an hallucination is designed through its quality as the-thing-itself (not the thought of a breast but the breast itself) to be indistinguishable from freedom. The patient then may be seen as facing a choice: either he may allow his intolerance of frustration to use what might otherwise be a 'no-thing' to become a thought and so achieve the freedom Freud (1911b) describes, or he may use what might be a 'no-thing' to be the foundation for a system of hallucinosis.

From this last will spring the set of transformations in hallucinosis which it will be necessary to differentiate from transformations in painting, music, mathematics, and the domain of verbal communication. The importance of making this last distinction is enhanced by the fact that words are used both in the expression of verbal communication and in transformations in hallucinosis. Yet consideration of the nature of the differing reaction to the 'no-thing' will show that the word representing a thought is not the same as the identical word when it is representing an hallucination. Since

the similarity may be extremely close in the words employed in both systems and sometimes in the method by which they appear to be combined, it is important to discover in what the difference lies. The difference between philosophy (and even theoretical psychoanalysis) and the practice of psychoanalysis can be seen by considering what the detection of this difference means for the philosopher or theoretician and what it means for the practising psychoanalyst who has to decide in the emotional situation itself whether the patient's statements represent an hallucination or a fact of external reality. It is for this reason that the psychoanalyst must be experienced in non-sensuous realities and able to ignore sensuously derived experience as it appears formalized in memory. The word 'dog' represents different realizations in scientific inquiry and hallucinosis; but the word 'dog' is itself not the same when it is representing a realization in scientific inquiry and when it is an element belonging to the domain of hallucinatory transformations. It is sometimes useful to regard it as analogous to the visual image in a reversible perspective: in the visual image the marks of a drawing on paper remain unchanged but 'mean' two faces or a vase; similarly, 'dog' may mean dog or God (to take but one example). In non-psychotic transformations the invariant is insignificant: the resemblance to ordinary speech, the fact that the word is identical in psychotic and non-psychotic transformation, is accidental.

Verbal, musical, artistic modes of communication all meet with realizations that they appear to represent only very approximately. Hallucination may be regarded, wrongly, as a representation and therefore as unsuited to some activities. As verbal, musical, and artistic transformations have compensating values arising from their being *transformations* of O, it is natural to consider the like possibility with hallucinosis. But hallucinations are *not* representations: they are things-in-themselves born of intolerance of frustration and desire. Their defects are due not to their failure to represent but to their failure to *be*. Thus we need to consider the difference between psychic and external reality.

As I am primarily concerned with the formulation of theory, the illustrations I am about to give are by way of C formulations, not records of clinical experience. The intention is to approach to more rigorous theoretical presentation, that is, presentation less open to

misunderstanding through logical defect, or over-flexibility in an attempt to represent different configurations of the same fundamental structures and functions, or failure to represent, through over-rigidity, realizations in which the fundamentals are invariant but the accidentals diverse. The illustrations are C category elements used as preparation for theoretical formulations that can stand by themselves: the reader should regard the 'illustrations' as psychological aids to understanding the theories proper. From this point to the end of the chapter emotional experiences will be represented by C formulations.

1. The patients, for the treatment of whom I wish to formulate theories, experience pain but not suffering. They may be suffering in the eyes of the analyst because the analyst can, and indeed must, suffer. The patient may say he suffers but this is only because he does not know what suffering is and mistakes feeling pain for suffering it. The theory will need to be such that it represents the realization in which this is possible and shows how it comes about. The *intensity* of the patient's pain contributes to his fear of suffering pain.
2. Suffering pain involves respect for the fact of pain, his own or another's. This respect he does not have and therefore he has no respect for any procedure, such as psychoanalysis, which is concerned with the existence of pain.
3. Frustration and intense pain are equated.
4. Pain is sexualized; it is therefore inflicted or accepted but is not suffered – except in the view of the analyst or other observer.
5. For purposes of this exposition the following conjunction is described in narrative form, the elements being sequential and bound in a chain of causation. The realization of the constant conjunction does not have any element that approximates to the sequential or causal elements of the narrative representing it. These features belong only to the C category representation, not to the realization they represent. The patient feels the pain of an absence of fulfilment of his desires. The absent fulfilment is experienced as a 'no-thing'. The emotion aroused by the 'no-thing' is felt as indistinguishable from the 'no-thing'. The emotion is replaced by a 'no-emotion'. In practice this can mean no feeling at all, or

an emotion, such as rage, which is a column 2 emotion, that is, an emotion of which the fundamental function is denial of another emotion.

6. As a column 2 element, all felt emotion is a 'no-emotion'. In this respect it is analogous to 'past' or 'future' as representing the 'place where the present used to be' before all time was annihilated.
7. The 'place' where time was (or a feeling was, or a 'no-thing' of any kind was) is then similarly annihilated. There is thus created a domain of the non-existent. I have not come across any realization that corresponds to such a state though I can imagine a stupor so intense that it might seem to do so. It is nevertheless useful to postulate it partly because there are occasions when it is convenient to suppose that the patient holds such a belief, and partly because it is convenient for the analyst. As will be seen, meanings other than sophisticated meanings creep back into the relatively meaningless state of the term 'non-existent' as E1 category. Some patients with whom I am familiar achieve a state to which I wish to apply the term 'non-existence' for a few moments at most; this is followed by an externalization or evacuation of 'non-existence'. 'Non-existence' immediately becomes an object that is immensely hostile and filled with murderous envy towards the quality or function of existence wherever it is to be found. 'Space', either as a representation or the realization the term derives from or represents, becomes terrifying or terror itself: "*Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie.*" The space of the ordinary man, the astronomer, or the physicist, becomes confounded with 'mental space', and its objects with the objects of 'mental space'.
8. The scientific or sophisticated approach tends to become confounded with the realizations its formulations are intended to represent. The point (.) and the line (—) are regarded as if they were analogous to representations of reversible perspective. Their significance therefore varies according to the point of view (or vertex) with which they are associated. Vertices may have as their approximate realizations various recognized disciplines such as religion, mathematics, physics, music, painting, and other arts. The formulations associated with a particular vertex may be categorized in accordance with the Grid.

9. The following illustration is to facilitate an approach to a more rigorous representation of 'points of view' or vertices. The patient corresponds to the A personality, the analyst to B. The analytic exchange described is at an advanced stage in the analysis, in the sense that what was an extremely disturbed patient has become better adjusted to what the psychoanalyst regards as reality. The psychoanalyst similarly has become better adjusted to what the patient regards as reality. 'Somewhere' there is present a 'super-ego' that is cruel, denuded of all the characteristics usually associated with the super-ego, and, finally, of 'existence' itself. It therefore has the characteristics of 'non-existence' described in 7 above. I use the term 'super-ego' as a psychoanalytic intuitive theory, now with the status of a realization, which I want to reformulate in terms of another intuitive theory.

The patient talks freely, but his communications are disjointed sentences which would, anywhere but in analysis, be described as 'incoherent'. Such a term is insufficiently illuminating to lead to a psychoanalytic interpretation, but the 'vertex' (the 'point of view' provided by regarding an analysis as an ordinary conversation) gives me a descriptive term suitable for the immediate purpose. As it is not suitable for continuing the psychoanalytic discussion, the term 'incoherence' must be observed more critically.

As time passes, and it may require many months of observation, 'incoherence' displays many characteristics which are changing constantly. The patient may, in a fit of impatience, describe them as pointless; and so they may prove to be, for sentences can indeed communicate everything but the point. The sentences were mutilated. Personal pronouns were used without indication of the person to whom they might relate. Important parts of speech were missing; and so on. The mutilations varied in form and in effect; they did not always make sentences pointless, though sometimes 'pointlessness' was the 'point'. This type of peculiarity is but one manifestation of attacks on linking, the technique of psychoanalysis and indeed articulate speech itself being the link. My immediate concern is not with attacks on linking but with an aspect of transformation (*Transformations*, Chapter 2). The patient, having delivered himself of a series of statements, listens to the interpretation and then continues, to all outward appearance, in much the

same way. Further observation reveals that there has in fact been a change. If my interpretation was intended to show him that he was speaking to conceal, rather than to reveal, something about his sexual life, he will identify himself with a 'point of view', a vertex, such that only certain elements in my interpretation are illumined. Thus he emulates the mathematician whose formula effects a transformation in vector space. What takes place I now represent by a slow-motion model:

The patient grasps the gist of what I say. The totality of the statement, including the implication that I am the analyst, is evacuated (the mechanism represented by the theory of projective identification). He identifies himself with the analyst, and by virtue of his intuition is able to 'see' the meaning of my interpretation. The meaning that he thus 'sees' is that I am annoyed, jealous, envious at my exclusion from participation in, or understanding of, his sexual life. He then exclaims, "Oh that frightful noise!"

His remark, without the interpolated story, appears to be a *non sequitur*; if the account given is assumed to represent the mental events, unexpressed in the interval between interpretation and rejoinder, incoherence disappears. Many assumptions can be made about the link between interpretation and response. One set assumes that it should be compatible with respect for the truth; another that it should conform to respect for omniscience; yet another that it should be compatible with both. The role of desire, in pre-conception, is determinant.

In this episode there are some of the unsatisfactory features to which I would draw attention. There is no evidence to support the particular assumption made. To produce it would involve the impossible task of explaining the history of my mental development, or even that limited part of it shared with the patient, that has led to accretions of 'desires' to original beliefs (Grid category C1) that my analysand was my patient.

Furthermore, I have used terms ('omniscient' is one of them) that represent similar developments of meaning in order that the term should become the premise of further developments. 'Omniscient' is therefore an element categorized as $\overleftarrow{C3}$ and $\overrightarrow{D4}$.

The patient may categorize the same statements in an entirely different way, as is apparent from the description I have given of his

interpretation of my interpretation. To meet this difficulty I propose to construct a figure that will serve to represent the invariants of an ever-changing situation.

By way of psychological preparation for the reception of a system that is independent of the particular situations it is intended to serve, I shall use descriptions that lack rigour but have definition. This makes for a lack of flexibility in the final formulation which is intended to combine flexibility with rigour. The system may be regarded as being contained within an emotional space within itself – an 'exo-skeleton' or an 'endo-skeleton'.

To construct this I differentiate an awareness of reality from a denial (or ignoring, or ignorance) of reality. A will ignore reality; B will accept it. With vertex A, reality will be restrictive and frustrating; with vertex B, reality will be liberating and conducive to growth.

Further, I assume an axiomatic approach in all theoretical formulations; axiomatic statements are not differentiated from postulates and premises: they are treated as indistinguishable from each other and from definitory hypotheses. Definitory hypotheses are statements marking the binding of a constant conjunction whatever the content of the formulation may be. I regard any theorem as capable of one of the uses of the horizontal axis. But when a column 1 → columns 3 and 4, it means the category has changed to row D. Any theorem may illuminate facts it was not designed to display, but, conversely, any deductive system will be seen, as soon as it is used, to accumulate meaning in a manner analogous to that of the pre-conception and, in doing so, to require axioms that have not been necessary for the completion of the system.

Any deductive system may appear to be consistent within itself provided it remains definitory, that is to say, with characteristics that qualify it for column 1. The deductions may appear to be consistent and logically necessary so long as it is not asked 'necessary to what?' or 'to whom?' But if they are said to be logically necessary this is itself a statement about the system, and this statement cannot be refuted unless it is used. But if it *is* allowed to become saturated, that is to say *used* as a pre-conception, then the pre-conception mates with the realization to produce a conception (E) and again to produce a concept (F). The conception (E) has the characteristic not only that it records by implication (a realization exists which approximates to the pre-conception) but that a realization exists which approximates

to the conception although its existence was not known when the preconception was formulated. As soon as the deductive system proves its value as an exploratory tool, the self-consistency, which appeared to exist when the domain in which the system applied was limited, is imperilled because readjustments become necessary to fit the theorem to its extended domain. As the system illuminates facts whose significance was unknown before (the elements of the paranoid-schizoid position) and thus imperils its self-consistency, it throws off the limitations of the domain in which it applies. It approximates to illimitability and universality. The dilemma can be stated thus: the system, if consistent within itself, is limited; if not limited, then it cannot be regarded as self-consistent because its self-consistency is contingent. Furthermore, its statements can be seen to depend on an axiomatic statement whose existence was not even suspected, let alone regarded as logically necessary, when the system was formulated and had the status common to column 1 categories.

3

Reality sensuous and psychic

The illustrations in the previous chapter are not satisfactory and I propose to consider some reasons for this.

Psychoanalytic events cannot be stated directly, indubitably, or incorrigibly any more than can those of other scientific research. I shall use the sign O to denote that which is the ultimate reality represented by terms such as ultimate reality, absolute truth, the godhead, the infinite, the thing-in-itself. O does not fall in the domain of knowledge or learning save incidentally; it can be 'become', but it cannot be 'known'. It is darkness and formlessness but it enters the domain K when it has evolved to a point where it can be known, through knowledge gained by experience, and formulated in terms derived from sensuous experience; its existence is conjectured phenomenologically.

The events of the psychoanalytic experience are transformed and formulated. The value of these formulations can be assessed according to the conditions under which the transformations are effected. Formulations of the events of analysis made in the course of analysis must possess value different from that of formulations made extrasessionally. Their value therapeutically is greater if they are conducive to transformations in O; less if conducive to transformations in K.

The experience of psychoanalysis affords material impossible to equal from any other source. It follows that this material should be available in full to the psychoanalyst. The analysis that every psychoanalyst is obliged to undergo as part of his training is necessary because it removes obstacles to participation in the psychoanalytic experience; it has many facets, but for the psychoanalyst none can compare in importance with this; what I have to say is ancillary to this. It is impossible to undergo an analysis without learning about

psychoanalysis as practised by one particular psychoanalyst; this is a misfortune rather than an advantage. Furthermore, established beliefs and conventions, hardened habits of thought, unless subjected to vigilance, re-establish themselves and encroach upon the freedom the psychoanalyst has won by being psychoanalysed and lead to deterioration of his efficiency.

In the course of analysis it is inevitable that the analysand imparts a great deal of information *about* himself just as the analyst imparts information *about* analysis. This information is worthless at best and, at worst, harmful because every analysis is unique; talk about analysis is not.

The analyst must focus his attention on O, the unknown and unknowable. The success of psychoanalysis depends on the maintenance of a psychoanalytic point of view; the point of view is the psychoanalytic vertex; the psychoanalytic vertex is O. With this the analyst cannot be identified: he must *be* it.

Every object known or knowable by man, including himself, must be an evolution of O. It is O when it has evolved sufficiently to be met by K capacities in the psychoanalyst. He does not know the 'ultimate reality' of a chair or anxiety or time or space, but he knows a chair, anxiety, time, and space. In so far as the analyst becomes O he is able to know the events that are *evolutions* of O.

Restating this in terms of psychoanalytic experience, the psychoanalyst can know what the patient says, does, and appears to be, but cannot know the O of which the patient is an evolution: he can only 'be' it. He knows phenomena by virtue of his senses but, since his concern is with O, events must be regarded as possessing either the defects of irrelevancies obstructing, or the merits of pointers initiating, the process of 'becoming' O. Yet interpretations depend on 'becoming' (since he cannot know O). The interpretation is an actual event in an evolution of O that is common to analyst and analysand.

A fallacious but helpful description is that the practising analyst must wait for the analytic session to 'evolve'. He must wait not for the analysand to talk or to be silent or to gesture, or for any other occurrence that is an actual event, but for an evolution to take place so that O becomes manifest in K through the emergence of actual events. Similarly, the reader must disregard what I say until the O of the experience of reading has evolved to a point where the actual events of reading issue in his interpretation of the experiences. Too great a

regard for what I have written obstructs the process I represent by the terms, 'he becomes the O that is common to himself and myself'.

The reasons for this are as follows: there can be no genuine outcome that is based on falsity, therefore the outcome depends on the closeness with which the interpretative appraisal approximates to truth. The psychoanalyst and his analysand are alike dependent on the senses, but psychic qualities, with which psychoanalysis deals, are not perceived by the senses but, as Freud says, by some mental counterpart of the sense organs – a function that he attributed to consciousness. Without wishing to discard this possibility I prefer to consider it as an open question and substitute a more general postulate which I represent by O. To put it in more popular terms, the more 'real' the psychoanalyst is, the more he can be at one with the reality of the patient. Conversely, the more he depends on actual events, the more he relies on thinking that depends on a background of sense impression.

In the primitive phase, which Freud regards as dominated by the pleasure principle and from which he excludes the operation of memory, this last being dependent on the prior development of a capacity for thought, the prototype of memory appears to reside in one of the aspects of projective identification. This mechanism, employed to fulfil the duties of thought until thought takes over, appears as an interchange first between mouth and breast, and then between introjected mouth and introjected breast. This I regard as reaction between container ♀ and contained ♂. ♀ seems to be the element which is nearest in this phase to the memory. The terms I use must be regarded as verbal representations of visual images; the whole description will be in these C category terms because I find them easier to employ and more likely to be understood. Later, I may attempt more sophisticated formulations.

♂ evacuates unpleasure in order to get rid of it, to have it transformed into something that is, or feels, pleasurable, for the pleasure of evacuation, for the pleasure of being contained. ♀ takes in the evacuations for the same motives. The nature of the relationship needs investigation. ♀, which may evacuate or retain, is the prototype of a forgetful or retentive memory. Pleasure may be retained if possession is the dominant concern; grievance if a store of ammunition is the main concern. Evacuation may be forcible as if to convert the evacuated object into a missile; introjection likewise as fulfilment of

greed. Developments of memory that are inevitable to the psychoanalyst are C category elements, the dominance of ♀♂, the primacy of pleasure-pain (in contrast with reality or truth), and 'possession' with its reciprocal, fear of loss; all have been acquired in close association with the senses.

The impulse to be rid of painful stimuli gives the 'content' of the memory (♀) an unsatisfactory quality when one is engaged in the pursuit of truth O. The more successful the memory is in its accumulations, the more nearly it approximates to resembling a saturated element saturated with saturated elements. An analyst with such a mind is one who is incapable of learning because he is satisfied. Furthermore, because of its primitive nature, his memory is believed to be filled only with objects giving rise to feelings of pleasure and to be empty of unpleasure components, or vice versa. The attitude towards the 'memory' or 'unconscious' depends on the idea that it is a container for the 'evacuations' of projective identification. Such a 'memory' is no equipment for an analyst whose aim is O, as may be seen by considering what is represented by this sign.

O stands for the absolute truth in and of any object; it is assumed that this cannot be known by any human being; it can be known about, its presence can be recognized and felt, but it cannot be known. It is possible to be at one with it. That it exists is an essential postulate of science but it cannot be scientifically discovered. No psychoanalytic discovery is possible without recognition of its existence, at-one-ment with it and evolution. The religious mystics have probably approximated most closely to expression of experience of it. Its existence is as essential to science as to religion. Conversely, the scientific approach is as essential to religion as it is to science and is as ineffectual until a transformation from K → O takes place.

In order to know about the analysand, the analyst has recourse to K. Memory is a part of K. Notation (Freud, 1911b), in the wide sense of the term, is its servant. But memory depends on the senses. It is limited by the limitations of the senses and their subordination to the pleasure-pain principle; memories are therefore fallacious and memory has the defects of its origin in functions of possessiveness and evacuation.

The psychoanalyst is concerned with O, which is incommunicable save through K activity. O may appear to be attainable by K through phenomena, but in fact that is not so; K depends on the evolution of

O → K. At-one-ment with O would seem to be possible through the transformation K → O, but it is not so. The transformation O → K depends on ridding K of memory and desire. I turn accordingly to consider 'desire'.

It may not seem necessary to postulate desire as well as memory; if memory could be dispensed with, desire would likewise disappear, and vice versa. But this would involve loss of meaning which I wish to retain. So, in addition to memories, I wish to consider thoughts which are formulations of desire, and probably, but not certainly, objects we represent by the term 'desire'. They are not verbal formulations merely, or even verbal formulations of elements of C category. The desires that can be represented verbally are relatively simple to deal with. For example, the thought occurs that one would like to go abroad for the annual holiday; this can be followed by further ideas, more or less detailed elaborations of the main theme. These thoughts are typical 'desires'; they are extremely common and can be harboured almost unaware; they may be reminiscences or anticipations.

The 'memories' and 'desires' to which I wish to draw attention have the following elements in common: they are ready formulated and therefore require no formulation; they derive from experience gained through the senses; they are evocations of feelings of pleasure or pain; they are formulations 'containing' pleasure or pain. In so far as they are column 2 statements, their function is to prevent transformation of the K → O order.

The above characteristics cannot be indulged by the psychoanalyst without impairment of analytic capacity. For any who have been used to remembering what patients say and to desiring their welfare, it will be hard to entertain the harm to analytic intuition that is inseparable from *any* memories and *any* desires.

The first point is for the analyst to impose on himself a positive discipline of eschewing memory and desire. I do not mean that 'forgetting' is enough: what is required is a positive act of refraining from memory and desire.

It may be wondered what state of mind is welcome if desires and memories are not. A term that would express approximately what I need is 'faith' – faith that there is an ultimate reality and truth – the unknown, unknowable, 'formless infinite'. This must be believed of every object of which the personality can be aware: the evolution of ultimate reality (signified by O) has issued in objects of which the

individual can be aware. The objects of awareness are aspects of the 'evolved' O, and are such that the sensuously derived mental functions are adequate to apprehend them. For them faith is not required; for O it is. The analyst is not concerned with such sensuously apprehended objects or with knowledge of such objects. Memories and desires are worthless but inevitable features that he encounters in himself as he works. He *is* concerned with these objects in his analysand because he is concerned with the working of the analysand's mind. His analysand will express his awareness of O in people and things by formulations representing the intersection of evolutions of O with the evolution of his awareness.

It is not possible to say that such formulations by the analysand are not to be interpreted: no such rule can be laid down far from the situation in which it is to be applied because the criteria for it do not exist. Nor can the criteria be established in the situation of the analysis, for they are part of an ineffable experience. There can be no rules about the nature of the emotional experience that will show that the emotional experience is ripe for interpretation. Instead I can only suggest rules for the analyst that will help him to achieve the frame of mind in which he is receptive to O of the analytic experience. If he is able to be receptive to O, then he may feel impelled to deal with the intersection of the evolution of O with the domain of objects of sense, or of formulations based on the senses. Whether he does so or not cannot depend on *rules* for O, or O → K, but only on his ability to be at one with O.

My last sentence represents an 'act' of what I have called 'faith'. It is in my view a scientific statement, because for me 'faith' is a scientific state of mind and should be recognized as such. But it must be 'faith' unstained by any element of memory or desire. If it reveals an aspect of O which has to be formulated, then the *transformation* will require the operation of memory and desire; even so the formulation will require the negative characteristics of column 1 elements – that is to say that the statements must affirm implicitly that the object defined is *not* any of the elements whose names are used in the definitory hypothesis, but is a constant conjunction whose meaning will declare itself only when all traces of memory and desire have been removed from the elements invoked to produce the new formulation. Failure to observe the nature of transformation O → K (that is, the use of objects of memory and desire to mark a new constant conjunction,

and the need to discard the evocative characteristics of memory and desire so that the formulation representing the new constant conjunction is unsaturated) has obscured the only sense in which the term 'abstraction' has any useful meaning. A formulation has the quality of an abstraction only in so far as it is divorced from the sensuous background inherent in and essential to memory and desire. The abstract statement must not stimulate memory and desire, though memory and desire have contributed elements to its formulation.

Memory and desire are essential elements in the composition of the new formulation, but a distinction must be made between two classes of mental event. One is an evocation of memory and desire with impulses of possessiveness and sensuous greed: the impulses generate memory and desire; memory and desire generate sensuous greed. The other is the evocation of memories and desires because the experience of at-one-ment *resembles* possession and sensuous fulfilment. The classes differ because the mode of selection differs, and since the classes differ the interpretation (the formulation by the analyst) will differ. The evocation of that which provided a container for possessions, and of the sensuous gratifications with which to fill it, will differ from an evocation stimulated by at-one-ment. The exercises in discarding memory and desire must be seen as preparatory to a state of mind in which O can evolve. The facilitation of 'constellation'[1] must in turn be seen as a step in the process of at-one-ment, the transformation O → K. In practice this means not that the analyst recalls some relevant memory but that a relevant constellation will be evoked during the process of at-one-ment with O, the process denoted by transformation O → K.

To what then *is* the analyst's memory relevant and why can there not be a constellation that has a relevance other than relevance to analysis?

It is difficult to conceive of an analysis having a satisfactory outcome without the analysand's becoming reconciled to, or at one with, himself. It is tempting to suppose that such an outcome, or the desire for such an outcome, might provide a criterion for relevance. Conversely, it would be convenient if the analyst's memories, as reminiscences of sensuous experience, could be disregarded as column 2

[1]I use the term 'constellation' to represent the process precipitating a constant conjunction.

phenomena mobilized to keep at bay the experience inseparable from the transformations in O. If the objection to memory can be sustained because all memory is a special case of keeping (possessing) a theory known to be (or suspected of being) false in order to prevent the psychological upheaval inseparable from mental growth, it will have the advantage of decreasing the number of theories required to extend, as I propose to do, the theories of resistance. It is sometimes said that a particular interpretation is inadvisable because it increases resistances, but any approach produces its proper resistances; it is as possible to identify an approach by its resistances as it is to judge a tree by its fruit. Resistance to growth is endo-psychic and endo-egregious; it is associated with turbulence in the individual and in the group to which the growing individual belongs.

All C category elements, developed from experience gained by the senses, have gratificatory quality associated with dominance of the pleasure – pain principle. Objections to 'memories' and 'desires' are therefore objections to C3 and C3(2) statements. Later it will be necessary, when we deal with hallucinations, to distinguish between C elements having a background of visual sensation and those with other sense backgrounds.

The discipline that I propose for the analyst, namely avoidance of memory and desire in the sense in which I have used those terms, increases his ability to exercise 'acts of faith'. An 'act of faith' is peculiar to scientific procedure and must be distinguished from the religious meaning with which it is invested in conversational usage; it becomes apprehensible when it can be represented in and by thought. It must 'evolve' before it can be apprehended and it is apprehended when it is a thought, just as the artist's O is apprehensible when it has been transformed into a work of art.

But the 'act of faith' is not a statement, not even a column 6 statement, though it has resemblances to column 6 elements. All Grid elements have a background of O from which they have evolved and it is only when O has evolved sufficiently to be apprehended that it can be represented by a Grid element. It is only when it has evolved to the point where it can be represented by a Grid element that it can be apprehended. When it is apprehended the element can be represented by a Grid category.

The 'act of faith' has no association with memory or desire or sensation. It has a relationship to thought analogous to the relationship

of *a priori* knowledge to knowledge. It does not belong to the ±K system but to the O system. It does not by itself lead to knowledge 'about' something, but knowledge 'about' something may be the outcome of a defence against the consequences of an 'act of faith'. A thought has as its realization a no-thing. An 'act of faith' has as its background something that is unconscious and unknown because it has not happened. Thoughts have as their background realizations that are sensible: anxiety, fear, sex can be thought about only when O has evolved to a point where it is apprehensible in sense and has become amenable to transformations in K. Anxiety is 'known' by its secondary qualities. Yet no one has any doubt about anxiety or about 'feeling' the reality, though what is felt is sensations associated with anxiety and not anxiety itself. Similarly, no one who denudes himself of memory and desire, and of all those elements of sense impression ordinarily present, can have any doubt of the reality of the psychoanalytic experience which remains ineffable.

Receptiveness achieved by denudation of memory and desire (which is essential to the operation of 'acts of faith') is essential to the operation of psychoanalysis and other scientific proceedings. It is essential for experiencing hallucination or the state of hallucinosis.

This state I do not regard as an exaggeration of a pathological or even natural condition: I consider it rather to be a state always present, but overlaid by other phenomena which screen it. If these other elements can be moderated or suspended, hallucinosis becomes demonstrable; its full depth and richness are accessible only to 'acts of faith'. Elements of hallucinosis of which it is possible to be sensible are the grosser manifestations and are of secondary importance; to appreciate hallucination the analyst must participate in the state of hallucinosis. From what I have said it will be clear that this is so, for I have postulated that a K link can operate only on a background of the senses, is capable of yielding only knowledge 'about' something, and must be differentiated from the O link essential to transformations in O. Before interpretations of hallucination can be given, which are themselves transformations O → K, it is necessary that the analyst undergoes in his own personality the transformation O → K. By eschewing memories, desires, and the operations of memory he can approach the domain of hallucinosis and of the 'acts of faith' by which alone he can become at one with his patients' hallucinations and so effect transformations O → K.

A type of hallucination worthy of study is that which one may describe provisionally as visual. I have described a patient who seemed to think that my words flew over his head and could be detected in what to me were the patterns on a cushion. I have since found that the pattern on the cushion was seen by him to travel, as it were, in the opposite direction. That is, he was able, in a state of hallucinosis, to see that the patterns were really my words travelling, through his eyes, to him. Furthermore the 'meaning', which could not be grasped outside the conditions of hallucinosis, was perfectly clear in a state of hallucinosis. The 'meaning' of a statement in hallucinosis is not, however, the same as its meaning in the domain of rational thought. Ordinarily, constellation, constant conjunction, and binding (by nomination) are a prelude to exploration of meaning. In the domain of hallucinosis the mental event is transformed into a sense impression and sense impressions in this domain do not have meaning; they provide pleasure or pain. In this way the unsense-able mental phenomenon is transformed into a beta-element which can be evacuated and reintroduced so that the act yields not a meaning but pleasure or pain.

The analysand in a state of hallucinosis experiences visual hallucinations which tend to be self-perpetuating. They yield pleasure and pain, both being valued, and fail to yield meaning in the sense in which that term is understood in the domain of rational thought. He tends therefore to demand, and provide, more hallucination to compensate for the missing gratification. He feels the pleasure and pain to be inadequate; the 'meaning' is likewise inadequate. The less gratification he achieves the more greedy he becomes; the more greedy, the more hallucinated. The visual element is expected to be exempt from the disabilities inherent in those senses that depend for their efficacy on proximity to the object of gratification. Meaning is lost, pain and pleasure are gained, from a state that is independent of proximity to an object and of the frustration peculiar to thoughts and their genetic association with the 'no-thing'.[1]

I suspect that what I have said of visual hallucinations is true of hallucinations with a background of senses other than visual, but

[1]It is worth contrasting this type of independence of objects, conferred by hallucinosis and the advantages of 'visual' impression, with the independence of the physical presence of objects peculiar to 'maths' and 'thinking'. Note, too, the distraction caused by the *presence* of objects.

other senses lack the quality of independence of close contact with objects.

A patient who feared guilt substituted punishment. It was achieved by hallucinosis. His circumstances were comfortable and he did not manipulate events by acting out, which he might have done, to produce a penitential life. He could presumably have forced the police to take action by committing some variety of sexual offence – sexual offences often appeared in his statements – but instead he complained incessantly though inarticulately of what he ultimately came to recognize as sexual visions, which he admitted were present throughout the sessions. For months during which I had interpreted that he was seeing visions he denied them, but they were maintained tenaciously. After their presence had been admitted he feared to lose them though their dominance was painful. The pain yielded pleasure, and therefore there was cause for him to cherish the state of which he complained. His complaints, his flow of statements, produced a painful state in analysis and then were made into a sexual link between him and me. At the stage of which I write this was a gratification and also a protection against behaviour which might yield pleasure in a more expansive way – by his becoming involved with the police, for example. But his fear of any change was so acute that it was impossible to say with any plausibility what he expected to take the place of his hallucinations were they to cease. In time, however, certain fears could be discussed. Acting-out limited the amount of hallucinatory experience and its extent because the reality component involved frustration and delay, and real pain and pleasure seemed deficient in power to satisfy.[1] This, however, was his complaint against hallucinatory gratification. Hallucinations of dreams seemed to be deficient in associations and unsuited to perform the functions of dreams, and to be felt as unrewarding. Yet he reported what he said were dreams.

In this period hallucination supplied him with punishment as it might in other circumstances have supplied him with sexual pleasure, food, or any other sensual gratification. His analysis indeed showed that the usefulness of hallucination was absolutely limited to

[1]In this respect, real objects, real pain and pleasure, are felt as distraction. It is worth comparing *this* type of distraction with the frustration experienced by a calculator who has to think out mathematical problems only in the presence of objects which are the essence of his calculation. [Cf. previous footnote. *Ed.*]

elements with a background of sense-able realizations: this was their virtue and their defect.

Their moral value seemed to be that they punished him by providing him with ill-deserved pain to compensate for having been once used as the source of ill-deserved pleasure. In the analytic session they seemed as a barrier against any appreciation of the realities of the session. Yet some interpretations were grasped sometimes. I found it difficult to establish any rule that would govern the time at which interpretations could be understood but I did note that the interpretation had to be exact. He could not correct or adjust an inexactitude so as to bring the interpretation into line with the realization it was intended to illumine. It had to remain uncorrected and unabsorbed because it was wrong.

The sessions were occupied in verbalization of his visual images. His verbalizations were peppered with locutions such as 'tomorrow', 'yesterday', 'last week', all of which could be taken to mean 'not now'. Splitting in time was very common and psychoanalytic objects were scattered over a range of years. Corresponding to this was a denial of the present which amounted to a denial of the passage of time. It was as if a moment of time had been stretched out like a piece of elastic to cover an enormous area.

There had been an occasion when he smelled coffee in the house where I was working. He had once seen me caught in a rain shower without a coat or umbrella. Both these facts appeared in fragments spread out over many years. It would be an exaggeration to say they were expressed unmistakably. I have no doubt, or, more accurately, by an 'act of faith' I am confident, that the scraps of sentences and intonations when put together were signs that he had had both these experiences as I have described them. Were it possible for him to witness my having coffee and being caught in the rain, to 'take it in' and then fragment what he had thus taken in, to evacuate these fragments and leave them scattered over a wide space of time, then that would be what he was doing. The two facts appear in the analysis as if they have been embedded in the elastic moment of time that has been stretched out. How far is it safe to use such descriptions as a valid basis for conjecture? I can imagine that this patient's grasp of fact is so slight that he has not enough with which to provide a cover for his psychotic mechanisms. Further, I can suppose that the obtrusion of psychotic mechanisms is such that the 'skin' or 'sanity' is stretched

to breaking-point. Either description is likely to be so limited as to lead to a multiplicity of theories to serve a single configuration. But an illumination for the psychoanalyst does not necessarily provide illumination for someone not sharing the experience or illuminate for the patient who shares the experience but who transforms it under hallucinosis.

This problem prompts comparison of interpretation with the matter interpreted, or comparison of the category of associations with the category of the interpretation; the Grid is an instrument by which this can be effected. If some relationship between the categories could be established it might be possible to discover the nature of the relationship between psychotic association and the appropriate interpretation. This involves a further look at projective transformation.

The views expressed about memory and desire and the need for their regulation as the psychoanalyst's preparation for his work provide a starting-point for reconsidering the nature of the projective transformation. Hallucinosis, which can be *observed* by divesting oneself of memory and desire, must have had some corresponding mechanism in the events that led to its inception. If the analyst can take certain steps that enable him to 'see' what the patient sees, it is reasonable to suppose that the patient has likewise 'taken steps', though not necessarily the same ones, to enable him to 'see' what he sees.

4

Opacity of memory and desire

The 'act of faith' (*F*) depends on disciplined denial of memory and desire. A bad memory is not enough: what is ordinarily called forgetting is as bad as remembering. It is necessary to inhibit dwelling on memories and desires. They are two facets of the same thing: both are composed of elements based on sense impressions; both imply the absence of immediate sensual satisfaction; one supposes a store of sensual objects, the memory being the container, and the other a conjunction of sensually satisfying objects. The invariants are an inside and an outside composed of objects which are sensible. The more the psychoanalyst occupies himself with memory and desire the more his facility for harbouring them increases and the nearer he comes to undermining his capacity for *F*. For consider: if his mind is preoccupied with what is or is not said, or with what he does or does not hope, it must mean that he cannot allow the experience to obtrude, particularly that aspect of it which is more than the sound of the patient's voice or the sight of his postures. What sounds the patient makes, or what spectacle he presents, relates to O only in so far as O has evolved into the K domain.

Uninhibited exercise of memories and desires is indistinguishable from, inseparable from, and analogous to, making pre-conception impossible by virtue of leaving no unsaturated element (the desire or the memory precludes preconception if it occupies the 'space' that should remain unsaturated). If the mind is preoccupied with elements perceptible to sense it will be that much less able to perceive elements that cannot be sensed. Yet obviously anxiety cannot be said, except by analogy, to be smelled or touched or felt. Even so, anxiety comes nearer to being 'sensed' than many more subtle aspects of the personality which do nevertheless exist. It is important that the

analyst should avoid mental activity, memory and desire, which is as harmful to his mental fitness as some forms of physical activity are to physical fitness.

'Past' and 'future' represent a realization related to another realization represented by the terms 'internal' and 'external'. The past is something contained 'within' the 'memory', and the 'future' something that cannot be so contained. 'Memories' can be regarded as possessions; desires, though just as much 'in' the mind as are memories, and therefore just as much 'possessions', are spoken of as if they 'possessed' the mind. A certain class of patient feels 'possessed' by or imprisoned 'in' the mind of the analyst if he considers the analyst desires something relative to him – his presence, or his cure, or his welfare. I have said if the patient 'considers' the analyst desires something, but in fact to say in this context that the patient 'considers' is to use an approximation that may be misleading because its penumbra of associations conceals more than it reveals of the state of mind of the patient. The patient is in a state of mind for which there is no verbal apparatus and the psychoanalyst is constantly faced by the need to produce his own apparatus for investigation while he is carrying on the investigation. If the psychoanalyst has not deliberately divested himself of memory and desire the patient can 'feel' this and is dominated by the 'feeling' that he is possessed by and contained in the analyst's state of mind, namely, the state represented by the term 'desire'.

A means of representing mental phenomena without words (which are unsuitable because of their background of sensible experience) is required. The patient uses words that represent visual images, or he may be mute for long periods, or use words that are evocations of emotion, sometimes powerful emotions, but challenge the psychoanalyst to detect a content and express it in ordinary English. Evocations of anger, anxiety, fear, pity, hate, and loyalty to himself often include words that give the total a particular coloration: wreath, upset, cemetery, may be words scattered through the flow in such a way as to suggest bereavement; or solicitors, damages, illness, to suggest legal proceedings.

In this way he appears to be having an experience that he is not able to represent in terms of ordinary speech. He could be described therefore as suffering from a speech disorder were it not that the disturbance would appear to be inadequately or eccentrically described

in such terms; reciprocally, to ordinary view, it seems eccentric to say that a stammerer suffers from a psychosis. But in fact the descriptions of the psychotic patient as having a speech disorder and the stammerer as being psychotic both have substance, and in both eccentricity depends on the vertex. 'Stammer' and 'psychosis' are vertices displaying the same configuration in a manner that illuminates characteristics just as binocular vision demonstrates qualities that require stereoscopy to make them manifest.

Freud, in a letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé,[1] suggested his method of achieving a state of mind which would give advantages that would compensate for obscurity when the object investigated was peculiarly obscure. He speaks of blinding himself artificially. As a method of achieving this artificial blinding I have indicated the importance of eschewing memory and desire. Continuing and extending the process, I include understanding and sense perception with the properties to be eschewed. The suspension of memory, desire, understanding, and sense impressions may seem to be impossible without a complete denial of reality; but the psychoanalyst is seeking something that differs from what is normally known as reality; a criticism that applies to what is ordinarily meant by reality does not indicate undesirability for the purpose of achieving contact with psychic reality, namely, the evolved characteristics of O. This procedure is valid in psychoanalysis and other sciences; *F*, likewise, is an essential component of scientific procedure however rigorous.

There is the possibility of suppressing one or all of these functions of memory, desire, understanding, and sense either together or in turn. Practice in suppression of these faculties may lead to an ability to suppress one or other according to need, so that suspension of one might enhance the effect of domination by the other in a manner analogous to the use of alternate eyes.

Before considering the distinction to be made between total suppression, sleep or other recognized states we must consider in more detail what is meant by understanding or memory or desire. I accept Freud's view of memory and its relationship with notation (Freud, 1911b). Since all memory has a background of sense impressions, the appropriate category is row C. As there are a number of respects in which memory and desire seem to have a similar configuration

[1]Letter from Freud to Lou Andreas-Salomé, 25 May 1916 (in E. L. Freud, 1961).

I propose to consider only the C3 function of memory. What of a 'memory' of a gratification that was *missed?* – an unfulfilled desire must be classed as a desire.[1] If the constellation of thought to which it belongs is associated with feelings of grievance, regret, or remorse, such a desire may have to be regarded by the psychoanalyst as dominating or possessing the memory. A practising psychoanalyst has to decide whether he is psychoanalytically witnessing the operation of a *particular* internal object or not. Does the patient feel like that, or does what he feels like approximate to the formulations of Melanie Klein? I am concerned with developing a mode of thought which is such that a correct clinical observation can be made, for if *that* is achieved there is always hope of evolution of the appropriate theory. Defective observation means that a correct interpretation is an accident. The memory can become possessed by a desire; it can cease to be felt as a possession but itself becomes a possessor of the personality that harbours it. The category is no longer C3. What then is it? The unwelcome answer is that so long as progress, growth, is taking place, no one knows.

The probability is that either a process of rationalization leads to its conversion to categories D → F and columns 2, 4, 5, 6, n − 1, n, or it becomes fixed in row C and column 2. The need to resist the impact of changing circumstances requires that the C2 memory should become more and more independent of, and impervious to, the world of reality (sensible). These are developments in the category C3(2) and are, according to intensity, memories of sense impressions designed to act as a barrier *against* sense impressions; it would seem likely to lead to a development akin to hallucinations. The solution of the problem is made nearer by giving 'projective identification' a direction and greatly increasing the vertices and destinations. Not enough attention is paid to the unconscious as itself a destination of the projected object nor yet to the evacuation from the mental world into the sensible world and so out of the mental system.

Desire is similar to memory in that both have a background of sense impressions. But desire relates to that which is felt not to be possessed; it is 'unsaturated'. There is therefore a correspondence between desire as an unsaturated term and the evolution of O it represents. The problem in discussing O is that the discussion can only

[1]To be a desire the idea must be felt to be unfulfilled.

be about evolved characteristics of O (K) whereas *F* is related to O itself.

The problem of differentiating desire from memory lies in the fact that it is 'located' in a 'place' which cannot be determined any more than can the 'place' where parallel lines of a railway-track meet. 'Where' is a term with a background of sense impressions. The difference between desire and memory has no background of sense impressions and cannot be discussed adequately in terms that have such a background. Nevertheless, in psychoanalytic practice it is possible to decide when memory is being experienced by the patient and when desire: one is the 'past' tense and the other the 'future'. The decision depends on the fact that the experience the analyst has of the patient's experience is different from the patient's experience. Investigation of the problems involved depends on *F*. This means that the understanding of the patient and the identification with him that have been regarded as sufficient hitherto must be replaced by something quite different. The transformation in K must be replaced by the transformation in O, and K must be replaced by *F*. In transformations in K, the point on which attention is focused lies on the line of intersection of the evolution of O with Tα to produce Tβ. In transformation in O, the attention is focused beyond the intersection and in O. Tα and Tβ are therefore projections onto a surface from a point at O (infinity), and although O (infinity) is inaccessible to K it is perfectly accessible to T in O. The analyst has to *become infinite* by the suspension of memory, desire, understanding. The emotional state of transformations in O is akin to dread as it is represented by the formulation:

> Like one that on a lonesome road
> Doth walk in fear and dread;
> And having once turned round walks on,
> And turns no more his head;
> Because he knows a frightful fiend
> Doth close behind him tread.[1]

The 'frightful fiend' represents indifferently the quest for truth or the active defences against it, depending on the vertex.

The menace to 'reality' is felt to derive from: (1) the suppression of memory, desire, and understanding, for such suppression undermines sense-based experience which is the reality with which the

[1]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

individual is familiar; (2) the increase of power of *F*, which reveals and makes possible experiences that are often painful and difficult for the individual analyst and analysand to tolerate; and (3) the peculiar type of relationship between one element and another in the O domain. Included in this is a relationship that is indifferently expressed as spatial or temporal. Thus, in my quotation, the walker is being 'overtaken' by dread; he walks a 'lonesome road'. It may seem improbable that dread should be associated with analytic progress towards a more realistic outlook.

I shall therefore discuss the phenomenon at greater length.

First it is to be noted that the submergence of memory, desire, and understanding appears not only to run flat contrary to accepted procedure but also to be close to what occurs spontaneously in the severely regressed patient.[1] The analyst who tries this disciplinary activity will find it disturbing despite his own analysis, however thorough and prolonged it might have been. It is necessary to consider why this should be so.

Desire, memory, and understanding are based on sensuous experience, expressed in terms whose background is precisely the same experience and which are designed for use related to that experience. They are vitiated by the same defect as are formulations based on a background of inanimate reality when they are applied to biological reality. Anxiety, depression, persecution are not *sensed* (though common usage sanctions an analogical use of the term 'sensed' in a context in which it is not appropriate). The nearer the analyst comes to achieving suppression of desire, memory, and understanding, the more likely he is to slip into a sleep akin to stupor. Though different, the difference is hard to define. The sharpening of contact with O cannot be separated from an increase of perception, in particular of elements of K; this sensuous sharpening is painful although partial and mitigated by the general obliteration of sensory perception. The residual sensory perception, often auditory and restricted to particular kinds of sound, is responsible for inducing a sharp and painful reaction (similar to the startle reaction seen in babies).

Furthermore, the sacrifice of pleasure and pain is a deprivation

[1]There are real dangers associated with the appearance; this is why the procedure here adumbrated is advocated only for the psychoanalyst whose own analysis has been carried at least far enough for the recognition of paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions.

that is not easily tolerated in prospect and is disliked by the analysand when he senses it in the analyst. The deprivation corresponds to displacement of the pleasure–pain principle from its dominant position. This would not matter were it not for a simultaneous apparent deposition of the reality principle, for that is based on a background of realizations which are perceptible to the psyche through the mediation of the senses. The disciplined increase of *F* by suppression of K, or subordination of transformations in K to transformations in O, is therefore felt as a very serious attack on the ego until *F* has become established. If psychoanalytic method is narrowly conceived of as consisting in the accumulation of knowledge (possessiveness), in harmony with the reality principle, and divorced from the processes of maturation and growth (either because growth is not recognized or because it is recognized but felt to be unattainable and beyond the control of the individual), it becomes a potent stimulus of envy. A further source of distortion is the tendency to link *F* with the supernatural because of lack of experience of the 'natural' to which it relates. The tendency is to introduce a god or devil that *F* is to reveal (or that is to 'evolve' from O). The element F,[1] which should remain unsaturated, becomes saturated and unfitted for its purpose. The progressive stages in the disciplinary exercise proposed for the analyst are repellent rather than attractive. The more the analyst becomes expert in excluding memory, desire, and understanding from his mental activity, the more he is likely, at least in the early stages, to experience painful emotions that are usually excluded or screened by the conventional apparatus of 'memory' of the session, analytic theories, often disguised desires or denials of ignorance, and 'understanding' (which consists more often than not of column 2 elements). I exclude consideration of painful experiences in so far as they lie in unresolved conflicts in the analyst, for these do not differ from similar experiences in the practice of accepted methods; I have nothing to add to what is already known of counter-transference and the complications to which it may give rise. But it may be as well to glance at some of the more common experiences, if only as a warning to anyone disposed to practise the approach I advocate.

In the first place, the analyst will soon find that he appears to be ignorant of knowledge which he has hitherto regarded as the

[1][F as a Grid Element, a Concept, as distinct from *F* ('Faith'). *Ed.*]

hallmark of scrupulous medical responsibility. It is disconcerting to find that one is without an idea, say, that the patient has been married, or has children, or of certain events deemed by the analysand to have been of great significance. If the patient has paranoid trends and displays a tendency towards litigation, it may seem to be running an unwarranted risk to be ignorant of matters that could, in a court of law, be regarded as significant and as evidence of ordinary medical care for detail. This would indeed be the case if there were not cogent reasons for *not* 'remembering' such detail. As it is, I think that whatever the risks may be, the obligation is for the analyst to conduct the case in accordance with his lights – and not in accordance with the supposed risks to himself. In this method the experience the analyst gains bears little resemblance to the files and case-histories with which psychiatry is familiar. It may appear to differ from what would be expected in the light of accepted analytic theory. Thus an analyst may feel, to take a common example, that his married patient is unmarried; if so, it means that psychoanalytically his patient *is* unmarried: the emotional reality and the reality based on the supposition of the marriage contract are discrepant. If this seems to suggest the analyst must preserve his capacity for memory, I maintain that he always does (as does the patient, however regressed), but error is more likely to arise through inability to *divest* oneself of memory than through forgetfulness. If the analyst does not remember that his patient is married, the fact that he *is* is irrelevant until the patient says something that reminds the analyst of this fact.

I have spoken of the 'fact' that the patient is married. Sooner or later it will be necessary to abandon locutions which, though helpful when adumbrated (i.e. used to bind a constant conjunction), become unable to fulfil the function for which they are intended. To take the present instance as an example: provided one does not consider too deeply what is meant, no difficulty is experienced in using the phrase, or the idea that is represented by the phrase, 'the patient is married'. But in psychoanalysis such matters as the patient's marriage have to be considered deeply. Is an overt practising homosexual with several children and a wife with whom he has entered into the marriage contract married? In psychoanalysis the answer does not depend only on what is meant by marriage, because marriage is but one 'element' among many: for example, the 'meaning' of having several children, or a wife or husband with whom a legal marriage

has been contracted. In such a context the value can be seen of regarding both the term 'marriage' (the verbal expression) and the fact of several children, and a wife or husband, as 'statements' whose Grid category can be determined. If one considers the 'fact' of marriage it soon becomes necessary to suppose a number of different kinds of fact, such as a fact of 'external reality' or a fact of 'psychic reality'. Such terms are useful but they are themselves statements, and the belief that an event belongs to a category of 'events of external reality' leads to confusion and contradiction. It is simpler to regard the patient's statements as having a category in the vertex of the analyst and to observe that they do not, in the analyst's view, 'mean' that the patient is married (i.e. they are not column 3 elements) but that they have a particular category and that it is from the analyst's assessment of the category that the 'meaning' derives. *His* unsaturated elements are saturated. What the patient *thinks* he means is, as far as the analyst is concerned, irrelevant, but what the statement is, and to what use it is put, *is* relevant. What matters is that to statements of a particular category the patient begins to add statements of a different category. The patient whose statements have at no time suggested to the analyst that he, the patient, is married, now, at a particular point in his analysis, introduces statements that indicate that he *is;* that is to say, he behaves in a way that makes the analyst regard his statements as belonging to new categories including column 6 (he is asserting that he has actually *done* something, resorted to the kind of statement that consists in actually doing something, e.g. getting married).

Now it is clear that if the psychoanalyst has allowed himself the unfettered play of memory, desire, and understanding, his pre-conceptions will be habitually saturated and his 'habits' will lead him to resort to instantaneous and well-practised saturation from 'meaning' rather than from O.

When the psychoanalyst anticipates some crisis, and especially if he has, or thinks he has, good grounds for anxiety, his tendency is to resort to memory and understanding to satisfy his desire for security (or to resort to 'saturation' to avoid 'unsaturation'). If he gives in to this tendency he is proceeding in a direction calculated to preclude any possibility of union with O. This is understood by the psychotic patient, who does not resort to resistances but relies on being able to evoke the resistance-proliferating elements in his analyst; in other words, to stimulate the analyst's desires (notably for

a successful outcome of the analysis), his memories, and his understanding, thereby intending that his analyst's state of mind will not be open to the experience of which he might otherwise be a witness.

This digression brings us back to the question of what is to be regarded as a fact. It appears to mean that the analysis should reinforce doubts of 'facts' which are part of 'memory'. The tendency to try to recall some supposed 'cause' of the crisis and to desire some different and more pleasing situation must be resisted. At best it can only recall some episode supposed to be the 'cause'. The 'recalled memory' saturates the psychoanalyst's pre-conceptions and obscures the issues at the one point where clarity of judgement and scope for its exercise are able to coincide – the current session.

To repeat: the capacity to forget, the ability to eschew desire and understanding, must be regarded as essential discipline for the psychoanalyst. Failure to practise this discipline will lead to a steady deterioration in the powers of observation whose maintenance is essential. The vigilant submission to such discipline will by degrees strengthen the analyst's mental powers just in proportion as lapses in this discipline will debilitate them. This view departs from commonly accepted practice and it may be as well, therefore, to consider the theoretical basis implicit in accepted practice.

The idea that patient A comes five times a week and has been doing so for months or years is based on a background of sense impressions and a view of the individual's continuity as an individual which is primitive and crude. It is the emergence of primitive number as a method of asserting 'constant conjunction', of asserting that the object is recurrent, that the 'breast' is something that reappears. But we are not concerned with the patient's anatomy; a belief that no cellular changes take place in twenty-four hours is unwarranted on any but a crudely macroscopic view. The mental phenomena with which we are confronted cannot possibly have remained unaltered even if no analysis had been done. The mental phenomena should reveal invariance and it should be possible to observe the invariants embedded in these phenomena, but an invariant is a characteristic not of permanence but of transformation. It must be sought for in transformation. A psychoanalyst who remembers that A is the same person as A was yesterday indulges a column 2 element. Nor is there any reason for the analysand to believe that the analyst is the same person as the analyst of the previous day. Such belief is suspect as

the sign of a collusive relationship intended to prevent emergence of an unknown, incoherent, formless void and an associated sense of persecution by the elements of an evolving O.

Desire, memory, understanding thus have the column 2 function of keeping *F* at bay and preventing the transformation in K from becoming transformation in O. Ostensibly they represent a compromise, for not only do they preclude *F* and transformations in O, but they substitute transformations in K which give a similitude of transformation in O and make the pre-conception (D) in K serve as a saturation rather than as a means to a saturation. 'How I wish I had the chance to swim!' expresses the idea that a particular state of completion (wishing to swim) has been achieved and precludes the unsaturation that would be felt were the individual to *wish* to swim. Of all the hateful possibilities, growth and maturation are feared and detested most frequently. This hostility to the process of maturation becomes most marked when maturation seems to involve the subordination of the pleasure principle and the emergence of the reality principle. The change cannot be regarded as hated because it involves loss of pleasure, for the activity of the pleasure principle means activity of pain. Similarly, the continuation of pleasure when the dominance of the pleasure principle is in abeyance is not precluded by the dominance of the reality principle. But the change from pleasure principle to reality principle does mean abandonment of control over the proportion of pain to pleasure and leaves it to forces that are outside the personality. At-one-ment, or unity with O, is in prospect fearful; no experience challenging this preconception prevails because it is embodied in memory and desire, belongs to K, and does not transform into, though it may mark the inception of, O.

The central point appears to be the painful nature of change in the direction of maturation. It is probably idle to ask why it should be painful, why intensity of pain bears so little relationship to intensity of recognizable danger, and why pain is so feared. There is no doubt that mental pain in particular is feared in a way that would be appropriate if it corresponded directly with mental danger. The relationship of pain to danger is, however, obscure. In this it is not peculiar, for any relationship of one element of the personality with another seems difficult to determine. A science of relationships has yet to be established and one would look to find some discipline analogous to mathematics to represent the relationship of one element in the structure

of the psychic personality with another. It is possible to argue that mathematical formulations can be fully appreciated because there is always some more concrete background to which they can be seen to relate, *even though that background may itself be only mathematical*. Something similar may be possible in the relationship of elements of the structure of personality. Envy is typical of other elements of the personality in that everyone would be prepared to admit its existence. Yet it does not smell; it is invisible, inaudible, intangible. It has no shape. It must have invariance, or it could not be so widely and surely recognized; and if it has invariants it must be invariant with regard to some kind of operation and therefore there must be an underlying group of such operations.

5

Theories: particular instance or general configuration

Controversy is the growing-point from which development springs but it must be a genuine confrontation and not an impotent beating of the air by opponents whose differences of view never meet. What follows is a contribution to bringing different psychoanalytic views together in agreement or disagreement.

Hearing psychoanalytic controversy I have felt that the same configuration was being described and that the apparent differences were more often accidental than intrinsic; different points of view are believed to be significant of membership of a group, not of a scientific experience. Yet everyone knows that what is important is not the supposed use of a particular theory but whether the theory has been understood properly and then whether the application has been sound.

It may be objected that to establish this would involve consideration of every individual analyst and of the circumstances of every individual interpretation. Even so, many difficulties could be obviated by more precise definition of the point of view (vertex). It is permissible for an observer to say that he has no evidence of infantile sexuality provided he also adds that he is an aeronautical engineer and does not take anything but a cursory view of children. What is *not* permissible is that he should say that he has no evidence of infantile sexuality without mentioning his vertex. I hope that there will be evolved a method of designating the vertex with brevity and precision. The following is a loose description, by way of a prelude to something more scientific.

To attain to the state of mind essential for the practice of psychoanalysis I avoid any exercise of memory; I make no notes. When I am

tempted to remember the events of any particular session I resist the temptation. If I find myself wandering mentally into the domain of memory I desist. In this my practice is at variance with the view that notes should be kept or that psychoanalysts should find some method by which they can record their sessions mechanically or should train themselves to have a good memory. If I find that I am without any clue to what the patient is doing, and am tempted to feel that the secret lies hidden in something I have forgotten, I resist any impulse to remember what happened or how I interpreted what happened on some previous occasion. If I find that some half-memory is beginning to obtrude, I resist its recall no matter how pressing or desirable its recall may seem to be.

A similar procedure is followed with regard to desires: I avoid entertaining desires and attempt to dismiss them from my mind. (It is not enough to try to do this in the session because that is too late: the habit of desiring must not be allowed to grow.) For example, I think it a serious defect to allow oneself to desire the end of a session, or week, or term; it interferes with analytic work to permit desires for the patient's cure, or well-being, or future to enter the mind. Such desires erode the analyst's power to analyse and lead to progressive deterioration of his intuition. Introspection will show how widespread and frequent memories and desires are. They are constantly present in the mind and to follow the advice I am giving is a difficult discipline. There are exceptions, all of a simple and obvious kind.

Some matters can be easily recorded and need not burden the mind, as, for example, the times of sessions. It would be absurd if the analyst forgot to keep them and they are easily recorded on a timetable. The same may be true of age, members of the family, past illnesses, and other such facts as fancy might dictate. But these are to be recorded, together with addresses and telephone numbers, because they can then be forgotten and because they lend themselves to record. While it can be precisely stated that the patient is married and has four children it is not easily stated that his state of mind is that of a married man with four children because there is no such state of mind. Furthermore, such a 'memory', and the remembrances that such a note would provide, would greatly obscure observation of the patient's state of mind suppose it were to be more nearly what one might expect of a bachelor.

Matters that can be recorded with the means at present at our disposal, including mental means, are sensuous experiences, and the transformations they undergo issue in formulations which have all, mathematical formulations included, a sensuous background. The central phenomena of psychoanalysis have no background in sense data. Even the signs that accompany anxiety, for example increased respiration, would be more appropriate to smelling a danger, if that danger had a scent and our olfactory powers were well developed, than to detecting an endo-psychic phenomenon. An apparatus that might be useful where a danger is sensible is useless or obstructive when the danger derives from a background that is mental and not sensible. Therefore, keep records for events whose background is sensible, such as the time at which a patient is to appear, but not for phenomena of central concern to the psychoanalyst, since their background is not sensible.

How, then, are we to 'observe' and 'record' the patient's state of mind? Since I wish to discuss this but do not know the answer, I shall say 'by *F*'.

Freud said that he had to "blind myself artificially to focus all the light on one dark spot".[1] This provides a useful formulation for describing the area I wish to cover by *F*. By rendering oneself 'artificially blind' through the exclusion of memory and desire, one achieves F; the piercing shaft of darkness can be directed on the dark features of the analytic situation. Through *F* one can 'see', 'hear', and 'feel' the mental phenomena of whose reality no practising psychoanalyst has any doubt, though he cannot with any accuracy represent them by existing formulations.

The vertex I have thus far attempted to represent in this description may later be more accurately defined. Even as it is, I hope that my description will serve to make certain advantages clear. For example, it is easier for another psychoanalyst to appreciate my work if he knows the vertex and can thus anticipate what he thinks are its merits and defects. He does not have to engage in a barren argument about the theories I use (in a context of which he can know nothing) if he is given some idea of the state of mind in which I apply them.

It can be seen that with one vertex theories might be useful that are not useful with another; that if the vertex were altered, other

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[1]In the letter referred to earlier in Chapter 4.

theories would be required to illuminate the phenomena discussed. Conversely, another psychoanalyst could understand that I might 'see' the oedipal situation in a context in which he might not.

The rules are relatively easy for a psychoanalyst to obey; if they are obeyed, dissimilar people with dissimilar patients may yet have a similar experience and so tend less often to mistake for general laws what are in fact only particular instances of old ones.

The experience to which I refer is the contact with the evolved aspects of O, the realization that I have variously described as ultimate reality, the thing-in-itself, or truth. Logically, in so far as logic affords a model for the approach I am making, the absence of memory and desire should free the analyst of those peculiarities that make him a creature of his circumstances and leave him with those functions that are invariant, the functions that make up the irreducible ultimate man. In fact this cannot be. Yet upon his ability to approximate to this will depend his ability to achieve the 'blindness' that is a prerequisite for 'seeing' the evolved elements of O.

Reciprocally, his freedom from being 'blinded' by the qualities (or his perception of them) that belong to the domain of the senses should enable the analyst to 'see' those evolved aspects of O that are invariant in the analysand. The further the analysis progresses the more the psychoanalyst and the analysand achieve a state in which both contemplate the irreducible minimum that is the patient. (This irreducible minimum is incurable because what is seen is that without which the patient would not be the patient.)

Suppose the patient proliferates endless stories, coherent, plausible, and apparently true. After some analysis it becomes evident that something is wrong: the associations vary from accounts of episodes alleged to have happened and quite likely to have happened, to accounts that sound no less convincing but that reveal flaws. From internal evidence it is clear that the event could not have happened. But for the incongruities, the tone of assurance of the narrative would have lulled all suspicion. If the narration is challenged, the patient admits the fault and at once begins to proliferate further fabrications which invite the analyst either to withdraw his comments and acknowledge the truth of the patient's assertions, or to say openly that he is lying.

It is not relevant to describe details of this case. By regarding the patient's statements as transformations and categorizing them by

means of the Grid, one can do something towards understanding what is taking place. I have advocated (in *Elements of Psycho-Analysis*) exercises of this kind, but it must not be supposed that understanding of this nature is required. On the contrary, such 'understanding' can be seen to have as its background memory and desire and should therefore be avoided. The importance of the exercise is to facilitate the analyst's capacity for conjecture, not to intrude upon an analytic session. If the analysis is conducted as I advocate, the 'evolution of O' becomes manifest in the chains of fabrications such as I have described. It should be possible to observe a wide spectrum of categories of lies and what they represent. The flow of associations demands a high degree of inventiveness and speed (especially in sealing off any breach in the fabrications), and a measure of verbal facility that may give an impression of intelligence, especially if memory and desire distort judgement of the category. I am concerned here not with the diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, or cure, but with the O of psychoanalysis.

From one vertex it might seem that the analysand was 'blinding' the analyst by flooding him with illumination – so many facts that the 'obscure' point could not be 'seen'. Is this statement distinguishable from the state produced if the analyst is not successful in ridding himself of memory and desire? Only the psychoanalytic session can provide the answer. Extra-analytic activity stimulates doubt and curiosity in the analyst. Such a patient stimulates memory and desire by appearing to satisfy but without doing so; the analyst is tacitly invited to 'remember' all he is told.

A number of questions, of which the following are a few, are posed by this behaviour:

1. Are the patient's statements lies? Is 'lie' the most appropriate term to use? If not, what is the correct formulation?
2. Why does the patient transform in fabrications and what does he thus transform?
3. Does the fabrication differ from myth? It is often a plausible and coherent narrative, but it seems to declare itself to be category 3 when in fact it would appear to be C2. What, then, are the emotional experiences that are to be covered up and not allowed to emerge?

4. How do the patient's statements differ from other false statements? Respect for the truth appears to have low value compared with other vertices. What, then, is the vertex? –K? How does this compare with Plato's objections to the poet in society? With regard to other false statements it is usually supposed that there is either a mistaken idea that the lie is correct, or a belief that some reward attaches to being able to mislead. Some statements appear to be without reward to either party, but perhaps there is a pleasure in creation even though creation can be achieved only by a lie. Is it a *folie à deux* – a collaboration? Certainly with *F* it could be a sado-masochistic collusion to 'poison' or be 'poisoned'.

These questions can be answered only in analytic contact with the patient. The Grid, or some improved version of it, facilitates mental gymnastics in preparation for it.

6

The mystic and the group

It seems absurd that a psychoanalyst should be unable to assess the quality of his work. In attempting an assessment he has available popular repute (notoriously fickle and unreliable, and unsuited for use as a foundation for any judgement), anxiety, or a sense of satisfaction and well-being about a piece of work that appears to him to be well done. This last is probably as reliable a foundation as any, but is subject to doubt and misgiving. The only other person well placed to have an opinion is the analysand. His opinion is likewise a matter for scrutiny. The friendly or hostile feelings revealed converge towards a point where there should be a wise and compassionate, though critical, judgement. Instead there is an intuition, 'That is truth, accept it.[1]' Such formulations are not regarded as scientifically adequate and one craves something better. The craving cannot be satisfied unless it is recognized that standpoints such as religion, art, science, as we understand them today, are as unsatisfactory as the formulations truth, beauty, god, or future life.

The formulation is the end-product of a transformation; all transformations are associated with a particular vertex. The psychoanalyst is faced at an early date in his own development and at an early stage in the development of psychoanalysis itself with problems that arise because no vertex at present recognized is adequate. It is as absurd to criticize a piece of psychoanalytic work on the ground that it is 'not scientific', as it is to criticize it because it is 'not religious' or 'not artistic'. It is not any of these things. Its failure to be so is a criticism; but its 'success' at being any of them would not remove the reproach.

[1][Prince André, in *War and Peace*, by Leo Tolstoy. *Ed.*]

The critical formulation for which there is no substitute is that it is 'not psychoanalysis'.

It would seem that we are as far as ever from a positive result to the discussion; 'psychoanalysis' must be regarded as a term binding a constant conjunction. Years must pass before we understand what are conjoined and what the conjunction means. Can it be done in verbal terms? Are there any other terms?

It has been said in criticism of psychoanalysis that it cannot be regarded as a science because it cannot be mathematized. Available mathematics do not provide the psychoanalyst with appropriate formulations. The same is true of available verbalizations, but this has been obscured because ordinary conversation has served fairly well for the analysands who have come for analysis hitherto. This situation has been altered by the advent of so-called severe cases on the one hand, and by the needs of communication between psychoanalytic colleagues on the other. It is clear that a development is required that will help psychoanalysis in a manner analogous to that in which modern mathematics has helped the development of physics. In the meantime we are thrown back on existing verbal, mathematical, and artistic formulations, and the exceptional individuals capable of employing them. Genius has been said to be akin to madness; it would be more true to say that psychotic mechanisms require a genius to manipulate them in a manner adequate to promote growth (or life, which is synonymous with growth).

The group needs to preserve its coherence and identity; efforts to do so are manifested in conventions, laws, culture, and language. It also needs the exceptional individual and therefore needs to make provision for the exceptional individual. This might be simple if exceptional individuals declared themselves in unexceptionable terms, and if the nature of their impact on the group, its laws and conventions, could be judged as life-giving or the reverse. The possibility of such discrimination is doubtful and, centuries after, it may still be debated whether an individual of this kind exerted a beneficial or deleterious effect. The same is true of ideas; furthermore, groups are hostile or friendly, favourable or unfriendly, to the development of the new person or idea.

The 'exceptional individual' may be variously described as a genius, a messiah, a mystic, and his following may be large or small. The negative group declares itself an enemy of promise in a manner

that may not be discernible to ordinary individuals, but is apparently clear to the gifted individual who seeks an atmosphere more congenial to the exercise of his gifts. For convenience, I shall use the term 'mystic' to describe these exceptional individuals. I include scientists, and Newton is the outstanding example of such a man; his mystical and religious preoccupations have been dismissed as an aberration when they should be considered as the matrix from which his mathematical formulations evolved.

The mystic may declare himself as revolutionary, or he may claim that his function is to fulfil the laws, conventions, and destiny of his group. It would be surprising if any true mystic were not regarded by the group as a mystical nihilist at some stage of his career, and by a greater or less proportion of the group. It would be equally surprising if he were not in fact nihilistic to some group, if for no other reason than that the nature of his contribution is certain to be destructive of the laws, conventions, culture, and therefore coherence of a group within the group if not of the whole group. In this it is evident that the character of the group (which I do not discuss) cannot be excluded from the facts of the evolution of a mystic in a group. The disruptive force of the mystical nihilist, or of the mystic whose impact on a particular group is of a disruptive or nihilist character, extends to and depends on the Language of Achievement, be it expressed in action, speech, writing, or aesthetic. Usually the spread of the disruptive force is limited by the vehicle of communication. The phenomena of destruction remain the same but reception of their message varies, often being restricted to relatively few.

Melanie Klein writes of symbol formation as if it were a particular function that could disintegrate or be disordered and give rise to deep disturbance in a personality; there are realizations that correspond to this theory, but I think the area of disturbance should be regarded as greater than her theory implies. For example, the psychotic patient does not always behave as if he is incapable of symbol formation. Indeed, he often talks or behaves as if he is convinced that certain actions, which to me are innocent of any symbolic significance, are obviously symbolic. They mean, apparently obviously, some message which is of personal and particular concern to him. This 'meaning' is quite different from the meaning one assumes to lie behind a constant conjunction that is public – not private to one individual. The former is, and appears to belong to, a private communication made by God

(or Devil or Fate); when the psychotic symbol is met with in practice, its significance seems to be less that it symbolizes something, more that it indicates that the patient is in private rapport with a deity or demon. The symbol, as it is usually understood, represents a conjunction which is recognized by a group to be constant; as encountered in psychosis it represents a conjunction between a patient and his deity which the patient feels to be constant.

The 'symbol' can be an attempt of the personality to use its experience to formulate a theory, which may then be used when the appropriate realization presents itself, or an attempt to use an external event (e.g. a meeting with an acquaintance) to yield an interpretation *as if it were* a symbol. Thus an adverse circumstance can be used as a 'symbol' (not 'sign') of God's wrath, or past experiences can be represented by symbols whose genetic base is in their *sensuous* background. The emotional experience is thus made manageable by being symbolized, whether it is in origin felt to be a response to a painful external stimulus, or whether the external experience is felt to be the confirmation of a painful internal psychic experience.

The inescapable bestiality of the human animal is the quality from which our cherished and admired characteristics spring. 'Man is a political animal' means that he has the mental counterpart of the physical characteristics of a herd animal. As psychoanalysts, we are concerned with the mental counterpart of such physical characteristics as can be discerned in the individual when in semi-isolation from his group but closely involved in a situation likely to stimulate his 'pair' characteristics. Birth, dependence, pairing, and warfare – these are the basic situations to which the basic emotional drives correspond.

This summary of the human condition adds nothing new to what is already familiar, in greater detail, to every psychoanalyst. The summary is intended as a reminder that the analytic situation itself, and then the psychoanalytic occupation or task itself, are bound to stimulate primitive and basic feeling in analyst and analysand. Therefore, if the technique I propose for ensuring vivid appreciation of the emotional facts is as sound as I think it, these fundamental characteristics, love, hate, dread, are sharpened to a point where the participating pair may feel them to be almost unbearable: it is the price that has to be paid for the transformation of an activity that is *about* psychoanalysis, into an activity that *is* psychoanalysis. The

activity that is psychoanalysis evokes desires to know how the group is reacting to the pair relationship; this desire often masquerades as a wish for validation, popular repute, or approval.

We thus return to the original problem and the impulse to repudiate the approach I have adumbrated: the more reminiscence is indulged, the farther one is removed from a form of anxiety; one's historical identity is asserted, one was such and such and had certain recognized and remembered associates; one has done as well as, or less well than, so and so. It is doubtful whether these 'historical' reminiscences would be corroborated by any of the characters who figure in one's own story, but they serve to deny the painfulness of the actual predicament that is the source of embarrassment. It is difficult, short of hallucination, to do anything about the present predicament: reminiscence becomes a C2 category orgy to keep out the painful insights that follow on denial of sensuous experience.

There is one form of denial of sensuous experience that has been a commonplace since Freud pointed out that analysis must be conducted in an atmosphere of deprivation. It has not been recognized that to achieve this it is not enough to hope that analysis of the analyst and denial of the patient's wishes will serve. Anyone who considers it possible to achieve a suitable frame of mind by a few minutes of psychological tidying up before starting work cannot have grasped the nature of the discipline necessary to be an analyst or the nature of the insights that become available to the analysed analyst if he brings 'artificial blindness' to bear on his dark spots. It may well be that analysts who attempt the approach advocated in Chapter 4 on 'Memory and Desire' will find that the intuitions achieved by it cause them to feel the need for further analysis. It is possible that the test of sensuous deprivation involved in eschewing memory and desire will bring to light a need for analysis that exists because the analytic experience has not been sufficient, or it may be that it indicates an *additional* demand that would not have occurred had the analyst remained content with the 'atmosphere of deprivation' as it has been understood hitherto. The point is of moment because, if the abandonment of memory and desire brings a need for increased stamina, analysts may have to accept that advances in insight have to be matched by further analysis. Such a contingency imposes revision of training and maintenance of capacity for a psychoanalytic career.

Though it is easy to envisage the need for further analysis, it is not certain that the further analysis must be similar to analysis as experienced and understood when we undergo our first analysis. The importance of the unconscious must not blind us to the fact that in addition to our unconscious memories and desires, dealt with psychoanalytically, there is a problem to solve in the handling of our conscious memories and desires. What kind of 'psychoanalysis' is required for the conscious?

The psychotic *is* conscious of what we feel requires analysis; to approach this problem it will be necessary to discuss memory and desire relative to loss of contact with reality. It has been supposed that the psychotic severs links with reality as a step to a sexual life in phantasy, but it is equally intended to establish freedom from sexual and allied stimulation. He appears to achieve a result resembling the neurotic patient's contact with the unconscious as it is known in classical analysis. The psychotic seems to have the same relationship and attitude to what he has *not* been able to repress, and what therefore remains conscious, that other patients have to the unconscious. The neurotic patient is concerned to show that neurotic elements in his behaviour are rational and does his best to rationalize them. The psychotic can 'see' that any action has a symbolic meaning and that the conjunction of the elements is not fortuitous but has a meaning which is clear *to him*. This is possible provided he has severed all links with anything that shows the conjunction to be fortuitous and devoid of meaning, that is, in my terminology, unsaturated – a D category element. The premature saturation involved in this has the paradoxical effect that all acts are symbolic, and yet the patient is incapable of symbol formation in the way open to the normal personality who can allow his elements to remain unsaturated. Contact with reality is unwelcome because it tends not only to show that an element is unsaturated but also to saturate the element in ways that are painful to the personality. As all his 'symbols' have an obvious meaning they can hardly be regarded as symbols at all and nothing is left that can fulfil the function that symbols fill for the non-psychotic personality.

How does this differ from the state produced by the elimination of memory and desire?

First, I am advocating only a partial severance with reality. Second, it is a deliberate, conscious act of discipline. Third, it has a

purpose that would appear to differ from the purpose of the psychotic manoeuvre. He wishes to destroy contact; I wish to establish it. Furthermore, he is primarily concerned with destruction of sensuous contact and its concomitant saturation, whereas I am anxious to diminish sensuous contact to bring psychic reality into focus. The psychotic fears and hates that result; it is an extension of reality.

The domain of personality is so extensive that it cannot be investigated with thoroughness. The power of psychoanalysis demonstrates to any practising psychoanalyst that adjectives like 'complete' or 'full' have no place in qualifying 'analysis'. The more nearly thorough the investigation, the clearer it becomes that however prolonged a psychoanalysis may be, it represents only the start of an investigation. It stimulates growth of the domain it investigates. This difficulty I mean to exploit in this way: if it is true that the proportion of the known to the unknown is so small at the *end* of analysis, it must be even smaller *during* analysis. Therefore to spend time on what has been discovered is to concentrate on an irrelevance. What matters is the unknown, and on this the psychoanalyst must focus his attention. Therefore 'memory' is a dwelling on the unimportant to the exclusion of the important. Similarly, 'desire' is an intrusion into the analyst's state of mind which covers up, disguises, and blinds him to the point at issue – that aspect of O that is currently presenting the unknown and unknowable though it is manifested to the two people present in its evolved character. This is the 'dark spot' that must be illuminated by 'blindness'. Memory and desire are 'illuminations' that destroy the value of the analyst's capacity for observation as a leakage of light into a camera might destroy the value of the film being exposed.

To consider objections to the elimination of memory: it may seem impossible to have a link with a patient without remembering who he or she is; but such recognition does not depend on memory, nor does psychoanalysis. It depends on a background of an experience the peculiarity of which I shall indicate by a series of approximations. We are familiar with the experience of *remembering* a dream; this must be contrasted with dreams that float into the mind unbidden and unsought and float away again as mysteriously. The emotional tone of this experience is not peculiar to the dream: thoughts also come unbidden, sharply, distinctly, with what appears to be unforgettable clarity, and then disappear leaving no trace by which they can be

recaptured. I wish to reserve the term 'memory' for experience related to conscious attempts at recall – expressions of a fear that some elements, 'uncertainties, mysteries, doubts'[1] – will obtrude.

Dream-like memory is the memory of psychic reality and is the stuff of analysis. That which is related to a background of sensuous experience is not suitable to the phenomena of mental life which are shapeless, untouchable, invisible, odourless, tasteless. These psychically real (in the sense of belonging to psychic reality) elements are what the analyst has to work with.

It may appear that this contradicts the psychoanalytic theory of dreams unless it is remembered that the dream is the *evolution* of O where O has evolved sufficiently to be represented by sensuous experience. The sensuous elements of a psychotic dream do not represent anything. They *are* a sensuous experience.[2]

Anyone who has made careful notes of what he considers to be the facts of a session must be familiar with the experience in which such notes will, on occasion, seem to be drained of all reality: they might be notes of dreams made to ensure that he will not forget them on waking. To me it suggests that the experience of the session relates to material akin to the dream, not in the sense that dreams might be part of the preoccupation of the session but that the dream and the psychoanalyst's working material both share dream-like quality.

The *reality* of the psychic experience – the O in the human personality – is such that the more the analyst is in contact, the more real will be that part of it that he has been able to interpret. It will be clear to him that he is formulating only one aspect of a multi-dimensional experience, but what will dwell in his mind will be that multi-dimensional experience. Once he has interpreted it, that facet ceases to be of moment. He reads his notes with a sense of an emotional experience powerfully present in his mind, but it is of an experience of the as-yet-unknown. It is against this powerful sense that he reads the note of an event which ceased to be of importance once it was formulated; the attempt to remember or record destroys the capacity for, and interrupts the exercise of, observation of the psychoanalytically significant events.

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[1]John Keats, 'Letter to George and Thomas Keats', 21 December 1817. [See Chapter 13. *Ed.*]

[2]The use of the sensuous experience to represent a psychic reality differentiates the neurotic dream and its symbolic quality from the psychotic dream.

Conversely, the sacrifice of memory and desire is conducive to the growth of dream-like 'memory' which is a part of the experience of psychoanalytic reality. The transformation of the emotional experience into mental growth of analyst and analysand contributes to the difficulty of both to 'remember' what took place; in so far as the experience contributes to growth, it ceases to be recognizable; if it does not become assimilated it adds to those elements that are remembered and forgotten. Desire obstructs the transformation from knowing and understanding, to being; that is to say, $K \rightarrow O$.

7

Container and contained

An advantage of believing that observations are the foundation of scientific method is that the conditions in which they are made can be stated and then produced. The simplicity of this has its appeal for the psychoanalyst: an analytic situation is presumed to exist and interpretations of the observations made in that situation are then reported. It is possible to believe that the analysis has a location in time and space: for example, the hours arranged for the sessions and the four walls of the consulting-room; that at such times and in such a place the analyst can make observations which he cannot do if the domain has not these limitations, or if 'psychoanalytic observations' do not conform to the conventional view of an observation. If I pictorialize the statement 'the conventional view of an observation' to be a container, like a sphere, and the 'psychoanalytic observation' as something that cannot be contained within it, I have a model that will do very well not only for the 'conventional view', to represent my feelings about a 'psychoanalytic situation', but also for the 'psychoanalysis' that it cannot contain. It will also serve as a model for my feelings about certain patients: I cannot observe Mr X because he will not remain 'inside' the analytic situation or even 'within' Mr X himself.

I have found theories of acting-out enlightening, but not enlightening enough; none of the theories known to me 'contains' the 'facts' by which I seek to be enlightened. My 'facts' gird against the framework of definition and theory which I seek to erect around them. The patient who is acting out cannot be 'contained' within existing formulations.

This is a characteristic of the mental domain: it cannot be contained within the framework of psychoanalytic theory. Is this a sign of defective theory, or a sign that psychoanalysts do not understand

that psychoanalysis cannot be contained permanently within the definitions they use? It would be a valid observation to say that psychoanalysis cannot 'contain' the mental domain because it is not a 'container' but a 'probe'; the formulation that I have tried to further by using the symbols ♀ and ♂ minimizes this difficulty by leaving ♀ and ♂ as unknowns whose values are to be determined.

I would pursue this train of thought further by discussing something more practical and particular. It is a matter where action[1] seems to be called for, namely, the institutionalization of psychoanalysis comprising publication, selection, training, and qualification.

In recent years there has grown up the use of the term Establishment; it seems to refer to that body of persons in the State who may be expected usually to exercise power and responsibility by virtue of their social position, wealth, and intellectual and emotional endowment. (This list is not in order of priority of attainments). I propose to borrow this term to denote everything from the penumbra of associations generally evoked, to the predominating and ruling characteristics of an individual, and the characteristics of a ruling caste in a group (such as a psychoanalytic institute, or a nation or group of nations). Because of my choice of subject it will usually be used for talking about the ruling 'caste' in psychoanalytic institutes.

The Establishment has to find and provide a substitute for genius. One of its more controversial activities is to promulgate rules (known in religious activities as dogmas, in scientific groups as 'laws', e.g. of nature or perspective) for the benefit of those who are not by nature fitted to have direct experience of *being* psychoanalytic (or religious, or scientific, or artistic) so that they may, as it were by proxy, have and impart knowledge of psychoanalysis. Group members will not through incapacity be denied a sense of participation in an experience from which they would otherwise feel for ever excluded. At the same time these rules (or dogmas) must be such that they attract rather than repel, help rather than hinder, the membership of genius which is essential to the group's continued existence and vitality. A Freud can discover and establish psychoanalysis, but it must be maintained by a continued supply of 'genius'. This cannot be ordered; but if it comes the Establishment must be able to stand the shock. Failing

[1]I shall include psychoanalysis itself in the category of 'action' for reasons given under the heading of 'Language of achievement' in Chapter 13.

genius, and clearly it may not materialize for a very long period, the group must have its rules and a structure to preserve them. Thus an environment exists ready, as Nietzsche said of the nation, to fulfil its proper function, namely, to produce a genius. Similarly, it may be said of the individual that he should be ready to produce a 'flash of genius'. Let us therefore consider this phenomenon.

The term 'genius' does not carry the associations I want, so I propose to use the term 'mystic', leaving it to be supposed that the mystic has characteristics usually associated with genius, and that the person represented by the term 'genius' or 'mystic' may with equal propriety be described by the term 'messiah'.

The mystic is both creative and destructive. I make a distinction between two extremes that coexist in the same person. The extreme formulations represent two types: the 'creative' mystic, who formally claims to conform to or even fulfil the conventions of the Establishment that governs his group; and the mystic nihilist, who appears to destroy his own creations. I mean the terms to be used only when there is outstanding creativeness or destructiveness, and the terms 'mystic', 'genius', 'messiah' could be interchangeable.

The problem posed by the relationship between the mystic and the institution has an emotional pattern that repeats itself in history and in a variety of forms. The pattern may appear in the relationship of a new phenomenon to the formulation that has to represent it. It appears in the relationship of widely dissimilar groups to their mystics; it reveals itself in the history of the Christian heresies, the heliocentric theories, the relationship of the rabbinical directorate of the Kabbalah to revolutionary mystics such as Isaac Luria, the political reformer, and the Establishment.

My object is to show that certain elements in the development of psychoanalysis are not new or peculiar to analysis, but have in fact a history that suggests that they transcend barriers of race, time, and discipline, and are inherent in the relationship of the mystic to the group. The Establishment cannot be dispensed with (though this may appear to be approximately achieved in Sufism and in the theory of Marxism) because the institutionalized group, the Work group[1] is as essential to the development of the individual, including the mystic, as he is to it. Homeric psychology indicates a stage of mental

[1][See *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers*, in Volume IV. *Ed*.]

development in which the distinction between man and god is ill defined; in the individual psyche, little distinction between ego and superego is recognized. The Work group, under the religious vertex, must differentiate between man and god. Institutionalized religion must make man conscious of this gulf in himself and in the counterparts of himself in the group of which he is a member.

The institutionalization of psychoanalysis requires a psychoanalytic group which has 'Establishment' as one of its functions. It is itself a replica, in the external world, of an object in which the desired separation has been effected. But its function is then to effect this separation in the personalities of its members. It is thus both a model of a state that is desired, and an institution whose function it is to make the individual aware of the gap between himself (his idealized, superegoized self) and himself (his unregenerate, un-psychoanalysed self).

One result of separation is no direct access of the individual to the god with whom he used formerly to be on familiar terms. But the god has undergone a change as a part of the process of discrimination. The god with whom he was familiar was finite; the god from whom he is now separated is transcendent and infinite.

To restate the above in terms appropriate to a background of human experience: Freud and his associates mix on terms of equality such as exist between any human colleagues in a common venture. Freud, merely by being a person of outstanding stature, stimulates the tensions and emotional drives appropriate to a primitive group and stimulates them still further by his work. The primitive stages of the analytic group contribute to the obtrusion of tensions and emotional drives appropriate to the primitive group, as Freud observed through his study of the individual. I doubt that he appreciated the force of the messianic hopes aroused. The primitive stage makes way for the stage of discrimination described in the religious group: a distinction is made, otherwise there will not be recognition of the real distinction that exists between a mystic (in my sense) and ordinary human beings.

This distinction cannot be achieved adequately by saying that it is inseparable from idealization. Idealization in the group is a reality-based activity which is essential for the growth of discrimination in the individual. The individual himself must be able to distinguish between himself as an ordinary person and his view that he is omniscient and omnipotent. It is a step towards recognition of a

distinction between the group as it really is and its idealization as an embodiment of the omnipotence of the individuals who compose it. Sometimes the separation fails and the group is not only seen to be ideally omnipotent and omniscient but believed to be so in actuality. The individual's realization of a gulf between his view of himself as omnipotent and his view of himself as an ordinary human being must be achieved as the result of a task of the group itself as well as in individual analysis. Otherwise there is a danger that a state of mind is transferred (by projective identification) to the group and *acted out* there – not altered. Some details of this situation must be described.

In the first stage there is no real confrontation between the god and the man because there is really no such distinction. In the second stage the infinite and transcendent god is confronted by the finite man. When the function of the group is to *establish* the separation there is no question of reunion. In the third stage the individual, or at least a particular individual – the mystic – needs to reassert a direct experience of god of which he has been, and is, deprived by the institutionalized group. Before I turn to this it is necessary to glance at some peculiarities of the group that has been institutionalized and of life in it.

The individuals show signs of their divine origin (just as the gods of the previous stage show signs of human origin). The individuals may be regarded as being incarnations of the deity; each individual retains an inalienable element which is a part of the deity himself that resides in the individual. He can be regarded as constantly attempting to achieve union with the deity, or he can be regarded as divine in a somewhat low-grade way. This last shows signs of being related genetically to the stage where no real distinction exists between god-like human beings on the one hand and very human gods on the other. Finally, the individual strives for reunion with the god from whom he feels consciously separated. This is reflected in the actualities of the human relationship and contributes to the hatred of the group for a state in which individuals cannot have direct access, or even a sense of direct access, to the great man (as they might once have had to Freud). Individuals cannot reconcile themselves to a discrimination that means conscious separation of themselves from a belief in their Freud-like qualities and recognition that Freud, a genius (mystic), no longer exists. Another Freud cannot be created no matter how essential he may be.

The group and mystic are essential to each other; it is therefore important to consider how or why the group can destroy the mystic on whom its future depends and how or why the mystic may destroy the group. I shall indicate the nature of the questions at issue since it is vital that the problem should be seen to exist. It is inherent both in the nature of man as a political animal and in the nature of psychoanalysis as the explosive force.

The relationship between group and mystic may belong to one of three categories. It may be commensal, symbiotic, or parasitic. The same categorization may be applied to the relationship of one group with another. I shall not trouble with the commensal relationship: the two sides coexist and the existence of each can be seen to be harmless to the other. In the symbiotic relationship there is a confrontation, and the result is growth-producing though that growth may not be discerned without some difficulty. In the parasitic relationship the product of the association is something that destroys both parties to the association. The realization that approximates most closely to my formulation is the group–individual setting dominated by envy. Envy begets envy, and this self-perpetuating emotion finally destroys host and parasite alike. The envy cannot be satisfactorily ascribed to one or other party; in fact it is a function of the relationship.

In a symbiotic relationship the group is capable of hostility and benevolence, and the mystic contribution is subject to close scrutiny. From this scrutiny the group grows in stature and the mystic likewise. In the parasitic association even friendliness is deadly. An easily seen example of this is the group's promotion of the individual to a position in the Establishment where his energies are deflected from his creative–destructive role and absorbed in administrative functions. His epitaph might be "He was loaded with honours and sank without a trace". Eissler (1965), without mentioning the general principle involved, shows the dangers of the invitation to group or individual to become respectable, to be medically qualified, to be a university department, to be a therapeutic group, to be anything in short, but *not* explosive. The reciprocal attitude in the mystic is that the group should thrive or disintegrate but must *not* be indifferent. The attitudes are not conscious and deliberate; they are essential. Without them the group is not a group, nor the 'mystic' a mystic. An analytic parallel is the psychoanalytic interpretation which is death to the existing state of mind, the state of mind that is being interpreted. Worse than being

right or wrong is the failure of an interpretation to be significant, though to be significant is not enough; it merely ensures that it exists. It must also be true. The parasitic group can be primarily concerned to destroy the mystic, or mystic (messianic) ideas, but if it fails to do so it must 'establish' his or their truth.

Eissler discusses 'applied' psychoanalysis. I suspect that applied psychoanalysis, even if 'applied' to curing people, is a method of bringing psychoanalysis under control and rendering it harmless to the Establishment. I have expressed this in another context and in a different approach by a rule that the analyst should not permit himself to harbour desires, even the desire to cure, since to do so is inimical to psychoanalytic development. Development itself is not an object that can be 'desired'. The painful nature of the dilemma is essential.

The recurrent configuration is of an explosive force with a restraining framework. For example, the mystic in conflict with the Establishment; the new idea constrained within a formulation not intended to express it; the art form outmoded by new forces requiring representation.

It is essential that the language should be preserved. To this end, rules are produced under which words and definitions are to be used. The *Oxford Dictionary*, linguistic philosophy, mathematical logic, are tributes to the work that is incessantly proceeding for this purpose. On this work ordinary men and women with ordinary ability depend to do work that otherwise would be done only by exceptional people. Thanks to Faraday and other scientists ordinary people can illuminate a room by the touch of a switch; thanks to Freud and his co-workers ordinary people hope by psychoanalysis to be able to illuminate the mind. The fact that the world's work has to be done by ordinary people makes this work of scientification (or vulgarization, or simplification, or communication, or all together) imperative. There are not enough mystics, and those that there are must not be wasted.

The more successfully the word and its use can be 'established', the more its precision becomes an obstructive rigidity; the more imprecise it is, the more it is a stumbling-block to comprehension. The new idea 'explodes' the formulation designed to express it. Sometimes the emotion is powerful but the idea weak. If the formulation survives it can be repeated. If it can be repeated under severe conditions it becomes stronger until it communicates meaning without

disintegration. Conversely, the formulation may destroy its content. In his play, *Major Barbara*, George Bernard Shaw describes the apotheosis of the dictum "No man is good enough to be another man's master" as a method of rendering the emotional content ineffectual.

It may be that the distinction between creative and nihilistic mystic is no more than a temporary expedient depending on the need to express one view of the mystic rather than the other. The most powerful emotional explosion known so far, spreading to many cultures and over many centuries, has been that produced by the formulations of Jesus. The effects are still felt and present grave problems of containment even now, though some measure of control has been established. Jesus at first expressly disavowed any aim other than fulfilment of the laws of his group. The rabbinical directorate failed to solve the problem of containment, a failure associated with disastrous consequences for the Jewish group. The disaster attributed to Christian teachings did not terminate at any finite point, as for example at the crucifixion; after Alaric had sacked Rome, four hundred years later, Saint Augustine felt the reproaches against the Christians to be sufficiently serious to require refutation in his *City of God*.

The problems of mystical revelation that centre on having, or claiming to have, a direct relationship with the deity remain. The need for the Establishment to do what the rabbinical directorate had failed to do soon became evident. Complaints by the disciples that miracles were being done by unauthorized or, as we might say, 'lay', people, suggest awareness that we expect to find associated with an Establishment. That, and evidence of a need to establish a structured hierarchy ('who shall sit at the right hand'), is too slender to be more than a starting-point for conjecture. Something must have contributed to the efflorescence of structure, hierarchy, and institution. The institution is evidence of the need for the function that the rabbinical directorate had failed to provide. Although in many respects the Church was more successful, the long history of heresy (see Knox, 1950) shows that the structure required to contain the teaching of Jesus was, and still is, subjected to a great strain. It has not, however, been without its successes, and even today complaints can be heard, which are really a tribute to the success of the institutionalizing process, of the lack of enthusiasm, drive, and 'spirituality' of the Church.

Though we may contrast the success of the Church favourably with the failure of the rabbinical directorate, the force of the mystical

revelation has not yet spent itself. There are signs that the Oedipus myth, and the elements that in the Christian religion touch on paternity and sonship, both have a configuration suggesting an underlying group of which these elements are representative. I have used the sign O to denote this 'ultimate reality'. Any formulation felt to approximate to illumination of O is certain to produce an institutionalizing reaction. The institution may flourish at the expense of the mystic or idea, or it may be so feeble that it fails to contain the mystical revelation.

A formulation may approximate to 'illumination' of O. Many mystics express their experience of direct access to the deity in terms of light, but light is not the only model used. Jewish mystics in particular find the voice a telling representation of the experience. Saint Paul found light *and* voice necessary to represent the experience. It is significant that psychoanalysts seeking direct access to an aspect of O, though it is not only to that part of O that informs god-like characteristics, conduct their affairs through language. To be confined to one medium of communication only is too restrictive even if it has the flexibility and capacity for development of language. Psychoanalytic observation certainly cannot afford to be confined to perception of what is verbalized only: what of more primitive uses of the tongue?

The suspension of memory and desire promotes exercise of aspects of the psyche that have no background of sensuous experiences. Paradoxically, the release of these aspects of the psyche enables them to reveal elements such as the non-verbal muscular movements of the tongue, as in stammer. The dominance of sensuous experience promotes expressions such as 'seeing' or 'hearing'; the falseness introduced by such formulation contributes to those differences that seem so significant but are in fact unimportant. Intuitive power cannot develop because it is hindered by such obtrusions of 'sense'. The institutionalizing of words, religions, psychoanalysis, – all are special instances of institutionalizing memory so that it may 'contain' the mystic revelation and its creative and destructive force. The function of the group is to produce a genius; the function of the Establishment is to take up and absorb the consequences so that the group is not destroyed.

8

Vertices: evolution

Some psychoanalytic tensions appear in a simpler, less disguised form if we use as a model the impact of the thought of Jesus on the Jewish group and on later religious institutions. The stress on miracles of healing represented an urge to 'medicalize' the institution intended to serve the teaching of Jesus. Healing retains its dominance in Christian Science, Lourdes, faith-healing. An example in the early Christian group of a problem of institutionalizing is the query put to Jesus by the disciples who wanted to have a ruling on recognition of those who cast out devils in Jesus's name. His attitude appears to have been against rigid qualification for membership of the group – 'those that are not against me are for me'. Although this reply cannot now be interpreted with sureness and may have been referable to the favourable (for Christianity) effect of turpitude in the opponents of Christianity, it shows the recurrent configuration of the problem of selection (lay versus professional, or out-group versus in-group). These conjectures illustrate the configuration to which I want to draw attention.

Psychoanalysis cannot escape ideas of cure, treatment, illness, in psychoanalysts and patients alike. Eissler warns against a structure that is too rigid and too limited to permit development. At the opposite extreme the Sufis have no rigid institution yet have endured; their solution would open the way for an 'expanding universe' of psychoanalysis but it would not be long before members of the psychoanalytic movement could not understand each other.

The importance of unconscious motivation has tended to screen the importance of conscious motivation. An analyst or a particular group of analysts may stress a medical view possessing, in my terms, a common vertex; an observer of the group would expect to find that

its vertex is recognized by certain invariants such as ideas of disease, treatment, prognosis, pathology, and cure. The unconscious counterparts of such a vertex will have been laid bare in the psychoanalysis of the individuals, but this should not blind us to the conscious aspects of this vertex.

Suppose a group in whom the need or desire to make money is obtrusive. The unconscious counterpart of this will likewise have been laid bare in the analysis of the individuals. The greater the need or the 'desire', the easier it would be to detect a particular application of psychoanalytic theory (what Eissler calls 'applied' psychoanalysis as opposed to 'anthropic').

Other groups may display similarly obtrusive vertices: a wish for power, influence, propaganda, education, research, or poverty. It is evident that, in our present stage of development, if we achieve 'psychoanalytic' psychoanalysis, the vertex of the group will make a difference to the findings of the group. So far, analysts have seemed to act on the assumption that motives should be analysed and may, therefore, be safely left without further consideration. This view ignores the varieties of development opened up by the analytic experience.

The oedipal situation, or its even more primitive roots, would have a different configuration according to whether the vertex of the group was psychoanalytic, religious, financial, legal, or some other. This itself increases the variety of experiences opened up within the limits of even rigid psychoanalysis. The messianic expectation, formulated and institutionalized in the Christian religion, may represent the evolved aspect of an element which is represented also at its evolved stage by the Oedipus myth.

Similarities in the configurations suggest a common origin and common disorders associated with the problem of containing the mystic and institutionalizing his work. The emotional impact of ♀♂ will be proportionately greater the more closely it is related to the forces represented by the messianic hope, the Oedipus myth, the Babel myth, and the Eden myth; the greater the emotional impulse the greater the problem. These myths are evolved states of O and *represent* the evolution of O. They represent the state of mind achieved by the human being at his intersection with the evolving O.

Where Eissler speaks of applied psychoanalysis I shall speak of psychoanalysis conducted from a particular vertex. If an analyst or

group of analysts regards the making of money as an essential part of psychoanalytic practice, that is to say that they regard it as an essential part of practice which is an equally essential part of cure, then I think that the vertex should be described as money-making, and the discoveries that are made in such analysis will bear the stamp of the financial vertex.

If the vertex is religious I should expect the discoveries to bear the stamp of that vertex. In time, the configurations associated with the various vertices would evolve to a point where they could be formulated. I should then expect the rigidity conferred by the formulation to be resisted by the fluidity of the O represented by the formulation. Just as there is at present an unbridged gap between the animate and the inanimate, which makes the transformation of the inanimate into the animate impossible, so there is a gap between the formulation of the configuration and the underlying realization approximating to it. The configuration that represents the relationship between the mystic and the institution can be recognized in, and be the representation of, the relationship between the emotional experience and the representative formulation (words, music, painting, etc.) designed to contain it. The same configuration can be seen in the relationship between the Dionysian emotional experience and the Apollonian representation. Direct access to the O of the mystic and the O of the Dionysian orgy is both contained and restrained by the religious dogmas substituted for them in the minds of 'ordinary' people.

Most analysts have felt at some time that the 'universe of discussion' in psychoanalysis is expanding so fast that we no longer maintain what a soldier calls 'lateral communication'. To take one instance about which I am able to have an opinion: the gap between what some regard as analysis and what I, as a Kleinian, regard as analysis is very wide and widening. This is attributed to differences in theory. I do not believe that what separates scientists is their difference in theory. I have not always felt 'separated' from someone who differs from me in the theories he holds; that does not seem to me to afford a standard of measurement by which the gap can be measured. Conversely, I have felt very far separated from some who, apparently, hold the same theories. Therefore, if the 'gap' is to be 'measured' it will have to be in some domain other than that of theory. The differences in theory are symptoms of differences in vertex and not a measure of the differences.

9

Ultimate reality

So far this book has been concerned with the formulation of a theory, the few 'facts' mentioned being illustrative models intended to give body to what might otherwise be an exercise in the manipulation of abstractions. It leads up to the formulation of a theory which has as its realization a background of psychoanalytic practice. The theory formulates a recurrent pattern of emotional experience of wide distribution. It does not replace any existing psychoanalytic theory, but is intended to display relationships which have not been remarked.

However thorough an analysis is, the person undergoing it will be only partially revealed; at any point in the analysis the proportion of what is known to what is unknown is small. Therefore the dominant feature of a session is the unknown personality and not what the analysand or analyst thinks he knows.

All psychoanalytic progress exposes a need for further investigation. There is a 'thing-in-itself', which can never be known; by contrast, the religious mystic claims direct access to the deity with whom he aspires to be at one. Since this experience is often expressed in terms that I find useful to borrow, I shall do so, but with a difference that brings them closer to my purpose. The penumbra of associations is intended to help those who look for my meaning.

In any object, material or immaterial, resides the unknowable ultimate reality, the 'thing-in-itself'. Objects have emanations or emergent qualities or evolving characteristics that impinge upon the human personality as phenomena. Of these qualities the personality may be consciously or unconsciously aware; they differ from the ultimate reality.

'Ultimate reality' is a term with a penumbra of associations, which

makes it psychologically helpful, but this fact makes it unsuitable to represent something that by definition is unknowable. The same objection applies to the term 'godhead'. Meister Eckhart expresses his sense that the godhead evolves to a point where it becomes apprehensible by man as the Trinity.

By contrast the godhead is formless and infinite. Milton expresses a similar idea in the description of the world of waters dark and deep which has been "won from the void and formless infinite", though here the emphasis is less on the evolution characteristic of the godhead, and more on the capacity of the apprehending object to apprehend.

The religious approach postulates an emanation of the deity and an incarnation of the deity. Both formulations are needed to represent states of mind in which there is an interaction between states of an object that is sometimes whole, sometimes split into fragments dispersed within a multiplicity of objects. For the analyst, the doctrine of the incarnation yields the rewarding model, so I shall concentrate on it first.

The psychoanalyst witnesses the behaviour of a being who is usually, but not always, lying on a couch and talking. The analyst may take in the scene as a whole or any part of it. 'Whole' or 'part' is an aspect of an ultimate reality that has evolved until it intersects the personality of the observer (see Chapter 3 above).

The scientific approach, associated with a background of sense impressions, for example the presence of the psychoanalyst and his patient in the same room, may be regarded as having a base. In so far as it is associated with the ultimate reality of the personality, O, it is baseless. This does not mean that the psychoanalytic method is unscientific, but that the term 'science', as it has been commonly used hitherto to describe an attitude to objects of sense, is not adequate to represent an approach to those realities with which 'psychoanalytic science' has to deal. Nor is it adequate to represent that aspect of the human personality that is concerned with the unknown and ultimately unknowable – with O.

The criticism applies to every vertex, be it musical, religious, aesthetic, political; all are inadequate when related to O because, with the possible exception of the religion of the mystic, these and similar vertices are not adapted to the sensually baseless. The realities with which psychoanalysis deals (for example fear, panic, love, anxiety,

passion) have no sensuous background, though there *is* a sensuous background (respiratory rate, pain, touch, etc.) that is often identified with them and then treated, supposedly scientifically. What is required is not a base for psychoanalysis and its theories, but a science that is not restricted by its genesis in knowledge and sensuous background; it must be a science of at-one-ment. It must have a mathematics of at-one-ment, not identification. There can be no geometry of 'similar', 'identical', 'equal'; only of analogy.

The Platonic theory of Forms and the Christian dogma of the Incarnation imply absolute essence which I wish to postulate as a universal quality of phenomena such as 'panic', 'anxiety', 'fear', 'love'. In brief, I use O to represent this central feature of every situation that the psychoanalyst has to meet. With this he must be at one; with the *evolution* of this he must identify so that he can formulate it in an interpretation. Certain states of mind obstruct this and of them I shall say more later.

An aspect of O that evolves is signified by number. Participating in the evolution can be the object, which may multiply or decrease, and the observer, who feels that the object multiplies or decreases. Ignoring the object so as to discuss only the observer, one may say that he *feels* that the object increases or decreases. The constant conjunction signified by number excites curiosity to know which, what, when, why, or how. 'The need to know' (whether the change (±) is in the objects observed or in the 'feeling') may be activated. The 'number' is assumed to relate to an aspect of the object observed, but it may with equal propriety be regarded as relating to the feeling. I shall be discussing mostly the 'number' as being the name of the feeling, but to avoid confusion I shall distinguish between, say, R3 (external reality) and Ψ3 (psychic reality), the latter being the sign for a feeling of 'threeness' which may or may not be contemporaneous with 'threeness' as an aspect of the observed object.

When I speak of 'number' in the context of feelings, the term has too many associations for my purpose. I shall therefore use (ξ), denoting a 'mathematical object'[1] as the name of a 'feeling'.

The following illustrations, taken from religion, politics, conversational intercourse, and so on, may act as an introduction to 'psychic' mathematics:

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[1]Borrowed from Frege (1950).

'The majority of people . . .'
'Thousands (millions) all over the world . . .'
'The Trinity'
'Four or five people . . .'
'For weeks (months, years) they waited for . . .'

In these examples, numbers, used to represent a feeling in the observer, may be categorized in accordance with the principles of the Grid as intended to evoke curiosity (category 4) or as a barrier against statements that might evoke a psychological disturbance (category 2).

These 'numbers' have been transformed from $\Psi(\xi)$ to $R(\xi)$, so that they represent realizations which approximate to them. These realizations can become extremely complex. Thus Euclidean geometry has been regarded as a representation to which space, as ordinary people know it, is the approximate realization. Euclidean geometry then becomes the background realization that approximates to axiomatic algebra, which represents *it*.

Axiomatic algebra appears to be entirely independent of its sensuous background and can be developed accordingly; on the theory developed here, although it may start by representing feelings that provide the background, axiomatic algebra, the example I have taken, becomes entirely independent of that background of feelings. The H formulations (Grid category) begin to lack 'body'. What does it mean that these formulations lose 'body', cease to represent a 'feeling'? The number 'three' or 'ten' can easily represent a 'feeling' that there are three or ten objects present. The names three and ten do not seem to represent constant conjunctions in the way that 'cat' does. 'Cat' has a sensuous background; so has $R(\xi)$; but $\Psi(\xi)$ has not unless we reverse a process of transformation through Euclidean geometry back to ordinary space.

Non-sensuous phenomena form the totality of what is commonly regarded as mental or spiritual experience. $\Psi(\xi)$, which represents non-sensuous realizations, seems to be relatively easily adapted for manipulations to represent *sensuous* realizations, but not for manipulations to represent non-sensuous realizations. If 'three' represents a nonsensuous realization of 'threeness', why can it not, in combination with 'ten', 'five', etc., be made to represent anxiety or love or hate?

Certain problems may be handled by mathematics, others by economics, others by religion. It should be possible to transfer a problem

that fails to yield to the discipline to which it appears to belong to a discipline that *can* handle it. If Euclidean geometry cannot handle multi-dimensional problems they may be transferred to algebraic geometry. In this way certain problems may be transferred within their own discipline so that their solution can be attempted. The mathematics evolved by the manipulation of 'numbers' has so far proved very successful in matching the formulation with the realization it represents. But the numbers representing feelings have not evolved so that they can handle the realizations of the domain from which they appear to have sprung.

Before we consider the transference of problems from one discipline to another, or of the procedures proper to one discipline to procedures proper to another discipline, we shall examine the peculiarities of catastrophic change.

10

Visual images and invariants

From the material discussed it should now be possible to detect a pattern that remains unaltered in apparently widely differing contexts. It would be useful to isolate and formulate the invariants of that pattern so that it could be communicated.

Freud's formulations do just that. Thinking, developed through psychoanalysis, has led to discoveries that were not made by Freud, but that reveal configurations resembling those in discoveries he *did* make. Can his formulations be replaced by others that reveal as nearly as possible *all* the configurations that are similar and not merely those instances that his formulations were intended to illuminate?

If his Oedipus theory is used in conjunction with the Eden myth, the Babel myth, and a version of messianic expectation, it can continue to illuminate the mind's workings as it does now and to display elements of an underlying configuration that widen significantly the area illuminated. The deity's hostility to curiosity remarked by Milton's Satan (Book IV, *Paradise Lost*) can be matched in Babel by the attack on speech (the infliction of confusion of tongues); in Oedipus by Tiresias and his warning; in the messianic story by the attack on the son by the father. The same pattern is reflected in the self-inflicted punishments of the Sphinx and Oedipus. Each version emphasizes a different facet; together they suggest a common configuration. The attempt to differentiate emotional elements is curiously unsuccessful. Thus 'omnipotent good', 'evil', 'pursuit of knowledge through curiosity', 'impending disaster', 'arrogance', and so on, each attempt seems to weaken the impact that the elements have when they are part of the narrative as a whole; they undergo a transformation similar to that undergone by the dream upon being consciously recalled, or by a work of art when it is replaced by a reproduction. The transformation

depends on a change of vertex. The vertex of the myth-maker is not mine as I attempt this reformulation; the vertex of the dreamer is not that of the dreamer awake; the vertex of the artist is not that of the interpreter of the work of art. Similarly, the vertex of the psychoanalyst, and changes of vertex corresponding to moment-to-moment changes in a session, effect the transformations made manifest in associations and interpretations.

First, there must be a difference of vertex to make correlation possible. It must ultimately take place in the individual. (For the moment I assume that correlation is a necessary part of confrontation and that confrontation is a necessary part of analysis.) Schizophrenic defences are mobilized against confrontation; violence makes confrontation impossible because both sides of a confrontation are annihilated.

Second, the vertex must not be too distant or too near, otherwise correlation becomes impossible. How is 'distance' measured between the vertex of the analysand and the vertex of the analyst? If the analyst wants to make a living and the analysand wants to be 'cured', how is the 'distance' between these vertices to be 'measured'? A man and a woman can have such different outlooks that their temperaments are described as incompatible; or views so similar that they cannot stimulate each other. Is there any sense in which their views can be so 'far apart' that the distance can be 'measured', that a phrase used metaphorically can be treated so that the metaphorical sense is replaced by a literal sense?

Under this vertex the views of patient and analyst are separated; the 'gap' separating them is bridged by something that I call linear or planar, or a line or film. Very different is the gap that is bridged by a relationship between container and contained. The following will serve as a model for a theoretical formulation of this kind of link: a man speaking of an emotional experience in which he was closely involved began to stammer badly as the memory became increasingly vivid to him. The aspects of the model that are significant are these: the man was trying to contain his experience in a form of words; he was trying to contain himself, as one sometimes says of someone about to lose control of himself; he was trying to 'contain' his emotions within a form of words, as one might speak of a general attempting to 'contain' enemy forces within a given zone.

The words that should have represented the meaning the man wanted to express were fragmented by the emotional forces to which

he wished to give only verbal expression; the verbal formulation could not 'contain' his emotions, which broke through and dispersed it as enemy forces might break through the forces that strove to contain them.

The stammerer, in his attempt to avoid the contingency I have described, resorted to modes of expression so boring that they failed to express the meaning he wished to convey; he was thus no nearer to his goal. His verbal formulation could be described as like the military forces that are worn by the attrition to which they are subjected by the contained forces. The meaning he was striving to express was denuded of meaning. His attempt to use his tongue for verbal expression failed to 'contain' his wish to use his tongue for masturbatory movement in his mouth.

Sometimes the stammerer could be reduced to silence. This situation can be represented by a visual image of a man who talked so much that any meaning he wished to express was drowned by his flood of words.

I hope that I have conveyed my meaning to the reader by virtue of the verbal transformations of visual images. However, the communication is not satisfactory; the visual images are too concrete to be suitable for expressing the relationship of the mystic to the group; they are too evocative of a penumbra of associations which they already carry. In short, the situation is similar to that of the stammerer whose words, or lack of them, contain rather than communicate his meaning. Alternatively, the meaning is too powerful for the verbal formulation; the expression is lost in an 'explosion' in which the verbal formulation is destroyed.

To consider the essentials: the communication is about a relationship between meaning and its expression, between emotion and its expression. But I am aware that it is not a relationship between any 'things'; it is a pattern of relationships in the way that mathematicians speak of mathematics as expressing relationships. I have in the past used the symbols ♀ and ♂ to express a relationship between container and contained; for the present I shall continue to do so.

The theory is that an object is placed into a container in such a way that either the container or the contained object is destroyed. In pictorial terms the container is represented by a mouth or vagina, the contained by breast or penis. The relationship between these objects,

which I shall represent by the male and female signs ♂ and ♀, may be commensal, symbiotic, or parasitic.

By 'commensal' I mean a relationship in which two objects share a third to the advantage of all three. By 'symbiotic' I understand a relationship in which one depends on another to mutual advantage. By 'parasitic' I mean to represent a relationship in which one depends on another to produce a third, which is destructive of all three.

Take another simple visual model: a man wishing to communicate his annoyance is so overwhelmed by emotion that he stammers and becomes incoherent. The invariants under the theory I wish to formulate are the forms of speech that the man uses to convey his meaning; these I regard as being intended to 'contain' what he has to say and therefore to correspond to the sign ♀. The annoyance he strives to communicate I regard as being what should be contained in his speech, and therefore it is appropriately represented by ♂. If the man remained coherent, this could correspond to an overwhelming of the content by the container: his speech would in this case be so restrained that it could not express his feelings. But suppose he expressed himself 'perfectly':

one could then imagine that his emotions had served to develop his ability for well-chosen speech and that his capacity for speech had helped his emotional development. This contrasts with development leading to incoherence. Such a failure is the outcome of a 'parasitic' relationship between the contained (or rather, *not* contained) material and the speech devised to contain it: 'container' and 'contained' have produced a third 'object' – incoherence – which makes expression, and the means of expression, impossible. In so far as the imaginary episode led to a development of powers of expression and of the personality that strove to express itself, the relationship could be described as symbiotic. 'Commensal' is illustrated by supposing that the episode occurred in an age and society (as in Elizabethan England) in which language had reached a point of development where the ordinary man was inspired to speak it well: that which was to be expressed and the vehicle for its expression profited from the culture to which they belonged.

11

Lies and the thinker

The distinction between truth and lie constantly confronts the psychoanalyst who has to apply, in a rough and ready practical way, ideas that have been the centre of discussion over the centuries, but the rough and ready application may be too crude to do the work required of it. The analyst seeks ideas sufficiently accurate and robust to survive the emotional storms they should illuminate.

To the problems of understanding the psychoanalyst can bring something that is unknown to the philosopher of science because he has experience of the dynamics of *misunderstanding;* he is concerned *practically* with a problem that the philosopher approaches *theoretically*. Investigations of understanding and misunderstanding impinge on problems associated with truth and untruth. The reality of the problem becomes apparent when the analyst must ask himself, can a liar be psychoanalysed?

The problem can be formulated in Grid terms without moral overtones. Category 2 (reserved for formulations known by the initiator to be false, but maintained as a barrier against statements that lead to a psychological upheaval), would seem provisionally to offer a home to the lie. Such a categorization supposes that an experience has been permitted to continue to a point where the patient thinks he knows his formulation to be untrue; but is it true that he maintains it because it would be disturbing to his development not to do so? The lie could be uttered because in the view of the liar it would be profitable to him or injurious to another: is it correct in such a case to say it would be true, and if true significant, that inability to profit himself or injure another would lead to his having a psychological upheaval?

As I think it would be true, I must indicate why and in what way it is reasonable to categorize the lie in 2. I am concerned with patients

who come for analysis – not with those who do not. It is clear to such a patient that he risks exposure of the lie; he must either have great confidence in his capacity (or lack of it in the analyst) or feel some dissatisfaction with the lie. However these are random conjectures,, and beg the question at issue, which must be answered in the course of an analysis, the very practicability of which is under debate. The extreme case would seem to offer the best chance of being able to observe the essential characteristics, or, as I prefer to call them, the invariants, of the liar. Present considerations make it unlikely that the psychoanalyst would treat such a case by choice. The supposition that he was going to cure such a patient would lead him to hesitate about accepting him. Therefore the probability is that the lying is so well concealed that he stumbles into such a collaboration unwittingly. This makes it possible that the same may be true of the patient; so at the outset one must be prepared to find that the supposition that the patient thinks he risks exposure, or minds it if he does, is not in fact the case.

The need for a category for statements known by the patient to be untrue arises when, for example, a patient, who has been shown in the course of analysis that there are a number of explanations of the fact that he is late, continues to repeat apologies. The analyst is challenged to accept them, at the risk of showing himself unmindful of the truth, or to reject them and assume the role of being the patient's conscience. A statement may be made not to mislead but to fill the function of evocation. Thus a lying report may be evocative or provocative, accusatory or defensive, to name only a few of the more obvious uses. In such a case, 2 is not the correct category because the statement is intended to lead to emotional upheaval. In short, the lying statement is not category 2 but category 6; its nature must be indicated by some usage such as minus L (–L) or minus K (–K).

The term 'lie' thus has limited value for use in the course of analysis. It focuses attention on something that is not invariant; on the other hand, –L or –K, together with the appropriate Grid category, leaves it open to saturation by appropriate 'meanings', should approximate realizations present themselves to the analyst and analysand.

If we suppose now that the emotional upheaval against which the lie is mobilized is identical with catastrophic change, it becomes easier to understand why investigation uncovers an ambiguous position which is capable of arousing strong feelings. These feelings

relate to an outraged moral system; their strength derives from risk of change in the psyche. As the episode that I describe occurs frequently and can be resolved only in a way that seems to set the pattern for the resolution of subsequent recurrences, it is necessary to dwell on certain features which have an importance that may escape notice.

The patient can be seen to make a decision between the lie and the truth. The frequency with which this 'decision' is automatically made in favour of the statement known to be untrue will determine the nature of the case. I focus attention on the position that now arises for the analyst.

By definition and by the tradition of all scientific discipline, the psychoanalytic movement is committed to the truth as the central aim. If the patient constantly formulates –L and –K statements, he and the analyst are, in theory at least, in conflict. In practice, however, the situation does not present itself so simply. The patient, especially if intelligent and sophisticated, offers every inducement to bring the analyst to interpretations that leave the defence intact and, ultimately, to acceptance of the lie as a working principle of superior efficacy. In the last resort he will make consistent progress towards a 'cure' which will be flattering to analyst and patient alike. The alternative he offers is bleak: progressive deterioration, loss of mutual esteem both private and public, hostility, and, in extreme cases, threats of legal action. Against this the analyst has to balance a hope of retaining his integrity.

Some forms of lying appear to be closely related to experiencing desire. Long stories, with every appearance of truth, are spun out extempore as if the virtuosity of the exercise gave pleasure. One would expect such fabrications to be idealizations, and some are, but the liar's state of mind is not ordinary and the divergence from the usual is screened by the plausibility of his lies. They are usually C category formulations and may present more difficulty to an analyst whose mind is built on sensuous experience than to one who is used to discounting memory. As the problems of the psychoanalysis of the liar differ so much from those of the psychoanalysis of one whose outlook is scientific, it is worth considering shortly what is meant by the scientific approach. In ordinary speech it is taken to mean an assumption that the truth is of overriding importance and that reason should be harnessed to its elucidation. As a preliminary to attempting

a more sophisticated formulation, the opposite view may be stated in terms of fable, thus:

> The liars showed courage and resolution in their opposition to the scientists who with their pernicious doctrines bid fair to strip every shred of self-deception from their dupes, leaving them without any of the natural protection necessary for the preservation of their mental health against the impact of truth. Some, knowing full well the risks that they ran, nevertheless laid down their lives in affirmations of lies so that the weak and doubtful would be convinced, by the ardour of their conviction, of the truth of even the most preposterous statements. It is not too much to say that the human race owes its salvation to that small band of gifted liars who were prepared even in the face of indubitable facts to maintain the truth of their falsehoods. Even death was denied and the most ingenious arguments were educed to support obviously ridiculous statements that the dead lived on in bliss. These martyrs to untruth were often of humble origin whose very names have perished. But for them, and the witness borne by their obvious sincerity, the sanity of the race must have perished under the load placed on it. By laying down their lives they carried the morals of the world on their shoulders. Their lives and the lives of their followers were devoted to the elaboration of systems of great intricacy and beauty in which the logical structure was preserved by the exercise of a powerful intellect and faultless reasoning. By contrast the feeble processes by which the scientists again and again attempted to support their hypotheses made it easy for the liars to show the hollowness of the pretensions of the upstarts and thus to delay, if not to prevent, the spread of doctrines whose effect could only have been to induce a sense of helplessness and unimportance in the liars and their beneficiaries.

It is not necessary to elaborate this phantasy further; this sample should indicate the vertex I wish to establish but, in so far as it does so, it throws up difficulties. It is easy to imagine that there are such things as facts independent of the mind. A belief that led a man to throw himself off a cliff in confidence that his capacity to fly would preserve him from injury would contribute to his injury because the reality of his belief, the O of his belief, is, from the vertex of survival,

of less consequence than the O of throwing himself from a cliff. But O, without such a vertex, is an absolute, inhering in ('incarnate' in) everything and unknowable by man. The belief that he would fly off uninjured can be compared with the belief that he would break his neck. Depending on the vertex, the two beliefs can be regarded as valuable and precedence accorded to one of them. But to what scale of values is the value of the belief related? Ruskin defined 'valuable' as life-giving. This may do, in that the oedipal theory and primal scene afford a link (as does the theorem of Pythagoras, by the use of Cartesian co-ordinates, for the conversion of geometry to algebraic formulation) between life instincts and death instincts, and that which is valuable or life-giving and its opposite.

If value is to be the criterion, difficulty arises because there is no *absolute* value: the individual does not necessarily believe it is better to create than to destroy; a suicidal patient may seem to embrace the opposite view.

The determination of the system of beliefs, the vertices, aims, complaints, and 'cures', is often mistaken by the patient for an attempt to establish a correct system. The investigation of category 2 is to see in what respect its pains compare with those of other systems and in what way the relationships differ. Such insights laid at the disposal of the patient seem to give him the opportunity to correct errors. The contemplation of various systems enables the analyst to reconsider and correct his own system. Category 2 involves conflict with impressions of reality; sometimes these may not matter, but beyond a certain point the conflict between the need to know and the need to deny becomes acute and may usher in attacks on linking to stop stimulation which leads to conflict. But this presupposes an aim on the part of the liar, and therefore a pattern that can be detected. This is not the case with some liars. Hence it is not possible to rely on picking up a symptom, such as a wish to please the analyst, that will betray the pattern.

For satisfaction, the liar needs an audience; this makes him vulnerable, since his audience must set a value on his fabrications. It is therefore necessary that the analyst-victim should attach importance to the patient's statements as formulations of a truth. It must be possible to observe incoherent elements and to detect a pattern that brings together the disparate elements, showing a coherence and a meaning that they did not have without it. So far, this description does not

differ from that of the transformation from the paranoid-schizoid to the depressive position; it is superior to a narrative formulation which betrays the lying element of the story only by the weakness of the causative links. The Ps ⇌ D reaction reveals a whole situation which seems to belong to a reality that pre-exists the individual who has discovered it. The lying discovery lacks the spontaneous bleakness of the genuine Ps ⇌ D. The lie requires a thinker to think. The truth, or true thought, does not require a thinker – he is not logically necessary.

Provisionally, we may consider that the difference between a true thought and a lie consists in the fact that a thinker is logically necessary for the lie but not for the true thought. Nobody need think the true thought: it awaits the advent of the thinker who achieves significance through the true thought. The lie and its thinker are inseparable; the thinker is of no consequence to the truth, but the truth is logically necessary to the thinker. His significance depends on whether or not he will entertain the thought, but the thought remains unaltered.

In contrast, the lie gains existence by virtue of the epistemologically prior existence of the liar. The only thoughts to which a thinker is absolutely essential are lies. Descartes's tacit assumption that thoughts presuppose a thinker is valid only for the lie.

The paranoid-schizoid state may then be seen as peculiar to the thinker who is in a state of persecution by thoughts that belong to a non-human system, the O domain. The O domain may be said to be, *vis-à-vis* the thinker, in a state of evolution. This evolving system intersects with the personality of the individual thinker. The impact of the evolving O domain on the domain of the thinker is signalized by persecutory feelings of the paranoid-schizoid position. Whether the thoughts are entertained or not is of significance to the thinker but not to the truth. If entertained, they are conducive to mental health; if not, they initiate disturbance. The lie depends on the thinker and gains significance through him; it is the link between host and parasite in the parasitic relationship.

The relationship between the lie, the thought, the thinker, and the group is complex. The thinker may express the truth in a lying group; the group may not want its ideas disturbed and will be dominated by category 2 mechanisms and formulations. The relationship between such a group and such a thinker will be one of envy and hate. If the thinker is expressing lies, the relationship of the thinker to his lies will

be parasitic, and lies and thinker will destroy each other. If the lie is of the 'sun rises at dawn' type, the relationship between lie and thinker is commensal – such a thought *requires* a thinker and the thinker is essential. But the relationship, at least in our present age, is commensal. The thought that the world will endure may be a lie but it may be essential to keep at bay ideas that the world is on the verge of coming to an end. Such a relationship between lie and thinker is symbiotic.

The link between one mind and another that leads to destruction of both is the lie. The term 'link' gives an inadequate idea of the realization it is intended to represent. The lie is not restricted to the domain of thought, as the word 'lie' would ordinarily imply, but has its counterpart in the domain of being; it is possible to *be* a lie and being so precludes at-one-ment in O.

In psychoanalysis the liar is a significant fact and gains significance from the lying nature of what he says. The parasitic relationship between liar and environment, corresponding to the parasitic relationship between the thinker and the lie, denudes the environment of significance. The analyst who accepts such lies is acting as host; if he does not, he contributes to the feelings of persecution by 'being' an unthought thought, a thought without a thinker. The thought to which a thinker is not necessary is also a thought that the thinker would not regard as likely to contribute to *his* significance. On the contrary, once he has expressed a truth the thinker is redundant.

To summarize, I formulate two definitions:

1. True thought requires neither formulation nor thinker.
2. The lie is a thought to which a formulation and a thinker are essential.

The lie is peculiar to a relationship between the host mind and the parasitic mind and destroys both. The thinker can harbour thoughts if he does not need thoughts to contribute to his significance, and can tolerate thoughts that do not do so. If essential to the thought, the thinker conflicts with other thinkers who feel themselves to be essential to the thought. The envy, jealousy, and possessiveness aroused are the mental counterparts of toxic elements in physical parasitism.

They contribute to the destructive nature of the culture that develops from the development of the lie. The need for each individual to claim his contribution to the thought as unique and essential,

differentiates the emotional climate from that in which the inevitability of the thought and the unimportance of the individual who harbours it do not gratify the narcissism of the individual and therefore lack emotional appeal. Work that corroborates the discovery of others has a lack of appeal. Even if it requires a thinker it does not require a *particular* thinker and in this resembles truths – thoughts that require no thinker.

Since the analyst's concern is with the evolved elements of O and their formulation, formulations can be judged by considering how necessary his existence is to the thoughts he expresses. The more his interpretations can be judged as showing how necessary *his* knowledge, *his* experience, *his* character are to the thought as formulated, the more reason there is to suppose that the interpretation is psychoanalytically worthless, that is, alien to the domain O.

12

Container and contained transformed

In this chapter I repeat the configuration in formulations that appear to be descriptions of events in psychoanalysis or history but have not the status of historical narrative. They are C category elements, images derived from a background of experience or reported experience, reassembled for my purpose.

Description 1: The signs ♂ and ♀ I call the contained and the container. The use of the male and female symbols is deliberate but must not be taken to mean that other than sexual implications are excluded. These signs designate a relationship between ♀ and ♂ The link may be commensal, symbiotic, or parasitic.

Description 2: A word contains a meaning; conversely, a meaning can contain a word – which may or may not be discovered. The relationship is established by the nature of the link. A constant conjunction of elements in a psychoanalysis can be 'bound' by the attribution to it of a word, a theory, or other formulation. The word by which it is bound can have such a powerful pre-existing penumbra of associations that it squeezes the meaning out of the constant conjunction it is supposed to mark. Conversely, the constant conjunction can destroy the word, theory, or other formulation that the formulation is intended to 'contain'. For example, a man is attempting to express such powerful feelings that his capacity for verbal expression disintegrates into a stammer or a meaningless, incoherent babble of words.

Description 3: The container (♀) extracts so much from the contained (♂) that the contained is left without substance. A psychoanalysis is so

long continued that the patient can get no further meaning from it. A converse example would be the continuation until the patient had no more patience, tolerance, fortitude, or money left. The container can squeeze everything 'out of' the contained; or the 'pressure' may be exerted by the contained so that the container disintegrates. An illustration would be the word used as a metaphor until the background is lost and the word loses its meaning.[1]

Description 4: The marriage *in* which the sexual relationship ♀♂ plays such a part that there is *no room* for any of the other activities in which the married couple might engage. Conversely, the other (i.e. 'other than sexual') activities play such a part that there is *no room* for sexual fulfilment. (The metaphors used in this description exemplify the outside-inside, container–contained, ♀♂ pattern.)

♀ or ♂ may represent memory. The container ♀ is filled with 'memories' derived from sensuous experience. The sensuous background is dominant and 'memories' with such a background are tenacious. The ♂ memory is saturated accordingly. The analyst who comes to a session with an active memory is therefore in no position to make 'observations' of unknown mental phenomena because these are not sensuously apprehended. There is something that has often been called 'remembering' and that is essential to psychoanalytic work; this must be sharply distinguished from what I have been calling memory. I want to make a distinction between (1) remembering a dream or having a memory of a dream and (2) the experience of the dream which seems to cohere as if it were a whole, at one moment absent, at the next present. This experience, which I consider to be essential to evolution of the emotional reality of the session, is often called a memory, but it is to be distinguished from the experience of remembering. In memory, time is of the essence. Time has often been regarded as being of the essence of psychoanalysis; in the growth process it has no part. Mental evolution or growth is catastrophic and timeless. I shall use 'memory' with its ordinary conversational meaning; it represents something that is out of place in the psychoanalyst's conduct of a psychoanalysis. A patient's close relatives are burdened with memories which

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[1]See H. W. Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, 2nd edition, 'Metaphor' 2D.

make them unreliable judges of the patient's personality and unfit to be the patient's analyst.

So far, I have examined the configuration as it appears in the limits of words themselves; its appearance in more complex formulation indicates the degree of its persistence. The psychoanalytic situation provides and evokes examples of the configuration; it pervades difficulties which analysand and analyst find in communication. There are emotional experiences to be conveyed or represented, some of great intensity. Therefore, we find instances of the configuration in the subject-matter and in the psychoanalytic procedure designed to deal with it.

Description 5: The patient will be at a loss to convey his meaning, or the meaning he wishes to convey will be too intense for him to express properly, or the formulation will be so rigid that he feels that the meaning conveyed is devoid of any interest or vitality. Similarly, the interpretations given by the analyst (♂) will meet with the apparently co-operative response of being repeated for confirmation, which deprives ♂ of meaning either by compression or by denudation. Failure to observe or demonstrate the point may produce an outwardly progressive but factually sterile analysis. The clue lies in the observation of the fluctuations which make the analyst at one moment ♀ and the analysand ♂, and at the next reverse the roles. When this pattern is observed the links (commensal, symbiotic, or parasitic) within the pattern must also be observed.

The more familiar the analyst becomes with the configuration ♀, and ♂, and with events in the session that approximate to these two representations, the better. The essential experience is not the reading of this volume but the matching of the real event in the psychoanalysis that approximates to these formulations. The frequent references made to events that occur 'in analysis', or 'in the past', or 'inside' or 'outside', should aid recognition of the realizations to which these signs relate. The recognition of the category of link that is operating may be more difficult unless a lead-in can be obtained by considering the kind of event that takes the place of ♀ or ♂. Thus an extremely greedy patient may want to obtain as much as he can from his analysis while giving as little as possible; we should expect this to show itself by frequent events in which the container was denuding

the contained object, and vice versa. The patient might show that he made enormous demands on his family but resented doing anything for it. Many patients might show behaviour of this kind on relatively rare occasions, but some might show it in many activities and in striking degree as, for example, by habitual incoherence while demanding great precision of interpretation from the analyst. This kind of patient cannot well be described in terms of narrative recording actual events, first, because any such formulation is suspect for reasons I have given in discussing memory, and, second, because it is impossible to predict what form his greed will take. Therefore the psychoanalyst who may have such a patient, or a patient showing such patterns of behaviour relatively rarely, or anything between these extremes, needs formulations of theory that enable him to have as wide a spectrum of observation as possible so that these configurations do not pass unnoticed. If these formulations are too abstract they lack body. Accordingly I give them body by using C category descriptions, but these are liable to produce so great a penumbra of associations that the formulations become saturated and narrow the psychoanalyst's perspicacity.

Descriptions 1–5 could include claustrophobia, agoraphobia, and acting-out as illustrations of the configuration.

Acting-out, as it is ordinarily understood, takes place 'in' the analysis and the analysis is then itself a part of acting-out. The claustrophobic-agoraphobic patient identifies himself with an object which is inside or outside a container. An ability to see the configuration reveals relationships within the patient's personality that otherwise would remain unknown. When a patient can be said to be acting out, the analysis is 'in' a situation of which the boundaries are unknown. If the behaviour characterized as 'acting-out' is brought to the analysis it can be accompanied by claustrophobic symptoms in the patient. The coherence of these symptoms may not be detected if the underlying configuration is not realized. As this last point touches on group behaviour I shall make my next description a formulation in terms of history. The description will appear to be complex because I intend to broaden the scope of the configuration, but its complexity will be less if it is borne in mind that the description has the same fundamental configuration even if at first sight it appears that this is not so. It may help if I explain that new ideas may appear to be

presented in this description; their novelty or otherwise is a function of the reader's personality and must not be supposed to inhere in the communication.

Description 6: This section is mostly recapitulation and expansion of the model of mystic and group. Some mystics attract notice but others do not because the conditions are not propitious. The same is true of ideas; the idea which I consider to be the counterpart of the mystic or genius, I call the 'messianic idea'. The idea that is messianic may be confused with the person; he may believe he is the messiah. The person, I call 'the mystic'; the idea, I call the 'messianic idea'. The terms 'mystic' and 'genius' are interchangeable. Mystics appear in any religion, science, time, or place. Such persons 'contain' the 'messianic idea', or the 'messianic idea' may 'contain' the person who is sought to incarnate, represent, or manifest the messiah in a manner analogous to the meaning that is felt to 'contain' the word that is to represent it.

The society in which the mystic appears has been described by Nietzsche as a body whose function it is to produce a genius. It is also the function of the society to make the mystic or messianic idea available to the members of the group. This is effected by laws (in society), dogma (in religion), rules or laws (in mathematics or science). The governing body of the society I call the Establishment; the counterpart in the domain of thought would be the pre-existing disposition or pre-conception.

The mystic makes direct contact with, or is 'at one' with, God. This capacity is not attributed to the ordinary member of the group. The Establishment must pronounce dogmatically, make laws or rules, so that the advantages of the mystic's communion with God or ultimate truth or reality may be shared at one remove by the ordinary members. This the Establishment may fail to do through lack of discrimination, leading to the furtherance of false views, or through rigid adherence to an existing framework, so that a parasitic link is set up between mystic and group, ♂ and ♀. The life is then squeezed out of the mystic or messianic idea, or the society is disrupted.

Description 7: The conflict between the mystic and his group is exhibited in its most exaggerated, and therefore most easily studied, form in the account of Jesus and his relationship with the group. He

himself claimed, in a manner typical of many mystics, that his teachings were in conformity with the existing Establishment: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17. A.V.). This claim is often associated with an awareness of the disruptive force that is being brought to bear upon the group from within. The mystic does not always claim to conform to the group. He may appear in the guise of a destroyer from within or without. He does not claim peaceable intentions or methods. A distinction is sometimes made between the nihilistic mystic, who disrupts the community, and the creative mystic, who denies violent methods particularly against his own group. I wish to stress the disruptive quality of the mystic, whether he claims to be disruptive or not, for it is this disruptive quality that is associated with the group's hostility to the mystic, and vice versa. It is, furthermore, the quality that I wish to emphasize in this description.

The reaction of the Establishment is to prevent the disruption, and this it does by incorporating the mystic within itself. This is expressed in the biblical illustration by the temptation in the wilderness where the rewards of conformity are clearly stated. Conformity can be renunciation of the messianic idea or acceptance of the role of the messiah. Alternatively, the mystic can be destroyed and an attempt made to ensure the same fate for his ideas.

The functions of containment – I use the word with its military implication of one force containing another – had to be assumed by the split factions of the group, one ostensibly against, and the other for, Jesus. Gradually a fresh group was formed and a fresh Establishment to contain the mystic or rather the messianic idea. The Jewish group learned to handle the mystic with consequences that were less disastrous for itself. The Christian group, though finding a different solution of the problem, achieved a similarly satisfactory result. Neither system was free from recurrences of the problem. One Christian Establishment restored the disrupted structure and ensured its continuity by taking over the festivals of paganism, and thus mollifying the hostility that might otherwise have followed the loss of holidays and feasts that were beloved and valued. The theme could be stated as bigger and brighter paganism, with gods refurbished and rejuvenated as saints and devils. (Milton expresses this very clearly in his representation of Pandemonium in Books I and III of *Paradise Lost*.)

The problems of the Christian Establishment developed in the lifetime of Jesus. They were: delineation of the borders of the group, selection and training, and stabilization of the hierarchy.

To take the last point first. In the account in Mark's Gospel (10:35–45), the problem was clearly posed by James and John with their request for status. In his reply Jesus seems to suggest a kind of initiation or test, but the alacrity with which the two accept the conditions makes it hard to know what the initiation was, though it is clear that Jesus regarded its performance as beyond them. He also adumbrates a change in the function of the Establishment as it existed among the Gentiles of that time. The proposal put forward by James and John seems to be for status, and status appears to be a substitute for qualification. Their desires were to be satisfied as it were *ex officio*. The reply given by James seems to indicate that the 'position' achieved *ex officio* was an alternative preferred by the pair to undergoing the experience of the mystic himself. In this respect the rejected solution meets one of the requirements of society, namely, to make the fruits of the mystic's work available to ordinary members who do not have the mystic's qualifications for at-one-ment with the deity.

The problem of membership of the group and how to decide whether or not a man was to call himself a Christian[1] also arose early. Characteristically, it hinged on the question of the therapeutic efficiency of the Christian and his brand of Christianity. The problem was brought to a head through the apparently successful therapeutic effects obtained by persons not qualified members of the group (Mark 9:38). In the instance quoted, the criterion proposed by Jesus seems to be the successful cure and its attribution by the therapist to Jesus. The issues involved are: membership of the group as itself being a symbol of status; status, expressed by the locution 'in Thy name' as a therapeutic agent; therapeutic result as a criterion of membership of the group. The solution was empirical but it accepted the criterion of therapeutic efficiency. For the time being the test of membership seems to be twofold, namely, medical or therapeutic, and capacity for achieving results. This last requirement has been a problem throughout history. It might be described as a demand that the group leader

[1]The modern Israeli state has met the same problem of deciding who is, or is not, a Jew.

should be able to forestall the future, confer adequacy on someone already supposed to be suitable, and guarantee his adequacy in future contingencies.

The Christian hierarchy soon found itself faced by the same problems that had defeated the rabbinical directorate. The same forces were involved: on the one side, the need to control the messianic idea and make it available to ordinary people through dogmatic formulation; on the other side, the messianic idea or its incarnation perpetually breaking through the barriers intended to control it and threatening to disrupt the society in which it became manifest. The Reformation was a spectacular example of this (Knox, 1950).

I have used for descriptions 6 and 7 material familiar to all, for a configuration that is repeated in many forms and at many times. It is not limited to religious societies, or therapeutic or artistic or scientific societies, but is discernible in many. My intention is, however, not to express any opinion upon the nature of diverse groups. I am not purporting to write history but to formulate a pattern in picturesque C category terms; that is to say, to represent a configuration in terms that will give body to an idea that might otherwise seem to be a meaningless elaboration of abstractions. Naturally, I suppose that people other than psychoanalysts would profit from a recognition of the configuration and the underlying group to which one suspects that it belongs. But here I am concerned only as an analyst with the configuration as it might be discerned by other analysts. Descriptions 6 and 7 must not, therefore, be supposed to have a sociological or political application, but to be by way of fables or mythological constructs (C category) which, if formulated with greater precision and sophistication, represent a pattern to which the human personality would be found to approximate. The fable, constructed in terms of the group, must be regarded as a pictorialization of man's inner world (Money-Kyrle, 1961). For those familiar with Kleinian theory my description can be seen as a dramatized, personified, socialized, and pictorialized representation of the human personality. It may clarify the procedure to contrast this pictorial view with the accepted morphology of classical analysis. The theory formulated in terms of ego, super-ego, and id differs in two respects. First, it is an F category formulation whereas the pictorialized formulation I am representing verbally is a C category formulation, primitive and based on

sensuously derived terminology. Second, it is a theory of which the realization that approximates to it is to be found in psychopathology and psycho-morphology. The realization approximating to the C category formulation is to be found in material that is superficial and easily accessible to the conscious. Its unconscious roots are to be discovered through psychoanalytic investigation.

The nature of the messianic idea can be only very approximately represented by the C category formulations I have been using. Jesus, Meister Eckhart, and Isaac Luria represent in different ways the problem of reconciling the messianic idea and the Establishment. The rabbinical directorate learned caution, so that when it had to adjust to the Lurianic doctrine, and to the injuries that Lurianic doctrine was alleged by its opponents to have inflicted on Judaism, it did not contribute to an explosion. Luria for his part insisted on his conservatism and related all he said to older authorities. Significantly, he left no writings and, when questioned by a disciple about his reasons for not setting out his teaching in book form, he replied: "It is impossible because all things are interrelated. I can hardly open my mouth to speak without feeling as though the sea burst its dams and overflowed. How then shall I express what my soul has received, and how can I put it down in a book?" (Scholem, 1955, p. 254). Meister Eckhart wrote extensively, but the obscurity of his writing and perhaps the matter led to the condemnation as heretical of some twenty-eight propositions from his later writings. The main question seems to centre on his forthright statements of identity with the deity – "we are transformed and changed into God". The fate of Jesus himself had been crucifixion as a criminal on the one hand, and deification on the other. Both Isaac Luria and Jesus were alike in being followed by a proliferation of hagiographical biography; much of it, in the instance of Jesus, not being included in the canon. The common features are: containment of the messianic idea in the individual; containment of the messianic individual in the group; the problem for the Establishment that is concerned with the group on the one hand and the messianic idea and individual on the other. It is now necessary to return to the word.

Description 2 (cycle 2): If it were necessary to express descriptions 6 and 7 by one word, a choice could be made from terms such as 'religion' or 'Christianity' or 'God'. If none of these terms were

considered suitable, an attempt could be made to find the suitable term by introspection. This attempt is a search in the mind for the term supposed to exist, or it is a search in the meaning for the term; the latter is an instance of the meaning containing the word. The difficulties attendant on finding the word are described in the terms used by Poincaré, searching for a mathematical formula, or by Luria in the passage quoted above (p. 115). A better idea of the problem is obtained by substituting the term 'statement' for 'word' and including in its definition any act of expression whatever. In C category terms the problem is analogous to that of the sculptor finding his form in the block of his material, of the musician finding the formula of musical notation within the sounds he hears, of the man of action finding the actions that represent his thoughts. One of the peculiarities of this discussion lies in its being an example of the problem being discussed. It is an attempt to find a verbal formulation to which psychoanalytic realizations approximate. I restate the problem thus: psychoanalysis, the thing-in-itself, existed; it remained for Freud to reveal the formulation embedded in it. Conversely, once formulated by Freud, it remains for others (including Freud himself) to discover the meaning of the conjunction bound by his formulation.

It is necessary to postulate 'thinking' without supposing a thinker to be essential. I shall not at this point try to explain why. All thinking and all thoughts are true when there is no thinker. In contrast to this, for lies and falsities a thinker is absolutely necessary. In any situation where a thinker is present the thoughts when formulated are expressions of falsities and lies. The only true thought is one that has never found an individual to 'contain' it.

The messianic idea may be supposed to have a counterpart, the absolute truth, O, for which a thinker is not necessary. Falsity is the characteristic of thought within an individual, or thought within a container. It follows that all thought as it is ordinarily known, that is, as an attribute of the human being, is false, the problem associated with it being the degree and nature of the falsity. The lie is a falsity associated with 'morals'.

The messianic idea is a term representing O at the point at which its evolution and the evolution of a thinker intersect. The mystic, as seen in descriptions 6 and 7, is a thinker who claims the capacity for

direct contact with O. The degree of falsity depends on whether the relationship with O is commensal, symbiotic, or parasitic. It is not often enough recognized that a patient in whom resistance is active can be reacting against what he feels to be a thought in search of a thinker. It is supposedly his own thought (classical resistance theory), but it does not have to be so.

The thought O and the thinker exist independently of each other – there is no reaction. Or, as we should ordinarily say (identifying ourselves with the thinker) the truth has not been discovered though it 'exists'. In symbiosis the thought and the thinker correspond, and modify each other through the correspondence. The thought proliferates and the thinker develops. In a parasitic relationship between thought and thinker there is a correspondence but the correspondence is category 2, meaning that the formulation is known to be false, but is retained as a barrier against truth which is feared as annihilating to the container or vice versa. The falsity proliferates until it becomes the lie. The barrier of the lie increases the need for the truth, and vice versa.

The commensal position changes when thought and thinker approximate. In more usual terms, a critical situation arises when a 'discovery' threatens. It is commonly said that messianic hopes were more than usually active at the birth of Jesus, and it is a matter for remark that more than one investigator often seems to be approaching a discovery at the time when a discovery is made. The resistance of the thinker to the unthought thought is characteristic of category 2 thinking. The crucial problem appears to be the relative strength of the messianic idea and the personality who is to 'contain' it. We must therefore reconsider the personality. To do this I shall use descriptions 6 and 7 as pictorial representations (C category) of the parts composing the totality of the individual, not the group. I am assuming that the reader keeps in mind existing theories of personality structure. It is not to be supposed that they are to be abandoned or even modified by what follows. Existing theories are F category formulations; what takes place in the consulting-room is an emotional situation which is itself the intersection of an evolving O with another evolving O. The description I am giving is, as it has been throughout this chapter, a C category formulation intended to bridge the gap between a unique event on the one hand and a generalized F category formulation on the other.

Description 3 (cycle 2): The messianic idea clothes itself in a variety of forms. Though it may take any form there appears to be difficulty for form and idea to achieve a symbiotic or commensal relationship. Therefore it is difficult to find a formulation by which I can convey my meaning to the reader, but I can point to the consulting-room or group where he may intuit it for himself. Similarly, I can direct him to observe the word 'cure' when he hears it; for 'within' this word he may be able to intuit the messianic idea. His attention should dwell on formulations in which he is described in positive terms; for 'within' these statements he may be able to intuit the 'contained' messianic idea. Whether the statement appears outwardly to be representing a summer holiday, a car, a person, or a state in time, he should be able by degrees to intuit the frequent occurrence of the messianic idea and be persuaded of its reality and his ability to feel its presence.

When I say the reader might search the consulting-room or group, I am restricting the field of search to provide a 'container' wherein the search may be pursued without difficulty and relatively quickly. Yet it is doubtful whether intuition of a constant conjunction in the domain of psychic reality can be attainable quickly or easily. Therefore there can be no short cut for the psychoanalyst; he can hope that experience may enable him to intuit the messianic idea or recognize that this hope is itself a formulation containing it.

The notion that the messianic idea is contained within the analysis, or that descriptions 6 and 7 can be used as C category statements or formulations of the individual personality, implies that the personality can be represented by a ♀♂ relationship and that the personality has a ♀♂ relationship with a psychoanalysis. Such a formulation assists the psychoanalyst to intuit a personality, external to the psychoanalysis, which is present in the psychoanalysis only by 'hearsay'; the patient becomes a voice reporting that the messianic idea is abroad. A typical complexity of the ♀♂ relation, significant for its bearing on 'acting-out', relates to beta-elements lying outside the domain of thought proper, but appearing to belong to it because they are represented 'in' the psychoanalysis by C3 statements made by the analysand. The psychoanalyst and his analysand appear, therefore, to be excluded from the domain of action and 'confined within' the domain of thought in such a way that they are not in a position to 'psychoanalyse', but only

to substitute 'psychoanalysis' for psychoanalytic thinking, which is a prelude to interpretations – the psychoanalytic counterpart of action.

Psychoanalytic practice shows that the motives for any human activity are numerous and complex. They are derived from a background of sensuous desires; as fast as one is demonstrated it is apparent that further desires lie unknown. The aims of the psychoanalytic couple are arrived at by conjecture and are formulated, at least as far as the analysand is concerned, in terms representative of sensuous experience. Even the objects of curiosity are formulated in terms suitable to a sensuous background. In so far as desires can be stated they will be sensuous desires and sensuous aims, the overriding aim being to keep alive. Without exception these aims and desires are not relevant to psychoanalysis. Nor have they proved relevant in either Judaism or Christianity. Their place has not yet been taken by any formulations that are more satisfactory. So long as thinking is regarded as subordinate to the senses there is no difficulty. If thinking is a primary activity, the *aims* of contemplation or meditation are presumed to exist because thinking is tied to its genetic history as subordinate to muscular activity; similarly, muscular activity is presumed to have an aim in accord with the dominance of the pleasure principle.

It is possible that the vacuity produced by the subordination of sensuous aims to growth of a capacity for contemplation or meditation was filled, in the course of his teaching, by Jesus. But as his teaching was subjected to the twin pressures I have described, namely, annihilation by physical destruction on the one hand and divine honours on the other, we do not know what such a solution might have been. In practice the problem is shelved; thinking remains subordinate to the satisfaction of sensuous desires.

In consequence, psychoanalysis is saddled with an aim that, according to their various desires, is attributed to it by both analyst and analysand. Both are debarred from fulfilling their aim when the aim is pursued in the domain of action and the psychoanalysis is confined to the domain of thought in which thought is the only means of fulfilment. The 'conflict' is between action and thought, the counterpart (in descriptions 6 and 7) being the conflict expressed in Saint Augustine's refutation of the responsibility of Christianity for the fall of Rome. In the individual, demands for action and sensuous gratifications associated with physical survival conflict with the demand for mental 'activity'. The latter cannot justify itself in terms

comprehensible to the former. The former cannot justify itself to the latter, for its apparatus of sensuous fulfilment is irrelevant to the domain of thought.

I have used the term 'conflict', in describing action and thought, as a reminder of the accepted view. The object of using ♀♂ is to differentiate the states of containment which, as with thought and action, prevent conflict by containing thought and action in a mutually exclusive commensal state. In this condition thought and action do not modify each other but persist commensally in the same personality. Actions that appear to be compulsive are in reality beta-elements confined to the domain of action and thus insulated against thoughts, which are confined to the domain of thought – including psychoanalysis. Similarly, thoughts are within the domain of thought and cannot be influenced by beta-elements confined within the domain of action. An apparent exception, not real, is provided by C3 elements in thoughts that appear to bring A category into the realm of thought but are only C category *records* of action; there is no conflict.

The domains of thought and action are so close, when the musculature used in talking is involved with beta-elements, that the distinction between them becomes confused. The same confusion arises if intolerance of frustration leads to a substitution of thought for action. The associated omnipotence of thought obstructs the proper use of the musculature, as a feeling of helplessness stimulated by ineffectual muscular action is often the genetic base of omnipotence: when one is active the other is present.

In the previous paragraphs I have given examples of ♀♂ associated with outside and inside. They have a psychological value in giving body to a formulation that might otherwise lack it, but the reader should seek further instances from his practice. According to his background a patient will describe various objects as containers, such as his mind, the unconscious, the nation; others as contained, such as his money, his ideas. The objects are many but the relationships are not.

The individual always displays some aspect of his personality that is stable and constant even though it may sometimes be very difficult to detect in the welter of evidence for instability; it may appear only in the regularity with which the patient attends his sessions. In this stability will be found the counterpart of what, in descriptions 6 and 7, I have called the Establishment. It will be maintained with great

tenacity as the only force likely to contain the counterpart of the messianic idea. Reciprocally, the messianic idea is the only force likely to withstand the pressures of the counterpart of the Establishment in the individual. Fears of megalomanic identification with the messianic idea are associated with an inability to be at one with the omnipotent Father. The counterpart of the Establishment in the individual is not related to father or mother, but can be related to fragments of both.

In the ♀♂ configuration, decision is synonymous with selection for inclusion or exclusion. Thus the psychoanalyst has to decide whether to include himself in or exclude himself from various groups; to include or exclude given associations, ideas, experiences, and so on. The Establishment of the group has to decide to include or exclude certain individuals.

The personality decides to include or exclude certain characteristics or, failing that, to include or exclude awareness of their existence. Dislike of the onus of decision, or awareness of responsibility for the decision, contributes to the formulation of selection procedures by which selection, like dogma and laws of science, is made to act as a substitute for judgement or a scapegoat for the guilt attendant on overtly acknowledged exercise of responsibility.

The configuration to which I have drawn attention can be seen to have a penumbra of associations which retain an illuminating function in the circumstances on which they are brought to bear. At times the light they shed distorts by over-emphasis of the irrelevant past and occlusion of the unknown (and therefore relevant) present and future. Once the constancy of the configuration is recognized its nature can be assessed and related to psychoanalytic theory. Reciprocally, theory can be reformulated when it requires readjustment.

The primitive formulation of ♀♂ in C category terms of breast and mouth, penis and vagina, has the simplicity of all C category formulations. Although descriptions 6 and 7 appear more complex, they too share the stamp of all C category formulations. Both appear to differ from the configurations represented by the Kleinian theory of paranoid-schizoid and depressive position interplay. I am unwilling to accept this apparent cleavage. The most satisfactory formulation that displays the underlying harmony relates to the practice of psychoanalysis.

The discussion of the configuration of container and contained has occupied a considerable space in this book. It may, therefore, seem

surprising if, at this stage and in relatively few sentences, I describe what is perhaps the most important mechanism employed by the practising psychoanalyst. It requires less description and is relatively more easily grasped. It is for these reasons only that it occupies what may appear to be an insignificant place in this book. It is derived from Melanie Klein's descriptions of the paranoid – schizoid and depressive positions, and to these the reader should refer.

Here, briefly, is my formulation of this matter as it concerns the practising analyst:

In every session the psychoanalyst should be able, if he has followed what I have said in this book, particularly with regard to memory and desire, to be aware of the aspects of the material that, however familiar they may seem to be, relate to what is unknown both to him and to the analysand. Any attempt to cling to what he knows must be resisted for the sake of achieving a state of mind analogous to the paranoid-schizoid position. For this state I have coined the term 'patience' to distinguish it from 'paranoid-schizoid position', which should be left to describe the pathological state for which Melanie Klein used it. I mean the term to retain its association with suffering and tolerance of frustration.

'Patience' should be retained without "irritable reaching after fact and reason" until a pattern 'evolves'. This state is the analogue to what Melanie Klein has called the depressive position. For this state I use the term 'security'. This I mean to leave with its association of safety and diminished anxiety. I consider that no analyst is entitled to believe that he has done the work required to give an interpretation unless he has passed through both phases – 'patience' and 'security'. The passage from the one to the other may be very short, as in the terminal stages of analysis, or it may be long. Few, if any, psychoanalysts should believe that they are likely to escape the feelings of persecution and depression commonly associated with the pathological states known as the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. In short, a sense of achievement of a correct interpretation will be commonly found to be followed almost immediately by a sense of depression. I consider the experience of oscillation between 'patience' and 'security' to be an indication that valuable work is being achieved.

13

Prelude to or substitute for achievement

> I had not a dispute but a disquisition with Dilke on various subjects; several things dove-tailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously – I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.
>
> John Keats[1]

A number of aspects of the practice of psychoanalysis must now be discussed; I group them under the Language of Achievement. The quotation from Keats will serve as an introduction to the area to be covered. Language is loosely and widely defined to include behaviour of which it is sometimes said "actions speak louder than words". Set over against and in contrast with the Language of Achievement, I consider the language that is a substitute for, and not a prelude to, action. Language of Achievement includes language that is both prelude to action, and itself a kind of action; the meeting of psychoanalyst and analysand is itself an example of this language. This discussion is centred on the problem of bringing attention to bear on the realizations to which Freud's theories approximate.

Any session should be judged by comparison with the Keats formulation so as to guard against one commonly unobserved fault leading to analysis 'interminable'. The fault lies in the failure to observe and is intensified by the inability to appreciate the significance of

[1] 'Letter to George and Thomas Keats', 21 December 1817 (in E. L. Freud, 1961).

observation. I have rarely failed to experience hatred of psychoanalysis and its reciprocal, sexualization of psychoanalysis. These are part of a 'constant conjunction'. In C category terms: the human animal has not ceased to be persecuted by his mind and the thoughts usually associated with it – whatever their origin may be. Therefore I do not expect any psychoanalysis properly done to escape the odium inseparable from the mind. Refuge is sure to be sought in mindlessness, sexualization, acting-out, and degrees of stupor. The analyst's attention must not wander from areas of material characterized either by the Language of Substitution or by the Language of Achievement; he must remain sensitive to both. I do not claim that sensitivity can be achieved easily: the mental space available to the analysand and the material observed are subject to so many transformations that such a claim suggests inexperience of the practice of psychoanalysis. The experienced analysand finds dreams a useful stand-by because analysts are rightly expected to want to hear them. Current events can be transformed to expression in sado-masochistic terms or near psychopathological jargon; there is no limit to the forms of transformation. Experience leads to an extension of the area over which the Language of Achievement operates and therefore an extension of the area in which its operation can be recognized. We must now consider the extension of the concept of vertices in relation to both individuals in the psychoanalytic couple.

It will be remembered that the term 'vertex' can be understood as similar to 'point of view' except in certain special instances. There is a psychological or mental specificity analogous to the specificity associated with the relationship of sense organs to sense impressions. To allow for this specificity it is necessary to discard the term 'point of view' and replace it by a more abstract term such as 'vertex'. Language of Achievement is always related to a vertex whether that vertex has been determined (or evolved) or not. Since we shall consider both psychoanalyst and analysand we shall have to approach our problem by moving *outside* the field usually thought of as belonging to psychoanalysis. The states of mind with which psychoanalysts deal comprise many that are generally the hunting-ground of other than psychoanalysts; for example, thieves, burglars, sexual perverts, murderers, blackmailers. Their mental world is matched by a world of external reality which caters for their states of mind by an established organization of international and commercial spying, police

forces, religious organizations; the one group is matched by the other. A process of selection in Church or police force is carried out by examiners (in the instance of delinquents, by varieties of courts of law). It is intended to separate the good from the bad. Who or what is to exercise the power, and what voice is to utter the Language of Achievement is a matter of consequence and has been accepted as such whether the field in which the struggle is carried on is the individual, or agglomerations of individuals. Psychoanalysts accept their field to be the individual. The supposition that inhibitions should be decreased seems to be based on a view of the individual analogous to a view of the group in which democracy is a bad form of government but none the less the best.

The analyst and the analysand each have a vertex (or vertices) which, if it were known, would indicate the organization each regarded as best. Freud's scheme of id, ego, super-ego suggests one view of the organization of the personality, though there is nothing to suggest that the scheme represents a preference and not an observation.

The idea that is nourished by love develops from matrix to function in Language of Achievement; from which it can be transformed into achievement. But if the idea is subjected to splitting it may split again repeatedly, each split growing and having to be split again. Thus one gets not development but division and multiplication – cancerous, not qualitative, increase. There appears to be a great increase in ideation, but there is not, because all the ideas turn out, on inspection, to be the same one. The emotional matrix from which this springs is not envy and gratitude, but envy and greed. The idea is split over and over again and is felt to produce a quantity of splits – 'mental faeces'. Envy and gratitude, on the other hand, stimulate a desire for gain, but enable the individual to establish a good relation between what has been gained and that which has enabled him to gain it. The repudiation of the debt owed to his 'predatory' personality, and the need to continue repudiating it, exclude other parts of the personality from activity. The greed of the super-ego leads to the usurpation of the domain of reality (scientific facts) by the 'moral' outlook, and of 'scientific' laws by 'moral' laws.

The model for cancerous growth is not splitting of the object but splitting of the envy, each 'bit' then growing independently of every other 'bit'. Ostensibly these 'bits' appear as 'different' ideas. In fact

they are a cover: ideas → impulses → *One* impulse. In this respect sessions can be regarded as repeating themselves, and the unchanging quality of the sessions should betray itself despite the multitudinous changes in disguise. Sometimes this state is described as a negative therapeutic reaction when it would be more accurately described as 'proliferation of fragmented envy'. If the envy were to assume an aspect of whole object it could be seen as envy of the personality capable of maturation and of the object stimulating maturation. The stimulating object is the breast (♀) or mouth (♂). They replace each other. The stimulating quality in turn replaces the stimulating object. A series of transformations is thus initiated, each a substitution for the previous one and each subject to splitting. Berkeley's criticism of Newton's mathematics is psychologically well based because it is *not* the mathematics of growth that is represented by the infinitesimal calculus and its use of concepts of infinitely small positive and negative increments – "the ghosts of departed quantities". It is psychologically more nearly true to regard Newton's formulation as *measurement* of restoration of whole objects than as measurement of growth. Is mathematics the Language of Achievement or of Restoration? What is required is not the decrease of inhibition but a decrease of the impulse to inhibit; the impulse to inhibit is fundamentally envy of the growth-stimulating objects. What is to be sought is an activity that is both the restoration of god (the Mother) and the evolution of god (the formless, infinite, ineffable, non-existent), which can be found only in the state in which there is *no* memory, desire, understanding.

BOOK REVIEWS

1966

The review of K. R. Eissler, *Medical Orthodoxy and the Future of Psycho-Analysis* (New York: International Universities Press, 1965), was published in 1966 in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 47*: 575–579.

The review of R. Slovenko (Ed.), *Sexual Behavior and the Law* (Springfield, IL: Thomas, 1964), was published in 1966 in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 47:* 579–581.

Review of K. R. Eissler's *Medical Orthodoxy and the Future of Psycho-Analysis*

Questions of importance for psychoanalysts have been debated in this able book by Eissler. The subject may seem to British readers not to concern them; a great deal of hard-hitting criticism is directed against American institutes of psychoanalysis, American failings (in the author's view), and American psychoanalytic 'heresies'. Ostensibly he is arguing in favour of the lay analyst – which again may appear to a British psychoanalyst to be a subject no longer for debate, but which to me appears only to be one facet of the problem of the relationship between group and mystic which has now become vital for the psychoanalytic group. On an adequate solution of this the future of psychoanalysis hangs, and the adequate solution demands, as a prerequisite, adequate debate. This is not possible unless psychoanalysts are prepared to spend time studying the history and dynamics of the relationship between the mystic and the group. Eissler's book should be read against the background of this seldom and inadequately discussed phenomenon. The central point is the impact of an explosive force on a pre-existing framework. This configuration is recurrent, and can be detected in the impact of new ideas on an old vocabulary, formula, or deductive system; or of the genius, mystic, or messiah upon the group in which his presence becomes manifest.

The group and mystic are essential to each other: it is therefore important to consider how or why the group can destroy the mystic on whom its future depends and how or why the mystic may destroy the group. The reader will not expect me to do more than indicate the nature of the questions at issue. I do not wish to pronounce upon it, but to say why it is vital that the problem should be seen to exist and to be inherent – both in the nature of man as a political animal, and in the nature of psychoanalysis as the explosive force.

The relationship between group and mystic may be seen to belong to one of a few major categories. It may be commensal, symbiotic, or parasitic. The same categorization may be applied to the relationship of one group with another. I shall not trouble with the commensal relationship. The two sides co-exist and the existence of each can be seen to be harmless to the other. In the symbiotic relationship there is a confrontation, and the result is growth-producing – though that growth may not be discerned without some difficulty. In the parasitic relationship the product of the association is something which destroys both parties to the association. The realization which approximates most closely to my formulation is the group-individual setting dominated by envy. Envy begets envy and this self-perpetuating emotion finally destroys host and parasite alike. The envy cannot be satisfactorily ascribed to one or the other party; in fact it is a function of the relationship.

In a symbiotic relationship the group should be capable of hostility and benevolence, so that the mystic contribution is subject to close scrutiny. From this scrutiny the group grows in stature, and the mystic likewise. It is not useful, therefore, to consider the relationship in terms of hate or love – for both can be beneficial. But in the parasitic association, even apparent friendliness is deadly. An easily seen example of this is the group's promotion of the individual to a position in the Establishment where his energies are deflected from his creative-destructive role, and absorbed in administrative functions. His epitaph might be "He was loaded with honours and sank without a trace." Eissler, without specifically mentioning the general principle involved, shows how sensitive he is to the dangers of the invitation to group or individual to become respectable, to be medically qualified, to be a University Department, to be a therapeutic group, to be anything, in short, but NOT explosive. The reciprocal attitude in the mystic is that the group should thrive or disintegrate, but must not be indifferent. Put thus, it may seem that I mean these attitudes to be conscious and deliberate. I do not think of them as anything but essential, Without them the group is not a group, or the 'mystic' a mystic.

Eissler discusses at length 'applied' psychoanalysis. I sympathize with his anxiety – though I may be misunderstanding him in doing so. My suspicion of applied psychoanalysis, even if 'applied' to curing people, is that it is a method of bringing psychoanalysis

under control, and rendering it harmless to the Establishment. I have expressed this in another context and in making a different approach; as a rule no analyst should permit himself to harbour desires; even the desire to cure is inimical to psychoanalytic development or the development of psychoanalysis. Development itself is not an object that can be 'desired'.

A formulation may approximate to 'illumination' of reality: I must, however, point out that while many mystics have felt the need to express their experience of direct access to the deity in terms of light,[1] light is not the only model that is used. The Jewish mystics in particular appear to find the *voice* a more telling representation of the experience. St Paul, as befits a Jew and a Christian, seems to have found light *and* voice necessary for adequate representation of the experience; he also objected to the Greeks (Acts Ch. 17, v. 21) for being insufficiently institutionalized. It may therefore be a matter of some consequence that analysts, who, in my opinion, are bound to be seeking direct access to an aspect of reality – even though it cannot be said to be only to that part of reality that informs godlike characteristics that a contact is sought – conduct their affairs in a medium which, for establishing the mystical revelation, is only used for that purpose generally by the Jews. I suggest that to be confined to verbal contact only – even if only in metaphor – is too restrictive.

Eissler quotes a procedure adopted by Aichhorn (whose clinical acumen he praises highly) for watching strangers to whom he is close, for a period, with a view to forming a conjecture about their next act. As he describes it, Aichhorn was playing a game not unlike that of a boy imitating Sherlock Holmes. He speaks of it with approval, attributing to it some of Aichhorn's flair for understanding instantly and accurately the personality of the delinquents with whom he dealt. But he deprecates the possibility of making any parallel procedure part of a formal training course. But why not? I welcome the introduction into training of Baby Observation; I think it would be all the better for an injection of the good humour of the 'Holmesian' technique. The baby should be observed with all the enthusiasm of Holmes on the track of a desperate criminal. Pessimistically Eissler doubts the success of any approach, even Aichhorn's, to the delinquent. I suggest

[1]For example, Milton in Book III of *Paradise Lost*; Dante in *Paradiso*, Stanza xxxiii; the Christian mystics generally.

that the lack of success will continue so long as the investigation is carried out with predisposition to see the object of the investigation as a 'delinquent' – matter what his life may have been – and to do so with the humourless attitude which seems to be inseparable from having suffered a psychoanalytic training course. Indeed, anyone who has not been reduced to revolt by the course must either be insensitive to his environment or in an analysis which increases his robustness to a remarkable degree. Who does not remember, at the end of the day, entry into a hot and smoke-filled room with the expectation of an hour and a half of boredom from a tired psychoanalyst and a dozen equally tired colleagues? Exceptions were rare and welcome, but haunted by the suspicion that relief must depend on the meretricious nature of the seminar or lecture.

The personal analysis, which in any case can hardly be expected to be pleasant, is not the trouble. The relief which comes with the understanding of one's problems makes the pain involved tolerable. The extra-analytic training however, can hardly be excused. The subject is of profound interest in itself. It is one of the few domains of human effort – peace be to the nuclear scientists – in which any real progress is being made. Can there then be any justification for boredom and lack of imagination in the training course hallowed by the authority of institutionalized psychoanalysis? Eissler doubts the suitability of the limited field from which selection has to be made to provide our training candidates. He gives cogent reasons for his doubts. He might well have given more had he considered how candidates drawn from the same field acquit themselves when called upon to train others. Can this discrepancy possibly be right?

The question demands a serious rather than a polemical answer. I should certainly be unwilling to wound people who have devoted themselves to the pursuit of psychoanalysis, but I am fortified by the thought that people who are devoted to their subject are rarely boring without the fault, whatever it may be, being shared by the bored. Certainly there must be austerity and hard work, frustration and anxiety: I am also suspicious of enthusiasm and its fellows. We do not expect our candidates to be free from defects at one end of the scale or the other. Nor does anyone suppose that a few years of analysis makes us as psychoanalysts approximate to what we might regard as desirable in analysts, teachers, administrators. How then are we to give effect to our suspicions when they are the fruit of legitimate self-criticism?

I believe the answer is similar to the answer that we accept as analysts when we regard psychoanalysis as the method of choice in any given problem. For this reason I regard Eissler's approach, scrutiny by the group of itself – through books such as his – as offering the best hope. It is for this reason I make this contribution.

In my Grid[1] I made a preliminary attempt at forging an instrument to help with all such problems by a method of categorization. At the same time I have suggested substituting the term 'vertex' for 'point of view'. Put in other terms, I think the problem should be approached by determining the Grid category of the vertex.

Eissler might describe this – to take as example the particular problem he poses – as considering the point of view of the medically trained man *vis-à-vis* the point of view of the layman or 'anthropic' scientist. In the example of the impact of the thought of Jesus on the Jewish group, and subsequently on the various other groups formed by the different religious institutions of history, it is possible to see some of our present tensions in a simpler, less disguised, and therefore purer culture. It is clear that the stress on miracles of healing could easily have represented a powerful urge to 'medicalize' the institution intended to embody the teaching of Jesus. Even to-day, the healing aspect retains its force in Christian Science, Lourdes, faith healing. An example of a problem of institutionalizing in the early Christian group is the query put to Jesus by the disciples who wanted to have a ruling on recognition of those who cast out devils in Jesus's name. The attitude of Jesus appears to have been against any rigid qualification for membership of the group on the ground of survival of the group. ("Those that are not against me are for me.") Although this reply cannot be interpreted with any sureness at this length of time, and may well have been referable to the favourable (for Christianity) effect of turpitude in the opponents of Christianity, it shows sufficiently the recurrent nature of the configuration of the problem of selection and lay versus professional or out-group versus in-group. My object is not, however, to make conjectures about ancient history, but to educe illustrations which, between them, can serve to convey the configuration to which I want to draw attention. Similarly with the vertex and the part it plays in determining the configuration of the group.

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[1]W. R. Bion (1963), *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* [Volume V].

As Eissler points out, psychoanalysis cannot escape from the consequences of Freud's association with medicine; it is to be expected that ideas of cure, treatment, and illness would play a big part in psychoanalysts and patients alike. Eissler does well to draw attention to the dangers of making permanent a structure which is too rigid, and too limited, to permit the development of psychoanalysis or – as I think – of the mystic who is, and provides, the stimulus for growth. At the opposite extreme would seem to lie the Sufis who have no rigid institution. They have endured; they appear to feel no need for an institution, and no obstruction to growth in their lack of it. Can their example suggest anything of interest to the psychoanalysts in their problem? It is possible to propose that any candidate should be free to go to any psychoanalyst who would have the right to declare the candidate fit to be a psychoanalyst when he, unaided, thought so. This solution would seem to lay the way open for the production of an 'expanding universe' of psychoanalysis in which it would not be long before members of the movement could not understand each other. I would be prepared to argue that this prediction is not so far from fulfilment under the present dispensation, were it not for the fact that the degree of mutual comprehension which exists may be considered to be remarkable when allowance is made for the nature of the subject, the apparently infinite variety of human personalities, and the fact that the psychoanalytic approach tends to magnify differences the more thorough and the less macroscopic the result that is sought. Obviously there should be no ruling on what is discovered, but only on how it is discovered.

I propose to consider motivation without stressing the difference between conscious and unconscious. An analyst, or a particular group of analysts, may be remarkable for stressing a medical view – for possessing, in my terms, a common vertex. That is to say, an observer of the group would expect to find that the vertex of the group would be recognized by certain invariants, say ideas of disease, treatment, prognosis, pathology, and cure. No doubt the unconscious counterparts of such a vertex will have been laid bare in the psychoanalysis of the individual members, but this should not blind us to the conscious aspects of this vertex.

Suppose now yet another group in whom the need or desire to make money was obtrusive. No doubt the unconscious counterpart of

this will likewise have been laid bare in the analysis of the individuals. The greater the need or the desire, the easier it would be to detect a particular application of psychoanalytic theory – what Eissler calls 'applied' psychoanalysis as opposed to 'anthropic'.

Another group may display a similarly obtrusive 'vertex', say a wish for power or influence, propaganda, or education (public relations), or research, or poverty. To me it is self-evident – at any rate in our present stage of development – that whatever may happen if we achieve 'psychoanalytical' psychoanalysis, the vertex of the group will make a difference to the findings of the group. So far analysts have seemed to act on the assumption that motives should be analysed, and may thereafter be safely left without further consideration. Such a view is mistaken and helps to obscure the varieties of development that are opened up by the analytic experience of the individual, or the group of which he becomes an adherent. In his chapter on polemics Eissler is critical of what he feels to be the failure – one might almost say the apostasy – of certain groups of analysts. Even if he is mistaken in the particular judgements that he makes, it would require a pathological optimism to deny the possibility of groups to which his criticisms would apply. There may well be vertices which are not regarded by the group as respectable, and therefore of which it needs to be unconscious. The group tendency would be to foster unconsciousness in other groups of these defects in itself while claiming their discovery elsewhere. Since if this were successful it would deny us the opportunity for study, it is obvious that it would help if we could understand the means by which any group of analysts could collude with any other to bring about the desired result. For successful collusion to deny the vertex would remove the basis for understanding why that particular group, sharing that particular approach, also shared their particular psychoanalytic discoveries. The Oedipal situation – or whatever its even more primitive roots might be – would have a different configuration according to whether the vertex of the group was psychoanalytic, religious, financial, legal – or indeed any of the other vertices which time may show to be central rather than peripheral.

Where Eissler speaks of applied psychoanalysis I shall speak of psychoanalysis conducted from a particular vertex. If an analyst or group of analysts regards the making of money as an essential part of

psychoanalytic practice – that is to say that they regard it as an essential part of practice which is an equally essential part of cure – then I think the vertex should be described as money-making and the discoveries that are made in such analysis will bear the stamp of the vertex, 'Babel'.

If the vertex is religious, I should expect the discoveries to bear the stamp of *that* vertex. I should further expect that in time the configurations associated with the various vertices would themselves evolve to a point where they could be formulated. I should then expect the rigidity conferred by the formulation to be opposed by the fluidity of the reality represented by the formulation.

It is evident that Eissler feels, as any analyst must at some time have felt, that the 'universe of discussion' in psychoanalysis is 'expanding' so fast that we are no longer able to maintain what a solider calls 'lateral communication'. He feels, to take one instance, that the gap between what he regards as analysis and what I, as a Kleinian, regard as analysis, is very wide – and widening. This he attributes to differences in theory. I do not, and never have been able to believe that what separates scientists are their differences in theory. I have not felt 'separated' from someone who differs from me in the theories he holds; that does not seem to afford a standard of measurement by which the gap can be assessed. Similarly, I have felt very far separated from some who, apparently, hold the *same* theories. Therefore if the 'gap' is to be 'measured' it will have to be in some domain other than that of theory. The differences in theory are symptoms of a difference in vertex and not a measure of the difference.

Eissler and I cannot see the same patient. Even if this were possible the patient would not be the 'same' when seen by him and when seen by me. There can be certain invariants in Eissler, the patient, and myself which ensure a relationship sufficiently constant for comparison. Of these invariants, only those are relevant which are also invariant under psychoanalysis.

I hope that I have made clear the reasons why the topics discussed in this book are of importance to everyone concerned with the growth and development of psychoanalysis. The questions raised in it demand dispassionate and serious thought, because on that will depend ultimately the chance that the day-to-day problems that have to be faced will be seen in relation to the wider

problem, and therefore wisely decided. Individual solutions must vary in a movement where so much importance is attached to the individual. If members of the movement can learn from Eissler, it becomes more likely that diversity of opinion in relation to the issues involved will not menace group unity, or group unity the integrity of the individual.

Review of R. Slovenko's *Sexual Behavior and the Law*

The nature of psychoanalytic training and practice promotes a paradox which sometimes misleads psychoanalysts themselves, and usually makes confusion amongst our critics even worse. For though the discipline is severe if it is loyally adhered to, it enhances the unique qualities of the individual to a point where non-analysts at least wonder in what way such a diversity of views can be seen to cohere; I have had a better opportunity than most of appreciating the reality of the paradox.

One unfortunate result for members of the psychoanalytic movement is the impossibility of keeping up with – or even being aware of – the contributions which psychoanalysts are making in fields outside the narrow domain of psychoanalytic practice, training, and research.

Sometimes a number of psychoanalysts are engaged on work which enables them to make a contribution to some aspect of society not usually illuminated by psychoanalytic insight. This has occurred in the book under review, *Sexual Behavior and the Law*. It is therefore with some interest that one looks to see what the diversity of the individual analyst – together with the background that he shares with his fellow analysts – will lead him to put forward to society as his uniquely analytic contribution. From this we may learn something of an aspect of psychoanalysis with which we are unfamiliar, and something of the image of psychoanalysis with which our colleagues are presenting the public.

It would be helpful to give some idea of other contributions to this book, but this unfortunately I feel unable to do. As psychoanalysts we sometimes complain that our views are misrepresented by those who mistake familiarity with the words we use, for familiarity with

the ideas we try to express by use of the words. I shall avoid this error by not criticizing contributions made by masters in their own field – their views can best be understood by those familiar with the field.

In this volume one expects to find that the contributions by lawyers state the legal view of sex. In fact the difficulties of doing this are not made clear; yet it is one half of the equation because it is difficult to discuss such a subject without knowing what the law-making body considers sex to be, or how it defines criminal sex. In his introduction, Slovenko states a number of definitions of sexual crime, but he admits that they apply only in some states of the Union and not others. Furthermore, some of his definitions – mostly of rape – seem to be his own summary of the legal position, rather than a quotation of an actual law. What is required is something analogous to Lord Devlin's account[1] of the legal view of Guilt; it was possible, listening to Lord Devlin, to observe the enormous gulf which separates the view he expressed from the views commonly accepted by psychoanalysts. Indeed, so much was this the case that many psychoanalysts expressed disappointment, as if they expected to hear up-to-date formulations of the psychoanalytic view of guilt, rather than to be reminded of what a member of the Establishment – to use a convenient if loose expression – thought on the subject, and the sort of theory to which he expected the realities of the law courts would approximate.

In Great Britain the courts are expected to apply the laws passed by Parliament. That is to say, they are supposed to arrive at a practical conclusion on what any given law means – not always an easy task – and then to match it with what they find. The function of the court must surely be to discover what it is they have found, before they can match it with the Law. But they do not, as is very evident from Slovenko's introduction. For example: a man is charged with rape; in the Court an extremely complex story is unfolded, as will be evident from the case of B, recounted by Arthur Hyatt Williams (p. 568). A psychoanalyst listening to the proceedings might well form an opinion about where the guilt lay, and of what the criminal was guilty – which was quite unlike the case the Court was being asked to consider.

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[1]1964 Ernest Jones Lecture to the British Psychoanalytical Society.

The problem arises of course because sexual impulses and sexual acts may be a part of an immense diversity of episodes, ranging from expressions of passionate and profound love to methods of earning a living by blackmail, or prostitution, espionage, complex revenge – sometimes conscious and relatively simple, sometimes requiring an analytic investigation to display its roots. Yet in the catalogue they all count as sex.

It has been said that a famous criminal, responsible for many murders as a part of the routine of his working life, was finally brought to book – all other charges having failed to stick – on the grounds of evasion of income tax. Perhaps sexual laws are devised on this principle; they may lead to the apprehension of a criminal when all other legal procedures fail. Yet this can scarcely be a justification for law as it is at present practised. The system is easy to criticize, but the remedy hard to find. Masud Khan makes a contribution on 'The Function of Intimacy and Acting Out in Perversions'. It is no criticism of the article to say it is difficult to see how the non-analyst is to profit from it or what he would make of it. Someone who has been analytically trained would find the article interesting and illuminating. He could legitimately come to his own conclusions, and match Khan's findings with his own. But although it is claimed that those who have these matters at heart will profit by a perusal of the articles in this book, it must be confessed that something more than goodwill is required of them to make their reading profitable. I can well understand that a lawyer or magistrate or schoolmaster would find such an article hard going. Yet – and here is the rub – psychoanalysis was spread by those who had little to go on except what they read of Freud's own articles. Analysis in those days was rudimentary, and it still is accessible to few. There must then be a place for these articles, and a hope that here and there they will meet with understanding and help to leaven the culture of which they form a part through publications of this kind. At least the cases cited by Hyatt Williams and Khan may be brought to light through the obtrusion of the sexual characteristics of crime. In this respect the law may be regarded as a network, in some part of which the criminal may become enmeshed. But as Rubinstein points out, the crime may be quite simple: the criminal is caught thieving, brought to court and sentenced. Nothing, one might think, could be simpler or more straightforward. No psychoanalyst could possibly take such a view, as Lothair Rubinstein points out. Once in prison

the simplicity of the story evaporates. After repeated crimes and recaptures it becomes clear that a fish has been caught that does not lend itself to simple classification. One of the invaluable functions of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency is that it can do much by its impact on the courts to spread knowledge, in just the way it is hoped that this book will manage to do.

I have said that the layman will find psychoanalytic concepts hard going. The problem is that if the analyst resorts too readily to concepts that the layman can understand he will give a misleading impression of psychoanalytic theory. When Khan talks of a technique of intimacy it is likely that he will seem to a layman to be more easily comprehensible than in other parts of his discussion of perversion. It is difficult to see how the analyst is to evade giving an impression of banality or jargon, but the only solution would seem to be that arrived at by Freud, when he decided that the only way was to express himself as clearly as he could, without any compromise with the susceptibilities of those who would, in any case, be antagonized. The analyst cannot evade this obligation. The criminal on the other hand can, and often does. Ronald Markillie points out the effect it has on the criminal who realizes that it makes a great difference to what crime he confesses (p. 780). He has to recognize that the 'treatment' meted out by a court of law is based on a simple psychopathology, namely, that what is the matter is a lack of anxiety in the criminal, and that clearly the cure to correspond with this disease is to increase anxiety by adding the threat of punishment to any already existing fears. In addition to this, as Markillie shows, while he may be being tried for a sexual offence, what he may be punished for is disgusting the court. The rule for the criminal would seem to be, "Be criminal if you must; but be disgusting at your peril."

Markillie's article has some illuminating things to say about the sentenced man, and the use to which such a man puts the law and the sentence he receives. In my experience a patient may easily decide to use a mental hospital for what is really a purpose indistinguishable from that to which another man will put prison and the courts. There is a point at which despair of ever getting proper understanding or treatment – least of all from himself –will lead a man of pathological make-up to use the institutions of the Law, or the institutions of medical cure, as instruments for improvising a treatment he despairs of ever getting. As can be seen such a choice may go back to times

when the only formulations of his distress open to the patient might be either that he was 'naughty', or that he was 'ill'. Society is asked to collude, through its institutions, with one or other view. These same institutions, the legal system being one, are however also supposed to be exempt from such collusion; even case law has to develop in such a way that potentially the citizen is able, increasingly, to see how he stands in his legal obligations to his group. In this book Wels and Freed quote Mr Justice Jackson giving a dissenting opinion – explaining that he does so precisely because the majority view fails to clarify the law and makes confusion worse. With this view the authors obviously agree (p. 176). In England the confusion often arises before the case ever gets to the courts, because the Parliamentary legal draughtsmen fail to formulate the intentions of Parliament in such a way that a reasonably competent court might be expected to arrive at a correct interpretation of the intention of the Law.

In truth, in any trial two sets of interpretations have to be made: one is of the behaviour of the supposed criminal, and the other is of the meaning of the Law. Only when both have been made can the one be matched against the other.

It must not be forgotten that the courts are not supposed to be legislating, but carrying out orders imposed on them by the sovereign body. Even when allowance is made for the development of case law, in fact the authority of the courts resides in the supposition that it has correctly interpreted the will of Parliament. The court rules are intended to ensure the court remains what I have elsewhere called a Work Group,[1] and does not become dominated by powerful, primitive urges which cause it to express impulses that are not the intention of the sovereign body that it should express. In their review of the historical sources of American Law, Wels and Freed bring out very clearly how much the courts are influenced by their historical development. Even such elasticity as common law procedure introduces into legal settlements of sexual problems is denied by the accident of the development of divorce law from canon law.

One of the consequences of this is described by R. V. Sherwin, who bluntly characterizes the behaviour of the courts as dominated by prudery. He makes out a good case for saying that the courts are frequently swayed by hostility to sex rather than by concern for the

[1] [*Experiences in Groups and Other Papers,* in Volume IV. *Ed.*]

legality or otherwise of the act being tried (p. 425 et seq.). This brings his view very close to that expressed by Markillie to which I have already alluded.

The blurb describes this work as likely to be regarded as, "the most profound work on psycho-sexuality since Freud". Psychoanalysts need not be deterred by such praise. There is a great deal of comfort to be had by reading what these workers have to teach us of their experiences in that extremely complex field where intuition and understanding have to be converted into wise action.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME VII

subsequent history. The only part
of the story which I have here briefly
recounted of which I can be reasonably certain
is that part of it which passed in the course
of the psycho-analytic sessions and was there
for open to my direct inspection. The remainder
depends on his overt statements which were
made only rarely and were suspect because
they were made by such a disturbed man.
I must leave on side my reasons for thinking
them worthy of credence: my reason for
citing this example is that I had a record
of an early thought about the "cure" of
this patient and could compare it with
the impression I gained at the latter stages.
The "facts" I have recounted would fit in
quite well with with the ideas which would
form part of the conjunction bound by the title
"cure" as originally conceived by me. They

Bion's handwriting

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME VII

Edited by Chris Mawson

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KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume VII): 978–1–78220–235–6

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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BRAZILIAN LECTURES

1973/1974

Bion's Brazilian Lectures, 1: São Paulo, was first published in 1973 by Imago Editora, Rio de Janeiro. *Bion's Brazilian Lectures, 2: Rio de Janeiro/São Paulo*, was first published in 1974 by Imago Editora, Rio de Janeiro. They were revised, corrected and published together in 1990 as *Brazilian Lectures* (London: Karnac Books).

Brazilian Lectures

INTRODUCTION

These lectures have been edited to suit them to the printed, rather than the spoken word. With the exception of a few minor additions the text is substantially the same as that of the transcripts taken from the original tape recordings.

The questions which stimulated the material content have had to be subjected to the same selection and compression without, I hope, too much misrepresentation of the intentions of the participants. To them I would like to express my thanks; also to Frank Philips, whose arduous and spontaneous translation made the lectures in São Paulo possible. Of my wife's contribution in changing the spoken to the printed word I cannot speak highly enough. This book has cost her many hours of skilful work.

* * *

The lectures given in Rio de Janeiro were simultaneously translated by Cibele Pallon and Elizabeth Hart, to whom I take this opportunity to express my admiration and thanks.

In São Paulo Frank Philips again translated as I spoke. I had a renewed opportunity to admire the facility and speed with which he did this and here express my thanks.

As before, this printed version is the work of my wife. She is not to blame for the defects of which I become more aware at each scrutiny. Gardeners, like my wife, know how pebbles multiply on a bed which is supposed to present the 'minimum conditions' for flowers to flourish. That they are no worse I owe to her.

Wilfred R. Bion

1973 SÃO PAULO

1

In these seminars I will try to give a sketch of the area in which I am prepared to exhibit my ignorance and to answer questions that you care to ask. Go on asking the same question as often as you like and I will answer it if I can, although probably in a different way each time.

I shall start with a fable, in the guise of an historical account of the Royal Cemetery at Ur. On the death of the king the entire court processed into an excavation, since called 'The Death Pit', and there, dressed in their finery and jewels, took a drug from a small cup later found by each body.

Five hundred years later, without any publicity, the tombs were robbed. It was a courageous thing to do because the Cemetery had been sanctified by the death and burial of the Royal Family. The robbers were the patrons of the scientific method: the first who dared to break through the ghostly sentinels of the dead and their priestly attendants.

This primitive reconstruction, which is not history, archaeology or art, might be categorized from a religious, aesthetic or scientific vertex. In Grid terms we might say that it is a C category construction.

Continuing this use of fable into the domain of finance: money was early used as a mode of communication in religious observance, the communication then being between corporeal beings like humans, and others such as the ghostly sentinels at Ur. Later, it was used by the Anglo-Saxons as 'wergild' to compensate for the loss of life or blood, and 'bride-purchase' to compensate for the loss of a bride from the membership of a group. The convenience of this method of communication, analogous to the convenience of speech, made it suitable for take-over for purposes of exchange and communication in commerce.

Psychoanalysis may be regarded as a response to the inappropriate; from that awareness arose the search for the cause of the inappropriate. In finance the inappropriate has not yet been discovered. Consequently, fluctuations in exchange are sought in the realms of the appropriate. The causes of the fluctuations will have to be sought, not only in the rational world of finance, but also in the continued survival of these primitive, and now no longer recognized, basic roots – religious and tribal (as described in my fable). Money does not work in accordance with rational, economic laws alone.

Freud regarded the Oedipus complex as being one of the main discoveries of psychoanalysis; it is worth considering that Freud's use of the Oedipus fable (or myth) enabled him to discover the human personality. It is not necessarily of great importance for us to learn what Freud and others discovered; what is important is that one should learn the value of what we nowadays call psychological or psychoanalytic activity – that is, *practical* psychoanalysis. That vast area requires investigation, not ossification. It is of cardinal importance that it should not be treated as a closed subject.

We have no way of guessing what the tomb robbers subsequently felt. I still consider that they must have been brave men to dare to rob the treasures hidden in a spot which was guarded by evil and dangerous spirits. Similarly in psychoanalysis: when approaching the unconscious – that is, what we do not know, not what we do know – we, patient and analyst alike, are certain to be disturbed. Anyone who is going to see a patient tomorrow should, at some point, experience fear. In every consulting room there ought to be two rather frightened people: the patient and the psychoanalyst. If they are not, one wonders why they are bothering to find out what everyone knows.

It is tempting always to engage upon something familiar. This temptation is greater for psychoanalysts than for others because it is one of the rare situations in which human beings can be engaged in a frightening occupation without even going outside the door.

We should not consider too much what we have already done in the way of investigating patients; we should consider what we are going to do tomorrow, about which we know very little because it has yet to happen.

Let us now consider any questions arising from the above. We

shall have to go on asking the same question, because although the question may be in the same words tomorrow as today, it will not be the same, because it is a different day.

Q: If we are interested in the thing that will happen tomorrow how can we maintain our attention on the things that are happening now?

Bion: One hopes, as a result of experience, to learn how to concern oneself both with the present and with the future. These are the only things about which we can do anything at all; the past we can do nothing about.

A famous general once said, "You do not have to be very intelligent to be a general, but you must be able to use such brains as you have while you are being bombed and shot at." It does not sound very dramatic, but I think most psychoanalysts know what it feels like to be giving an interpretation in front of the patient. It sounds simple. It is difficult to say why it is not. One would have to say, "If it is as easy as you think, you go and try it." If you *can* try it, and if neither you nor your patient have what we loosely call a breakdown, and survive, then both people will be mentally stronger after the experience. The writer, Bagehot (1872), said, "Strong men are attracted by strong ideas, and strong ideas attract strong men and make them stronger". In psychoanalysis two people dare to ask questions about what they have forgotten and about what they do not know, and at the same time must be capable of living in the present. As a result they do get stronger.

Q: I would like to ask how to proceed in practice with this question of 'tomorrow'. I would also like to hear more about the aspect of religion.

Bion: To take the second point first. Psychoanalysts have been peculiarly blind to this topic of religion. Anyone, recalling what they know about the history of the human race, can recognize that activities which can be called religious are at least as obtrusive as activities which can be called sexual. In the domain of the physical, if a human being were spoken of as having no alimentary canal, one would think – here is a monster indeed! It bears no resemblance to the human animal.

If that is so, then one wonders on what grounds a mind or personality could be regarded as a human personality or character if it had missing one of the main departments of mental activity.

I will try to answer the first part of the question by posing another. How can a human being, with a human mentality and character, not be interested in, or concerned with, the future? If anyone wants to claim exemption on the grounds that he knows nothing about the future, I would think he was rationalizing; nor would I accept the explanation that he is unconcerned because it has not happened yet, particularly as it is so common for people to claim that they exercise foresight or that they are prudent, or even sometimes that they have acquainted themselves with the mathematics of probability. This seems to me to be the mathematics of a human feeling, or what is a guess on the part of the individual as to what is likely to happen in the future put into convincingly mathematical terms. If someone says they are not concerned with the future because they have learned about it from the past I would not believe them. The fact that a thing has happened in the past has nothing whatever to do with its happening in the future.

Q: I would like clarification of the concept of 'the future'. If we are always dealing with something that is to happen and nothing else, is not the present totally absorbed in that perspective?

Bion: I have been using a concept, and it is one of these situations in which one tends to believe that there is some realization which approximates to that concept. We are all used to words like 'sex' which, if one considers the matter, means nothing. But the word 'sex', like 'the future', is useful for this kind of discussion. What it has to do with the world of reality I do not know. Yet people use words like 'sex' and 'the future' exactly as if they were about something. Why that is so, psychoanalysts will have to find out, because I do not think the philosophers have yet done so.

Q: I would like to hear you speak about the use of the past, the present and the future in relation to anxiety.

Bion: This word 'anxiety' is a praiseworthy attempt to give a name to a feeling. Most of us think that we know what people mean when they say 'anxiety', although a child would not.

If we were to look at the X-ray of a baby's hand we could see

cartilage and bone and so on, and say, "That is a baby's hand." Why? It is nothing of the kind; it is not a hand at all; it is a collection, a constant conjunction of various numbers of sense impressions together with a theory that it turns into a hand. The reason why one says that it is a baby's hand is based on many years of accumulated experience which leads one to suppose that that is so.

The question has this forward component: what does anxiety, and any other feeling which has become sufficiently noticeable to be labelled with a name, bear on the future? What will it turn into? One can observe certain children's activities and say, "That behaviour is going to become sexual activity." In the present one could say, "This sort of activity resembles that which I think I remember having witnessed in a child." It is not surprising, however, if people who are not psychoanalysts or psychiatrists do not see what the connection is. Indeed, I suspect there are many things which analysts interpret to patients that it is unreasonable to expect the patient to understand.

One of the questions involved is: are we simply exchanging concepts, or have these concepts some realizations which approximate to them? For example, when we say we are, or think we are, anxious *today*, we are talking about what was once the future; and in this 'future' this meeting had not taken place; we knew nothing about it; nor did we know what this 'anxiety' was. But some of us may think that we are reminded of some experience in childhood or adolescence which was similar. What we do not know is what we should be feeling if we were in existence in fifty years' time. But we can *guess* that we would be feeling anxious. But we do not know whether the feeling that we would have in fifty years' time would be something that we could stand. We often speak in terms of 'anxiety', 'very anxious', 'exceptionally anxious', or 'I'm not anxious at all' – that kind of quantitative language. At some point quantitative change turns into qualitative change. But this supposes the passage of 'time' which is a concept, although we tend to forget that and to believe that there is such a 'thing' as 'time'.

Q: Has analysis concerned itself too much with analogy? In your example of the tomb at Ur, was this kind of model not itself a disturbing one? How does this affect the course of an analysis?

Bion: It affects it very much – in the present. It cannot affect it at any other time. Similarly, nostalgia or anticipation are important because

they exist in the present. This seems to me to be lost sight of – that the analysis itself is done in the present. It cannot be done in anything else whatever. But the ideas of the past and the future, although they are feeble ideas, are emotionally strong. When people talk about the future, or what they remember, or what they desire, they are really talking about a powerful, present feeling.

If someone says they remember 'the good old days', they are talking about a powerful feeling, and they are giving it a name which will not stand investigation. Over and over again, these names, like 'past', 'future', 'good old days', are in fact names of a feeling in the present, and that is why they are so important.

With regard to the use of the analogy, I agree it is a most defective tool, but it is also a very powerful one. The dominance of the ocular senses, both real and imagined, is such that it affects our capacity for thought. I may overcome the difficulty by being so abstract that what I say is incomprehensible, by being so concrete that it is comprehensible and misleading. But the importance of the analogy is not the similarity of one thing to another, but the relationship between the two.

Q: I would like you to say more about the synthesis of the past, the present and the future, because in the sense of removing the limits of time and space I feel that the imagination is equivalent to a fifth dimension. You frequently express yourself mathematically and I therefore take it from this angle.

Bion: Let us consider the opposite: the counterpart of the synthetic in the sense of the analytic. I refer to Kant's distinction between the synthetic and the analytic; that is the way in which I am using the distinction between the *a priori* and the experiential knowledge.

Q: Would you say some more about the model of Ur in its relation to the scientific method and to the breaking down of taboos.

Bion: I can put a visual image into a verbal formulation, like telling the story about the cemetery at Ur, the priesthood, the royal funeral and the tomb robbers. As a result, if I am successful in calling up that visual image, then I am also falsifying it in the same way. That verbal formulation of a visual image is more comprehensible and probably more false. Euclid, by drawing lines and circles, appealed to the eyes. As a result, for several centuries intelligent human beings thought that Euclidean geometry presented space as it is known to

all of us. But when Descartes promulgated the idea of the Cartesian co-ordinates, geometry became independent of these lines and circles and triangles and translated them into terms which were algebraical. Until that time nobody realized the fallacy of Euclidean geometry. It was convincing *and* misleading. On the other hand, projective geometry is, for most of us, incomprehensible. Similarly, if I were to draw a picture, I could, even with limited artistic ability, give you the impression of an avenue of trees and a circular pond at the end. In fact, if you looked at it and were honest with yourself, you would admit it was not a circle but an ellipse. Thus, the artist is able to help people to ignore the piece of canvas smelling of paint, the better to see an avenue of trees and a pond. What then is to be done with that communication? Either it is visual, comprehensible and wrong, or it is accurate and incomprehensible – unless, of course, we happen to be either mathematicians who are familiar with projective geometry (that is, algebraic formulations which previously would have to be drawn or imagined in visual terms), or aesthetically trained. The problem would be a simple one if it were as extreme as that, but real life is not so simple. Psychoanalysts are confronted with a situation which is extremely complex. We may first want to discuss the problem, but all we have at our disposal is conversational language. We might try inventing a language that is suitable for our work; would we then ever have a patient who understood what we were talking about? That sounds pessimistic, but it depends on the belief that a single individual is of any consequence. For example, it is rash, to say the least, to assume that one person would be able to carry this discussion further. But forty or fifty of us may, and I am hoping that quantity of us leads to a change of quality. The more of us who have not only heard of, but felt anxiety, the greater the possibility that someone will be able to say more about it than, "You are anxious". We do, in fact, use conversational language: we say 'sex', 'aggression', 'anxiety and so on. The tendency, therefore, is for our listeners to say, "But we know all this – we all know about sex and anxiety – what about it?" The reply is a difficult one because it will have to be, "But you don't know; and if you will study our approach to this subject and you are able to benefit by it, at the end of the analysis you will discover that you do not know"; 'yes I know' is no more a solution when said by grown men and women, than when said by a child. The analyst will say, "Yes, I did say 'envy', but you don't know what I

mean when I say 'envy'." That is the problem. It *sounds* exactly 'as if we are saying what everyone knows and using a language that everybody knows. Time and again we do not use what we understand by conversational language. It may appear to be articulate, governed by the rules of grammar and by an ordinary vocabulary, but as practising psychoanalysts we have a chance of realizing that something else is going on in the sessions. We can say to the patient, "When I say 'anxiety' I mean something which is what you are feeling at the moment." We can also say, "When I say 'envy' it is a name which I am giving to the way in which you seem to me to be behaving at this moment when you tell me you already know everything that an analyst can tell you." It is difficult to get people to realize that they do *not* know envy as an analyst knows envy – his own or other people's. As a psychoanalyst I do not claim to know the answer, but I do not mean, therefore, that those who come to me for analysis know better.

2

The sign K (ξ) denotes a complex idea, or series of ideas, in its most simple and uncomplicated form. Its most extended form suffers from requiring the whole of psychoanalysis, past, present and future, for its expression and elucidation. Its most economical formulation is incomprehensible without experience. In this way it is analogous to mathematical signs such as,

$$dx^2 = \sum_{i:j=1}^{4} Gij\ dxi\ dxj$$

to represent a four-dimensional world of three space coordinates, and a fourth coordinate denoting time.

K represents a constant, or variant. ξ is an unknown component, a variable, an unconscious which remains unconscious, a source of speculation and disturbance. Variables depend on vertices such as religious, aesthetic and scientific, often represented in the world of reality by persons and their points of view.

Perhaps you wonder why I do not say what I mean in a way that you could understand. You may be thinking, on the other hand, "What about it? I know all this already – I can't waste my time on it". But if we go on together I shall try talking in borrowed fables, verbal formulations of visual images, stories like that of Oedipus, of the Tower of Babel, or the Garden of Eden. All these are reminiscent of ideogrammatic speech. They are open to the objection that they are easy to grasp, being dominated by the ocular senses and distorted accordingly. They are both easily comprehensible and false. This is probably one of the components of Plato's hostility to the poet. I am now using the history of philosophy to tell a story. I can imagine that one of the grievances held against Socrates was that he

was corrupting the youth by mobilizing visual imagery or poetry, both of which are powerfully seductive. Whether it is true I do not know, but it serves my purpose to construct the story as a method of making relatively simple something that I want to convey. I may be able to make it clearer while at the same time being misleading. Alternatively, I can resort to something which is so sophisticated that it has very little or no feeling; in that case the communication will be so theoretical (it may be true) that it will be incomprehensible. So, at the two extremes, I can either be comprehensible and misleading, or truthful and incomprehensible. But while it is possible, at a scientific meeting, to make an exaggerated statement of this kind, it is not like real life; the analyst should be talking about real life. No interpretation is any good unless it is reminiscent of real life.

Although the analyst cannot, in fact, be a famous or important person, he may be *felt* by the analysand to be so. If the analysand is trying to co-operate he will speak or behave as if the analyst was somebody as important as a father might be to a child, or as God might be to an adult. But the significant thing is not the child and the father, or the adult human and God, but the relationship between the two – the link. This is expressed in psychoanalytic theory by the term 'transference', referring to the relationship between analyst and analysand. It reminds me of mathematicians (Frege, for instance) who talk about pure mathematics as being about the relationship between mathematical objects. It is useful for us to borrow that terminology.

To return to the sign K (ξ): whatever one is saying in the course of the analytic experience, whether in the group or with the individual, one part of it will remain constant and the other will be constantly changing – the unsaturated element. But while these signs are useful for talking about psychoanalysis, they are not useful for experiencing psychoanalysis. For example, I thought the patient who said, "I don't know what I mean", was talking articulate English. It took me a long time to realize that he was not, but when, after about six months, I did, the experience was instantaneous. *He* was as ideogram. *He* was something that ought to have reminded me of a person lying on a couch. That person had a meaning and I could say to him, "You do not know what you mean; but you expect *me* to know that when I see someone lying on the couch, two people have been having sexual intercourse". What this patient 'meant' was that his parents, or two people, had been having sexual intercourse.

To return to the question of what this language is which is spoken but not articulated: the analyst has to manufacture something which enables him to know what is going on, in the way that Galileo – another story – had to invent and build a telescope before he could make any discoveries. Over two thousand years ago Aristarchus proposed a heliocentric theory, but there was no equipment, physical or mental, with which that could be confirmed or refuted. It took a long time and the co-operation of many people before an instrument for observing the facts and making it possible to understand what those facts meant became available. One can imagine that Aristarchus might have said, "These are the facts; I don't know what they mean, but if enough of you, for enough years, get together, you may be able to see the same thing and even be able to understand what you see".

We are generally able to understand sensual experience; so long as we can use our physical make-up we can understand certain things. We can understand, for example, that I am Bion. But here is the misleading point about visual imagery. As a result of thinking that we know who or what Bion is, we may think that we know that character because we are misled by the power of our sight, and we may, therefore, think that Bion's character ends with his skin. In fact, any psychoanalyst would be bound to feel that if there is such a thing as a mind, or character, or personality, it cannot be assumed to correspond to the physical formation. All of us need, in the analytic session, to wonder why we think there is a personality where the body lies.

The area which is available for inspection to psychoanalysis is like an expanding universe. As soon as I can understand what it means when I can see a body lying on a couch, the live relationship between me and you, and you and me (either direction) has become a dead relationship between I and it, and it and me, and you and it, and it and you. This is, again, a verbal formulation of visual imagery. But in the consulting room the relationship is different. Let us suppose that the relationship between you and me, and me and you, is ultra-sensual and infra-sensual (again, terminology based on visual imagery). It is a theory made up of sensuous experience, like a measure or a telescope, in order to make contact with or discern something which is possibly infra-sensual or ultra-sensual, like talking about infra-red or ultra-violet. But it is not about light; it is about what we might metaphorically call mental illumination. "I *see* what you mean." But I do not; nor can I tell you what I see without using terminology

which is borrowed from the physical sciences and, therefore, sure to be unsuitable. Psychoanalysts will have to invent and manufacture a way of 'seeing' the other person.

Q: Although, in analysis, the patient uses a language which is variable, we have to search for and understand the invariant – the ideogram. We have to talk to him in his own language, which is not ours, and capture his ideograms. Is this not a question of technique?

Bion: In the practice of psychoanalysis the patient will make a statement. One part of it consists of what he already knows; another part is the attempt to formulate the problem for which he seeks help. The analyst must try to state the information asked for in terms which he thinks are comprehensible by the patient.

If you wanted to relate a dream, you would have to tell it through time. You would have to say this happened, and that happened, and something else happened; but that is not what the dream did. One moment that dream was not there – the next moment you knew the whole dream. When dealing with something so primitive and fundamental we need to find some instrument or language which could distinguish between a narrative like a fable, and this experience which happens all at once.

For this purpose I have used two things which are entirely meaningless: beta-elements, which do not belong to the domain of thinking, and alpha-elements, which are reserved for the domain of thought.

The physicists have categorized physical atoms and have then described parts of atoms and have invented an instrument – the electron microscope. This is so impressive that there is a danger that we might want to do the same. It is useful to be stimulated by these achievements, but not to a point of trying to do the same. It is possible here to talk about psychoanalysis and alpha-elements and beta-elements. These words are useful if we want to talk *about* things, even if there is no reason to believe they are facts. There is no evidence whatsoever to believe that beta-elements and alpha-elements exist, except by a kind of metaphor like calling them psychological atoms, or psychological electrons. All that I am saying could be classified according to Grid category C3. It might then be possible to bring together C3 and F3. It is a psychoanalytic game, like a children's game in which the arguments become so fierce and bitter as to who

is father, or who is mother, or who is baby. The spectator, confronted with such a display of emotion, begins to think, "This must be about something". As adults we can guess that the game is a serious prelude to marriage, but the child has not the knowledge to make it possible for it to understand the adult interpretation. At the same time, the ordinary adult can find it difficult to know why the children are so quarrelsome and why 'only a game' stirs up so much emotion.

I suggest that it is equally difficult to know why an adult, mature psychoanalyst should feel angry about a psychoanalytic theory, unless that theory is part of an adult game – the psychoanalytic game – which stimulates and engenders a great deal more heat than light.

Using the theory of the expanding universe (for visual purposes): when the analyst has made an interpretation he has also caused the universe of discussion to expand. His moment of illumination is very brief. *At once* he is back in the unknown; the problem has gone out of sight. It has become ultra-sensuous (and infra-sensuous in the other direction). I have said 'direction' but what are the points of the mental compass? I do not know. Someone will have to find out. It may take anything from the time which has elapsed between Aristarchus and the present day, to that between Democritus of Abdera and a modern psychoanalyst. The distance between the state of mind of the modern psychoanalyst and that of Democritus of Abdera is vast when measured by the artificial scale of distance in time. But that may be the distance between one element in classical psychoanalysis and another. What is the distance between 'No, I didn't dream anything', and 'Yes, I had a dream'? What is the distance between 'nothing' and 'the whole thing'? This kind of investigation can only be carried out by psychoanalysts, who will have to invent their tools. Assuming that there is such a thing as a mind which is infra-sensuous and ultra-sensuous, how are we to find an instrument for investigating that? If it were the physical world, one could use the electro-magnetic wave system and invent angstrom units to measure the distance between one wave length and another. Yet even in the physical world it is not possible to reconcile theories of wave motion together with theories of elementary particles which come together as a whole without any discernible gap between 'nothing' and 'everything'.

Crude categorizations, such as religion, aesthetics, or science, are useful for macroscopic investigation, but not for psychoanalysis.

They are only models which may be useful or not, and which can be discarded without all the upheaval involved in upsetting a theory. Models are expendable; theories are not. This is why it may be helpful to invent beta-elements and alpha-elements. It is like playing games with higher mathematics, except that the games are no more grown-up than those which are played in the primitive domain.

To turn now to the story Virgil wrote, using an aesthetic capacity to describe religion in serious terms. The story of the death of Palinurus is a *serious* simplification, through the poetical capacity of a great man to draw attention to religion. The god Somnus appears disguised as another god and in this guise seduces Palinurus, saying: "You are tired; it is a fine night, the fleet is going by the guidance of your ship; there is no danger; you can go to sleep and I will guide the ship." Palinurus replies, "I am not such a fool as to be taken in by a smooth face. I would never trust the smooth face of the sea and the air", and he ties himself to the helm. The god then takes a branch, dips it in the waters of Lethe, and scatters it over Palinurus who is thereby rendered helpless. The god immediately hurls Palinurus into the sea with such violence that part of the ship is torn away at the same time. That is a moral story, a *serious* moral story. If we ask ourselves what words we should have to use to tell that story today, we should have to talk about things like memory, desire, drugs (the waters of Lethe), violence and great hostility.

To continue the story – Aeneas sees his helmsman has gone, his ship is veering wildly and the fleet has nothing to navigate by. He says: "Poor Palinurus! How sad that you should be taken in by something so commonplace as the smooth appearance of the sea." Nobody gains anything. Aeneas cannot believe he has a faithful, experienced helmsman; Palinurus cannot feel that his leader knows anything about his fidelity or his ability. That is a moral story; plus or minus. Therefore, when your patient makes you feel that he is being omnipotent, it would be useful if you had evidence which might show what kind of god he is talking about and what kind of morals he is experiencing. In the consulting-room the analyst has to be a kind of poet, or artist, or scientist, or theologian to be able to give an interpretation or a construction (Freud, 1937d). The analyst must be able to construct a story. Not only that: he must construct a language which he can talk and which the patient can understand. In the meantime he must be able to tolerate this expanding universe which expands faster than

he can think. He can think fast enough to get from nothing to the interpretations, but by the time he has finished talking, the universe has developed beyond sight. The problem is: How can we become strong enough to tolerate it? – a much more modest aim than trying to add something new to psychoanalysis.

3

We have previously divided the domain of investigation into religious, scientific and aesthetic. At any given stage one or other of these categories is liable to be predominantly obtrusive, but it does not mean that the other ones are not discernible. For example, the patient claims to be entirely scientific, to have no particular religious beliefs and not to be in any way artistic. But religious and aesthetic elements are quickly and easily discerned amongst all this presenting scientific material. Frequently one can point out that it is not a question of not having religious beliefs, but that the religious belief which the patient is betraying is one which is an insult to his intelligence. Consequently, his scientific view betrays hostility to the religion which is hostile to it. The fundamental, basic elements belonging to the primitive level of the human personality are at war with each other. The Grid categories are useful for the purposes of talking or thinking about these elements here – not in the consulting room. We could suppose human behaviour or activity which we would not call thought at all. Alpha-elements and beta-elements are supposed to represent elements which are equally primitive and difficult to observe, but even when we deliberately choose two meaningless terms, like beta-elements or alpha-elements, almost at once those empty categories have acquired a meaning. It is as if the mind abhorred a vacuum and filled it up accordingly.

Q: Would you explain more about the mind which functions like a muscle.

Bion: When you speak of a muscle, I am not sure whether you are speaking metaphorically, or about a physiological or anatomical structure; or is it a way of using a physical object like a muscle as the

easiest way in which to describe a part of the mind? The only way to speak about this particular thing may be to borrow from the world of physical vocabulary, language, or experience. It may be difficult for us to understand, but it is the easiest and shortest way to attempt communication. The question will recur, although its formulation may be deceptively different.

Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the termination of the Fifth Book of the *Aeneid* are both serious attempts to formulate, and thus communicate, something about religion, about a god representing the ultimate reality. We are trying to talk about an obscure subject, the most fundamental and primitive parts of the human mind. We could try to bring a brilliant illumination to bear on this obscure thing in order to show up the dark space so clearly that even something dark and difficult to see would become visible. Freud gave a clue to another approach [in a private letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé] when he said, "I often try artificially to blind myself in order to examine these obscure places". I may not have translated that correctly, but I would like to borrow from Freud and divert his statements to suit my problem.

Instead of trying to bring a brilliant, intelligent, knowledgeable light to bear on obscure problems, I suggest we bring to bear a diminution of the 'light' – a penetrating beam of darkness: a reciprocal of the searchlight. The peculiarity of this penetrating ray is that it could be directed towards the object of our curiosity, and this object would absorb whatever light already existed, leaving the area of examination exhausted of any light that it possessed. The darkness would be so absolute that it would achieve a luminous, absolute vacuum. So that, if any object existed, however faint, it would show up very clearly. Thus, a very faint light would become visible in maximum conditions of darkness.

This mechanism could be described as a version of sophisticated thought – Grid category F (concepts) and G (scientific deductive systems). Suppose we are watching a game of tennis, looking at it with increasing darkness. We dim the intellectual illumination and light, forgetting imagination or phantasy or any once-conscious activities; first we lose sight of the players, and then we gradually increase the darkness until only the net itself is visible. If we can do this, it is possible to see that the only important thing visible to us is a lot of holes which are collected together in a net. Similarly, we might look at a pair of socks and be able to see a mass of holes which have been

knitted together. Freud described something of this kind, but said that the patient had a phobia which made it impossible for him to wear socks. I suggest that the patient did not have a phobia of socks but could see that what Freud thought were socks were a lot of holes knitted together. If this is correct, terms like 'phobia' in classical analysis do not do justice to the facts, and in particular do not do justice to the extreme capacity for observation which is natural to some patients. Just as it is natural for me in my gross, macroscopic way classically to see a pair of socks, this kind of patient has a visual capacity which is different, making him able to see what I cannot see. What I think, with the light of my intelligence, brains, knowledge, experience, is a pair of socks, *he* can see is not. We should reconsider this domain of thought, because as psychoanalysts we must be able to see that it is a pair of socks, or a game of tennis, and at the same time to be able to turn down the light, turn off the brilliant intuition, and see these holes, including the fact that they are knitted, or netted together.

I would like to consider the category 'psychotic' and suggest that it is too gross, too macroscopic. If we look at it more closely, in detail, in the way we would have to look at a game of tennis, or a pair of socks, we can see that there may be *insane* psychotics and *sane* psychotics. It might be possible to help the insane psychotic to become an efficient psychotic. That is talking in terms of a vertex of understanding, of knowledge, but it is not enough for psychoanalysts. A psychoanalyst must be able not only to see something which is apparently a game of tennis, but also be able to move to a different vertex and see this same game from that position; he could then see what the patient who could not wear socks could see. Similarly, it might be possible to move the vertex and get nearer to being able to see what an artist or a theologian sees. It depends on a certain flexibility of mind of all of us who concern ourselves with the human mind. This can be seen to be difficult; Descartes, while suggesting philosophical doubt, failed completely to doubt philosophical doubt. "Cogito, ergo sum" is a failure to doubt doubt. This means that the domain of present-day analysis is much wider than that known to classical analysis. I am aware that in referring to 'classical' analysis I am using another meaningless term, but it becomes possible to talk about psychoanalysis by using terms of this kind in much the same way as it is possible to talk about Euclidean geometry, or the geometry of Riemann or Lobachevsky. These last two turn out to be important in dealing with space: not

geographical space, not classical space, not geocentric space, but this other space – let us call it scientific space, or religious space, or aesthetic space, as a convenient way of talking about it. But it is no good going to a museum and expecting to see there classical, aesthetic space, any more than it is any good going up the Amazon to have a look at the equator. One has to be content with this element $K(\xi)$, the constant together with the unsaturated space. Psychoanalysts must become accustomed to open-ended theory, to infinite, not finite space. If we want to know something about religion, or aesthetics, or science, we have to tolerate infinity.

I suspect that we are addicted to a kind of Euclidean geometry which depends on our being able, like Euclid, to borrow from the domain of space which we think is real. The physicist, who might be supposed to believe that there is a world of real physical space, has now found it necessary (I am quoting Heisenberg) to suppose an uncertainty principle. So the physicists have caught up with Descartes. But Descartes did not have to *use* physical or philosophical doubt; psychoanalysts *do*. We cannot have the privilege of playing a game of philosophical doubt; we have to use it in practice. Similarly, we have to use a method which includes not only understanding, but also *mis*-understanding. That is another reason why nobody, except ourselves, is likely to make progress.

Q: Nowadays religion is a taboo as sex was a taboo before Freud. Religion, money, science and aesthetics are probably related to sex. Would you comment further on this subject.

Bion: I do not believe that real life has any divisions such as religion, or aesthetics, or science, any more than there is a line dividing the northern hemisphere from the southern. That line tells you something about the human mind. These categories tell you something about the way in which sophisticated human beings think, but it is doubtful that they tell you anything about the things themselves. If there is a thing-in-itself, a thing which Kant would call the noumenon, all that we can know is about phenomena. When the noumena, the things themselves, push forward so far that they meet an object which we can call a human mind, there then comes into being the domain of phenomena. We can guess, therefore, that corresponding to these phenomena, which are something that we know about because they are us, is the thing itself, the noumenon. The religious man would

say, "There is, in reality, God". What Freud and psychoanalysts have investigated is phenomena. The human mind is an unimportant element; it is also an obstacle. For example: I would not be able to see a stream which was flowing smoothly without any obstacle to disturb it because it would be so transparent. But if I create a turbulence by putting in a stick, then I can see it. Similarly, the human mind may set up a turbulence, and some sensitive, intuitive and gifted mind, like the one we call Leonardo da Vinci, can draw pictures of turbulence reminiscent of hair and water. He can translate this turbulence and transform it by making marks on paper and canvas which are clearly visible to us. But we may not so easily 'see' this turbulence in the world that we call the mind. If we can, then it becomes possible to believe that there is such a thing as a human personality in the world of reality, and such a thing as an underlying group in the universe of which we know nothing, only phenomena.

By changing the vertex and borrowing from the religious, we can say that the assumption is that there is a Godhead (corresponding to the noumenon) about which we know nothing; but we think we know something about God when we come to the realm of phenomena. In religious terminology, there is numen which can be numinous, and there are omens which can be ominous. The religious person would say that psychoanalysts are only investigating the phenomena and that in consequence things like dreams, thoughts, ideas, stories like Oedipus, are very superficial. There is, indeed, something important in this area which we can say belongs to the category of beta-elements.

Freud gets near to this when he says that a dream is wish-fulfilment. That is to say, there is no 'dream' (readily communicable formulation) which is not a 'wish', in contrast with the original, unknowable, unknown 'dream'. In other words, there is no nightmare so terrifying that it is not better than the thing-in-itself. Some patients will say they had a dream, and I may think, "This is not a dream; it has no free associations". This may be a mistaken impression. The patient may be able to have a *real* dream, exactly as he can see that a real sock is a series of holes which have been knitted together, and that the important thing in the game of tennis is the net. Why should a patient not have the same experience whether he is asleep or awake? I may think there is a difference between what he is experiencing when he is asleep and when he is awake, because they would be different

experiences for me. To him the events in both instances are the same. The real thing is the dream which happens *exactly* as he said – he held out his hand and his arm fell off, and there it was lying on the ground. It is not a dream without free associations; it is the *real* thing. Similarly, a mystic may be able to say that he has direct relationship with God, without the intervention of any other agency.

Borrowing from the domain of physiology, let us suppose that the central nervous system does not develop further than the thalamus, and that there is a world which can be contacted by the parasympathetic or the autonomic nervous system which has the thalamus as its brain. In that sphere the individual can know and contact what we call feelings. I suggest that on this basis there could be such a thing as thalamic fear, or thalamic hate, or thalamic love, unknown in the relatively recent development of the cerebral spheres – the 'grey matter'. I suggest that the patient who can mobilize his thalamus can have dreams and experiences analogous to seeing or hearing things, but is not hearing or seeing things because no system of sensory organs is developed. This patient may, however, be able to do something analogous to knowing about things which we cannot know because we have gone too far, and because there is now a gap between thought and action. In order to express this in terms of classical analysis one would have to borrow from Freud's 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' [1911b], in which he suggests that the capacity to think can be used to intervene between impulse and activity. If thinking has not developed, the person will go straight from the impulse to the action without any intervening space of thought. This is why, in Homeric psychology, so much importance is attached to the phrenes, the diaphragm. It seems a reasonable idea. You can see for yourself that feelings of fear, hate, love, are accompanied by movements of the diaphragm. What is more natural than to suppose these feelings are caused by the diaphragm which must, therefore, be the home of the mind? Democritus of Abdera was the first to suggest that the mind is related to the brain. It is difficult to believe that the mind could possibly have anything to do with this chunk of white, nervous material. All you have to do is to hit a man on the head and expose his brain, and you can see for yourself there is no mind there. It is, therefore, a preposterous idea that this white stuff has anything to do with the mind, or the soul, or the spirit. On the other hand, according to Homeric psychology, there is no difficulty in believing

in a whole spirit or mind of the person who is asleep and off their guard, or dead.

To return to the religious vertex: it is easy to believe in some kinds of god, like the one Virgil described. There are many other gods in whom it is difficult to believe without insulting one's intelligence. A war between what we call science and religion is, therefore, inevitable. It is impossible for anybody who knows what is visible from the religious vertex to believe in science. Suppose that it has become possible to observe and believe in something which is so obtrusive that it is worth giving a name, like 'sex'. Equally, it may be possible, for the time being, to believe in a scientific approach, and even in truth. There is no reason why a change should not take place in which people will no longer tolerate thought, but will say that thinkers, like Socrates, corrupt the youth, or, like Plato, that artists and poets should be forbidden because they tell lies, they corrupt the truth. Our next state may be one in which it is as wicked to be a scientist as it might have been a short while ago to do sexual things and to believe that even babies have a sexual life. It is as incredible as to believe that my hand was once a baby's hand; this is the kind of story that scientists tell. Suppose that psychoanalysts say that an infant or child has a mind, and that games which children play, like soldiers, turn into wars, and that faeces and urine can turn into atomic bombs. Any people who could assert such nonsense obviously ought to be abolished.

Q: Is it possible to show the model 'mother–baby' on the Grid?

Bion: If it could be shown it would be by something in the area *of* transformations of visual imagery (C3), like saying, 'I had a dream last night', describing in *words* something that was *seen* when off one's guard as in sleep.

Q: Is there a difference in the way in which 'time' is expressed aesthetically, or scientifically, or religiously?

Bion: It depends which vertex one adopts. For example, one can treat the vertex itself as a variable and use a measure which might indicate angstrom units or light years (scientific). Using an aesthetic time-scale, we could quote "Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away"; or, "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God" – a religious time-scale.

4

Q: I would like to hear more about category A of the Grid (beta-elements) and column 6, thoughts transformed immediately into actions.

Bion: There is a good deal of evidence to support the assumption that there exists something which we call the human mind, thought, personality. For example, 'sensuous evidence', meaning that which appears to be based on the information given by our physical, sensual feelings; this in turn suggests that there are physical bodies, that is 'corporeal evidence'. That material could fall in this category of beta-elements. We are not assuming that that is human thought at all. We can use the category as a way of making it possible to talk about these elements. If we want to talk about the analogue of small, elementary features of thought, we can use the category of alpha-elements about which we are equally ignorant and for which we have no evidence whatever. Beta 6 would represent not thought, but action with actions. Freud supposes, in 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' [1911b], that if no thought were possible, the individual would go straight from an impulse to an action without any intermediate thought. Confronted by the unknown, the human being would destroy it. Put into a verbal formulation of a visual image, it is as if the reaction were, "Here is something I don't understand – I'll kill it". But a few might say, "Here is something I don't understand – I must find out".

Keeping to this primitive area of alpha-elements, the human animal might say, "Here is something that frightens me, let me hide and watch it", or if it became braver, "Let me go nearer and sniff it", using its olfactory senses. It is not enough to say, "Here is a civilized human

being, let us analyse him", as if we could categorize his conversational language with these comparatively complex and sophisticated categories like C, D, E, F to H, and 1 to n – 1. That is an assumption we habitually make without verifying its validity. So long as we do that, psychoanalysis itself, although the most profound method of investigation we know, is not only not profound enough, but also risks destruction by the potentially observed object.

Q: I am going to try and sniff it and see what happens about this frightening unknown. I heard a story. There was once a man who was born in *Ursprung* (German word for origin) who felt very lonely, helpless, anxious and split off from something that he intuited to be the absolute, the beautiful and the truth. He perceived in himself the mental attitude that we call rituals – it gave him an intimate experience and evidence of contact with the truth and beauty and the absolute. I think it is what we call religious activity. On his journey through life he forgot the beginning and began to learn new things. Going from the culture of God to agriculture, a new form of culture, he succeeded in diminishing his anxiety and produced from the earth everything that he needed – plants, animals, minerals for his new god and made gold his symbol. He made art his new religion. He made doubt his god. Who told me that story?

Bion: I have been told a story about this microphone. It has no recognisable smell. I am told a lot of stories about its insides and I am assured it is safe to talk at it. I do not like it and I am filled with admiration for the questioner who is able to tell me that story and ask questions with a microphone in his hands. In fact, I hate the thing, but I put up with it. I am not convinced that the microphone brings me nearer to you or that it protects me from you. In so far as psychoanalysis is only an instrument, like a microphone, it matters very much what it is being used for. I am not sure that I have to use psychoanalysis to get nearer to human beings or further from them.

When a human being gets hold of a microphone and a lot of other scientific apparatus so that he can talk to some millions of people at the same time, I would like to be able to tell what he was using it for. Similarly, I would like to know what the people who are going to get control of psychoanalysis mean to use it for, and how they are going to use this extraordinary invention of human speech. I know

of nothing in the realm of sensuous experience which would tell me. Perhaps using a religious vertex might give me a clue.

There is a wide choice of religions for the person who is addicted to religion – anything from food, to money, to psychoanalysis, to science, to art, or even to curiosity. He might be addicted to stories like the one we have just been told. The hero of this story became so addicted to these sophisticated religions that he forgot the early ones. Even in psychoanalysis we might forget these early things and become addicted to the freedom which allows us to choose whether to be scientific or to use jargon. We have a wide choice; but there is something to be said for retaining some contact with these primitive, long-established aspects of our mental history. Like the hero of this story, we might prefer to be sophisticated and forget where we started the origin.

Q: Is there any connection between the concept of desire and memory, and the same concepts in Hindu literature: for example, Krishnamurti? Do you consider that the phenomenon of transference is comprised of desire and memory?

Bion: I can see a connection because you have just made one, but I do not know what it is. I do not know enough about Krishnamurti, but I am familiar with nostalgia and anticipation, both of which seem to me to be states of mind in which memory and desire play a great part. From my experience both of them interpose an opacity between me and the present. If I spend the time trying to understand what you are telling me, then I cannot listen to you. If I am thinking about the 'good old days' or the good times which are coming, I cannot pay attention to the present. But the only place I can live is always the present; there is, therefore, no value in what I can remember about my past except that I cannot forget what I cannot remember. Consequently, unless I know what the past is that fills my mind, I cannot forget it; and I am not paying attention to the present if I am obsessed with the future which I know nothing about because it has not yet happened. We bring into the open certain elements of an analysand's past, not because we think they are particularly valuable, but because they are not valuable for him to have in his luggage. If we bring them to the surface then he can forget them. Those memories, past or future, which he does not know seem to have a great deal of power; they are what I would call feeble ideas but powerful emotions.

Desire and memory are discernible as elements in transference – that is, supposing we can recognize the reality for which Freud coined the term 'transference'.

Q: You underline the religious categories in physical and aesthetic. Do you consider only these categories, or are there in your opinion others such as political, ethical, etc.?

Bion: At present it is simpler for me to limit, by definition, the areas of the primitive. That has nothing to do with reality. It only has to do with my own ignorance and lack of capacity. It is a simplification and it is sure to be an over-simplification because the universes of reality cannot be simple enough to be understood by a human being. One could imagine that there is not only *this* universe of discussion, but the universe of discussion which concerns all living animals. But then suppose there are countless more universes like the globular clusters or the spiral nebulae such as M31 and M33. Even the scientists cannot calculate the distance to our nearest neighbour more exactly than between one and two million light years – a measure of the vast ignorance of the human mind at its most sophisticated, mathematical, scientific level. Similarly, the most profound method known to us of investigation – psychoanalysis – is unlikely to do more than scratch the surface. It is, therefore, not surprising that the people who have a predominantly religious outlook say that there are certain experiences which are independent of the human mind; that to say that God is just a projection of the father of the family as he appeared to us in infancy or childhood is irrelevant and has nothing to do with the God of reality; that it is a human interpretation which flattens out the religious belief, turning it into an imprisoning idea; that the scientific, psychoanalytic view of religion or God can in no way describe the reality of religion, but flattens out religious dread, or religious love, or religious hate to a point where the individual cannot feel awe or dread, terror or stupor. This is one reason why modesty is becoming to the analyst: arrogance is not. Even the mystic who says he has direct contact with God must, in fact, have flattened out the religious experience, although it is much more profound than anyone else's experience.

However long we live we cannot possibly, as individuals, experience events such as those recorded by a few, mobilized from the whole of the human race, who, in spite of differences in age, religion,

race and language, are all in agreement. Note, for example, what is said by Dante in the 36th Canto of 'Paradiso'; by Krishna asking Arjuna, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, why he thinks he can understand God; and by God replying to Job's assumption that the human being can comprehend the Almighty. We lay ourselves open to the same accusation when we behave as if we could understand the spiral nebulae simply by scientific method.

Q: Do you think that the purpose of language is the destruction of meaning immediately after the process of discovery and communication, leaving man no opportunity to find another means of communication, either by way of neologism or of art or science? Does it not seem as if what we are saying at a given moment immediately afterwards suffers a restriction of meaning which makes it necessary to invent or create another? Do you yourself search for a new method of expressing that which traditional psychoanalysis got hold of and lost, or which the analyst got hold of and lost? Have new ideas become obscured by the fact that they have been discovered?

Bion: I would like to believe that. I would like to desire that, but that very desire, and what I know of desire, makes me doubt the validity of what I can see. Nevertheless, I am prepared to go on trying and I think it may be possible, even though we have turned our backs on our pasts, our origins, our genesis, to revive or recreate what we once were able to do or think, as well as what we can do and think today at our present age. I desire, with all its failings, to believe that it is possible to mobilize what I knew once with what I know now and what I still hope I may be capable of learning. I am hopeful because, after many years of effort, I have at last achieved the capacity to be awed by the depths of my ignorance. Whether I can continue to dare to appreciate how ill-equipped I am to exist in the reality in which I am bound to live – let alone the universe of universes which are beyond my comprehension, which are beyond my mental capacity even when augmented by radio-telescopes, electron-microscopes and psychoanalysis – I do not know. Such depths of ignorance are difficult to dare to contemplate. Therefore, I am bound to feel a wish to believe how god-like I am, how intelligent, as a change from being appalled by my ignorance. This is where the religious person would say, "You

have given a good description of your arrogance as a psychoanalyst; you have flattened it out so that you are no longer capable of awe, of dread, of stupor or terror".

Q: Could you explain the presence of action that does not substitute thought but precedes or follows it?

Bion: Man is said to be a tool-making animal whose capacity may be so one-sided that he cannot keep up with the need to learn how to use the tools he makes. This might help us to understand why the dinosaurs, who were the lords of the universe, disappeared almost suddenly (measured by an absolute time-scale) at the height of their power. The human animal may, similarly, by virtue of the cancerous growth of his tool-making capacity, put an end to the Magdalenian age, unless he can learn how to use his tools and related capacities. At present it is much easier for us to be awe-inspired by our clever monkey-like tricks than by our abysmal lack of knowledge of how to use them. I suspect that the question asked will have to be repeated, perhaps many times, to elicit an answer, if not from me, from somebody else.

Q: How can we understand the concept of unconscious fantasy within the category of the Grid which you have been showing us?

Bion: Another story: suppose I played a game like 'fathers and mothers'. That could be described as a 'conscious fantasy' at some stage. Then suppose I became so frustrated because I could not be father or mother, that I forgot it. I could say that the fantasy which was once conscious had become unconscious. Today, when I *am* one of the parents, I may again be unwilling to know anything about this unconscious fantasy, for what is the use of knowing about 'fathers and mothers' when I *am* either too young to be one or too old to be able to do anything about it now. I may say, "I don't want to have anything to do with these psychoanalysts. I do not want to be reminded of these fantasies. The best place for them is the unconscious." The answer to that might be, "I don't object to that, except that that 'unconscious fantasy' of yours, as you call it, is horribly alive; it may be obscured but is active and powerful, though beyond the reach of my ability unless psychoanalysis (or something better) can bring it again within my scope".

The phrase I have used – 'horribly alive' – is not an analytic concept; it is a synthetic concept in which the term 'alive' does not include the meaning, as it would analytically, of 'horrible'. Nor does the word 'horrible' include the idea of being alive. But if the two can be brought together, then you have a synthetic concept which also involves daring to bring two ideas together in a creative or generative manner. If, on the other hand, the individual is still dominated by hatred, envy and jealousy of the father and mother who can make anything from babies to ideas, he may be unable, even philosophically, to form symbols or synthesize analytic concepts. There is no chance of making progress because there is no way of generating thought.

5

What is the interpretation of this cup that I am holding in my hand? *My* interpretation could be classified on the Grid as E1, that is to say, an interpretation in sophisticated form. I could call it an element in a sentential calculus. There are, I am sure, many other interpretations which would probably be better placed in some other Grid category.

[*Silence*]

It seems that the combined wisdom of this group has no interpretation to offer. We should be stimulated to wonder why silence is the group's response to this particular problem. If this occurred in analysis with an individual (one could consider the individual as being represented by a group) and I wanted to talk about the polyfaceted characteristics of that personality, I would need a large group of people to give me a visual image of that personality. I could then regard anything that that individual said or did as a statement made, or not made, by only one of the people in that group. That one person would still not be known to me any more than I know one facet of the silent individual. I might feel that although the silence remained the same (what I would call K), the element ξ (the variable) had changed but would remain without a value.

Falling back on my classifications and verbalizations, one could say that the psychoanalytic vertex was too gross, too macroscopic, in the same way that a molecular formulation is on too large a scale for dealing with electrons or neutrons. On the other hand, suppose one tried to formulate it in terms of the very small, then the group of these elements would form a constant conjunction of elements which I could not distinguish the one from the other. The one mental element would, for my purposes, be indistinguishable from the other because

the tiny element of the human personality has not been described by anyone. Nobody can say what a mental atom is.

The language and formulations which have to be used by the psychoanalyst were, all of them, forged for different kinds of investigation or activity. The apparently simple question, "What is the interpretation of this cup?", is not as simple as it looks. My interpretation means nothing. For one thing, it is too gross. If I try to make it more comprehensible and say, "It is a coffee cup", neither you nor I feel any wiser. I hope, however, that what I have said so far indicates that I am talking about something that is not thought at all. I have to use words which do not belong to this subject in so far as there is a reality which approximates to the theoretical world of psychoanalysis or even of human speech.

Q: The cup impresses me as being an object of use as a container. In what sense is the mind itself a container with a content?

Bion: This question has already led to one answer: it is a container. That itself is a sophisticated observation in the category of C, which is one in which I would place the verbal formulations of a visual image. But the moment that is done the universe has begun to expand and another question is raised, namely, what is the *use* of this? I could say, "I agree it is a cup, but I am not using it for holding anything. I am using it here to stimulate a question." In that respect it is not as simple as a cup. It is questionable whether the verbal formulation is accurate because it is this which is used for purposes of stimulating the group or the individual.

Q: I *feel* that you have an idea of what this cup is, but I have the impression that I cannot *know* what your idea is. I need more information to be able to give an interpretation about that.

Bion: Put to the test of a reality situation, it is difficult to believe that there is any technique, whatever its name, which could reveal what I am thinking – remembering at the same time that I have already said what I am thinking. Assuming that there is some standard by which one could distinguish what is true and what is not, namely that there is some sort of truth function, it is difficult to believe that I, as the object of investigation, am likely to give you a correct (truthful) answer as to what it is that I am or contain.

Q: This silence leaves me feeling curious. I would like to hear your opinion about the silence which was the response to your question.

Bion: I can give my interpretation of what has just been said. It appears that the silence stimulates a certain fascination. It does not appear to further the investigation, but because of the fascination of the unknown neither does it cause every member of this group to abandon the investigation. Judging by appearances, the majority of the people who make up this group – or, if it was representing one individual, the majority of the elements of his make-up-do not want to carry the investigation further, but there is, as it were, one element which is too fascinated to allow it to lapse.

Q: I suggest that the interpretation of the cup could be F4.

Bion: This formulation is a sophisticated one, but could it be reformulated in any other terms which were more illuminating, or is F4 the simplest possible way of discussing this subject? I might say: this scientific stuff is too much for me. Is there some poet, or philosopher, or priest who could say it in a way which is comprehensible? I am not doubting that it is a sincere statement and that a scientific approach is permissible; I can still say that I cannot understand it, or I have not had the training or experience which makes it possible for me to understand the language. There may be nothing wrong with that formulation, and, according to me, nothing wrong with me, but I cannot understand it. Or, I can understand it but I do not know how to make it clear to the rest of me, because I am a complex person and the majority of the aspects of my personality have now been forgotten by me. It is possible that I might know enough in the future, but there is no way I know of in which I can borrow what I might know in the future in order to make it possible for me to understand what is being said *now*. I have many years of experience to fall back on, including years of what I have been told is psychoanalysis, so it is a serious thing if, in spite of it all, I am still not able to use my equipment to comprehend this meeting and, even less, the people who are not here at all.

Q: The cup brought me visual impressions: I saw its form, its height, the colouring on it, although I could not see it very clearly. It seemed to have a trademark at the bottom. It is a physical, inanimate object which by common consent we call a cup. By experience

> I have with other cups, it is a small cup which is suitable for holding coffee. I could put it in another context, but it is better to call it simply a coffee cup. When you used the cup as a model for us to think about we could distinguish you as a person separate from the cup. This cup can awaken in me visual and emotional impressions although it is not a cup which impresses me particularly by its artistic value. I feel a taste of coffee in my mouth that I took from a cup very much like this one.

Bion: What impresses me about that formulation is that it sounds like a description of an emotional state or a symptom of a mind. That, of course, is itself partly an interpretation, but mostly a preconception. There appears to be every sign of an ability to make acute observations. A problem arises if the observer now wants to know what his observations mean, or, to put it in more theoretical language, what the interpretation is of these 'facts' which he has observed. Resorting to verbal formulation of a visual image, it is as if a child had an acute, fresh capacity for seeing things, but not enough experience to know what the interpretation is of those same observations. When a mature individual, who can make extremely acute observations of the environment in which he lives, wants to know what this environment means, the problem becomes a difficult one. What, for example, if he not only wants to know what this cup means, but also wants to know what the spiral nebula at M31 means? That is something which can be seen with the naked eye and has been observed by countless generations of the human race as a faint blur in the constellation of Andromeda. Suppose these countless generations are able to pass on the observation from one to another; suppose there is an individual whose observation is sufficiently acute to enable him to see this same faint blur on dark nights just above the central star of the three in the limb of the Andromeda and Pegasus; suppose his curiosity is aroused and he wonders why there is this constant conjunction; suppose it is 1973 and vast telescopes have been invented. With these instruments he can look at that same faint blur and discover that it looks like a spiral nebula, edge on. That will not only have an effect on what he has seen, but he himself may never be the same again. The universe in which he lives is the same as ever, but *he will* have changed. If I can see this happen with two or three people I can have a theory that learning something or seeing something with his eyes

and his intuition can affect the growth of the individual. Intuition is a term which I can use for purposes of mental observation and I can then be curious about what stimulates or causes mental growth. I can say something about what causes my hand to grow. I can even have theories about a baby's hand and say I thought I once had one like that, but now have an adult one. But suppose I have a theory that there is a mind and that I have evidence for thinking so; how am I to explain that I can see intuitively that there is a mind, and how can I say that this is different from an hallucination? How am I to know that the correct description of this is that I have the intuition which enables me to know that there are human minds and that I do not think that somebody is right who says I am hallucinating? The religious man can say that he knows from experience that there is God and he knows the difference between an hallucination and a fact; that to persuade somebody that he is deluded, or hallucinated, or is suffering from an exaggerated view of what his father looked like, leads the individual to lose his experience of awe, wonder and mystery. Painters, musicians, sculptors, creative writers would also disagree with the view that scientifically prejudiced people express in book after book of what they call psychoanalysis. A patient once told me that if I would stop talking and listen to him playing the piano, he might be able to teach me something, but there was nothing that he could do because I had a shut mind, a mind closured by these prejudices in favour of a very limited human activity – talking. Vast though psychoanalytic literature may be, the whole of the psychoanalytic view is too limited. The spectrum is not wide enough to take in the world of the human mind.

Q: What is the relationship between interpretation, intuition, culture and wisdom?

Bion: These are all elements of language. They are definitory hypotheses. The definition and the use that is made of those words is laid down by the person who uses them. I can criticize him only if he changes the meaning of the definition of those terms in the same universe of discussion. According to the rules of what I consider to be scientific thinking, he should not make those changes without warning. But assuming that he is using an articulate mode of communication, then I can try to understand what he means when he articulates those words in a particular manner. But I may be wrong

because he may be using those terms, putting them together as he did just now, according to rules of ideogrammatic expression. In that case, I would not and could not understand what his communication means. I would be thinking, or trying to interpret, in terms of articulate speech, whereas *he* was talking in terms of verbal expression of visual images in the way a Chinese would talk. I could wonder, is the speaker thinking in a way which resembles the way he is talking? Is he thinking from left to right? These apparently articulate sentences cannot be understood if I translate them as if he were thinking from left to right when he is thinking from up to down.

It would be much easier to refer you to a two-hundred-inch telescope than to say, "You have to look through a very much augmented 'intuition' and then you would be able to see, instead of a vague blur, things which corresponded to your words, 'interpretation, intuition, culture and wisdom'". I hope that I should be able to understand what you told me about these things that you have not only heard or read in a dictionary but observed in your consulting room – thanks to your psychoanalytically augmented intuition. I would hope, but I should not expect, that you could find somebody who would see the difference that you were attempting to point out. My own answer to you has to be so vague that I can hardly expect you to be illuminated by it. In this present context 'wisdom' could be usefully used to describe that experience which had become sufficiently a part of the personality to generate mental growth. 'Culture' I would regard, analogously to the vague blur, as the wisdom which the group is permitted to use or permits to be used. 'Intuition' I would find useful to relate to the individual member of a culture. 'Interpretation' l would consider to be related to the process of knowing what the observation such as 'the vague and constant blur' meant which, when interpreted, is a galaxy. At a corresponding point of another cycle of the helix it could be seen as a distant universe similar to our own. These would all be interpretations of the observations.

Q: You have described beta-elements and alpha-elements but I am not sure whether by beta-elements you mean those things which are perceptible to the senses, and if so whether you are making a distinction between the sensory phenomena and something which is to do with the psyche. In your books it seems to me that you are making a distinction.

Bion: Beta-elements are a way of talking about matters which are not thought at all; alpha-elements are a way of talking about elements which, hypothetically, are supposed to be a part of thought. The poet Donne has written, "the blood spoke in her cheeks . . . as if her body thought". This expresses exactly for me that intervening stage which in the Grid is portrayed on paper as a line separating beta-elements from alpha-elements. Note that I am not saying that it is either beta or alpha but the line *separating the two* which is represented by the poet's words. The practising analyst has to be sensitive while the conversation is taking place to what is taking place. My impression is that the questioner is contemplating just such a situation of change from something which is not thought at all to something which is thought. In practice, a patient may sometimes blush – a physiological fact. The analyst may think the blush conveys something to him. In this instance the line could be thought of as separating the patient from the analyst; a corporeal fact from a physical fact.

Q: Could the Grid be amplified so that it included not only alpha- and beta-elements, but elements that could be called 'gamma', 'delta' and so on, becoming gradually less psychic and more physical, so that in combination it would permit us to speak about mental phenomena with the same ease that we can formulate words into grammatical phrases and sentences?

Bion: It could certainly be used for exactly that purpose. Suppose the analyst wants to investigate more deeply this very area that lies between corporeal fact and psychic fact. He can interpose between the Grid rows A and B the entire Grid as if within the Grid itself could be seen, in depth, further Grids. In this way he could amplify the Grid indefinitely to suit himself, provided he explained what he had done by some phrase such as 'second cycle', as contrasted with 'first cycle'. For my part, I would visualize the Grid as repeating itself as a helix.

I am reminded that we are already reaching one of those peculiar terminations dictated by the clock. But I suspect that the thinking will go on even after we disperse and when we go to sleep. According to Freud, people dream and, however unpleasant, those dreams mean something. The interpretation of those 'dreams' will depend on what your particular vertex is. I say 'vertex' because I do not want to say 'from the point of view of smell'; people would say to me, 'I don't

smell with my eyes. I don't see smell'. They cannot bring together my statements from the point of view of smell or music; for them the interpretations have to be exact or they do not exist. Others will bring them together by making up for the deficiencies of human conversation.

6

If psychoanalysis is to survive and develop, there has to be a contact with the reality with which we deal. That is why the practice of psychoanalysis is dependent on the analyst and the analysand being able to contact psychoanalytic facts. When we talk about 'psychoanalytic facts', that is itself a theory; it is a definitory hypothesis and practice depends on being able to recognize what kind of event falls into the category of 'fact'. Unfortunately, all I can do here is to mention further theories, but in the practice of analysis carried on in the consulting room, there is a chance of being able to say, *"That* is what I call a fact", or, *"That* is what I mean when I say 'anxiety'", or, *"That* is what I would call 'sex'". The reply can be: "What about it? We all know that", or, "What about it? It's nonsense – typical of psychoanalysts to say it's sex". This situation can arise over and over again because we have to use words like hate, envy, jealousy, anxiety and it is difficult to say "I don't really mean what *you* mean when I say 'envy' or "sex'". It is relatively easy to talk about physical facts such as the resemblance of the baby's hand to that of the adult. But it is not so easy when it comes to mental facts like the feelings of the baby which grow up into the feelings of a man or woman. In the consulting room it is easier, because it is possible to say, "What you have just said", or "What you have just done is what I call sex", or, "That which you have just expressed in ordinary language is what I call evidence of envy". The advantage of being able to do that is that the analysand can say, "I don't agree with you", or, "I agree with you", or, "I think I see what you mean". One could say, "You don't deny this, but you can't confirm that what I have said is right. Perhaps later on something will happen which may show that we are both right about this, or perhaps that we are both mistaken."

To turn to something to which it is more difficult to draw attention – the translation of verbal communication. If I use the words, 'terribly efficient', it poses a problem for the translator. But it is still more difficult if the analyst wants to translate these words if used by the analysand. 'Terribly' and 'efficient' are a part of a *synthetic* construction, not what a philosopher like Kant would call an analytic element, that is, not *a priori,* but synthetic. 'Terrible efficiency', on the other hand, would express something very different from what is meant by 'terribly efficient'. The analyst must be capable of acute observation in order to 'translate' the sounds made by the analysand, the differences between which do not show up in the printed word. [The difficulty is bad enough when the language as spoken between analyst and analysand is homogeneous and it is necessary for the analyst to speak correct English. The problem is analogous but even more difficult when, as here, a difference must be indicated in Portuguese analogous to the difference between colloquial and precise English. The analyst has to speak with greater accuracy than the analysand, but at conversational speed.][1]

I gave an example of this before [see p. 18] when I spoke of the patient who said, "I don't know what I mean". If he himself is able to understand that there is a difference, then his capacity for discrimination is extremely acute. This acute capacity is not likely to be limited to one or two words; the same patient may be unable to tolerate ordinary conversation. He may even be unable to tolerate using ordinary conversation himself. [I have known a patient, 'supposedly psychotic', who was suffering because of the precision of exact thought and perception, e.g. intolerance to a musical note incorrectly performed. The difficulty with this kind of patient arises when his hostility takes the form of being vague and inexact when he has realized the importance, which has been made clear to him by the analyst, of precision. He will employ whole sessions in conveying 'facts' in vague, imprecise abstractions.][2]

Changing the vertex: the patient may have such a capacity for discriminating one musical note from another that he cannot tolerate trying to compose or perform a piece of music and it might appear to us that he is inadequate as a musician. But the reason he cannot

[1][Author's later addition. *Ed.*]
[2][Author's later addition. *Ed.*]

be a musician or even listen to music is because he is such an acute musician.

Changing the vertex again: suppose the patient can discriminate colours (the differences in what a physicist would call visual elements, changes in the wavelength of light) to a point where he cannot tolerate the differences, not because he is unable to see, but because he can see much more than the analyst can. We could multiply those vertices. There can be no limit to the domain in which the person appears to be incapable because he does not possess the gifts. It may be true from a macroscopic point of view to say, "Oh, he is hallucinating", or, "She is highly disturbed", but it would not be true if one could see or hear or intuit what the analysand can. Psychoanalysts must be able to tolerate the differences or the difficulties of the analysand long enough to recognize what they are. If psychoanalysts are to be able to interpret what the analysand says, they must have a great capacity for tolerating their analysands' statements without rushing to the conclusion that they know the interpretations. This is what I think Keats meant when he said that Shakespeare must have been able to tolerate 'Negative Capability'.

Q: In quoting Freud, you suggested that the analyst seeks to blind himself, the better to see what is happening with the patient. If this is the best attitude for the analyst to have in his work, what would be the best attitude for the patient? What would be the meaning of 'seeing an interpretation'?

Bion: The best thing for the patient is to be either blind or acutely observant, whichever is best at the moment. The analyst knows this, but the patient does not and therefore freely expresses hostility to his own or the analyst's perception without any idea what it costs him.

With regard to the analyst's attitude, nothing can relieve him of the responsibility of knowing whether to be acutely illuminating or acutely blind and deaf. This problem was dealt with by one patient by staying in his bedroom, drawing the blinds, having thicker curtains put up and making it clear that he did not want to be called on the telephone. That might have settled the problem, but he was then terrified of the news that he would hear if he answered the telephone. If he allowed himself to hear sounds or the light to come in, he was afraid of being deafened by the acuteness of the noises and blinded by the brightness of the light. In analysis, he could not listen

to my interpretations because I was unable to find a way of giving him only an interpretation. It was never a *pure* interpretation; it was never possible to use one's intuition with such purity that he could bear to listen to it. Keats said that Shakespeare must have been able to tolerate mysteries, half-truths, evasions, in order to be able to write. He had to be able to pay that price if he wanted to be Shakespeare. What he wrote still endures; it has a toughness, a durability which we cannot achieve; and yet he was an ordinary person like the rest of us. What makes people like Shakespeare and Virgil and Milton so 'extraordinary' is their ability to do such extraordinary things while at the same time being ordinary. All of us ordinary people must dare to behave as if we were extraordinary without believing that it is the case and without being cheats.

Q: Is there any difference or similarity between the *a priori* of Kant and psychoanalytic intuition?

Bion: The question poses what is to me a difficult problem. How can we acknowledge the person who has illuminated something for us, without also risking misrepresenting him? If I appear to talk as if I had said something original I know that is not true, because what I say has usually been said by somebody else, often by Freud, but also often by people I cannot remember. I do not know where the ideas came from or whose ideas they first were. On the other hand, if I say, "Yes, I am a Freudian", or "I am a Kleinian", I cannot be sure that I am not libelling the originators by falsely attributing to them my own ideas of what they said.

An infant feels that it has turned good food into faeces or urine; he may have to wait until childhood before he gets the idea that what he ate had something to do with his having grown. Using that analogy, can we say what we and our analysands are to have for mental food which would promote mental growth? What pictures is a painter to paint which others could look at and 'devour' with their eyes so that they were never the same again? How is one to know what is growth-producing and what is poison for the mind? It is often assumed that all that psychoanalysts have to do is to interpret what the patient says. I would not quarrel with that, but I do not know whether it is right; nor do I know what the authorities should allow the national family to look at, or read, or say. Milton has already said this in his pamphlet on free speech, *The Areopagitica*.

To consider the question of striving to clarify the difference between the *a priori* of Kant and psychoanalytic intuition: I have digested much knowledge conveyed to me in the course of psychoanalytic and other experience before and since reading Kant's view about the *a priori*. It has seemed to me that all of it has increased my mental growth, but the question of the relationship of one part of my mental sustenance to another is very difficult; it is formulated with greater ease than any answer. Nevertheless, the attempt to answer it can mean that it provokes growth in both of us.

Q: Is it possible to relate the expression, 'Negative Capability', to the capacity to tolerate ignorance and doubt, and to confront it with curiosity and fear of acquiring knowledge?

Bion: That is how I would understand what Keats said. Can one say 'negatively capable' or 'capably negative'? Clearly, there is no good elaboration and it is difficult to conceive of one. The difficulty with these formulations arises if one requires good sentential elaboration, as these instances show.

Q: How would you consider the Negative Capability of the analyst in relation to the so-called repetition compulsion?

Bion: Because I am unable to formulate ideas in the way that Keats, or Shakespeare, or Homer, or Horace could, I shall probably have to go on repeating what I have said. In other words, if I cannot command quality I can try to make up for it by quantity. If I cannot make myself clear verbally, then I might fall back on actions, which speak louder than words. If I were a baby I could try screaming. If my mother was unable to understand that, I might become so frightened by the noise that I fell silent; then nobody, not even I, could hear my screams. I might have to find actions instead. If I grew up and found an analyst, I might try acting-out. This does not mean that the screaming and the acting-out are the same, or that screaming turns into acting-out. Nor does it mean that if I analysed somebody he would end up by being a grown man who went around screaming. It is difficult to say what a patient who is acting-out today was doing long ago when he was silent, when he was the good boy or girl who did not scream, or when he was a baby who might have screamed so much that the mother said, "This is a very disturbed child". One does not know what it would look like even if one could go back to the past; nor do we

know what the person who is compulsively repeating will be doing in twenty years' time. However, I would prefer not to use 'repetitive compulsion' unless the element which is being compulsively repetitive includes conscious or unconscious awareness of fascination with the imperfectly adumbrated problem that he is repeating.

Q: Could you clarify the expression 'pure interpretation'?

Bion: It might be easier if I used another expression borrowed from physical science, like 'absolute interpretation', or the analogy of 'absolute zero', or, 'absolute cold', or, 'absolute vacuum'; something which is *only* interpretation. There are certain patients who can recognize that any interpretation I give is not absolute. I can describe it in terms of an actual experience in this way: the patient cannot listen to what I am saying because of the noise. Sometimes the 'noise' is the way I speak, sometimes it is the distraction produced by a fly in the room, but in a sense all the noises that he can hear appear to have an equal value. He can say, "I know you are angry", and if I am honest about it, I realize that he is right. But he may not differentiate between whether I am annoyed by the buzzing of a fly, or by the noise of the traffic, or by what he is saying and doing. All these facts are of equal value. It is an instance which can only arise because his interpretation is absolute, but lacking in the capacity to discriminate values. Equally, he might at another moment be absolute in his discrimination of value, but not in his discrimination of what was the symptom of the value. It is a dynamic situation changing all the time.

Q: I feel that the area of the Grid from Notation to Attention to Inquiry, cols. 3, 4 and 5, includes all attention, from desires and generic attention to particularization, and is directly connected to the theme of interpretation. In which area of the Grid would you put 'construction' as referred to by Freud?

Bion: 'Omnipotence', compared with the 'construction', approximates to an absolute. The contrasting construction would be a story of God's anger at the building of the Tower of Babel, or Adam's expression of shame by hiding his genitalia. Both these might be said to be verbalized transformations of a visual image. There is no reason why the 'construction' should be in C category terms rather than F, or G, or H, but I think a 'construction' implies something more elaborate than a single word such as 'sex' or 'omnipotence'.

It is comparatively easy to talk about attention, notation and so on when discussing the Grid. It is possible to change the vertex and talk about an infinite series of numbers; one could even say that the distance between 1 and 2 could be formulated with another infinite series of numbers – it becomes innumerable. But it seems extremely unlikely that psychic reality bears any resemblance to articulate speech. Words like 'attention', 'notation', 'inquiry' may be useful for us if we want to talk about it, not if we want to know about the reality. It is difficult to see how one's ideas could change into the things themselves without its being indistinguishable from what analysts call 'acting-out' (as that English phrase is understood).

Beneath all the verbal formulations of phenomena there is an underlying group which does not belong to thought or thinking, or anything that human beings do, but which exists independently of the human being in the way that the turbulence which we associate with an invisible centre appears (to take an astronomical model) to correspond to the 'crab nebula'. Today, thanks to electro-magnetic wave disturbances and radio receptors, we can say that there is something behind what we can see or hear or transform by mechanical means. For example, the noise which comes out of a microphone is a more audible but grossly distorted version of the voice itself; it leaves out a great deal which is not audible. There are certain answers which I can give to questions, but the answers that I give, let alone the answers that are heard, are a feeble representation of what I think. If I heard a recording of what I said I might be surprised to hear that that is what I sounded like; or if I looked in a mirror I might get a shock to see that the person in the mirror looked like me. If analysis is regarded as an attempt to produce a mirror in which the analysand can see what his character or personality looks like, however near to perfection it became it would be only a feeble and inadequate representation of the person, or the mind, or the personality that was believed to exist.

Q: Can the ideogram be considered as a non-verbal communication?

Bion: Yes; but whether or not it is a useful way of considering it I do not know. It depends on the possibility that that change of vertex might make something more comprehensible. For example, if I could look through the two-hundred-inch reflector at that faint cloud in M31 I could see a spiral nebula. But suppose I could also bring another sense to bear; not only could I see this spiral nebula, but I

could hear it, thanks to the radio telescope at Jodrell Bank. By using two different senses, sight and hearing, a bi-sensual rather than a binocular vision might be produced.

Any words which I employ in an attempt to convey something to you are extremely inadequate; it depends on your being friendly enough and tolerant enough to be able to bring my statement into contact with your hearing. Some patients cannot do that, nor can they listen to what they themselves say. They have no respect for what they already know, so that their experience and knowledge are of no use to them. The question is not simply one of the relationship of the patient to the analyst, but the relationship of the patient with himself which may be so bad that he cannot even make use of what he already knows. Nothing can be done about his unconscious knowledge because he can make no use of his conscious knowledge. At present I know of no way in which either he himself or I can help him. We may both come to the session, but neither of us can pass on anything to him.

Q: Candidates often bring material from their patients on the problem of God. According to Freud's teaching the child grows up and sees the father who is insufficient as a container for his admiration. If the patient has arrived at a stage where he can be conscious of his reality he should be able to realize his direct contact with God. I should like to mention a clinical example which may indicate a conflict between a scientific and a religious man. The patient had two dreams: in the first he saw a very powerful thing looking at him with its two eyes; in the second he saw one woman with exuberant breasts and another who was displaying some textiles.

Bion: The problem is what we are to say to the analyst that might make it easier for him to know what to say to the patient. Children of all ages, whether at the beginning or near the end of their lives, are not adequately equipped to be God. At the same time, the parent, the mature human being should be of such a kind that the child can see or understand the father or mother without insulting his intelligence. In other words, the grown human being should not be so lacking in a sense of proportion that his beliefs about himself amount to what we could call, in psychiatric language, 'megalomania'; nor should he be so contemptible, either in his own eyes or the child's, that the child has no chance of respecting him. To translate that into terms

of psychoanalysts and analysands: the psychoanalyst should not be under the impression that he is God or that he is as wonderful as people are ready to believe he is. At the same time he should make it possible for people who come for analysis to have a chance of feeling respect for him. If they cannot, they suffer serious deprivation.

Referring back to the two dreams described by the questioner: if I were the analyst I would expect to have a visual image called up in my mind by the patient's verbal accounts of the dreams. I suspect, from the account given me by the questioner, that I would feel that both those dreams were describing an object which sooner or later turned into a god. This depends on information which the practising analyst can have, but I, who am writing or talking about it, cannot have – unless one assumes that my ability to interpret the translator's remarks (who in turn has been able to translate the questioner's statements, who in turn has been able to translate his observations in his consulting room, which in turn is a translation (interpretation) of what his patient said was a dream) is considered to have some validity – a large assumption.

7

Q: I would like to hear you speak about the realistic aspect of projective identification in relation to the mother with the baby.

Bion: The problem is how to formulate verbally what is a visual image – the mother and the baby. One of the advantages of such a visual image is that it is relatively simple and not as complicated as trying to trace the counterpart in the lives and mentalities of adults. Taking this simpler formulation, let us imagine that the baby is very upset and feels afraid of an impending disaster like dying, which it expresses by crying. That kind of language may be both comprehensible and disturbing to the mother who reacts by expressing anxiety – "I don't know what's the matter with the child!" The infant feels the mother's anxiety and impatience and is compelled to take its own anxiety back again. Contrast this with a different situation. Suppose the mother picks up the baby and comforts it, is not at all disorganized or distressed, but makes some soothing response. The distressed infant can feel that, by its screams or yells, it has expelled those feelings of impending disaster into the mother. The mother's response can be felt to detoxicate the evacuation of the infant; the sense of impending disaster is modified by the mother's reaction and can then be taken back into itself by the baby. Having got rid of a sense of impending disaster, the infant gets back something which is far more tolerable. Susan Isaacs has described a situation in which the baby could be heard saying something like "oo el, oo el", which the mother recognized was an imitation of herself saying "well, well". In that way the infant was able to feel comforted by a good mother inside and could make reassuring, comforting noises to itself exactly as if the mother was there all the time.

To return to the first situation: the infant takes back into itself the sense of impending disaster which has grown more terrifying through the rejection by the mother and through its own rejection of the feeling of dread. This baby will not be able to feel that it gets back something good, but the evacuation with its badness worse than before. It may continue to cry and to rouse powerful anxiety in the mother. In this way a vicious circle is created in which matters get worse and worse until the infant cannot stand its own screams any longer. In fact, left to deal with them by itself, it becomes silent and closes inside itself a frightening and bad thing, something which it fears may burst out again. In the meantime it turns into a 'good baby', a 'good child'.

Suppose this child comes as an adult to you for analysis. It would be difficult to trace those primitive ideas which have become overlaid by any number of other thoughts and ideas. It is like trying to trace embryonic signs in the physiological anatomy of the adult, but more difficult because in the mental world one has no physical signs to fall back on – only these fictions such as the one I have tried to invent. A still more sophisticated version is one which is related to concepts and theories, such as projective identification, but these theoretical terms are almost meaningless.

Q: Although I understand the theory of the death instinct I have difficulty in contacting it. I have only found it as an aspect of illness.

Bion: The theory of the death instinct is a controversial matter amongst psychoanalysts of all schools or groups. Melanie Klein was inclined to believe that it was a useful theory, that Freud's work on it made a valuable contribution and that we would be worse off if it were not there to use. Suppose it appears to be useful: is it useful to feel it as part of a personality in any situation except that presented by what most of us would think of as an ill person? The term, 'ill', has a meaning in physical medicine; by the time we have borrowed it, it is difficult to say what kind of a mind or character one is going to describe as 'ill'. Even if we borrow the terminology, for what purpose are we going to borrow it? What is the mentally ill person or character? What is the healthy or well person? I do not think one can use such a term, in the mental sphere, as if there was only one pole without the other pole. In analysis we cannot usefully think in

terms of a single expression; there ought always to be another pole, or another end of the spectrum. Making use again of the story about the infant and mother, the mother can be glad to be able to say, "This child is ill". Before long the infant turns into a child and finds it much easier to say, "I've got a stomach ache", because it has no word for anxiety, and in any case I doubt whether a child ever considers that there is anything peculiar about being anxious. I have no doubt at all that children, from a very early age, feel anxious, but they have no language in which to express it and do not consider that feeling anxious is anything out of the ordinary. If they dislike it they have to say something like, "I've got a stomach ache".

Q: Can 'transference' be explained as that phenomenon which passes between analyst and analysand, and as a religious aspect of the mind when someone who feels mentally helpless consults an analyst as if seeking help from a divine personality?

Bion: As the language had no word for the kind of relationship which Freud thought he had found existed between one human being and another, he gave it the name 'transference'. *Our* problem in the practice of psychoanalysis is to know what this curious thing called a 'transference' looks like. Theoretically it is the link between any two human beings. When it comes to the question of the practice of psychoanalysis you may feel that a description like 'transference' is not sufficiently accurate because you are not dealing with a general relationship between two people; you are dealing with a *particular* instance of the general. It is like saying somebody is ill and then wanting to say, "What do you mean by 'ill'? Has he a lymphosarcoma? Or cancer? What illness? I am a doctor and if I am to practise medicine I don't want to hear that the patient is ill – I'm no wiser." Similarly, the analyst might say "It's no good telling me that there is a transference relationship between X and Y. It is still less useful to tell the patient that he has a transference – it doesn't mean a thing!" One wants to know what the transference looks like in a particular instance in the practice of psychoanalysis. Even analysts mistake a *particular* example for a discovery of a *general* application. There would thus appear to be millions of psychoanalytic discoveries but in fact they are only particular instances of an already existing discovery. To the statement, "This patient has a duodenal ulcer", one does not reply, "Oh! Do you

mean the patient is ill?" The doctor already supposes that everybody knows that, but that they did *not* know the patient had a duodenal ulcer.

As regards the religious aspect, the question is, what particular aspect of this general idea has emerged in a particular patient with a particular psychoanalyst? I remember an example where a practitioner said psychoanalysis was ridiculous and nonsensical because he had *told* his patient that he had an Oedipus complex and he did not improve at all. In this instance Freud's theory of the Oedipal situation has not been related to what the patient is saying. In the context of Freud's discovery it could be said to be universally discernible in members of the human race. In analysis the analyst is not dealing with 'the human race' but with a particular person. He therefore needs to put into terms which are comprehensible to the particular individual whom he is addressing, the gist of the Oedipal theory as it applies to that individual at that time. The analyst does not have to know the theory but the aspect of the realization which is presenting itself to him and to the analysand at that time.

Q: Would you explain further your use of the term 'vertex'.

Bion: The reason I have suggested this term 'vertex' is because it is less complex than saying something simple and more accurate like 'from my point of view', or 'from your point of view'. There are some occasions when that produces confusion. I cannot be sure that it does not produce as much, or more, confusion to say 'vertex' except that it may leave the particular instance free to be described. I remember a mother telling me about discovering her young daughter with her head right up against the baby. The child's explanation was that the mother had said, "Keep your eye on the baby", and that was what she was doing. In analysis we increasingly find that our help is sought by people whom we call 'very ill' or 'very disturbed', and who use language in a literal manner. You cannot use terms like 'from the point of view of smell' because the patient will say "I don't view things with my nose". It sounds as if the patient was trying to be difficult, but he is in fact being extremely accurate; he cannot understand a phrase which is conversational language. It is, therefore, better to borrow a term from mathematics, like 'vertex'. There are many other terms which one could borrow, such as 'radiant' from astronomy. In

particular instances you may not be able to use terms like 'point of view' or 'vertex'. You have to consider what word you should use to formulate a *particular* instance of a point of view, or vertex, or radiant which would be the general term, like 'transference' which is itself the general term. But in psychoanalysis one is not dealing with people *generally;* one is dealing with a particular person and that particular person's relationship, link, transference with another particular person, the analyst.

Q: I would like to hear about the difficulties of certain patients in finding a balance between an excessive wish and inertia. These patients cannot achieve an adequate rhythm. One patient complains that he has too much work, he does an excessive amount, and he wants everything in excess; or else he doesn't want anything; he falls into inertia.

Bion: When a patient does not want anything and lapses into a state of inertia, that is also excessive. One might say to the patient, "You often tell me that it's too much; once or twice it mightn't matter very much, but when you say it as often as you do, then we have to pay attention to this 'too much'". Is this some form of greed? Who is being greedy? Is it the patient? Is it the analyst? If it is neither of those, who is it? Is it some kind of a greedy god, or some form of a greedy curiosity – a curiosity which in ordinary metaphorical speech one might say is a devouring curiosity, or even a devouring morality?

Consider some part of it as a constant conjunction with many specific instances of the same thing – the unsaturated element, the unsatisfied patient, or analyst, or conscience, or aesthetic impulse, or religious impulse. The person who wants to have a religious or aesthetic experience feels *very* unsatisfied by science. Conversely, the analyst or analysand, while becoming extremely scientific, may also be becoming more and more inhuman. The patient in this case will feel that he is more efficient than he was, certainly more efficient than when he was a baby but not, therefore, necessarily improved. Both people in the room may be better analysed or more efficient, but could hardly be felt to be nicer people. These references to 'more' may also be a sign of an ideal situation known to the patient, in contrast with which he realizes he is not better. The analyst must attempt to gauge the standard by which 'better' is measured and which makes

the patient know that he is 'worse'. He can do nothing about the patient wanting 'more' – he needs to know what it is that the patient is lacking.

Q: Would you speak about the religious cult and the aesthetic impulse, and the relationship between them.

Bion: In psychoanalysis, and even in ordinary conversation, one is always talking about religion or art or business, all of which is very useful if you want to talk; it is another matter if you want to talk about *the thing itself. You* can easily feel from your own experience that these watertight compartments of categories have a lot to do with human thinking but very little to do with the universe in which we live. Nevertheless, however ignorant or mistaken we may be, we can feel that religion and art have often worked closely together. The same can be said for psychoanalysis in so far as it can be regarded as an attempt at a scientific approach. Sooner or later one will feel that one knows the interpretation but does not know what to say to the patient, or how to say it. At this point the psychoanalyst would gain if he could be an artist and express himself, as Freud could, in terms which are easily appreciated as being highly artistic. Even Plato, while critical of artists and poets as people who are always misleading their fellows by telling lies, nevertheless expressed things, in the Socratic Dialogues, in a way which no artist has since excelled – and yet he might be supposed to have been opposed to the artist. This kind of conflicting view is common; the artistic or aesthetic capacity seeps into the expressions of those who want to be purely scientific; and the artist, reciprocally, can discern the science in his art. [See p. 47. Sometimes he can even consciously aspire to a 'golden number', as with Leonardo da Vinci, Dürer etc.]

Q: I should like to hear about your experience of the analysis of psychotics, especially about schizophrenics. We know that Freud was very pessimistic about this; he thought we should have to use great modification in order to be able to analyse them. There are two schools of thought at the moment – one advising modifications, the other not. I should like to have your technical advice on this subject.

Bion: I do not advocate any changes – through sheer ignorance – not because I believe that the classical idea of analysis is good or effective,

but because I cannot think of anything better; and bad as it is one has to adhere to it unless one has good reasons for changing. I have only analysed schizophrenic patients who were able to come to my consulting room. Although I still think that the best description of them was 'schizophrenic', I do not suggest they were comparable to the kind of patients who have to be hospitalized.

I must add that in the psychoanalytic world with which I am familiar, 'crazes' appear to be frequent. I am amazed how often an analyst seems to think that he can hardly claim his title unless he has treated many schizophrenic patients. I would almost wonder how mental hospitals manage to make a living. From the little I know I find it difficult to believe that so many analysts are treating schizophrenics. Such a claim belongs to the domain not of the science of psychoanalysis but of fashion. As it is sometimes the fashion to wear feathers in hats, so psychoanalysts wear 'psychotics in their hair'.

Q: What is the relationship between belief and knowledge?

Bion: I do not see why one should bother to *believe* in something one knows. One should, surely, reserve one's capacity for belief for matters for which there is no evidence. Otherwise one would have to find a new language. Terms like 'belief' are used in such an ambiguous way in ordinary language. I like to use it when I have no facts to support what I wish to say. I 'believe' it is worth trying psychoanalysis with a patient who might be called schizophrenic, if there is nothing else to try. In that sense you might say I 'believe' in trying. I do not mean that I think that a schizophrenic patient can be analysed or cured, although I have known patients who have been certified as insane – by people who by definition were qualified to do so – who, when they finished their analysis with me, were thought by many people – but not by me – to be improved. They had found a way by which, whatever their mode of thinking, they were able to look like a good imitation of an ordinary human being. But since everyone connected with the patient wanted to believe that, I do not know what importance one can attach to their opinion.

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Q: I would like to hear your views about the following. One group of analysts has a common medical vertex related to certain ideas about illness, pathology, aetiology, etc. Another group recognizes other vertices, such as the desire to earn money, to have power, to educate, to influence, to apply psychoanalysis to the individual or to groups. These form groups which are related and give rise to tensions in the practice of analysis when seen as a whole.

Bion: One fundamental matter with which we are all concerned is tension. Sometimes there can be so little tension between two people that they fail to stimulate each other at all. At the other extreme, the differences in outlook or temperament are so great that no discussion is possible. The question is, can the society or group or pair find the happy mean which is tense enough to stimulate but belongs to neither extreme, either lack of tension or too much? Can a nation achieve both sufficient homogeneity and sufficient tension?

This problem applies also to the categories of science and religion. How is a proper balance to be achieved between a scientific vertex which could be said to be devoted to truth or the facts, and a religious vertex which could equally be said to be devoted to truth? Similarly, the sincere artist is also concerned to depict truth. If Vermeer can paint the little street in Delft, and if people can look at it, then they will never see a street in the same way again. The painter has brought about a change in the individual which makes it possible for him to see a truth that he has never seen before. It would seem absurd if the tension between these three groups – science, religion and art – which are all fundamentally devoted to the truth, was either so slack or so tense that they were unable to further the aim of truth.

Q: A theme which particularly impressed me in your book, *Transformations*, was your description of the concept of transformations in hallucinosis. I should be interested to hear more about this.

Bion: In this matter of transformation I suggest that, as a model, you might see photographs of what appeared to be two entirely different mountains which were, in fact, the same mountain: one from the southern vertex and the other from the northern vertex. Indeed, one could multiply those by all points of the compass. It is much easier to understand this applied to physical matters than it is when dealing with mental phenomena. It is possible for a psychoanalyst to think that hallucinations are operating and to observe this so accurately that he can say the patient is 'seeing' things coming into his eyes. At other times, although it might sound just the same, the words are related to things which start as C1 category statements and as such are projected into the air. Are these formulations of visual evacuations by the visual apparatus, or ingestions? The answer might affect our view of the nature of the situation which we could call a state of hallucinosis. The analyst's capacity for intuition (analytic observation) must be greatly increased and developed even though it then leads to a state of affairs in which we seem to be in disagreement with our psychiatric colleagues. It would be a pity if these different vertices, and the adherents of them, could not contribute something to each other. I would like to say more later about this matter of direction – evacuation and introjection, and the difference between the two.

Q: First, I would like to hear more about the question of the liar. Second, what do you think about the practice of analysis by lay people?

Bion: To take the second question first: who decides that someone is a 'lay person' and what is the definition of a 'lay person'? I have heard several people say that Melanie Klein was a lay person. From one vertex it is perfectly true: I do not think that she was ever medically qualified. I might as well say, "She can't play football and therefore I'm not going to listen to the sort of nonsense she talks", or, "That person doesn't play cricket so I won't pay attention to him". It depends from what vertex the person appears to be qualified or not qualified.

Something similar applies with regard to the liar. Plato suggested that in his republic – it sounds almost like national-socialism-artists would be forbidden because poets and painters are liars who corrupt

society and the country. It depends whether you think that the artist is able to teach us something about the truth, about what a brick wall looks like, or whether he actually misleads us all. It is, therefore, a matter of importance *who* says the person is a liar and *why. I* had a patient whose entirely coherent and vivid description, so I was told, had not a word of truth in it. There was much to be said for the view of the person who said that the patient in question was a pathological liar. The difficulty arises if one is a psychoanalyst and is not satisfied with the idea that the patient is actually trying to deceive, or that the patient is talking about one of the many facets of the truth. I have already said that psychoanalysts have a chance of investigating misunderstanding in a way that is not available to a philosopher. A philosopher is concerned with understanding and misunderstanding, but he cannot do what a psychoanalyst can do: that is, watch and listen to a person *while* he is understanding and *while* he is misunderstanding. This is one reason why I am not greatly interested in psychoanalytic theories. *If* one gets trained one can go and look them up in a book, but the *practice* of analysis is the only place where it is possible to read people, not books. It is, therefore, a pity to spend time which could be spent in reading a person, in reading a book instead.

I would like to take up another widespread question of vertex. The whole of psychoanalytic literature and training is based on the idea that there is a mind and that it is even connected with the central nervous system. We know a certain amount about the anatomy and physiology and embryology of the central nervous system, but we have not considered what could be the situation supposing this system never developed beyond the thalamus. One can imagine that there might be such a thing as a possibility of experiencing 'thalamic dread', and that it might be very different from the dread or fear with which we are all familiar if we are capable of conscious thought. But suppose that, for some reason, we are not. Suppose that kind of mind with which we are dealing in a particular instance, is not capable of going beyond thalamic emotions. That may also be something which psychoanalysts have to investigate. Carrying that kind of model in mind, one could say that in the last two thousand years or so, from the time of Democritus of Abdera, there has existed the impression or prejudice that the central nervous system is an important development and is somehow

associated with the mind, the soul, and what we generally call mental phenomena. If that is true – as we think – then perhaps we do not know as much as we ought about the significance of the central nervous system; we may not be exploiting the situation sufficiently if we consider thinking and mental life as the fundamental outcome, the teleological view. Suppose that, thanks to psychoanalysis, one could devise some kind of questionnaire and get the individual concerned to complete it. If we could, then we would notice that there were areas where the questions were not answered and that, from the vertex of psychoanalysis, there would seem to be certain opacities connected with what we call memory and desire. But suppose we looked at these questionnaires, with their blanks and their answers, from a vertex which was able to throw light not so much on the mind as a product of the brain, but on the mind as a symptom of the physiological and anatomical apparatus. Then it might be possible to say, "This questionnaire, which I can now look at, has these different areas of opacity in the way that an X-ray film of the lungs shows opacities". Suppose such a questionnaire, based on the extremely important nature of the central nervous system, revealed a kind of mental X-ray which showed that the patient concerned was liable to develop, say, cancer or a duodenal ulcer; the parasympathetic nervous system could reveal things not about the mind, but about the future of that particular corporeal body. That is, psychoanalysis would not be concerned only with the human mind, but also with revealing the physical condition of the patient. I am not suggesting one as opposed to the other. I do not want to get mixed up in another war between two groups of psychoanalysts. But there might be analysts who were concerned to reveal the physical health of the patient in a way which no medical science or procedure could, as well as those who were concerned with the operation of the mind with regard to the mental world. Thus, there could be a physical psychoanalysis just as there could be a psychological psychoanalysis.

Q: None of your ideas has aroused more enthusiasm in me than this one which you have just presented. I believe that if these ideas were more common they would stimulate considerable investigation and increase progress in the realm of psychosomatic relationship.

> I would like to persuade you to investigate the physical forces underlying the psychic forces. What you call alpha-function may derive energy not from a sensorial system, but from the blastodermic sheets and therefore from organs and tissues derived from the endoderm. The hypothesis which I propose meets with an impressive agreement in statistical works.

Bion: One of the problems which confront psychoanalysts, particularly those who are concerned with the organization, development and survival of the total activity, is that if these institutes do not develop psychoanalysis nobody else will. It may be this unwillingness to jeopardize psychoanalytic training that makes us appear to be intolerant of other disciplines, but I hope it is no more than an appearance of intolerance.

From my own experience responsibility for psychoanalytic progress is very difficult to ensure, but if we do not do it somebody else will do it even worse. There are many people ready to claim that they are psychoanalysts and that the psychoanalytic institutions and training forces are at fault. Others might, of course, do it better, so it ill becomes us to be dictatorial or possessive and to go about saying, "We are the only ones". On the other hand, it is also dangerous to say, "We don't know much about it; these other people may well know better"; that comes near to what has been called "*la trahison des clercs*". It is, therefore, important that psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic institutions should see to it that psychoanalysis survives. At the same time, any psychoanalyst, when qualified, should be free to use his developed capacities in whatever direction he wishes, including the investigation of things which we might regard as physical and of no particular interest to us. No harm is done if he already knows enough about psychoanalysis to have earned qualification and the approval of other analysts. Nor would it be harmful if physical medicine were carried out by psychoanalysed people. For example, it could be beneficial if a psychoanalyst acted as the chairman of a discussion between certain physicians, and, say, a number of sufferers from rheumatism; he could contribute something to helping to direct thought about these painful complaints according to sound methods of thinking. Philosophers have always felt that people should think accurately; there is no reason why psychoanalysts should not join in pursuing that particular aim.

Q: In psychosomatic pathology one no longer accepts the concept of alternatives. What do you think about the following statement? "The unconscious is the essence of the somatic."

Bion: Experience certainly leads me to suppose that the problem of, for example, the asthmatic patient cannot be considered as one enclosed only within the skin of that patient. On one occasion I was filled with admiration (not unmixed with a certain anxiety) to see, as I walked into the hospital ward, how the asthmatic had been able to mobilize the hostility of the other patients. That psychosomatic complaint not only ultimately killed – as it often does – that particular patient, but nearly killed me too. The whole question of unconscious and conscious, which has been useful so far, needs a great deal of reconsideration.

Q: How did you come to realize the advantages of suppressing memory and desire during the analytic session?

Bion: I found that I could experience a flash of the obvious. One is usually so busy looking for something out of the ordinary that one ignores the obvious as if it were of no importance. Indeed, one of the reasons for thinking it is time to give an interpretation is that nobody has seen something that is obvious.

With regard to memory and desire, you may, for example, feel that you would like to be at home. If that idea becomes more and more possessive you then think, "How marvellous it would be to be at home!" If you are spending your time thinking that, it becomes very difficult to pay attention to what is happening in the present. The perception of the immediate experience becomes opaque. Similarly, if you think not nostalgically about the past, but what is the same thing in the future tense, "How nice it will be when I'm grown up", or, "When I'm qualified", it becomes difficult to attend to the present moment which is neither the past nor the future. Even nostalgia and anticipation have to be carried out in the present; it is in the present that we have those desires, and in the present that we have those memories, and in the present that we live. So, while we are thinking about the past and the future we are blind and deaf to what is going on at the present moment. I think Freud had something of this kind in mind when he spoke of 'floating attention'. If you are tired and *try* to pay attention to what the patient says, then you do not hear what he says – things take on an opaque quality.

There is much to be said for Freud's idea that our patients suffer from memories – memories which they may know, which they may be able to formulate, or which require analysis to reach formulation. We suffer from memories of which we are conscious or unconscious; this again raises the question: what modifications are needed in our ideas about the unconscious? As usual there are no questions in analysis which have been settled. They are only settled for the time being until we come back to them next week, next month, or in two hundred years' time.

Q: Can this method of observing what occurs in the session, when suppressing memory and desire, be differentiated from the non-scientific method, that is from mystical practices suppressing the lower ego to reach knowledge, truths, which are unknowable in other ways?

Bion: My knowledge of mysticism is through hearsay and I am, therefore, not qualified to express an opinion which might have greater weight attached to it than it deserves. There is an ever-present danger of our not very great knowledge of psychoanalysis conferring undeserved authority on what we say.

Q: Could you tell me something more about projective identification in the patient–analyst relationship?

Bion: Melanie Klein's theory is that patients have an omnipotent phantasy; the way one can verbalize that phantasy is that the patient feels that he can split off certain unpleasant and unwanted feelings and can put them into the analyst. I am not sure, from the practice of analysis, that it is only an *omnipotent* phantasy, that is something that the patient cannot *in fact* do. I am sure that is how the theory should be used – the *correct* way of using the *correct* theory. But I do not think that the correct theory and the correct formulation happen in the consulting room. I have felt, and some of my colleagues likewise, that when the patient appears to be engaged on a projective identification it *can* make me feel persecuted, as if the patient can in fact split off certain nasty feelings and shove them into me so that I actually have feelings of persecution or anxiety. If this is correct it is still possible to keep the theory of an omnipotent phantasy, but at the same time we might consider whether there is not some other theory which would explain what the patient does to the analyst which makes the analyst

feel like that, or what is the matter with the analyst who feels as he does. The trouble with theories is that they so soon make themselves out of date. Even in physical medicine there was a time, not so long ago, when any doctor would tell you that a certain patient was suffering from dropsy. Today we would say there is no such disease; it is a symptom drawing attention to an underlying configuration. If one looks at this underlying configuration and uses the stethoscope, one can hear something about the heartbeat or palpate something about the abdomen which will indicate what the disease is. Referring back to my previous suggestion, perhaps we could look at a questionnaire which might draw attention to the fact that one peritonitis is different from another peritonitis. In other words, it might reveal *another* underlying configuration. Of course anybody could say, "These psychoanalysts are terrible people; like doctors, they are always inventing new diseases. At one time there were relatively few diseases. Now they find things they call myasthenia gravis. *One* more disease; *one* more thing to learn to get qualified! All scientists are a nuisance!"

Q: Is the O, as used in your books, the same thing as zero?

Bion: When I use the letter, O, I mean it to indicate noumenon, the thing itself of which nobody can know anything. Knowledge, I consider, only begins when we are dealing with phenomena. The zero should be kept in conformity with definitions of the mathematician and should not be diverted to our purposes without an attempt to define the use to which we are putting it. O and zero are certainly not the same thing, for zero represents a stupendous discovery and its value should not be lightly eroded. It would be helpful if there was a zero in analysis corresponding to the 'rest', the pause, in music.

It is easy to find the wrong word or symbol, like O, which may look or even sound like zero and yet be about something different. If I write a book its survival depends on somebody having the time, or energy, or interest not only to read it, but to try to make out what it is all about; it may prove to be a waste of time. One tries to write a comprehensible book, but it is likely that one may not be successful. If the writer is not sincere and 'discovers' something which brings him acclaim but is in fact bogus, then it is, of course, an even greater waste of time. For example, in the field of archaeology, Dawson claimed to have discovered the Piltdown skull. Although many people thought it was a fake, others said, "How unfair that these people should not

believe in an honourable man like Dawson and his discoveries; they must be jealous or envious". Ultimately, the Museum of Natural History reinvestigated the Piltdown skull and discovered that it *was* a fake. Even eminent archaeologists had been wasting their time on a fake for a considerable number of years. In the same way, people who make bogus discoveries in psychoanalysis are a nuisance, and so are people who do not believe these discoveries. It takes a long time to find out which is the bigger nuisance – the doubter or the believer.

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It is difficult for all of us who practise psychoanalysis to realize how obscure this subject is to people who are not used to attaching any importance to the problems of thought, or who are not used to thinking at all. In the psychoanalytic world we have our own divisions of time; we talk about periods like infancy, childhood, adolescence, middle age, old age, puberty, and so on. All that is so familiar to us that it is hard to realize that there are many people who are not familiar with those ways of marking the passage of time.

I want to consider periods of mental time which we can recognize, but which others who are not familiar with our world cannot recognize so easily. Although people are familiar with terms like 'puberty', even 'latency periods', they are not used to regarding them as actual experiences of the passage of time in the way in which we count 1 a.m., 2 a.m., 10 a.m., 23.00 hours, 24.00 hours. Some of these periods, like infancy, childhood, puberty, are times when human beings often undergo mental perturbation. Being unfamiliar with that world they are frightened at what is going on. These conditions are not diseases; nor are they illnesses. Puberty, old-age, youth, adolescence – none of them is an illness, although they often are periods in which dis-ease is experienced. Nevertheless, mental experiences are common-place during certain of those recognizable periods – recognizable, that is to say, to psychoanalysts and a few others. But they are none of them illnesses except by analogy. During those periods people will have an experience, say, of nightmares; they become frightened of nightmares. They may even speak of these experiences to their relatives – brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers – and make them frightened too. The fear is communicable. If the anxiety is sufficiently stirred up and communicated they will say they want to see a doctor, or a psychiatrist,

or a psychoanalyst. This becomes significant if the nightmare is experienced by someone notably awake.

These times of upheaval are alarming to the patient, but they are not illnesses. To take a biological model: it is as if a tadpole became very upset because it was turning into a frog. There is nothing abnormal about it; it is not an illness but a change, and the tadpole would like someone to explain what is going on. The human being experiences changes to which there are no guides, and it is not recognized that that is exactly what those who are familiar with mental phenomena are concerned with. It is difficult to bring together those technically qualified people with those for whom the experience *is* the turbulence. It is true that sometimes the technically qualified person might say, "This experience which I am being told about is not really ordinary; it lies outside the spectrum of what one would call normal development". That is a matter about which he knows something and could help if he were given a chance to do so. But at the same time, we do not pay enough attention to the fact that these experiences require a wholesale medical approach, such as putting the person into a mental hospital, or prescribing a never-ending psychoanalysis. I am familiar with hearing psychoanalysts say that everybody could do with a psychoanalysis. I would like to be sure that it was psychoanalysis – that is why I devote so much time and attention to it – but I think this is a somewhat rash statement. I would want some evidence that the condition does not fall within the normal spectrum.

A potential analysand may be a fit, happy and well-adjusted child, liking that stage so much that he wants to prolong it. We are all of us familiar with patients who want to be cured, as it were, permanently, for ever – which is a very long time. That is like being a chicken's egg [Freud, footnote to 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning', 1911b] and wanting to be permanently the shell. It is a nice shell; it has a nice appearance; why not be an egg-shell for ever? Suppose that in the course of development the chicken begins to hatch out; the more the person is identified with the shell, the more they feel that something terrible is happening, because the shell is cracking up and they do not know the chicken. It would be worth asking oneself: Why has this person come to me for analysis? Are they sent by their parents, their relatives, their husbands or their wives, or have they come independently, and, if so, what about? Why do they want me to agree to see them so many times a week, for so many weeks, for

so many months, for so many years? What we do when that person comes to see us will depend on the answers to these questions. For example, you may think, after talking with the patient, that he is in danger (although he says he feels all right and does not want treatment). If so, you could make clear your own or some other analyst's availability. What appears to be a stable and satisfactory condition may be a state of turbulence. Conversely, a spectacular story may not be as alarming as the narrator thinks. Then the psychoanalyst has to decide from his experience if there is anything he can communicate. His answer to this question depends on his assessment of the capacity of his communicant to understand. In practice, the psychoanalyst has to fall back on his own judgement. This point is basic, simple and proportionately difficult to communicate to others.

The psychoanalyst is not a luxury but is essential, because he is familiar with this peculiar world of personality. In the physical world there are certain advantages. The patient can say, "I have a pain" and, pointing out the place, "It's here". The physician can use his eyes and his finger-tips; he can feel the patient's body and say, "I feel a tumour – an enlarged spleen". He can say to students, "Feel that abdomen and tell me what you feel". They are fortunate! What are we, who are concerned with the mental life, to say to people? What are the nearest things to physical signs that we are ever likely to get? My own experience suggests that the answer is probably 'feelings'. When a patient says he is terrified, or he sees things, or he can only wear white clothes, or he cannot stand hearing even the best symphony orchestra playing and has had to give up playing the violin, the analyst can say to himself, "Yes, I think I know what this patient means. When he says he has that feeling, I can understand what sort of feeling it is". Otherwise, most of the time we have no sensuous experience – that is, literally the kind of experience which is possible thanks to one's physical equipment and the central, sympathetic and para-sympathetic nervous systems. Character has no sensuous symptoms. One must, therefore, undergo a training which intensifies intuitive capacity. [Milton, *Paradise Lost,* Book III, ll. 51–55]. The psychoanalyst can then give patients help which they cannot get in any other way.

In practice the psychoanalyst needs to be able to question himself as often as, and as long as, he is unsatisfied, but should not spend too much time looking for the answer in books. The time we have is

limited, so we must read people. We cannot do that if they will not come to the consulting room. The minimum we can ask is that the patient will come, or that somebody will bring him and take him away at the end of the session. We cannot do anything about the times when the patient is not in the room, but while he is in the room we can accept responsibility. For example, we can try to stop him from throwing himself out of the window – I do not say we would succeed, but we could try. If he needs more care than we can give him during the few hours we see him we must enlist the aid of psychiatrists who have the equipment of a mental hospital behind them.

Q: Could you explain how you would avoid a patient's throwing himself out of the window during a session?

Bion: My athletic equipment is not what it used to be and I cannot now promise to do much physically to stop the patient. But I would try to get between the patient and the window and would like, if possible, to go on interpreting while I had to do it, so that the patient would not feel that the only thing he could do was to throw himself out of the window; that is a form of communication which is very expensive. Could one give an interpretation early enough to make that unnecessary? I think that one must sometimes appreciate that the patient is apparently prepared to pay the cost of talking that kind of language, although we know that if he were successful he would be dead – another instance that the practice of psychoanalysis is more dangerous than talk about it.

Q: Could you expand your statement about reading people rather than books?

Bion: In order to read a book one learns the rules of written grammar and the aesthetic rules of written communication. Although somewhat complex, these rules can be taught to boys and girls; if they spell things in a certain way other people will understand what they mean. Even so, this is a limited statement because you cannot tell, say, James Joyce or Ezra Pound how to write English and what the rules are of writing it. Nor is it possible to say what the rules are of writing poetry. After a certain point it becomes something to do with the aesthetic capacity of the person concerned. Analysis poses an even greater problem; it is difficult indeed to say, if one is challenged, what better way the patient could communicate than by throwing

himself out of the window. Nobody can tell us how to read people in the way they can say, "This is how you learn to read; you learn your grammar; you learn your alphabet, and you put that together" and so on. All that we can say is, "The best way we know is to go to an analyst and get analysed, and then you may know a bit more which will make it possible for you to read an actual personality in the way that you cannot at the moment".

Q: How can we develop intuition?

Bion: Suppose a small boy or girl comes to you and says, "Aren't I grown up?" because they are dressed up in their father's or mother's clothes. They say, "Aren't I just like Mother or Daddy? I'm just like a grown-up". As the parent, and the analyst, knows, they are not. But we could say, "Yes, you are *just like* a doctor – look, you have a stethoscope", or "just like Mummy, nursing your baby doll". It is difficult to say, "No, but you are becoming like a grown-up", because the child cannot understand.

The analytic training authorities may not be able to say why the candidate is not a psychoanalyst. They may say, "Yes, you are just like a psychoanalyst", but that is very different from saying, "You are becoming a psychoanalyst". They sound alike, but there is a huge difference. One must be able to distinguish between 'just like' and 'becoming'. Many people say, "Oh, yes. My husband and I have been married now for twenty years". They have not. If you have experience you can look at them and see that they are just like a married couple, but they are *not* a married couple; they are a very good model of a married couple. But unless there is something seriously wrong with them the subject is not closured; being married is, in fact, a continuing, open-ended process. There is no future in being just like a married couple; they are probably becoming married, or becoming grown-up.

Similarly, the human being may be just like a sexual animal at the age of ten or thirteen. But if we respect the human personality, development does not stop at puberty or adolescence; if we believe in the existence of a human mind, there is no question of being just like a human personality; you can only be becoming a human.

Q: If intuition is so important, why, in the training and education of an analyst, do they not include artistic activities – poetry in particular?

Bion: Probably because of lack of time; certainly not because of lack of importance. One hopes that aesthetic experience has been acquired before embarking on analytic training.

Q: Do you consider identification as a basic mechanism for the apprehension of mental phenomena?

Bion: The question is posed in sophisticated terms. Making use of the Grid I would say, "This question belongs to F, G, H – that class of statement". If I ask myself, "What does this question mean?", I do not think I could tell you, because it depends what language I must use. It is no good answering that question in the sophisticated terms with which all of us here are familiar. For example, if someone says, "You see that tiger and that kitten – they are both cats" – a biologist might understand, but a layman might say, "But look – can't you see the difference? That is a tiger! That is a kitten! They are not the same". To a sophisticated, biological scientist, they are both cats. So, when asked a question like this, one needs to know: What is this question? Am I being asked for a sophisticated answer?

My reply in the same kind of language would be "Yes". In more pictorial language you would have to imagine yourself asking the question and imagining the answer you would comprehend. To sympathize with the questioner is fundamental; in technical language, 'sympathizing with' is known as 'identification'. In Grid terms I would say it depends on your kind of vertex, or, in more ordinary language, your point of view. In the practice of analysis whatever terms are used should remain constant throughout the same universe of discussion. To alter the definitory hypothesis without notice makes nonsense of the whole discussion, just as a change of key without corresponding change in key signature makes nonsense of a piece of music.

A psychoanalyst might say, "This is a psychotic patient; when he says he is terrified it does not mean what is meant by this other patient who is a neurotic. They both say that they are terrified, but I know that patient A is talking about a different thing from patient B"; an apparent quantitative change becomes a change in quality. For example, a patient says, "I am suffering agonies because I am blushing so badly". He is pale and there is no visible sign of a blush. But the analyst should know that the patient who shows no apparent capillary action is, nevertheless, capable of having that intense

experience. I would regard that patient as being not at all ordinary; the language that patient is talking is not the same as the language used by this other patient who says he has terrible difficulty with blushing and can be seen to be doing so.

I could ask, "Could you tell me a bit more what you mean by 'identification' and give me an example. What do you call a patient who is identified with another patient?" After a time some pattern might emerge which would enable you to say in *your* language what *his* language was meaning. One might say, "Yes, I agree with you. I use that sort of language myself", or, "No, I wouldn't use that kind of language myself, that's not what I would say". This is one of the difficulties about scientific meetings amongst ourselves; we often talk in a way which sounds exactly as if we talked the same language. It is very doubtful.

Q: What kind of help can the experienced analyst give to a patient whose problem he does not consider as severe as the patient does, and who does not really need treatment?

Bion: You are in your consulting room; you say that you are a psychoanalyst; you have your name on the door; for some reason a person has come to see you. You are at his disposal, you are free for fifty minutes, and during that time, if he will tell you what he wants, you will answer it if you can. I do not know why that patient thinks it worth his time and his money to come and see me, and I would not like to say that I know that he is spending all that time and trouble without some reason until I have heard more of what he has to say for himself. Suppose he says he is terrified that he might kill his children, or his mother or father. One would like to know how the patient comes to know that. I would say, "You have known yourself for a long time so you must have some kind of evidence which has led you to suppose that that is what you would do. You have evidence which I have not – that doesn't mean that you are wrong, but you haven't made it clear to me." One is not saying the patient cannot or will not do it, because he can do what he likes. I might continue, "Although you haven't made me frightened by what you have told me, there must be some reason why you have frightened yourself; you have frightened you – so much so that you have even come here today. You must have some evidence which has frightened you, although you haven't made it clear to me what that evidence is – so far."

Take a different case: the patient says, "I told my wife that I was going to commit suicide and she got very frightened. I know I won't do anything of the sort." As the analyst, I can say he may know that he will not do anything of the sort, but I do not. And he may know that it is perfectly safe to threaten suicide, but I do not. How does he come to know so much about people that he knows it is only an empty threat? I, as a psychoanalyst do not know that. If he said this to me, instead of to his wife, I would take that statement seriously; or, putting it in other terms, I would have respect for his statement even though he was inviting me to have no respect for it, to pay no attention to it. He may think that he need not bother about his threats to commit suicide, but I do not know that and, what is more, I do not believe he does either. Neither do I believe that that patient is such a good psychiatrist that he can really promise me that he will not commit suicide. I can well believe that he can promise, because promises are nothing new to me – I am quite used to them – but I do not believe I am going to have that promise fulfilled. So, although the patient does not take his own statements seriously, the analyst has to. He, at least, knows that people do fantastic things like killing themselves. He cannot say, "Oh, this is all nonsense", because he knows that patients will and can do these things; they are old enough; they are strong enough; they understand gas taps, knives, strangulation, hanging. So there is no reason why that patient, who might not be able to commit suicide if he was an infant, cannot do so now he is grown-up. He may feel that it is all just fun to frighten the analyst or his wife in that way, but what he does not know is that he might do it. What is the psychoanalyst to do when the patient will not take his own threat seriously and invites the analyst not to take it seriously also? You will not find the answer in a book. The only thing that can give you that answer is your experience and trust in your flare and intuition; you could say that an empty threat is transformed not into a substitute for action, but into a prelude to taking that action.

The psychoanalyst is in a very lonely job; he may have nobody to whom he can tell that. He cannot tell the patient; he cannot tell the patient's relatives, because they would probably be more upset than informed or illuminated. So he has to put up with knowing something about which he can do nothing. This is where the practice of psychoanalysis is absolutely different from books about or talk about psychoanalysis. There is no substitute whatever for experience.

People get medically and psychoanalytically qualified, and they may be just like psychoanalysts or doctors, but they are not psychoanalysts or doctors. They may be becoming doctors, or psychiatrists, or psychoanalysts, but they are not doctors, or psychiatrists, or psychoanalysts. They are only 'qualified'.

Q: Could you say something more about the difference between what you call mental experience and sensuous experience.

Bion: In one sense this is a simple question, and like all simple questions it becomes impossible to answer. Let me put it like this: Question: "What is *that*, Daddy?" Answer: "That is a cow." Question: "Why is it a cow, Daddy?" Well, why is it a cow? Does any philosopher, biologist, psychoanalyst, medical man know the answer to that question? Only two questions – what is that? why is that a cow? – and you are right away in the unknown. The world of the unknown is before you: you are out in ultimate space. That is how feeble our knowledge is. It is just two questions deep – that is all – and then you are out in the mental stratosphere. However long one lives one still will not know the answer to "What is that?", "It's a psychoanalyst". "Why is it a psychoanalyst?" You *could* say the mental experience and the sensuous experience have been making love to each other – hence the psychoanalyst. These answers are rationalizations, that is, rational answers; but the question may not be answerable in rational terms; it may be outside the scope of rational answers, or rational knowledge.

2

The discussions we are having here could be represented pictorially by a helix; we keep on coming back to the same point, only on different levels of the helix. Everything we say is related both to the ordinary course of the analytic work we do and to the various theories which are touched upon. If you feel you are unfamiliar with a theory I think it is an illusion due to the fact that we are at a different point in this heliacal progress; it only looks or sounds unfamiliar because it is stated in a rather different way from last time (or next time).

Last time I spoke of various events which could be regarded by people who are familiar with mental phenomena as being marks either in time or in space at different points in the helix, like puberty, infancy, old-age, or middle-age. These are imprecise statements and they are probably imprecise measures of time, yet I think that we have to be familiar with the fact that our methods of mental investigation, and the mental investigation itself, do not really conform with any precision to any of the known disciplines, so far. It is sometimes said that psychoanalysis is not scientific because it is not mathematized. But it is not mathematized because the mathematicians have not provided us with a mathematics suitable to our subject, not because our subject is unscientific. It could be said that we are not aesthetic. It is not true; the known aesthetic disciplines are not adequate to our subject. If someone wishes to paint or to draw they can go to an art school and learn certain elementary, basic disciplines. That is probably good enough unless somebody comes along called Leonardo who will not fit into any of these artificial categories which are in existence. You could interpret what he says in aesthetic terms; you could interpret what he says in terms of the discipline of engineering, or certain kinds of mathematics. But there is nothing, not even a

major group of disciplines, that would be adequate. The same thing applies to philosophy. A Plato, or a Socrates, or an Aristotle could be seen to be talking about some central and basic point. That is what I have tried to signify by a letter O – to signify it, merely to indicate that this is 'some thing'; but what it is I do not know. Kant might call it 'the thing-in-itself'. Some philosophers would disagree with that, but I think, nevertheless, that there is a great deal to be said for the idea that he did regard noumena and things which are noumenal as related to the thing-in-itself. If the discipline were what we might call 'religious', the thing-in-itself might be called 'godhead'. The analogous point in the helix, 'god', is that point at which the godhead corresponds to the point at which it intersects with the human intelligence, and can, therefore, be described in the sensuous language which is used by human beings. For example, in the sixth chapter of Isaiah you will find a literal description in which he says that in a particular reign of a particular king he saw six seraphim, each with six wings: two with which they flew, two with which they covered themselves and two with which they covered their feet. All this is extremely literal. It is the kind of language which you and I might use for saying "Well, this morning I got up and went out on to the beach. It's a particular day of the month; it's a particular day of the week; and there I saw . . ." – whatever it was. Of course, it is impossible to say what Isaiah meant, because we are so separated in time from him and his statements. If someone – say, William Blake – gives a literal description of contact with God, what are we to say about that? What language do we use? Do we say, "He is hallucinated, he is deluded, these things are hallucinations"? We cannot express any such opinion because, as far as we know, our point in this helix is so different. We say it is now the twentieth century of our particular era; but what is the century on the time scale of astronomical time? What year is it in the Andromeda nebula, in that particular universe, that particular galaxy? This is one way of giving a pictorial representation of our problem. To return to the universe of your consulting room: when your patient was talking to you today, what date was he talking from? When you were thinking about what the patient said, what was the date then? Let us consider it now from the point of view of geocentric space. Where did this event happen? Where did this free-association happen when you 'remembered' it just now? When your patient is 'free-associating' what is the date or time in psychoanalytic

space–time? Who will find a mathematical language which would be adequate to solve this problem of communication?

The analyst may say, "You are now feeling afraid of me". The patient may reply, "Oh, no I'm not – I'm not feeling at all frightened", to which the analyst can only say, "Well, you haven't led me to change my mind, nor do I wish to say that I am right and you are wrong, but I still think my interpretation was correct. Later, perhaps, we shall have a chance of seeing whether what you were thinking was right, or whether what I said you were thinking was right, and, as well as that, you may be able to decide that you were really thinking what I said you were. So the interpretation might have been what we call 'correct'. But there's another problem: if it was correct, were you right to be thinking or feeling like that? Were you quite right to be feeling afraid of me? Or is it possible to compare the feeling, which we are now agreed that you had, with the facts which are also familiar to you?" In that way the comparison can be made both between what the patient says is happening, and what the analyst says is happening. Furthermore, the patient can compare what he is feeling with other feelings that he has as well; these two points in the helix can be 'mapped' – the one with the other.

I would have you focus on this difficulty: the lack of co-ordinates for psychoanalytic space-time. This is a term I am borrowing from the philosopher, Alexander. A philosopher (philosophical vertex) confronted with the need to think of things popularly supposed to be in time and space, and a psychoanalyst confronted with a need to speak of similar matters, would be helped if the similar experiences could be formulated in terms suitable to both. This is not the state at present. Other disciplines, such as religion, art, mathematics, science, have a need to formulate steps in the progress towards the same end. Croce supposed that aesthetic could be a universal linguistic. He was wrong. Can we, as psychoanalysts, suggest any better? Analogy may help. I am not, however, using the term, 'analogy', in the way an artist in words would use it. It has to be understood that the importance of the analogy lies not in the two objects which are compared (for example, a breast with a penis), but with the link made between the two.

Speaking psychoanalytically, what we are concerned with is the relationship, not the things related. This is close to the view of the pure mathematician who will say that he is dealing with the relationships of objects. It seems to me that this is something like (at least,

analogous, to put it no higher) what Freud meant when he used the word 'transference'; he was not just inventing a word; he was convinced that there was a thing itself which required naming in order to talk about it.

Coming back to us and our patients: it is useful to make use of this word, 'transference', when we want to talk about psychoanalysis, but in the analysis itself we should be able to see, or feel, or intuit the *thing itself*. I ignore what is related to what, to focus attention on this 'bit in between'; that link is 'transference'. The analyst, together with his analysand, can have an actual experience and say, 'I think I see what you mean'. If he says that, he is using a language which has been produced to deal with the world of sensuous reality (the reality which is discernible if you have sight, hearing, sense of smell, touch and so on). It is inadequate for our purpose. We are having to use a language which was invented for one job, to do a different one. We have having to use a language which is concerned with phenomena, when what we are concerned with is noumena. We are having to talk about things which could be described as phenomenal, while having to use that same language for things which are noumenal. This is a serious problem. If we invent words, nobody will understand what those words mean. If we do not, their sensuous history is evoked. As with a 'dead' metaphor carelessly used, its ghost begins to walk. Neologisms are the privilege of the mentally ill. They are not available for use by the psychoanalyst.

We borrow from other disciplines to augment our vocabulary. Suppose we borrow from mathematics: Euclidean geometry is no good to us. That is all very well for geocentric time, geocentric space, but not for psychoanalytic space. Brouwer and Heyting have propounded the mathematics of Intuitionism. Their approach is still controversial, although it is now much more elaborate and to some mathematicians it appears to remain consistent to its own definitions, provided those definitions are used in that particular universe of discourse. Is it of any use to us?

Must we be painters, artists in words, mathematicians? The 'simple business' of seeing the patient tomorrow is formidable indeed! We have to use an inadequate tool, and we even have to invent our own particular way of talking while we are actually talking. It would be convenient if I could get used to a way of talking which was consistent in its own universe of discourse and which could be

comprehensible to someone who was not me, but was in the room at the same time. If I could, in addition, use the same language here the reader could say, "I think I see what you mean". That experience is an important one, because it makes lateral communication possible – in contrast with communication between analyst and analysand. When your patient talks to you tomorrow you may feel, "I don't know what he is talking about. I know of no interpretation that would fit anything he has said so far." As you go on listening, or, as Freud calls it, exercising a free-floating attention, you may begin to feel, "I think I see what he means". Those words do not matter; the feeling does, because it is going to turn into another feeling which will turn into something which you would be able to turn into an interpretation. So, when you think you understand what he means, or you think you see what he is getting at, that will be an interpretation one day: perhaps tomorrow, perhaps next week, perhaps in a year's time. Some of it will be clear at once, and then you can give that interpretation. But by the time you can give an interpretation it is not important, because the work for that has been done in the previous weeks, months, years that you have been with that patient. The immediate interpretation, *now,* goes backward and it goes forward. "I think I see what you mean." Or to put it in other terms, "I think I remember something like what you are saying. I think that one day I shall understand what you are talking about." It glances back; it intuits "the shape of things to come". It is that peculiar experience which is not an interpretation, not a memory, not even a prophecy. A 'present' experience is past, is present and is future; it is timeless – unless someone can invent space-time, psychoanalytic time and space.

There is a story which I would like to tell, a verbal representation of a pictorial image. It is said that General Marshall Lyautey was talking about the need to grow wood, oak wood, for ships, and he was told this was absolutely impracticable. He asked why and was told, "Well, it would take a hundred years before the oak was fit to use". "In that case", said Lyautey, "we haven't a moment to lose." That is our position. It will take a hundred years to answer these questions which I am sure we all have in mind, and therefore, we haven't a moment to lose.

Q: Could not understanding be used as a substitute for experiencing? What, in your opinion, is the relationship between the two?

Bion: I may be misinterpreting Freud, but I think what I am going to say is compatible with statements which Freud has already made with regard to free-floating attention. In the course of analysis it is wrong for the analyst to allow himself either memories or desires, the one being the future tense of the other, because memories and desires are opaque. They hide what is going on. This, I believe, is equally true of understanding. While you are *trying* to understand what the patient says he goes on talking and you do not hear what he says. Freud's statement could be made in a more detailed manner – on a further point on the helix – by saying one should avoid memories, desires, or understanding. It is easy to say; it is very difficult to carry out. To remember, to foresee, to understand, may all be relevant and desirable, as for example when reading a book or participating in a lecture, but during the practice of psychoanalysis none of them is a valuable activity; they are breaches in the analytic frame of mind.

Q: What can we do, what language should we use if it seems to us the patient does not understand our language?

Bion: This problem becomes most acute in situations where the patient seems to think in a different way from oneself. For example, most of us, if we chose to write down our thoughts or ideas, would write from left to right using the rules of articulate speech as understood and taught to us in childhood, It is the nearest that the accumulated wisdom of the race has come to turning thoughts and ideas into written communication. But suppose one meets somebody who writes from right to left, or from bottom to top of the page; and suppose that they do that because it suits their method of thinking better than going from left to right. Suppose those people *think* from bottom to top, or from right to left; suppose a Chinese uses a method of pictorial representation, hieroglyphic communication, and combines these hieroglyphs according to the rules of that particular way of thinking. If a member of the western civilization translates that communication correctly with regard to the pictures, the hieroglyphs, but not with the right grammar, and tries to put together these pictures as if they were part of a universe of articulate expression when in fact they are not, the result would be a curious translation, frighteningly apparently correct, but wrong because the grammar is not the grammar of articulate speech. It is the grammar of hieroglyphic communication. Our problem is, what is the 'grammar' of reality, and what grammar

are biological objects like us to create so that the reality may approximate to it? In psychoanalysis we have to manufacture our means of communication while we are communicating. I often think that we are hindered by expecting too much of our ability to psychoanalyse while psychoanalysing. In short, there are twin dangers – 'too much' and 'too little'.

It is western poets who have come nearest to using the correct grammar. Ezra Pound has frequently been regarded as psychotic; his poems have been said to be rubbish. But he shows every sign of understanding Robert Browning, even a poem like *Sordello*, said by Browning himself to have had a meaning which was once known both to himself and to God, but now known only to God, because he had forgotten what it meant. The relationship between the Browning who wrote *Sordello* and the Browning who wrote *The Ring and The Book* has been severed; they no longer talk the same language – and that is in the same person. This comes very near to what happens in analysis. The grown man cannot bear to be reminded of what he was like by the behaviour of his children, because he cannot bear to be reminded of a part of his still existing mind. He does not like the experience of living with his family and he does not like psychoanalysis. We are trying to introduce him to a character which we think it would be worth his while to respect, namely, himself: either himself as he was once, or to introduce what he was once to himself as he is today. These two people dislike each other and do not want to be introduced. Not only do they hate each other, but they hate this psychoanalyst who is trying to introduce them.

To return to the precise question: the analyst has to ask this of himself during the whole of his career, and precisely during the individual session.

Q: How can we develop intuition? When is intuition predominant as a means of knowledge in relation to projective identification?

Bion: I do not think I know the answer to that question. I may be wrong, but I do not think anybody else does either, because most of childhood is spent in trying to be just like the grown-up and that happens to be, as I said before, a closed system – it has no future. While the person is busy trying to be just like a grown-up, by accident he is becoming grown up. While he is trying to be just like an intuitive person, he does not notice that he is becoming an intuitive person.

That process does not end at puberty, or middle age, or any milestone to which we give a name, because it is an on-going situation. All of us are becoming intuitive – unless, of course, we try hard to be just like an intuitive person; that is aiming at a closed system. It does not matter how exactly like an intuitive person we manage to get, except that it interferes with our becoming intuitive and with our still being able to be becoming intuitive.

Plausibly, one could say there is a hurry, because we die and, as far as we know, when we are dead we are dead – unless we take the viewpoint, or 'vertex' as I call it, of a religious person who does not consider the termination of the physical life is quite what it appears to be. Even the analyst has reason to pause here, because as short a time as four hundred years ago you died at the age of thirty anyway, and what was wrong with that? It was natural; your teeth fell out, you decayed, you had tumours, you had all sorts of things which were normal. But today we do not expect to die at thirty in the normal course of events. We should regard that as pathological – if we knew the pathology we could match it with the fact of death, or assume an unknown. With the mind it is not so simple; what the mental counterpart of physical toxicity is we do not know. It seems to be possible to guess that some methods of thinking are less lethal than others – if we knew what they were. As it is, are we right to think that the years of our life are "threescore years and ten, or, if by reason of strength, fourscore years", as the poet says? That may be a delusion which is based on our inability to distinguish the toxic or pathological from the life-giving, or vital, or healthy, because we know so little about the mind, or psyche, or spirit – whichever term we borrow to talk about this thing which is not sensuously apprehensible, which does not fall within the spectrum of the sensuous range. It is ultra-physical, or infra-physical; it is outside the spectrum with which we are so far familiar. It does not mean to say that the thing-in-itself, life itself, the noumenon, is co-limited with our mental capacity, that because we can only think that far the mental world is only that big. It may be vast. It may be that if we had what, for the sake of convenience, one would call intuition, one could perceive, or be aware of, the existence of a mentality which is not bounded by my skin. My skin is convenient as a method of saying what the boundaries are of my physical make-up, of my anatomy and my physiology. It is unlikely that that forms an adequate description of the boundaries of my mind. I may

not be able to touch, or hear, or see you, but at the same time it is possible that mentally we are able to make a contact between ourselves and something which is not us. Using grammatical speech we could say 'you and me' is different from 'me and it' or 'you and it'. There is no mental relationship between the animate and the inanimate. But there *is* a relationship between the animate and the animate. It is difficult to say where those two meet, where those two objects intersect, like two circles, or, using more mathematical terms, where one set is related to another set in terms of overlapping, so that there is something which is common to both sets – the set which one could say is 'you and me'.

Q: Would you give an example of the use of psychoanalytic practice of the psychoanalytic space–time concept.

Bion: I cannot give an example of it, but in so far as I have some knowledge of myself I am aware that I am reaching out with something which is more than what I can touch and feel. I do not touch my patients. It is true that I speak to them and I see them, but I do not believe that that gives an adequate description of the meeting between the patient's mind and mine. I can understand someone saying that they had an experience like thought-reading. They might say, "It's a funny thing, but yesterday I *thought* you were meeting my friend at about the time when you *were* meeting my friend, but I had no idea that you were going to meet". It might be compatible with the idea that there is some mental phenomenon which is not bounded by what I can see and what I can hear, what I can smell and touch and feel. Although you and I are in different places not known to each other there may, nevertheless, be some overlapping. I could not prove it nor would I be satisfied with the example that I have just given. I suspect it is one of these things called 'extrasensory perception', but that it is probably too crude. As our intuition continues to develop we get nearer to a situation where we seem to be aware that the boundaries of our mind are not our physical boundaries, nor yet the boundaries which are imposed by our central nervous system. That is more like a guess, or a 'hunch', than anything one could call evidence or fact. But it may be a fact one day.

3

In the paper which Freud wrote in 1937, 'Constructions in Analysis' (1937d), he spoke about the importance of what he called construction. He had often written about construction before, but he gathered it all together in that paper and stated openly that he felt it was more important to give interpretations which are really constructions than to give particular interpretations. There is still a great deal of danger about the use of terms like 'omnipotence'. There are patients who say, "I don't know what you mean when you say 'omnipotence'". This seems, at first, an unrealistic, or even hostile comment, but in fact it deserves to have considerable attention paid to it. In analysis patients who are feeling helpless are also feeling omnipotent. Conversely, if they are feeling omnipotent they are also feeling helpless – the two are, in reality, not separated. Words like 'omnipotence' are very compressed statements which have a considerable penumbra of associations. In so far as omnipotence is associated with ideas belonging to some kind of religious belief, it is important to know which religious belief.

If we read a poem like *Paradise Lost,* or an aesthetic statement or poem like the *Aeneid,* or the *Odyssey,* or the *Iliad,* we tend to think that we are reading, or being taught, English, or Latin, or Greek literature. When those aesthetic constructions were made they were not literature. *Paradise Lost* was a serious attempt to make a religious statement; it was the simplest and easiest way in which Milton could convey what he considered to be great religious truth – it was a great poem incidentally. Similarly, when Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* he was not trying to write good Latin, or good literature. He was saying what he had to say. Consequently we tend to forget, and even our teachers tend to forget, that what is important is what the writer was trying to

convey; those particular poems endure because they retain a capacity for having a meaning. The stupendous nature of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid is* their durability, the fact that through hundreds of years they have delivered a message to those whose understanding has not been restricted to a knowledge of Greek or Latin. A knowledge of Greek or Latin is only a preliminary *sine qua non.*

If one is inclined to say that a patient is behaving in the way that we would regard as omnipotent, we cannot understand that behaviour until we know what religion the individual is actually expressing, and what the religion is to which he is devoted. I take this example, not because it is exceptional, but because it seems to be a good instance of the expanding nature of the analytic profession. The patient we shall see tomorrow, like the patient we see today, makes apparently simple statements and it is hardly worth interpreting the conscious, rational meaning of what they say. It is necessary to tell the patient that, in addition to the actual meaning with which he is familiar, there is a further meaning; and when we give an interpretation we do not mean that the free-association was therefore wrong. For the sake of convenience we can think that the patient is being 'omnipotent'. That is a psychoanalytic theory or, maybe, a religious theory, and it tells the patient precisely nothing if we tell him what he already knows. What we need to do is to draw attention to something which is obvious to us, but which he fails to notice. But before embarking on giving interpretations about the patient's omnipotence it would be useful to have some idea of what religion this rational twentieth-century person adheres to. For example, it is clear from a small boy's expressions of admiration that a particular teacher or player of games is so important to him that one could say he 'worships' him. As analysts we have to take that statement seriously; we have to appreciate that to that small boy the football player is his god. There is nothing wrong with that; it is appropriate in that particular universe of discourse. But supposing that small boy grows up and becomes a man of twenty-five, thirty-five, forty-five, and still worships a football player. One could say his religion has not progressed; his capacity for devotion, his capacity for awe, for worship, for admiration, for mystery, has not developed; it is a vestige which is no more use to him mentally than it would be if some anatomical defect had left him with a pronounced (hypertrophied) tail. Most human beings have no more need of a tail than they do of a vestigial religion. But

if indeed they have a vestigial religion, that vestige is as mentally pronounced in the world of the mind as a tail would be in the world of anatomy and physiology. The religious belief which was once right and normal has become inappropriate. Many of our ideas which were normal and appropriate at the right time are not so when they go on retaining their vitality and power at a time and in a personality in which they are out of date.

What date? That brings us back to this difficulty about psychoanalytic space–time. I know nothing whatever about it except that I wish somebody would discover it, because until they do psychoanalysis is going to be held up and unable to progress, because we go on using a time scale which is out of date. We go on using a space scale which is out of date. Space–time which has been elaborated by Samuel Alexander in his book *Space, Time and Deity* (1920), was in many respects before its time, but is not a great deal of use, just as the geometry of Riemann or Lobachevsky was not much use until there was a geometry which was not geocentric, but was of some use for outer space. It has to be galactic – to use astronomical terms – and even with galactic space we now know, thanks to radio astronomy, that there are radio stars and radio universes which are audible. That is not of much importance to us, but it illustrates the difficulty of finding or inventing a space–time scale for the mind.

Consider some mental travel: M31, the Andromeda nebula, probably something like one and a half million light years away. Now consider your consulting room tomorrow. What a journey from outer space beyond the confines of any time that we know, all the way to eight o'clock tomorrow morning in Rio de Janeiro! Mentally we can make these journeys; mentally we can traverse these immense spaces; and we can talk about the Homeric psychology, or the Virgilian psychology, or religion. This requires mental mobility not only in today's sessions, but in tomorrow's sessions with your patients. I hope I have given you some idea of what an enormous amount of work has to be done to see this patient, to achieve a frame of mind which is suitable for being a psychoanalyst, or a psychiatrist, or a philosopher – anybody who is concerned with the human personality. It gives some idea of the urgency of this problem, of why we have not a moment to lose, otherwise the human race is probably just another discarded experiment; it ceases to survive because it is out of date – unless, of course, it can somehow or another find a way of becoming up-to-date. Most

of us think that psychoanalysis is important, not because it is so good (we know that even the whole of existing psychoanalytic theory does not get much further than scratching the surface of our problem), but because if we are right in thinking that we have minds we shall have to do something about them.

Q: I would like to hear you speak about the omnipotence of questions.

Bion: I think it is impossible to say that one is not presupposing the omnipotence of questions. We can easily suppose that questions are really an outcome of omnipotence; so long as we have to depend on ordinary human beings to be analysts we shall never escape from many of these very same mechanisms. We need to be aware of our animal inheritance, whether that is a capacity for sexual activities or murderous activities, and even aware of our capacity to change from wandering about on all fours to walking about on our hind legs. We need, as far as possible, to get a catholic idea of our potentialities both for evil and for good. 'Evil and good' – again, what is the frame of reference? Are those religious ideas, or are they aesthetic ideas, or are they scientific ideas? Does the question relate to psychoanalysis, religion, or the bringing up of children? Most of us have to face the problem of telling a child how to run its life. Most psychoanalysts would agree that we do not want to pretend to run our own lives so well that we can run somebody else's too. That is why an analyst needs to have some working idea of his capacity and the limitations of his psychoanalytic knowledge likewise. Such self-knowledge might save us from the danger of trying to tell others how to live instead of trying to demonstrate how they are thinking.

Q: What is the relation between construction and psychoanalytic time–space? How should one understand the patient's or analyst's feeling of loss within psychoanalytic time–space?

Where does the feeling of omnipotence fit in this sense of loss? In your clinical work you use constructions (the Grid). Would these constructions be given to the patient instead of interpretations?

Is the space and time between that which we feel and that which we think filled by confusion, persecution and depression, or by good feelings?

Bion: I am used to hearing patients say that they feel 'terribly frightened'. What is the scale by which the degree of fear is measured? It

is said that the patient shows 'excessive anxiety', or is 'excessively pleased with himself', or pays "excessive attention to detail", or his "misunderstanding is abnormal". Hitherto psychoanalysts have been able to cope, more or less, with the kind of problem with which they were confronted; nowadays we are called upon to deal with problems which lie outside the range of what we have previously considered to be psychoanalytic activity. We are constantly dealing with these problems without any frame of reference. The analyst may feel, "I can't cope with this patient, he's too hostile". What is the right degree of hostility? Where is the scale of measurement in which *here* is very little hostility, and *here* is too much? How does one measure it if not by the feelings the analyst has in the session? 'Plus' or 'minus' could be used to indicate deviations from the psychoanalyst's 'norm'. This could be said to be unsatisfactory, subjective, unscientific. Nonetheless, there is nothing better that I know of. In all this we are having to make do without any proper scale of measurement, without any proper watch which tells you the time. This becomes serious when dealing with a patient about whom it might once have been said, "Oh well, he is abnormal, he is too ill, he's really a borderline psychotic". In real terms he is disliked because he involves too great an excursion from the limits of our spectrum. We must develop, we must achieve a standard of maturity which lies beyond animal maturity but leaves cultural sex as a goal. Animal sexuality is achieved before mental maturity; the latter has yet to be achieved. If there is such a thing as mental maturity or passionate love, then one cannot say what the date is at which somebody is able to achieve passionate love as opposed simply to being sexually mature.

The Grid is a feeble attempt to produce an instrument. An instrument is not a theory; it is made up out of theories, in the same way as a ruler which is marked in inches and centimetres has been made in conformity with a number of theories. But the ruler can be used by different people for all sorts of purposes. When I was a boy at school the teacher would say, "Hold out your hand", and then use the ruler to strike the palm – it hurt. It was not really what the ruler was made for, or why it was marked in inches and centimetres, but it worked. That is about all I can claim for the Grid. Some people may be able to use it for different purposes. Someone may find a way of inventing a grid which would be of some use to psychoanalysts practising psychoanalysis; it is yet to be discovered, for I certainly do not believe

that the grid I have drawn up fills that need. I think it is good enough to know how bad it is, how unsuitable for the task for which I have made it. But even if it inflicts a certain amount of mental pain I hope you can turn it to good account and make a better one.

Q: Do you think that psychoanalysis must be made mathematical before it can be considered a science?

Bion: I would not be impressed if psychoanalysis were mathematized – not at all. But I would not like to discourage anybody who felt disposed to try, because I can see that psychoanalysis is not by any means perfect, or even a good instrument. As far as I am concerned it is the best I have come across. I hesitate to say this, because there are so many people ready to believe that one does not think much of psychoanalysis. It depends on what is your scale of what is 'much' and what is 'less'. The operations of the human mind are far from efficient. So much so, indeed, that our mental capacity runs to cleverness more than wisdom; we are such clever monkeys that we can blow ourselves off the face of this earth or off the face of this universe long before we discover that it is dangerous to play with atomic bombs. Some people were afraid that if nuclear fission was effective a chain reaction would be set up in which the whole of the substance which we need for breathing and living would be destroyed in one flash. Luckily for us we have not been quite as clever as that – so far. Tomorrow perhaps, somebody will be brave enough, stupid enough, indifferent enough to say, "It would be so exciting – I'd like to light this dangerous match and see what happens". To make an artificial division between being clever and wise, one could say: it seems to take longer to be wise than it takes to be clever.

I remember talking to an atomic physicist who seemed to feel that all this business of Greek and Latin and poetry and literature was a lot of nonsense, that Oxford university wasted a terrible lot of time. I would not quarrel with that, but that does not mean to say that I think, therefore, that one should encourage our monkey-like tricks without also encouraging the growth of wisdom. I can see that far quicker than a study of the humanities would be an atomic termination of the human race – drastic, effective and quick. Whether it is an improvement on psychoanalysis is a matter of opinion – may the best man win!

When I was a small boy I would have preferred it if my teachers had learnt to use rulers for measuring centimetres and inches instead of hitting my hands with them. I would rather scientists used atomic physics in some way which was helpful to me, instead of using it for turning me into a cinder or a gas. It is difficult to know what it is that promotes the growth of wisdom. Psychoanalysis seems to offer the best hope of finding out what promotes growth – whether of a tumour, or healthy tissue, I do not know. In the meantime, while we are elaborating psychoanalytic techniques, perhaps we can learn how to grow wise people to be psychoanalysts and not just clever monkeys.

Q: I should like to hear more about your use of the term 'mystery'. To my mind it brings echoes of Agatha Christie, the enigma of the sphinx, the origin of man, and so on. What do you have in mind when you use the expression?

Bion: What I mean by the term is a capacity to have feelings of respect for the unknown; to have a capacity to respect something of which we are ignorant; not to be so frightened of what we do not understand that we want to say, "Oh, I don't know what he's talking about – put him in a mental hospital", or, "I don't know what this man is doing; let's have him executed". While it is true that most people are less good murderers after they have had their heads chopped off, we know very little about them as a result. One would like to have a chance of learning what the violent person or thing is before it kills us. But violence seems to be so much quicker than thinking, especially the kind of thinking which is directed towards action rather than the kind of thinking which is a substitute for action. Somehow it seems to be a slow process, perhaps too slow for the job. However, all this is more an indication for adherence to and devotion to the job rather than for not attempting it.

Someone who feels that they have learnt the explanation of everything, even the human mind, seems to be less of a person than he who is still capable of learning. People who are addicted to psychoanalysis seem to become two-dimensional – they are flat; they are not people, they are the plans for people. If we could analyse people properly (whatever that may mean), they might have a respect not only for their own minds, but also for other people's. Included in that mind

would be the capacity to be awe-inspired by the human mind itself in the same way as I would like to be capable of being awe-inspired by a sight like the aurora borealis. I would not think that I had improved if I said, "Oh well, this is simply an electric display; it's an electric phenomenon". That is clever, but not wise.

Suppose someone, listening to the radio, becomes curious about the background noises, the interference. In time they become sufficiently curious to build enormous radio telescopes in order to listen to the interference. This all depends upon a capacity for the respect and the awe of natural phenomena. There is no chance of progress in psychoanalysis until there are enough people who respect the human mind, whether they like it or not, whether they think it is the wrong kind of mind or not, or whether they disapprove of the way that particular kind of mind works. It is, therefore, important that psychoanalysts both now and in the future should be capable of respecting the human mind, the human personality, and even respecting it if they do not know what it is or anything about it. This is a part of what I call remaining able to be mystified. We must be able to tolerate mystery and our own ignorance.

Q: What would be the difference between omnipotence in the universe of a Catholic and of a Methodist, both within and outside the consulting room.

Bion: It would be necessary to have some experience of Catholics and Methodists: better still, experience of one particular Methodist or one particular Catholic. I think only a psychoanalyst would be likely to find out. He might find that they worshipped the same God, or that one of them worshipped a golf professional and the other worshipped a football player. But he would still have to remain able to say, "Well, I have only investigated two people and they seem to have led me to find out something that everybody knows anyhow". It is difficult to feel that after a lifetime's devotion one has nearly caught up with the ideas of a great number of people who already have those ideas. It is most unlikely that any of us will discover something new. I have never found out anything which has not already been discovered. But people have a great capacity for believing what they want to believe and that the object is worthy of belief. The desire to believe in the creative person obscures the capacity to discriminate between uniqueness and originality or creativeness.

Nietzsche says in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* that the function of a nation is to produce one genius. That gives a good idea of the scale: sixty million human beings might be able to produce one genius. And it would be a good thing if these collections of sixty million people would allow the genius to survive, should one turn up, without executing him, or blowing him up, or simply letting him die of indifference. But an ability to lead sixty million to agree on which is to be the unique genius is rare; in psychoanalysis the problem is unique and specific.

The questioner would have to determine whether the question was particular and unique, or general. If specific, the answer would have to be found on the specific occasion.

Q: Could the development of a capacity to experience time in analysis be effected through successive experiences of omnipotence and impotence?

Bion: It is possible that the time could be measured by the oscillation from one to the other. One is certainly familiar with people who say, "I can always wake up at the time of day I want by thinking about it overnight; if I want to wake up at five in the morning, I wake up at five in the morning". I do not find that inherently improbable. What it is due to I do not know. It may be dependent on something physiological like the heartbeat, or something like an oscillation from omnipotence to helplessness. I think it might be worth investigating if you have a patient who shows that sort of oscillation. As it is, at present one depends on a thing like a piece of machinery which says a quarter past eleven, and we all have to be awe-stricken by it; we have to be impressed by the fact that that piece of machinery has got round to those particular positions of the hands. So I suppose we had better bow to our little watches.

4

I want to discuss something which seems to be far removed from the topics with which we are concerned. In recent years there has been a mechanical development in astronomy analogous to the discovery of the telescope. Hitherto astronomy has been limited by what can be seen by the visual apparatus of the human being when extended by powerful instruments like the two-hundred-inch reflector at Palomar. It has now been further extended by the discovery of radio astronomy. Radio astronomers have discovered what they call 'black holes' in the spatial counterpart of the astronomical field; they believe that the 'black hole' is the space where a star has become so concentrated that it has fallen in on itself – it has collapsed. Where there used to be a star there is now a 'black hole' which, they suspect, is the source of immense power.

I am familiar with a psychoanalytic theory of the human mind which sounds like the astronomical theory of the 'black hole' – as far as I can understand astronomical formulation. Why should a psychoanalyst invent a theory to explain a mental phenomenon and, independently, the astronomers elaborate a similar theory about what they think is a black hole in astronomical space? Which is causing which? Is this some peculiarity of the human mind which projects it up into space, or is this something real in space from which derives this idea of space in the mind itself? Perhaps someone may have time and the inclination to investigate this 'black hole'. Of course, the investigation might result in a negative discovery, a discovery which made it unnecessary to look further; or perhaps psychoanalysts have already suspected a peculiarity about the human mind, and if their suspicion is correct it will lead to still further psychoanalytic investigation and theories. I have used this idea of modern cosmology as a

model for psychoanalysis, but I would also use psychoanalysis as the starting point of an investigation of the human mind.

Let us look at something which is not millions of light years away, but very near indeed – oneself. Freud, when writing to Lou Andreas-Salomé, said that when he was investigating a very dark subject he sometimes found it illuminating to investigate it by artificially blinding himself. In the third book of *Paradise Lost* Milton says, "Hail, holy Light, offspring of heaven first-born! Or of the Eternal coeternal beam May I express thee unblamed? Since God is light, And never but in unapproached light Dwelt from eternity – dwelt then in thee, Bright effluence of bright essence increate! . . . Won from the void and formless infinite!" There seems to be no doubt, and Milton certainly had no doubt, that he was blind – "so thick a drop serene hath quenched these orbs which roll in vain"; although they can feel the warmth he can see nothing. A capable eye specialist would nowadays have ideas about the nature of Milton's blindness. We cannot really say whether Milton blinded himself artificially, or whether he realized, unconsciously, that he could not investigate these 'things invisible to man' while he was blinded by the brilliant light of facts. One cannot psychoanalyse Milton, but it is puzzling that he could apparently turn the experience of being blind to good account, exactly as Freud could not investigate these dark and obscure places unless he artificially blinded himself.

When we are seeing our patients tomorrow would it be a good thing to know as much as possible about psychoanalysis, to have as brilliant an illumination as possible to bring to bear on the facts which we shall come across in tomorrow's session? Or would it be better to blind ourselves artificially so that the dark should be so pervasive that any very faint object will show up – like the expression about looking for a black cat in a dark cellar without any light. We can consider, as our patient talks to us, which we had better do: know all that there is to be known by one person about psychoanalysis? Or be as forgetful as we can of the various facts in order that our intuition, however feeble, can have a chance of seeing something, however faint and however obscure, in what the patient is saying to us? We need a kind of mental binocular vision – one eye blind, the other eye with good enough sight. The English admiral, Nelson, once decided that it was wise to 'turn a blind eye' to a signal which had been made, to disobey orders, so that he could say he had not seen the signal. He put the

telescope to his blind eye. Are there not times when it would be just as well if we did not pay too much attention to what we had been told to do? Where no interpretation that we know and that we have been taught (rightly taught by our forebears) seems to illuminate the situation, would it be as well not to see what we are told to do, but to use our own initiative? A most dangerous thing to do! It is arrogant, and in some ways you have to be a bit of a fool to ignore everything that you have been told and imagine that you would know better. But even in our own childhood our parents were sometimes wrong; they knew much more than we did about how to bring up children, but sometimes, when we were being really naughty, we may also have been quite right – no credit to us. Can we mobilize that today when we are grown men and women and are still feeling that we have a lot to learn? We are both the children, as it were, and the grown-ups. Shall we forget what as children we learnt was right, or shall we forget what as grown-ups we have also learnt is right? How can I put to you that I think you ought to use your intuition, however feeble and however misleading and however dangerous the possible wrong path may be?

To look now through the other eye – to return to astronomy. While most people were saying, "This is a terrible radio; I can't possibly hear the programme; the music is drowned by interference", some difficult, perverse, stupid, ignorant individual decided not to listen to the beautiful music and decided instead to listen to the interference. Can you imagine anything more perverse, more stupid than that – not to listen to Bach or Beethoven, but to listen to the interference? Nevertheless, not so many years later somebody built enormous radio telescopes to listen to this interference, to listen to the background noises. So much for our crackpot, stupid, psychotic, perverse and tiresome people! Why are they the people who are picked out to make these discoveries? Why did Galileo go against all the authorities, including important religious authorities, to say that the universe was different from what the representatives of God on earth had said was the fact? We cannot very well say, "Don't let's bother about sane people; the people we really want to encourage are all our lunatics". But we certainly cannot afford to say, "Here are the sane; there are the lunatics". It is a fact that the rebellious psychotic of one moment is almost instantaneously transformed into the sane, charisma-invested Establishment of the next moment.

In this narrow sphere which I might call 'myself', I have to try to have some opinion as to whether I am talking nonsense, or whether I am saying something which it is worth somebody's time to listen to. In the world of thinking when one is doing the kind of thinking which is a prelude to action, and not a substitute for it, one has to decide, even though one has not much to go on, whether it is worth while bothering people by mentioning an idea that one has. It may not be nonsense. That is the dilemma which confronts every one of us in this tiny universe which is the universe of ourselves: a universe which seems to be rather bigger than what, if we could fall back on anatomy and physiology, one could say was 'oneself'. I could have a good idea who I am if I was allowed to consider that my boundary is the same thing as the boundary of my skin. But I wonder whether my mind is really inside my skin with the rest of the works. If we have this psychoanalytic prejudice which is based on the theory that there is something which it is worth calling the human mind, and that it is worth investigating, it may be as important as all these radio interferences which are worth while attending to instead of the programme which our betters have decided is what we ought to listen to.

Our patients tomorrow *mean* to tell us some things and we ought to listen to what they have to say. There is no question of ignoring that. But one could say to the patient, "As well as what you are telling me, I would like to draw attention to what you *don't mean* to say – some stuff which you may think is rubbish. I would like you to have some respect for your mind as you know it and for parts of your mind which you have so far thought were rubbish", and which, according to Melanie Klein, infants split off at an early age (or think they do) and get rid of (or think they do) in the way that they learn to get rid of urine because it is not milk, and faeces because it is not good to eat. One neither drinks nor eats one's mind, but the habit of splitting off can continue; there can still be a wish to be able to say, "I don't want to have anything to do with all the bad stuff that I have ever got rid of". The analyst is saying, "Do have a look at this bad stuff; do have a look at the stuff which you have thought is bad at some time in your life and have tried to get rid of". In psychoanalytic practice 'looking at' is inseparable from experiencing 'turbulence'. This mixed, chaotic confusion may perhaps be the contents of the mental 'black hole'. That is why individuals often prefer 'hearing about' than 'experiencing' psychoanalysis. So before getting rid of the 'black

hole', have one more look at it before you decide that everything that your fathers and mothers told you was rubbish; before getting rid of all our conscious, rational knowledge, let us have a look at that too. In short, let us have a look at the interferences.

There is a complication; you will not be surprised that we shall now look at it. The baby in us hates the grown-up; the hate is mutual. Tomorrow one of our patients may show every sign that he does not want to grow up – he thinks it is a bad idea. He would rather remain a baby all his life. I myself am glad that I am not an official of a psychoanalytic society; let someone else be grown-up and do that job. Equally, the analysand does not want to be reduced, as he fears he will be, to the state of mind of child or infant. But it is not something which is over and done with once and for all. We remain human animals: sometimes young human animals; sometimes one can say we are grown-up human animals. Can they be made to work together? Can they co-operate enough to produce, to use metaphor, binocular vision, bi-mental perception? Are we on the right track as analysts? We assume that there is a mind, that it is worth spending time and money on it, that it is worth spending time on that particular specimen of the mind that we shall come across tomorrow. That is what *we* think. But we are a very, very small minority.

Q: You have stressed the importance of respect for mystery, and of the psychoanalyst's intuition. How can one reconcile this with the preference given to medical background in selection of candidates, since this training generally gives an organic-based, rather than an intuitive, attitude. Would it not be better to give preference to those with a humanities background?

Bion: This problem always exercised the British Society and was a matter for continual debate. In general it was agreed that one third membership should be lay members, the main requisite being that all the members should show some signs of a sincere devotion to the work. If a person was medically qualified it showed that they had undergone a discipline. The lay member, likewise, was expected to know what it was to be part of a mentally disciplined organization, such as having studied enough to get a degree in, say, philosophy. There is a lot to be said for the medical discipline as a preparation for the practice of psychoanalysis; doctors are familiar with anxious and frightened people. But on the other hand, they may be handicapped

by a materialist prejudice. To exaggerate: you can palpate the abdomen and you may feel a lump in it; if you cannot palpate the mind, then it is absurd to say there is anything wrong with the mind.

We must hope that our selection committees may exclude the worst and not exclude the best. This problem of selection has to be a matter of endless review; we have never answered the question once and for all, nor can we find an answer which absolves us from the need of thinking out every case on its merits.

Q: I would like you to tell us something about the black hole of silence in an analytic session; also something about the curious light of hallucination by which one perceives the invisible.

Bion: When we listen to a piece of music, included in it are the pauses, which in English one calls 'rests', but they are part of the music. I was once asked about groups, "Do you ever do anything except talk?" I said, "Yes, we are silent". I think that the questioner, who was a doctor of philosophy, thought I was being funny. But I was being serious. A group of people are not always talking; they are sometimes silent and that silence is a part of what they are doing. In English we even have an expression, 'a pregnant silence'. It expresses it very well. There are some silences which are nothing; they are mathematically zero. But there are times when a zero is put between the figures 1 and 1 and it turns it into one hundred and one. Similarly, there are some silences which turn the preceding sounds and the succeeding sounds into a valuable communication. A good poet uses ordinary words and ordinary silences, but the use to which he puts them turns both the words and the silences into something which is extra-ordinary. In analysis you may be able to distinguish the silences which you have a chance of observing. In 'practice' you can; in 'theory' you cannot.

It is difficult to distinguish between zero, meaning nothing, and something which is important, between a silence which is empty thought, and a silence which is pregnant. If I were talking about physical sexual intercourse and the consequences – pregnancy and so on – these words would be all right. But I am not meaning to talk about anatomy or physiology: I am talking about a mental experience. The problem is to interpret the silence, or to interpret what seems to be a silence. John Rickman described to me a patient who covered himself completely with the blanket, with the exception of one

eye – that was all that Rickman had to interpret. It is no good trying to look that up in analytic books; it is no good asking anybody else what the interpretation is. You have to go there, you have to have a patient who behaves like that, and you have to be able to stand it long enough for something to emerge. Freud describes how a mathematician has to look at a mass of meaningless, disjointed, disconnected facts until he thinks he sees a pattern and can write that pattern down in a mathematical formula.

What kind of analysis is required to interpret the behaviour of a patient who uses silence extensively, the patient who comes to you, says nothing at all, and walks out apparently satisfied at the end of the session? If we are going to restrict ourselves to verbal intercourse between the analyst and analysand, I do not think we are going to get far with that kind of patient. The analyst's 'restricted' statement and the patient's 'silence' leave too big a gap and no link between the two sides; 101 remains 11. It is not one hundred and one; it is not eleven. Someone will have to invent the language of silence – the unexplicit silence.

I had a patient who, when I spoke to him, would watch my words float over the room until they made a pattern on the curtain – so he thought. When his behaviour became comprehensible to me, although he never said a word, I could try to put it into words and it seemed to have some result. That is the kind of problem we are up against. We say, "This patient is being hostile", but we may be using the wrong psychoanalysis to interpret that silence. When you see your patient tomorrow, not only do you have to pay attention to what is going on, but you may have to invent the tools with which to do that analysis while you are doing the analysis: like a Galileo who has to invent a telescope, make a telescope, and grind his own lenses in order to study the matter he wants to investigate.

Q: What would 'interferences' be in psychoanalytic terms?

Bion: When you are talking to your patient you can sometimes see and feel that he is not attending to you. At the same time you can feel that he is attending to *something;* the conversation between the patient and analyst is being interfered with. That is what I mean by interference. Are you going to pay attention to what he tells you, or what your books have told you, or are you going to pay attention to the interference? This is the difficulty about practical psychoanalysis; this

is the difficulty about tomorrow's sessions. It is no good saying, "You are not free-associating", or, "This patient doesn't talk to me, I can't do anything about him". You can be silent; and you can listen. You can stop talking so that you can have a chance to hear what is going on. What you have to listen to then is psychoanalytic 'interference', just as somebody had to listen to radio interference. There is little chance of progress in these areas which we ordinarily call psychosis, or border-line psychosis, until we listen to what is happening – in this sense of being able to be silent when it is necessary.

You have illustrated the need for a language in your question, only you are asking me to invent the tool with which to ask, as well as answer, your question when you ask me, "What . . .?" There are no psychoanalytic terms known to me, any more than they are known to you. We both have to borrow from other disciplines.

Q: I would like to hear more of your comments on curiosity. Are there different kinds of curiosity?

Bion: What *I* think about curiosity, or different kinds of curiosity, is not important. You must have respect for yourself and your capacity for listening to, or looking at what is going on in your consulting room. That is the place where you will find the answer – not from me, not from any book, not from any colleague. When you sit there being curious you may have a feeling that the patient is now being silent in a different way. Suppose the patient begins to talk and ask you questions. You may feel, "This curiosity is a request for help". The same question may be repeated over and over again, like the patient who said to me, "I don't know what I mean" [see p. 18]. While you listen to the patient being curious you could say, "This patient is asking these questions to make me angry". Later, "This patient is asking me these questions because he wants to evoke some information about me". In that way you could note the different kinds of curiosity. That would be on the right track – asking me is not; going off to the library is not. The best place to find the answer to that question is in your consulting room listening to the patient being curious. I shall look forward to the book of your lectures on this subject. That is more important than the book you are reading now.

Q: Do you think the feeling of beauty can be taken in analytic work as an indication of truth, as Einstein considered it an indication of scientific truth?

Bion: I think you must be referring to something like Keats's statement "Truth is beauty, beauty truth". Scientists tend to feel that they are concerned only with the truth, only with the facts. Recently there has been considerable criticism of Linus Pauling for saying that vitamin C was a cure for the common cold. Doctors said, "What nonsense this is!" It is a dangerous thing to tell a Nobel prize winner that he is talking nonsense. He may be – nonsense is nobody's private property. But a Nobel prize winner will be likely to have a very good answer to that challenge, and Linus Pauling was able to show medically qualified men, often highly medically qualified, that he was not being unscientific.

Suppose one changes what I call the 'vertex'. We move off the scientific vertex to the aesthetic vertex. The definition of truth may be all right in logic, in scientific method, but that definition may not be applicable in the universe of discourse to which we have changed when we have changed the vertex to aesthetic, to the standards of beauty or truth in the aesthetic sphere. If I were to draw a picture of a human being I think you might be justified in saying "What on earth is that? That isn't like any animal I have seen on earth." But suppose Picasso drew it. One could say, "Well, if I want a portrait of my wife, or my husband, I don't think I'm going to get Picasso to do the job. I don't think that is at all a pretty picture." But the extraordinary thing is that when you are looking at a genuine Picasso you get a feeling, "You know, I think I see what this chap means – it's not quite what I could interpret as 'that's my wife', but I can say 'that is about something; that isn't about nothing'". That painting by Picasso is not adequately mathematized by the zero 0. You may feel that you do not really know enough to be able to understand what Picasso shows you.

You may give your analysand a correct interpretation, an interpretation which you are sure expresses the truth, and yet the patient may say, "I don't understand this psychoanalytic nonsense!" You can only say, "Well, you feel that it is nonsense; but perhaps you may feel it is 'non-sense' later" – and leave it at that. Many of our interpretations which are obvious to us as psychoanalysts may seem extremely obscure to the patient. He may sincerely say, "I think it's nonsense". But sometimes analysis is accompanied by the growth of mutual respect. The parents may have had something to teach the child. Today the grown-up child knows more than he used to know, but he

is also the child who could teach him something. After all, the child must have known enough to have grown up and still to be surviving. Sometimes analysis is accompanied by growth of the analysand's respect for himself.

One can identify oneself with the analyst, or one can identify oneself with the analysand. One can feel, "I can understand that he doesn't understand my interpretations, but as a matter of fact I have no reason to alter my interpretation; I think it is true. I can quite see that he thinks it's nonsense. Time will tell." Time is telling.

5

We have all experienced the patient who says, "I can't think of anything to talk about". That is an extraordinary state of affairs, for no one has said that any subject is debarred from discussion and there is a whole universe to talk about if the patient feels so inclined. The psychoanalyst is not in the same position although he is present for the same fifty minutes and in the same room; his working occupation limits his range of discussion. The minimum range suggested by Freud was discussion of the Oedipus situation, the interpretation of dreams, and sex. The work would indeed be limited if it in fact applied only to that threefold area, but each of these main topics splits up into a number of subdivisions, and these in turn become further subdivided, and so on, until before long there are an enormous number of possible interpretations. It depends upon whether you take the restricted view of the common root of the interpretations, or the various varieties. The mental domain is wider still when it is considered that the main categories change according to the vertex: for example, religious, aesthetic and scientific.

The conversation which takes place in the consulting room should resemble real life; painting should produce pictures which in some way remind you of the world we live in; similarly with sculpture. But people change, and a Greek who admired the sculpture of Hermes of Praxiteles would not understand a sculpture by Rodin who attempts to portray the character rather than the physical appearance of a person.

Already these topics have expanded in an alarming manner into a vast area of discussion. It diminishes equally rapidly when the patient says, "I can't think of anything to talk about". What are we to say, what are we to think about this situation? Does the patient

regard the range of talking as too limited? Is he somebody who says, "I can't talk. It doesn't give me any scope. I could play my violin to you – then I would have something to say." We may think, "This patient is denying something", but that can be an over-simplified and restricted interpretation. It is not enough to say he is denying reality – we need to know what he is affirming. We already have seen that if he is affirming reality we need to know what he is excluding. (I am doubtful about terms like 'excluding' or 'denying' in the consulting room, though they are useful in discussion about analysis.)

After the patient has said that he has nothing to talk about we wait – in 'expectant' silence. What are the possibilities? As you see the patient lying there saying nothing, it may occur to you that his silence is intended to find out something. Is he saying nothing so that the analyst will have to ask a question? The analysand will then find out what the analyst is thinking, or whether he is in a bad temper or not, or if he cares whether the analysand has come or not. You may feel, "This silence is evocative. I think this patient is waiting to see who lets which cat out of the bag first." We know nothing about whether it is right or wrong, but if you wait, your 'hunch' may become a certainty. If someone asked you why you thought the patient was being evocative you could only say, "If you had been in the consulting room with me you wouldn't have any doubt about it any more than I have". In a scientific meeting it is difficult indeed to explain that. That is why people often get irritated; it is just the sort of experience calculated to make everybody feel bad-tempered.

Freud says that it is important to be able to pay attention to the patient; to watch, listen and hear what is going on until a pattern emerges. Poincaré says that a lot of meaningless and unconnected, discrete facts make him, when he has contemplated them for long enough, think of a mathematical formula; then he realizes that the mathematical formula explains many facts which have not been explained before, and then, if you are lucky, it also explains a whole lot of facts which you had not considered. In analysis one sometimes hits on an interpretation which makes clear a lot which one has not understood so far; not only that – it also explains a lot of things which happen in the next three or four sessions and which have not happened before. When this occurs the analysis seems to progress rapidly. We are so used to analysis taking a long time; but some things happen with incredible speed. For example, you give the patient an

interpretation for what seems to be the hundredth time – without the slightest effect. He says much the same thing as usual, "I haven't really got anything to talk about". You try again, and just as you are getting exasperated and are thinking, "Oh, dear! Number hundred and one, hundred and two, hundred and three" – counting interpretations is quite as effective as counting sheep for sending you to sleep – the patient starts talking to you and you think, "My goodness, he's woken up! He sounds alive. His intonation is quite different. Instead of talking in that terribly dreary, boring manner which makes it almost impossible for me to stand the experience, he is talking in a lively, interesting manner – this same patient who had nothing to say." You are liable to be so surprised, so gratified that you either forget that the situation is probably just as dangerous as it was before, or you fail to recognize that the patient has altered and fall into the pattern of looking forward to a never-changing, never-ending analysis. You need to be able to stand the fact that the situation which has in fact changed a great deal – the patient has changed a great deal – has in some respects not changed at all. If, for example, you are satisfied that that patient is a dangerously irresponsible man, he is almost certainly still a dangerously irresponsible man, but the variety has changed. He has four, or fifty ways of being irresponsible and dangerous – instead of only one. To put it in more theoretical language, the basic things do not alter; art, science, religion do not alter. These are fundamental characteristics of the human animal. The superficial variables, to use a mathematical term, do alter.

I can describe this situation in a simple, pictorial way, thus: – $\psi(\xi)$. ψ stands for psyche and is constant; ξ is a variable; it goes on changing, changing, changing the whole time. The totality, say a man or a woman, remains recognizably the same, constant, otherwise you would not know that this patient had come to see you yesterday, the day before that and so on; nor would the patient. But there are also elements which are variable in spite of all the constancy. In analysis we have a chance of seeing the perpetual mystery of this peculiar process, described by Confucius (translated by Ezra Pound) who talks about adult wisdom consisting in seeing how things grow and change, grinding in the "mortar of the mind". The interesting and pleasurable component of psychoanalysis is that one has a chance of watching the way that people grow. In family life, similarly, someone

with a chance of paternity or maternity can watch how children grow – a fascinating and rewarding experience.

The child does not have that experience, because it cannot understand that it has much to do with growth. It is one of the reasons why a patient can be dominated by the feelings of fear of his being extremely destructive, of his feeling that even if he loves something he loves it in the way that he loves his food – he chews it up and turns it into faeces and urine. That is fairly easily and quickly understood by the child, but it is a long time before a child is able to learn that as a result of what he eats he does in fact grow. By the time he is able to stand against the wall and see that last time he was four feet three, but that now he is four feet three and a half inches tall, the conviction that he destroys what he eats has become firmly established. Analysis would be like being able to introduce him to the idea that he has grown, and introducing that idea to his feelings of depression, hopelessness, boredom and anger. He has often heard "You *are* a naughty boy; why do you break everything up?" He cannot say, "I have only been breaking up my breakfast – or my lunch or my tea – because I hope to be bigger" – as a child he cannot argue like that. These two people – the destructive, hopeless, despairing person, and the creative, constructive one who grows – do not meet unless we can manage to introduce them to each other in analysis. We are not attempting to show the patient how bad he is or to make him feel he will never be any good. We are trying to show him why he is so depressed, and that although he may know nothing about it he actually makes something out of his food which is not only faeces and urine. The girl has a chance of feeling that she may be able to make babies and that can bring a certain degree of relief. The boy, on the other hand, hears that his little sister can make babies, but that he cannot. It is easy for him to understand that; it is much more difficult for him to understand what good he is. Even in genital intercourse the man can feel that his contribution is slight indeed; even if he can have intercourse, what he does is very little compared with what the breast does – or his mother, or his sister. The analytic experience is not simply to find out about the boy or girl, the man or woman, in the sense of finding out what their faults and mistakes are. It also means giving them a chance to see that it may be perfectly true that they smash things up, but it is not the whole of the truth.

Q: Do you not think that the difference between theory and practice in psychoanalysis is due to the exercise of the profession by human beings, and that the difficulties over theory and practice are partly due to the analyst's fears of his own unconscious – thus he shies away from theory and memory? When you suggest forgetting theories and preconceived notions, are you not asking us to rely on the working of our unconscious, our mental apparatus, where not only Thanatos but Eros lives?

Bion: If we were not humans we would be no good as psychoanalysts. If we are human beings then it would be foolish to think that we escape the failings that we shall find in our analysands. In analysis we hope that we may be able to see the immediate difficulty which the analysand is having; but there is no one to whom the analyst can turn to help him with the mistakes that *he is* making. One can only hope that our own mistakes will be at a minimum. At some time we are sure to have a patient who stimulates our weak points. In other words, we are the analysts who the patient should not have. But we do not always have the parents who would be the best kind of parents for us; nor do we always have the kind of children who would be the best possible thing for us. When it comes to a question of choice, we do have a chance to choose the company we keep. We can choose what sort of professional society to belong to. We can choose, to some extent, the kind of parents with whom we would like to mix – even if they are somebody else's parents. That is why, in childhood at any rate, the disadvantages of having a particular mother and father are modified by the fact that we can work out some of our problems with a grandparent, or an aunt or uncle. Let us hope that something of the same kind applies to grandchildren and nephews and nieces. If we are not having quite the experience that we feel is good for us with our children, at least we might be able to have a better time with our grandchildren and nephews and nieces. The alternative is to make the best use of the kind of parents or children we have. Some people can do that. It is not that they are better off, they are better off because they can make good use of their misfortunes. Sometimes the individual has the misfortune, so to speak, to be very fortunate. A girl can be so beautiful that everybody automatically admires her. To be as beautiful as that a girl requires a great deal of wisdom. So often she seems to be a fool. It is difficult to realize that you have

to have a lot of wisdom to make the best of your misfortunes; it is much more difficult to see that you may have to be very wise to survive being well-endowed. Such a person may get so used to having everything without any difficulty that when they have to deal with the real world, which after all stays very much the same, they go to pieces – they have had so little experience of making the best of a bad job. They only have the experience of making the best of a good job, or even of making the worst of it.

Q: Could you say more about your reference, during supervision, to 'unborn babies'.

Bion: The poet Bridges says in *The Testament of Beauty* that wisdom consists in the "masterly administration of the unforeseen". The unforeseen is, in my analytic experience, one example of 'unborn baby'. In analysis the 'unborn babies' are the ideas which have not yet cropped up, but may do so at any moment. They may be good ideas, or they may be bad ideas, in much the same way as a baby might turn out to be a nice child or a nasty one. The analysand should become capable of coping with the 'unborn babies', the ones which have never been born, but which might be born at any time. If one has respect for persons, then every patient is potentially an 'unborn baby'; any idea is an unborn idea if nobody has formulated it so far.

This discussion is full of examples of what I mean by 'unborn babies'. I leave it to the reader to 'administer' those which he had not foreseen.

Q: Bearing in mind your references to the respect due to the human mind and personality, what do you think are the factors or motives that should lead one to fail a candidate?

Bion: In all my years of experience of selection in the British Psychoanalytical Society I cannot say I have found the answer to that question. We do not qualify everybody and sometimes I think that amongst the ones we have not qualified are, unfortunately, people who are a great deal better than those we have qualified. We have to make these decisions, making use of such intelligence as we have, but we may not have enough wisdom or intelligence to make the right decision. It is a human failing; the wrong people are chosen to be members of a football team, or to be surgeons or physicians, or parsons, or prime ministers. The supply of prime ministers is small,

but it is extraordinary how, even so, we can choose the worst ones. A friend of mine used to talk about what he called 'self-selected unsuitables': someone is put forward for a job because he has chosen himself for that job. There is a large supply of them. In the army there were people with self-inflicted decorations – inflicted on themselves as a way of getting out of certain very unpleasant difficulties.

I would not feel disposed to qualify somebody who disliked people unless the people were likeable. Most of the time we have to deal with people who have failed, or who are not very good at their job. Those are the people that we have to make able to be good at their job. Someone may have made a mess of everything he has ever had – education, fortune, married life, all of it – and yet will expect an analyst to make a success of him; and the analyst is expected to make a success of making a success of such a person. He will not do that if he dislikes people.

Q: I would like you to say something about the use of counter-transference in analysis.

Bion: Counter-transference is a technical term, but as often happens the technical term gets worn away and turns into a kind of worn-out coin which has lost its value. We should keep these things in good working condition. The theory about a counter-transference is that it is the transference relationship which the analyst has to the patient without knowing he has it. You will hear analysts say, "I don't like that patient, but I can make use of my counter-transference". He cannot use his counter-transference. He may be able to make use of the fact that he dislikes the patient, but that is not counter-transference. There is only one thing to do with counter-transference and that is to have it analysed. One cannot make use of one's counter-transference in the consulting room; it is a contradiction in terms. To use the term in that way means that one would have to invent a new term to do the work which used to be done by the word 'counter-transference'. It is one's *unconscious* feelings about the patient, and since it is unconscious there is nothing we can do about it. If the counter-transference *is* operating in the analytic session the analysand is unlucky – and so is the analyst. The time to have dealt with it was in the past, in the analyst's own analysis. We can only hope that it does not use us too much and that we have had enough analysis to keep the number of unconscious operations to a minimum.

6

Democritus of Abdera first put forward the theory that the brain had something to do with thought. Even today, some two thousand years later, we are still in a rudimentary stage of knowledge of the functions of the central nervous system. There are extensive accumulations of knowledge and experience of the anatomy and physiology of the brain. It is hard to say, however, what are the anatomical or physiological structures of the mind – assuming there is one – or what relation exists between the mind and the central nervous system. For example, has the sympathetic system, or the para-sympathetic system, anything to do with the mind or the personality? Is the mind (a theoretical concept) as important as the anatomical and physiological central nervous system?

As psychoanalysts we are concerned with trying to formulate why, and in what way, we think the 'mind' important. We assume that the vast amount of psychoanalytic literature is a product of the mind, a way of delineating the mind as a reality, as the reality that corresponds to the theory that there is such a thing as a mind or personality. One might argue that if there is a mind then it should be possible to find some event which could be regarded as the product of the mind, a result of the existence of a mind. Suppose that the psychotic person could produce some physical representation, would that representation betray the presence or the nature of that particular kind of mind? Would pictures drawn by a psychotic all betray a similarity so that if one looked at hundreds of pictures one would say, "Yes, I can put fifty, sixty, eighty of these drawings together and I think they would all of them show certain characteristics"? And if I could interpret what is the pattern of those characteristics, then I would discover that they were all the product of a certain kind of

mind. Criminologists are confident that finger prints provide a means for identification of a physical being. They can compare, apparently to their satisfaction, the number of points which have to correspond to identify the one print with another. We have no similar scheme by which we can compare one mind with another. This is so even in what appears to be such a gross difference as might exist between male and female.

The refinement which I visualize might show the mind could betray still more subtle, physical states, or even the germ of the physical state, before it emerged so grossly as to be discernible to sensuous investigation. Note that I am postulating the prediction not of psychoanalytic developments, but of psychoanalytic developments which might betray a physical future. They are not mutually exclusive. The statistical formulation known as the Poisson distribution is an example: the distribution which is characteristic of extremely rare events, events which are scattered over a great area of time, or a great number of human beings, but are characterized by certain mathematical patterns. That would be something much too subtle for interpretation by a single individual, but it might be possible if the knowledge was accumulated over a period, shall we say, of a thousand years. In this way the accumulated wisdom of the race could discern certain patterns which were characteristic of the individual. Clearly this depends on something more durable than the individual as known to psychoanalysts.

Thus, we might be able to say, "This pattern is a pattern which is characteristic not of some physical disease which has not yet betrayed itself, but is characteristic of a certain kind of mind which has not yet betrayed itself". It depends upon what we could call 'direction'. In one direction it could betray a state of mind as yet unborn. In tomorrow's session it is necessary to know what state of mind is unfolding itself in front of the analyst. Further questions to be resolved are: is it a past, future, or contemporary state which is casting its shadow on the present screen on which we hope to delineate it? Stating this in psychoanalytic terms: the screen is the transference; the interpretation is to determine what it is that is being 'transferred'. In pictorial terms: there is the shadow; where is the source of illumination? The reader must translate these statements into language which experience shows him is most serviceable to himself.

We are all concerned with seeing patients, but what we see may not be comprehensible to us as analysts, because our lives do not last long enough. However, as parts of a race or a nation our work might be significant. As individuals we do not know much about what part of the whole we are, any more than one of the microscopic parts of our anatomy knows what part it is of the human body. Our work as psychoanalysts depends on our having great respect for the individual, but it is difficult to say in what way that individual matters as one cell out of a totality. It suggests that we need to be very sensitive to the observable facts. We should now be inventing a method of communication which will be comprehensible to our successors. It is not a matter of much importance to any of us as individuals, although it might turn out to be important one day, just as the heliocentric theories of Aristarchus turned out to be of great importance many generations later when people were able to produce a telescope, or a microscope, or take photographs of the spectra and notice the Fraunhofer lines and interpret them. All that depends on what turns out to be a combined operation of people who could never have known each other. Consider a matter like the Fraunhofer line typical of sodium: it is now known that the Fraunhofer lines have widths – not exactly what had been expected – and consequently that particular form of spectrum has to be analysed in a new fashion. It has a resemblance to the old fashion, but it is a new fashion. The Fraunhofer line is an example of 'interference' which someone has noted and studied instead of white light. "Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, stains the white radiance of Eternity" [Shelley, *Adonais*]. We human beings, for all our self-importance, are a 'stain' on 'eternity'. Present-day analysis may one day become comprehensible to our successors.

If we are sufficiently sensitive to what goes on in the consulting room we may some time be able to understand what we see. I say, 'what we see'; of course we do not 'see'; there is nothing, as far as we know, which is visible in the range of ordinary sight. Let us use a term like 'insight' and say, it is still not within the range of ordinary insight – although it might be within that range if we can go on observing it through time and through generations of people. If we pay sufficient attention to what is being communicated to us by the patient other than verbally, say, by the use of gestures, we might increase our understanding during the short space of one working

life. If we could remain sensitive to the importance of the individual without being blinded by our own importance as the analyst, we might increase our contribution to human life – as did the inventor of the wheel, that unknown genius.

For example, a patient comes into the consulting room and does not say a word; perhaps he keeps on coming for six days, or six weeks, or six months without saying anything. If one can stand it, then after six months one might begin to think, "I have an idea about the pattern of this silence. I wouldn't like to say at any given moment why his silence today is not the same as his silence on Friday, and it won't be the same tomorrow. But I think that if I can go on listening to him being silent" – in the way that Freud talks about the importance of going on being present in the consulting room with the patient for long enough – "I begin to be aware of a pattern". Although we cannot say whether we have heard anything, we could say, "It has an effect upon me – not on my counter-transference – and I think I have had a respect for the silence of the session". If we cannot respect the silence – "I can't be bothered with this person; I can't come here day after day and have him lying on the couch, saying nothing" – then there is no chance of making any further progress. It is difficult to explain to someone not present why we think that we could hear the difference between one silence and another. The patient, however, *is* present.

As a somewhat gross description of the difficulty, let us suppose I have watched a child patient for six weeks; someone says, "Why do you waste your time doing that? Anybody can see it's an autistic child." Full stop. Finish. The diagnosis is simple – "It's an autistic child". All I can say is, "Well, *I* am an autistic analyst". If I want to make it sound respectable I can say, "I am a specialist in treating autistic children", or, "I am a specialist in treating adolescents", or, "I am a specialist in treating latency children". That may make it respectable, but it explains nothing. If I were honest about it I would have to say, "I listen to people who are silent for six weeks" and run the risk of being likened to the lunatic in the old joke who said, "Come inside", to the 'sane' person 'outside'. One has to tolerate the pressure from outside and be prepared to tolerate what it feels like to be inside that 'silence' as the patient can. The temptation is to rush to premature, precocious comprehension and diagnosis such as 'autistic child', 'adolescent', 'adult'. We have to say, "Well, yes, he told me all about going

to see the latest football match. I wasn't listening. But I did hear what he was not telling me, and that silence made quite a different noise; the pattern of what he didn't say showed that. . . ." When we see our patient tomorrow we must listen to what he says and to what he does *not* say; one has to 'intuit'. "I was listening to the silence; I was listening to the interference; I was listening to what came between him and me; I can now draw you a picture in words (or in painting, or in any other technique of human activity), a representation of what I intuited during so many minutes, or weeks, or years."

We need to be wide open to what is going on in the session. (This is what I think Freud means by 'free-floating attention'.) The unobserved, incomprehensible, inaudible, ineffable part of the session is the material from which will come the future interpretation that you give in so many weeks', or months', or years' time. The immediate interpretation was settled some time ago – one does not know when. We must concern ourselves not with what the patient is 'like', but with what the patient is 'becoming' during the session, and we must be able to stand the pressure of watching that process.

Q: I should like to have your comments on the following clinical material. The patient was a twenty-year-old man, a teacher of electronics, physics and mathematics, unmarried, the youngest of three children. He complained bitterly of his father's jealousy of his relationship with the mother. He said it had ruined his childhood. He was especially fond of food; a well-prepared meal drove him almost into a state of ecstasy. He said his mother is a wonderful cook. On the other hand, he sometimes existed on the simplest rations, feeling no need for dainties or liquids. Sometimes he had his meals away from home, choosing the worst food or bad cooking, eating without appetite. He became fascinated by a young man whom he described as having a long face, a thin pointed beard, a thin moustache and long, silky hair. He followed this young man to his apartment where they had promiscuous intercourse. He said the young man's face was round and not long as he had first thought, and was similar to his father's face. He said my face was also round. I said he was thinking that my face was also longish. Later I said he was repeating a recent similar situation. He looked deeply depressed and remained silent and withdrawn. I said he was reliving a situation he had lived through before, but

of which he could not speak – the primary relationship of breast feeding. He then looked at the Picasso painting, *Maternité*, and said "This picture disturbs me". I said he was now establishing a relationship between the time he had lost in infancy when he could not talk, and the present when he is able to communicate. He said he talks a lot, but the content of his speech is null. He could not distinguish between what he had lived through in the past when he was unable to define his impressions, and the present.

On returning from a journey undertaken to participate in a meeting of the faculty of the school in which he taught, he told me this story. He was driving his car at medium speed when a drunken woman jumped from the sidewalk directly in front of his car, and he, unable to brake, hit her. Witnesses said she had deliberately thrown herself in front of his car. As a result he was extremely upset and avoided any reminder of his past.

At present he is going through a difficult period in which he tries to escape from reality, avoiding a deep and intense existence. He cannot listen to music – which he formerly greatly appreciated – and abhors food. He avoids looking at the breasts of any woman; he relates the bad food which he eats in restaurants to the breasts of any woman.

This is the present situation – the difficulty of establishing this relationship so distant in time and so near his reality. When an interpretation makes him feel this relation with the past he becomes confused.

Bion: This patient is terrified of a guilty conscience with which he cannot cope. He feels he is responsible for the murder of the woman; he feels that he is reduced to travel to prove to himself his mobility and freedom to escape from 'the woman' who, as he always expects, is able to catch him up wherever, whatever, and whenever, and get herself murdered by him. His escape by aid of the onlookers is felt to be adding insult to injury by evading being held responsible for the murder of the woman. I suspect that he feels similar guilt about any progress in the analysis which might be conducive to further life; the more profitable, the more guilty and the more likely to be 'fascinated' – being fascinated meaning what we would call repetition compulsion. But with him it would be continued acting-out until a disaster, which is irretrievable, is precipitated.

One of the problems with this patient is, what can he see? In the consulting room the analyst can have an idea that what the patient sees must be much the same as what the analyst sees – so one would think. But either the patient cannot describe what he sees, what this experience is, so that the analyst is able to understand what he is able to see, or he is unable to see what the analyst sees because he is seeing something different. He cannot in fact be seeing something entirely different; he is in the consulting room and the analyst has no reason to doubt, therefore, that the patient is able to see, hear and smell much the same kind of thing as the analyst can, because they have both come to the same consulting room at the same time. There must be a certain similarity between what the analyst sees and what the patient sees. In that case, why does the patient not say something, or make noises, or make signs which indicate that he and his analyst have the same experience at the same time and in the same place? The possibility is that for some reason so far undemonstrated, in addition to what the analyst sees (not instead of it) the patient sees something else, hears something else, feels something else. What is this patient seeing, or feeling, or apprehending? It is reasonable to suppose that he sees, feels, apprehends at least two different stories at the same time. The same fifty minutes, the same consulting room, the same day, he sees the same thing as the analyst, but he sees, he apprehends something else which is different. If it were a question of visual sight the analyst could say, "You have put two different slides into your projector at the same time, so you get a confused image". He seems to be having an experience which differs from the analyst's experience. One could account for that by saying, "Well, the analyst is one person, this patient is another. Therefore, they don't see the same thing, any more than one person on one side of a mountain sees the same thing as another person on the other side of the mountain." But this, again, is a pictorial method of talking, or even a pictorial method of thinking. As far as one can tell, when this patient says he is confused it could be comprehensible if he saw or experienced two or more experiences at the same time and at the same place. If he tried to say what he is experiencing he would either have to invent a new language, which would be incomprehensible, or use a language which says two different pictures at the same time. In so far as the analyst is capable of understanding what the patient is talking about, he likewise gets an impression of two or more different stories about

the same fact and at the same time. Assuming for the moment that that is correct, what is the analyst to say to the patient? This is where the practice of psychoanalysis is so different from the theories about psychoanalysis. (It is also a situation which, if the analysis is still going on, raises the problem of the wisdom of talking further about this case in a meeting, not in the intimacy of psychoanalysis. Indeed, the whole problem of the scientific meetings of psychoanalytic societies is implicit in this particular question and answer.) I do not know what the analyst is going to say, because the language the analyst has to use was not invented or manufactured for the purpose of analysing patients. The language that the analyst has to use is the language of ordinary conversational communication which is useful in everyday life. But it is not appropriate for purposes of having an analysis. Anyone who had never heard of psychoanalysis would say of the analyst and patient, "There are two people having a conversation – simply one person talking to another". But there is a good deal of reason to suppose that a psychoanalysis is a unique experience. What is to be done about that experience? What language is to be spoken in the course of analysis? What was Aristarchus to say about his guess that the world goes round the sun? What would he have said to an ancient Egyptian who believed that the sun goes round the world, underneath, and turns up again on the other side next morning? *He* had to wait two thousand years for someone to invent a telescope. What is the analyst to say if he has to wait two thousand years to give this patient an interpretation in the correct language?

I believe that if I listen to this patient, if I am prepared to hear what he has to say, if I am prepared to see what I can see if the patient comes to me, then, although the patient cannot understand what I say to him if I am using ordinary language, he may be able to understand the meaning of the fact that I have not run away, I have not shut him up in a mental hospital and I am ready to arrange to see him tomorrow. None of this is expressed verbally, but it is possible, nevertheless, that the fact that the analyst has stayed in the room so far and will probably still be in the room tomorrow, may itself constitute a language which the analyst does not understand, which the patient does not understand, but which the two people together will have to make explicit. If that is right, then today's session, tomorrow's session and all the other sessions which have yet to happen, may have an effect on the patient. If the analyst is prepared to listen, have his eyes open,

his ears open, his senses open, his intuition open, it has an effect upon the analysand who seems to grow; the session provides the mind of the patient with what, if it were a matter of physical experience, one could say was 'good food'.

The analyst also has to be able to tolerate ignorance – his own – and his being in the presence of a mystery, a half-truth [see p. 48 – Negative Capability]. This seems to make it possible for the mind to have an experience in which it can grow. If the baby has a mother who is able to tolerate being frightened that the child is dying, or that it is mad, or stupid, then the baby seems to feel better for having such a mother. If she cannot tolerate it, neither can the baby who consequently seems unable to grow mentally. If it is going to grow it has to do so in a peculiar way; this, in turn, has the effect of making it grow a certain shape. Later, someone will say, 'psychotic', or 'schizophrenic', or 'borderline case' – it sounds just like a diagnosis.

But can the analyst tolerate growth? Can the community tolerate growth? Can a nation tolerate growth? Or does it get so frightened of it that it has to say, "Thus far and no further. No more progress please. I don't like it"? Or can the nation, or the group, or the individual say, "I'll put up with it. I can tolerate watching something grow"? It is not a brilliant achievement, but it does include the risk that the growth is pathological-mentally carcinogenic. That possibility contributes to the frightening quality of the analytic experience for both parties. That quality contributes to the need to prove that the analytic development is benign. It also contributes to finding a mental drug which may enable analysts to go to sleep no matter how dangerous the situation.

7

The following true story illustrates a number of points with which we are probably all familiar, and may get more familiar as time goes on.

I was asked to see a young man of twenty-one who was said to be very intelligent; not much the matter with him and probably a suitable case for psychoanalysis. A psychiatrist friend who knew him also spoke highly of him; although he seemed recently not to be fulfilling his early promise, he was most amusing, entertaining and, once again, just the person to profit by psychoanalysis.

The mother of the patient was opposed to psychoanalysis which she felt was unnecessary. She said that her son had always done well, there was nothing much the matter with him and she disapproved of this process of psychoanalysis. But she did not maintain her objections.

The father did not hold with psychoanalysis at all. He felt it was one of these fads which, like most fads, young people wasted time and money on instead of getting on with their work; he thought the boy would be better employed getting on with his university career.

Most people who knew him, or knew of him, also agreed that he was very amusing and on one or two occasions, notably on his twenty-first birthday, he had made witty and amusing speeches. I agreed to see the patient who was then just over twenty-one.

He was, indeed, co-operative; he missed no sessions and spoke freely. He said he did not get on well with his sister who was, in his opinion, a terrible liar.

I had occasion, before he came for analysis, also to see the sister who spoke freely, easily and intelligently, and told me a long story about herself and her educational achievements; she was two years younger than the patient.

The father asked me on one occasion what I thought of his daughter. I said she seemed to be a gifted and interesting person; whereupon he looked at me as if he thought I was what he expected – and that was nothing welcome. It was clear that he thought me an awful fool. When he was leaving he said, "Doctor, you realize, don't you, that this girl hasn't spoken a word of truth from start to finish – the whole thing is a fabrication". He obviously felt that I must be a fool not to have realized that none of this story was true.

The father also told me that his son was about to get engaged to a girl of whom he had a poor opinion. He said, "I hope you will be able to put an end to all that nonsense. You can take it from me that this girl is a bad lot and is out to get his money which she thinks he has a great deal of. As a matter of fact, he hasn't got a penny and I don't intend to let him have any, because I don't think he is at all sensible. I have had this girl watched by a private detective agency and they have given me a report on her which confirms my worst fears." I said I was sometimes not very convinced by these detective agency reports. The father thought this was also pretty stupid of me. I said, "The detective agency knows that you are suspicious of the girl and it is very easy for them to find out plenty of facts which would make you anxious, so that you would be likely to want to go on employing them". He was disturbed by this statement, but then dismissed it as probably being nonsense.

The patient told me that he was not in the least interested in this girl and had no intention of having anything to do with her. At the same time he thought that she was a nice girl and would be a good sexual partner.

I had a letter about this time from a friend of the patient, who said what a good fellow he was and he hoped I would help him because he was in great trouble: "he has so much money that he has lost enormous sums in each year of the two or three years that I have known him".

By this time I was beginning to wonder who was talking about what. I summed up the situation to myself as being one in which, to use the English expression, they were all 'off their heads', but I had no idea which head belonged to whom. So I settled down to listen to the patient's story.

It seemed coherent; he occasionally showed a lot of animation, but said nothing particularly witty or funny. He said that his sister was

hostile to him and disapproved of him because he liked the smell of faeces. As the analysis went on he used more and more vulgar words and expressions which are not usually used in polite conversation. I asked him whether he spoke like this to everybody, or only to a person like a psychoanalyst. He said he saw nothing wrong with that language and he *liked* the smell of faeces. He became indignant about it – "I *like* the smell of faeces; I think it is nice". I pointed out that we did not know why he came to see me, and he said, "I thought you knew. My difficulty is that I blush terribly. I thought you would have noticed it by this time." In fact, he was always pale; I never saw any colour in his face. He said that it was extremely painful – so painful that he hardly dared to appear in public anywhere and had, in fact, recently given up going to see his friends, or going out with them.

Somewhere towards the end of the first year of analysis – I was seeing him five times a week – he started mentioning that he had been drinking at the fountain. It seemed a strange expression, but I put it down to his being by way of a poet and a writer. From time to time he repeated that he had been drinking at the fountain until, to confirm my suspicions, I asked him, "What do you use for a fountain?" He replied, "Of course, an ordinary wine glass". It emerged after a time, bit by bit, one part of sentence one week, another part of the sentence a week later, another part another week, that what he was doing every time he said he was drinking at the fountain was drinking his urine.

At this point I wondered what kind of desirable, witty, intelligent, co-operative patient I had; and what it was about this patient that made him have no difficulty in using these unconscious (as I thought then) motives and methods of behaviour; why it was that this patient had no difficulty in understanding what I would consider was incomprehensible unless one was familiar with psychoanalytic theories. In short, this patient had no difficulty about psychoanalytic interpretations, but could not understand what we ordinarily call conscious speech. If he was to understand conscious statements he would have to get to them by a process which was like analysis; but whereas ordinarily I would expect to have to interpret ordinary English language to find out what the psychoanalytic interpretation was, with him I would have to translate ordinary psychoanalytic interpretation to find out what the fact was.

At this time the patient lived in his room behind drawn curtains, and had so arranged things that nobody ever called him on the telephone because it disturbed him that people could come right into his room through the telephone and interrupt the peacefulness of his life. That was the way he liked to live: he liked faeces; he liked urine; he liked living out of reach of anybody in this dark room. He explained that he could not bear being called on the telephone because he always became so terrified that it must be bad news.

I would have liked to say, "If you arrange that nobody should call you on the telephone, naturally you would think it was very bad news if they did; naturally you would be frightened if the telephone bell rang". It would indeed be natural in those circumstances to be terrified of the telephone, terrified of what he would hear, and most anxious not only to be blind, to live in the dark but also to live in a situation where he could hear nothing. But I said, "I think that you are able to hear my interpretations, but I don't think they mean anything". "Yes, that's right, that's right. You're quite right" he said, "they don't." I said, "I think that you are really not liking being alive at all and you are wanting to feel that you have gone right back into the mother's inside, in this dark, smelly, dangerous place in which there is no good milk, or good food; only faeces, smells, poison". "Yes" he said, "that's right." I thought, how satisfying it would be if I were a good analyst and if I could be right. But I don't think I'm right; I don't think that this patient needs to be fed on psychoanalysis – not by me. I also discovered that the patient did not want to be got rid of by me. I had that patient for the rest of my life; he was not going to stop coming to me. Why he was coming to me I did not know. Perhaps he liked analysis because it was such a dirty subject, such dirty language, such filthy, poisonous stuff but I did not know.

On one occasion, while seeing another patient, there was a telephone message for me. I said, "Call again later". "No doctor, this is urgent. Do you know anybody by the name of Mr XT (my patient)". "Yes." "He has just met with a serious accident crossing the road. Will you come and see him?" "Yes I will – later. I am busy. I will see him later". Here was my dilemma: If I, as a doctor, would not see that patient anybody would say, "This is a very funny kind of doctor who won't go and see his patient when he has had a serious accident". On the other hand, if I went to see this patient I knew he would be furious

with me for interfering in his private affairs. He did not consider it was any of my business to interfere with the way he lived, or with an accident if he happened to have one. I found out from him later on what had happened. He had wanted to cross the road, so he crossed the road. It was very busy and a car that was coming was unable to stop and knocked him down. I pointed out to him that he felt that if he wanted to cross the road he need not bother about the traffic or other people who were using the road – he could just set off. "Yes" he said, "that's right. Why not?" In short, he did not differentiate between the world of fact and the world of nightmares. He did the same thing in real life as most of us would do if we were fast asleep and having a nightmare. He did not have nightmares; he behaved as if he were living in one. He lived in a world in which chairs, tables and so on were what we should ordinarily call the furniture of a dream; but the furniture which you would expect to find in a dream was the furniture of real life.

Another occasion: The telephone rings. "Are you Doctor Bion? Do you know Mr X?" "Yes" "This is the police. We have this gentleman locked up in our cell. Will you come and fetch him?" In this way I was prevented from thinking about other patients, because I was always expecting the telephone to ring with a fresh piece of news about Mr X. Of course, I could cut off the telephone and darken the room, not see anything or hear anything, so that I could devote myself to him. Who was analysing whom? Was I curing him, or was he curing me? I do not tell you the answer, but leave it for you as an exercise in conjecture – you may have such an experience in your practice. Perhaps your friends or relations will say you are such a good analyst – they have just the right patient for you: young, witty, twenty-one, intelligent, just your 'cup of tea'. Such is fame – for psychoanalysts. I used to wonder if I had chosen the wrong job; if I might not have been better off as an ordinary doctor. But ordinary doctors have the same kind of patient. Ordinary fathers and mothers have the same kind of children. Ordinary sisters have brothers like that. Ordinary brothers have sisters like his sister. They all come to psychoanalysis in the end. If we live long enough, and if psychoanalysis lasts long enough, there will not be any shortage of patients. There may be a shortage of cures, and psychoanalysis may get a bad reputation because we mix with such extraordinary people, and because we treat them in such an extraordinary way that any father or mother would disapprove.

So long as there are psychoanalysts and psychoanalysis there will be no difficulty in finding somebody to blame.

I was able to draw the patient's attention to the feeling that if he became important enough, if he became a famous patient, then at last he would feel that it was worth killing himself if enough people knew about it. I could imagine that patient saying, "But I *like* murder; I would like to murder myself; I would like to be there and see the funeral". One day I received a message: the patient had left his room and had been found dead in the fields some twenty miles from London.

I cannot say that I felt I had done well. On the other hand, I cannot say that I even felt sure what the mistakes were that I had made. But I certainly could not believe that anybody would regard that as a satisfactory analysis of a witty, intelligent, clever, co-operative and friendly young man.

Q: Do you normally ask your patients questions, or just wait for free associations? What do you do when relatives of your patient want to speak to you? When a patient has to go into hospital for a time, do you yourself visit him there, or do you suggest that someone else should do so – for instance, a psychiatrist with some psychoanalytic knowledge?

Bion: In the practice of psychoanalysis it is difficult to stick to the rules. For one thing, I do not know what the rules of psychoanalysis are. There are plenty of people who will say "Don't you know the theories of psychoanalysis?", and I could say, "No I don't, although I have read them over and over again. I now feel that I only have the time to read the very, very best psychoanalytic theories – if only I knew what they were." However, that is what I would try to limit myself to. The practice of real psychoanalysis is a very tough job indeed. It is not the kind of thing which should be chosen as a nice, easy, comfortable way of life. Theories are easily read and talked about; practice of psychoanalysis is another matter. If the analyst engages on something that is not psychoanalytic practice, there is no one to take his place as the practising psychoanalyst. I would ask *any* question if I thought I was likely to get an answer. I would not expect to get any information from the patient I have been talking about – or from his father, or mother, or sister. Psychoanalytic knowledge can only be obtained psychoanalytically. Other information, however important,

cannot be substituted for psychoanalytic discovery. There is nothing that can substitute for what the analysand and I are able to discover together, however inadequate. The analyst must discover what the minimum is that he needs for his way of working; what anyone else needs is irrelevant.

There is a thing known as 'classical psychoanalysis': the analyst has an analytic situation in which he practises analysis; he has patients who are suitable patients and gives them suitable, certified – correct interpretations. I have never known that state. The analytic situation is the situation which the particular practitioner finds is adequate for himself.

Sometimes the seriously disturbed patient can tell me something which is important; sometimes he tells me the right thing by accident. But it does not matter whether it is on purpose or by accident if I am wiser for the information. I remember talking to a veterinary surgeon and saying, "It must be very difficult – your animals can't tell you anything". He replied, "Well, luckily they can't tell me any lies either". Silence, either of analyst or analysand, is golden – depending on the capacity of the pair to use it. A Brazilian analyst reminded me that sometimes there are patients who can be silent in five languages – it is well worth remembering.

Visiting, or not visiting, the patient is governed in principle by the conditions I have adumbrated; the particular application of the principle can be decided by no one except the practising psychoanalyst at the time. Practice depends on practice.

Q: You have said that an analyst can observe silence for a long time and feel differences between one silence and another. How can one compare today's silence with that of another day when one is working outside memory? Can it not be done only be setting aside that other rule which you have recommended?

Bion: I strongly recommend you to 'forget' that rule. It may stop you from using your intelligence. It is much better to use such intelligence or such wisdom as you have.

My patient did not need to be told not to use his memory. He drew the blinds, he arranged that nobody would talk to him and that he would not listen to his analyst's interpretations. In the end he found *the* cure – he died. And after that, as far as we know, he could hear

nothing. But that is a drastic kind of treatment and a very definite ending of the session. If one has a prejudice in favour of continuing to be alive, then you are bound to have difficulties and you are bound to find it difficult to follow any rule. All that you can hope to do is to use such experiences as have worked with you. I do not mean, therefore, that psychoanalytic training is not helpful, or that childhood is not helpful, or that your mothers or fathers cannot tell you something that would be useful. But the time for learning anything is so limited, and you are likely to waste it trying to be just like a grown-up, just like all your brothers and sisters, just like everybody else; it is protective colouring. There is no practical solution to the problem unless analysis finds it.

Q: If a teaching analyst, who has been inadequately analysed, has a candidate in analysis, and this person in turn qualifies and eventually becomes a teaching analyst, the standard of psychoanalytic practice is, of course, certain to fall. What is your experience or knowledge of this situation in England and the USA?

Bion: I remember a case in which the parents who were liars and drunkards had a most charming child who never ceased to make progress. I would hesitate to recommend drunken parents for everybody. Why the child did so well is a mystery which I still do not understand, and even if I could hear all the masses of psychoanalytic jargon which is freely available I still would not know the explanation. Conversely, a patient whose environment appears to be nearly faultless, may seem to have learnt only the expertise which makes it possible to destroy the favourable circumstances. Though I have no scientific basis to answer the general question which has been posed about England or the USA, I suspect that the particular instances to which I refer have a wider application.

Freud never suggested that dreams are good things, or that anxiety is a good thing; only that if you carry out certain procedures it is possible to make good use of a dream – the dream itself is not good; it is not bad; but some people can make use of it. Adverse circumstances are not good; war is not good; peace is not good; they are neither one thing nor the other. But some people make good use of the experience. The sooner we can learn to make the best of a bad job the better; analysis has to be done in this real world, for good or ill.

Q: In the case you cited, the analyst's role seems to help the patient to die, since he cannot help him to live. What do you consider to be the analyst's role in present-day society, from the point of view of helping to live or die?

Bion: The analyst's function is to psychoanalyse. It can be like being a mirror held up to the patient which would help him to see all of what he looks like. In accordance with what I have just said, I hope that instead of being 'just like', both parties might start 'becoming'. Trying to teach the patient psychoanalysis or psychoanalytic theories is a part of education, not psychoanalysis. If the analysis effects an introduction of the patient to himself it seems to initiate 'growth'. After spending their life up to date trying to be 'just like' somebody else, we are suggesting that they should be themselves, whatever they are, because they may have some redeeming features.

8

The confusion which I described in lecture seven is such a prominent feature of human activity that we shall have to discuss the matter further. First, we must beware the danger of prematurely seeking a solution which would remove from discussion what may well be an essential feature of human mental activity. The discussion is not intended to terminate, but to illuminate the object of the discussion. As an analogy, it would be dangerous to substitute a portrait for the person portrayed.

The situation I want to describe, using the ordinary time-scale of weeks, months and years, is somewhere between the ages of sixteen or seventeen and twenty-three or twenty-four: Putting it in more pictorial and less mathematical terms, the period of adolescence. But the term 'period' falsifies the situation by simplifying it. I am trying to consider a state of mind which is in no way pathological, in no way diseased, and in no sense stable, although disease and pathological events may be a part of the 'phase' studied. I can imagine that a time may soon come when there will be no general psychoanalysts, only specialists in some particular aspect of psychoanalysis, such as particular phases to which particular psychoanalysts are appointed. But to use these categories and fail to observe that they are related to the limitations of the human mind, and not to the limits of the subject studied, contributes added confusion to the confused situation. This is particularly so when we have to study the human personality. Analogies taken from anatomy and physiology may illuminate, but cease to do so if their character is not observed.

There is no realization which approximates to the verbal description of this phase of turbulence. For example, in adolescence the turbulence occurs when the personality is still enough of a child to

remember what it feels like, and is already grown up enough to suspect what it feels like to be grown up. Although we do not show signs which are anything like the gross transformations which occur when a tadpole turns into a frog, there are periods of transition which are much more marked than the periods in between. We can talk about pre-, post-, or delayed adolescence, and each division can be broken up into finer and finer subdivisions. These temporal subdivisions are survivals of a previous culture, as in the sixty-minute hour, or the three-hundred-and-sixty-degree circle. You cannot recognize when one minute transforms itself into another minute – not unless you have a look at a watch or some piece of machinery of that nature. In psychoanalysis, equally, you cannot see any of these divisions unless you look at something like a psychoanalytic paper or book. Reality is much more confused and there are no signs that the human being has devised to which reality approximates; the only certainty is that the signs denote a human characteristic. Yet a fruitful source of confusion arises from the failure to discriminate a peculiarity of the human mind from the reality in which we have our being.

Freud has mapped out a great number of characteristics and periods which can be seen to be recognizably human, characteristics of a human mind and a human personality. That very work now makes it possible to see certain periods in greater detail. Practical analysis is what I would call actually experiencing some period or state of mind of that kind, either one's own or that of another person who comes to share the analytic experience. A person in the adolescent period experiences survivals of childhood thoughts, feelings and ideas which have not died. They are vestigial, but they survive with a great deal of vitality. In language, a wonderful invention as Freud supposed, there are vestiges of its generation. Grammar displays some of these: for example, metaphors. Some are dead, some are still alive. If someone says, "I smell a rat; I will nip it in the bud", those are two metaphors, both all right in their context, but bring them together and these dead clichés, these dead metaphors, become alive and the result is ludicrous. Some of these dead or dying states of mind survive with sufficient vitality to sort [to correspond or agree with] well, but some do not sort with coming states of mind, post-adolescent states of mind which are also coming alive. So what with the states of mind which are supposed to be dying, and what with the states of mind which are supposed to be coming into existence, a

confusing situation is produced. It is not easy to say whether the state of mind at which we are looking, or which we are studying, is falling into decay, or is coming to maturity. That is what makes a period like adolescence so difficult both for the adolescent and for the observer. The observer (analyst) is in a peculiar position because he is supposed to remain stable, to remain in the same universe of discourse and to use the same language, and if he says he is speaking metaphorically he is expected to use metaphors which are coherent in that particular universe of discourse. He should not be like a musician who writes down the music but does not indicate that he has changed the key; the 'change of key' in discussion should be indicated. The analyst should be able to say, "I am not talking about surgery; I am not talking about religion; I am not talking about art – although all these may be used by me in the course of my talking. I am talking about psychoanalysis."

Unfortunately we have to use the already existing language. We may use the word 'envy'. People who are not psychoanalysts are sure they know what envy is; people who are psychoanalysts are not so sure. I thought I knew what psychoanalysis was twenty years ago; today I know too much to know that, or at least know enough to know that I am ignorant. I do not advertise it too much, not least because if I do somebody who thinks they know more, but does not, will usurp the vacant position.

Someone says, "I know what envy is; I know all about envy". But do they, one wonders, know what psychotic envy is? Or, to fall back on medicine to provide a metaphor, do they know what sub-thalamic envy is, or sub-thalamic hate, or infra-thalamic, or ultra-thalamic? I am here and now improvising a language with which to express my thoughts and ideas. It is difficult to express what I am trying to convey, even in the privileged position of being able to address myself to people who are familiar with the world of thought; people who may be analysts, psychologists, artists, or musicians, but who are all familiar with some aspect of the functions of the human psyche. The analyst who tries to pass on his knowledge or experience to someone else always runs the risk of that person saying, "I can't bear this nonsense; I'll shut my ears", or "I can't stand this stuff; I'm not going to any more lectures, speeches, psychoanalysis and so on – all psychoanalysts are mad". However, we have to put up with being accused of knowing nothing whatever about our subject. Unfortunately, it is very nearly true – but not quite. I suspect that we are not

in fact unique in this matter, that if we could establish a contact with the reality of, say, medicine, we might say that if you need a doctor the outlook is black indeed. You will find plenty of people who are qualified, who are entitled to the label, entitled to have the name, but there are very, very few doctors in reality. There are many people who have been to art school and have a degree or a certificate, but there are very few artists. Once in a while there is a Picasso and he runs the risk of being exiled from his country; it is an accident if some outstanding artist survives and continues to be able to live in the world as it actually is. The work that has to be done by psychoanalysts is, therefore, of the utmost importance, because if it is not done the individual will not survive. The crisis is there whether we recognize it or not. It may appear to be calm and simple like a latency period, or childhood, but if an analyst has a close look at the latency child with such intuition and intuitive apparatus as he has, he will see that the latency child already has the germs of being pubescent. I do not know whether you could say the same thing was true of the infant, but the expression, "the child is the father to the man", is certainly succinct: the child is never wholly a child; there is some aspect of the child which can already, to an observant, trained eye, be seen to be grown up.

We are already being forced into studying only a small part, a short period of the human mind. I say 'short', but it is not short or long, although it has some kind of dimension. After qualification we can set out to discover who we are and what we can do; all of us can mobilize that aspect of our personalities which comes easiest and most naturally to us, and thereby be led into a domain to which we are peculiarly suited. Then our troubles start, like a tennis player who goes to a professional coach, when he has finished his training he is nearly as good as he was when he was a natural player. But he may be potentially able to become better and he may be able to discover, shall we say, that he has a strong back hand, and he will use that against his opponents. Similarly with the analyst: when his training is finished he can begin to learn who he is and what he can do. It may take a long time – hopefully not too long. We live only for a limited period so that it is a matter of some urgency. After a time people learn what we can do and come to us; we get the kind of practice to which we are adapted and to which we adapt ourselves.

I would like to stimulate in you the idea of exploring one of these nodal points to which you could give a name – like adolescence, or

puberty, or latency. The advantage of picking on something like adolescence is that the adolescent has a lively sense both of the past and of what is coming. That is why adolescents are afraid they are going mad, or afraid they have got stuck, or afraid that they do not want to have anything to do with psychoanalysis, or afraid that they do not want to do engineering, or afraid that they are 'homosexual' – one more recruit for jargon. This period of turbulence is often detected by people who are not psychoanalysts. They say, "This boy (or this girl) is behaving in a very odd way; these adolescents are tiresome people – most worrying, but it's adolescence". Or they may say, "It's only a child", but nobody is only a child. There is no grown-up who is so grown up that he is not a child still. There is no child who is not part adult already. The human being is physically mature at an early age, but I do not think we would agree that the individual is psychologically or mentally mature at that time, or that that stage could be said to end at a particular point. It would be premature or precocious of us to say that the mind ceases to grow at the age of eighteen, or at forty, or fifty, or sixty. At the age of eighty it becomes more plausible; it seems reasonable to say that the person has just about finished, or has already declined mentally. But it is not obvious that we know the date at which mental maturity has been achieved and that from that point on there is a decline.

Leaving for a moment this relatively simply state of adolescence, let us consider some time like (physical) infancy. Since infants cannot speak the kind of language we are used to, although they can make noises which are like adult speech, the specialist in infant mentality will have to be able to tell the difference between the infant noises which have no future and the noises which might turn into human speech one day. When you hear a baby scream or shout, you will have to be a specialist to say that *that* particular scream has no future to it, and *that* particular scream is turning into something. If we can develop our powers and capacity for discrimination we may be able to see, and to be correct in thinking that we can see differences.

In a melancholy passage from the memoirs of Max Planck, the atomic physicist, he says that he discovered that you cannot teach our contemporaries anything. Progress does not consist in their learning anything. What happens is that they die and younger people come along. This sad discovery of his is something which any analyst must be aware of.

Q: You have spoken of the problem of communicating with a patient, calling attention to the merits of telling him what he can understand. The analyst can often see that the patient cannot understand. How can one talk to such a patient? Is there some means of communication other than that of using the language we use?

Bion: I think there must be a way of doing so, but it is difficult to know what it is. Children certainly seem, sometimes, to understand what we are understanding. There is a story by Beatrix Potter, *The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies,* about a family of rabbits who "were all very improvident and cheerful". Children seem to have no difficulty in being told that, and yet it is impossible to believe that the child knows what a term like 'improvident' means. In the same story we hear that "lettuces are very soporific"; it presents no difficulty whatever to children. What they understand by terms like 'improvident' and 'soporific' I do not know, but that story would certainly be wrong and the child would resent it if some simple word were introduced instead; these long words are part and parcel of the story.

But it is not all a matter of 'words'. From the point of view of the child there is absolutely no substitute for parents who have a loving relationship with each other. No amount of talk or theory is going to take the place of the parents who love each other. That seems to put something over to the child which is – to use some more long words – infra-verbal, ultra-verbal, pre-verbal, post-verbal. There is no way of describing what sort of 'verbal' it is. This language is communicated by what I have fancifully called 'beta-elements': something which is not words. What is the language which is not a verbal language? While the verbal gap between child language and words like 'soporific' and 'improvident' seems to be immense, the non-verbal gap appears to be very small or even non-existent.

The question posed may well be a starting point for investigation. It is an example of what makes the practice of analysis exciting.

Q: You have often referred in your seminars and supervisions to the importance of the patient's not missing going to the analyst's consulting room. You have also asked why the patient goes. Could you go into this more deeply?

Bion: Very frequently analysts seem to allow themselves to be preoccupied with why patients fail to come and thus do not recognize the reciprocal mystery – why they do come. The investigation should not

ignore either polarity. Sometimes patients keep on coming when one feels that it is hard to see that it is worth their while in time or money, but they must be getting something out of it, and they must think it is worth while. It is a fact which the analyst should never allow to disappear below his conscious horizon. It is absurd for analysts to talk about the hostility of patients and so on – we know there is plenty of hostility; but the surprising thing is that there is apparently such a great supply of friendliness. People actually do their best to co-operate. They get to the consulting room, even when they feel sure that they cannot do anything when they get there.

Q: I would like to hear more about your reference, during supervision, to the patient's perceptions of his earliest experiences, starting with birth.

Bion: I would like to be able to hear a little more of the subject myself. I can hear something of it by listening to what people who come to me for analysis tell me. It is a most absorbing subject, but I have neither the experience nor the knowledge to enable me to know much about it. I have no doubt that what we call autistic children are in fact children in a frame of mind, or state of mind, which we have failed to notice so far. It is as if we failed to notice that children are children, both grown up *and* inexperienced. In so far as I describe a self-contained system in those last words, it may also be a description of an autistic phase, as Freud uses the term 'autistic' [Freud, 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning', 1911b]. Such an investigation may prove the answer to the question.

As parents we often behave and talk as if we expected the child to know 'all about it'. "Can't you see", we say indignantly to the apparently naughty little boy or girl, "that that is very naughty?" No, they can't. They may have picked up a valuable vase and hurled it at the cat, or beaten the dog over the head with it and smashed it, but they do not see that that is 'very, very naughty'. They may be able to say that it is an extremely satisfying experience. It may not be very good for the vase, it may not be very good for the dog or cat, but the child can feel very much better after it has done it. The child can say, "Can't you see how nice it is to do this?"; the parent can say, "Can't you see how naughty it is to behave like that?" – no, they can't – neither of them. They are like two people passing each other and shouting across the gap, but one of them is going in one direction and the other

one is going in the other direction. (The psychoanalyst may observe a psychoanalytic 'Doppler effect' as they pass each other. This effect is what requires to be noticed.) The words are the same, but the meaning is different. "Very improvident and cheerful": mothers and fathers think they know what that means; so do the children. The words seem to be the same words, but again, the meaning is different. To say, "This is an autistic child", says almost nothing; it is very nearly, on the part of the grown-up, a noise which may turn into communicable words one day.

The newly-born child does not use any language that we know, but mothers are sometimes able to understand the language; the baby screams and the mother knows the correct reply. Sometimes it may be verbal; sometimes she may pick up the child and not say a word; sometimes she may say, "I don't know what's the matter with the child", and hand it over to the nurse, or even, one is sometimes afraid, to the psychiatrist or psychoanalyst. I certainly have no prejudice against psychoanalysing children, but I have a prejudice against the substitution of the analyst for the mother. They may be complementary, but you cannot substitute one for the other without a loss.

Q: You have warned us to use not only our eyes to see with, but also our other senses to detect, for instance, our patients' physical excretions. But even so we are still not sensitive enough, since our minds, and those of our patients also, seem to excrete things which ought to be sensed through organs we know nothing about. Could this be one of the mysteries we ought to focus our attention on?

Bion: I do not think that any analyst is improving if he loses his capacity for mystery, for unsolved problems. This is not only a long question, but I am afraid the answer is terribly long. I can give a kind of short answer by telling a story of a physician who had a beaker full of some substance which he showed to a class of students. "Now", he said, "it is very important that you should not be frightened of examining and seeing and testing and using your senses to find out what something is – even something like this. Watch." He dipped his finger in and tasted it; then he passed the beaker around. There were all kinds of ugly grimaces and looks of horror and disgust. The doctor said, sadly, "I am afraid that you did not observe that I substituted one finger for another". I do not know what the 'moral' of that story is, but my 'meaning' is in it.

9

Q: Why is so much emphasis laid on the analysis of envy, as if this were the earliest anti-life emotion; before envy made its deadly appearance in human life we had been sentenced to death for pride. If it is pride that is the basis of the extravagant and undisciplined desire for spiritual possession – and this desire is to be like God – why do we not look into the content of idealization which pride seems to be? Why do we omit to analyse boasting and vanity, described as two of the twelve degrees of pride?

Bion: I feel that the question itself depends on a certain cultural procedure about which I am doubtful. It seems to belong to the domain of a culture in which things have a beginning and a middle and an end; and an essential part of the same culture is a narrative account which also has a beginning and a middle and an end. I think it serves a purpose; indeed, we still talk a language belonging to the same kind of domain of verbal expression. But suppose one encounters some quite different form of expression. One could call it, say, the form of expression which is common to a Chinese way of verbalization using ideographs expressing ideas by graphic description. The direction from bottom to top, or from right to left, may be suitable for a mode of thinking which is fundamentally different from ours, but it becomes difficult to communicate when we are talking the language from top to bottom, or from left to right – or from pride to envy, or envy to pride, or sex to rivalry. In practical analysis the analyst may see which comes first – unless, of course, we defer to reality and wish to express an order, if there is one, which is general. There are disciplines which have satisfied themselves of the order. In the practice of psychoanalysis we are concerned with finding out. But the whole

question of logical thought has to be revised. In so far as we are still learning, what we know is open to revision. For example, one can say today that it is an erroneous idea to imagine that the sun goes round the earth, but it was 'correct' once.

Freud described the investigation of the human mind as an assault on the narcissism of the human being. Indeed, we may very much resent finding that the mind is deposed from the position of importance which we attach to it. We cannot help attaching importance to it; we are human beings; we are members of a particular kind of animal used to regarding itself as extremely important, and the human mind as an important part of the totality of the human being. It is a revolutionary change to suggest that perhaps it is not so important and that perhaps it does not matter that we are not even able to grasp the problems with which we have to deal.

The problems which reality poses can turn out to be beyond the capacity of the human mind; the human mind with its logical, scientific, religious, artistic capacity is not up to the problems which it has to solve. To depose the human mind from its position of centrality, from the supposition that the world of thought is homo-central, is a blow to the narcissistic beliefs of the human being. One could regard it as a situation in which we are sufficiently capable and advanced to grasp the magnitude of our problems, but not sufficiently advanced to know what to do about them.

This, I think, is the situation in which the autistic child finds itself. The phenomena described by people who have studied this problem could be explained on the grounds that the autistic child is aware of a universe for which its equipment is totally inadequate; the infant is somehow so highly intelligent that it is capable of seeing the vastness of its problems, but is without any equipment with which to deal with it. The human race may be reaching a similar point (but on a different 'level' of the helix) at which the relationship of the most gifted members of the race, *vis-à-vis* the problems, is analogous to that of the autistic infant; the most gifted, most capable of our thinkers may be baffled and inadequately equipped for the realities of the situation in which we find ourselves.

To revert to the question of whether envy comes before pride, or sex before generation. We know that the physiologist would regard generation and sex as contemporary. If someone believes there is a

beginning and an end, and finds it helpful, I know of no reason why he should stop believing it – until he finds a better.

To take another example: I have no objection to saying, "Let's get up tomorrow at sunrise". I do not believe the earth stays stationary while the sun rises in a certain position, goes round and sets in another. But I would not want to reform the ordinary way of talking. I still think it is useful for people like us. But on the other hand, I would not advocate the abolition of heliocentric astronomy on the grounds that it is in conflict with geocentric language of getting up in the morning. It is a useful language for certain simple purposes, but unsuitable for more complex situations such as the launching of a space probe through the atmosphere of Jupiter, through the close contact of Mercury, and then on still further into space to investigate the nature of Saturn. There must be mathematicians who are capable of working out these (to me) incredible mathematical problems; *I* can be hard put to it to use ordinary arithmetic to work out a simple thing like the time it takes to travel from Rio to Los Angeles, or from Los Angeles to London. But someone is able to do these things and it is difficult to believe that that person's mind might be inadequate for the problems which are posed by the investigation of a thinking mind. I have no objections to classical analysis, or to the theories of Freud, Abraham, Klein and so on – not unless I am told I must think so far and no further. Trying to impose that kind of limitation would be as futile as telling the earth to stop going round and round the sun in this puzzling manner. The universe does not obey orders from anyone, however self-exalted. As I say, I have no objection to the ordinary method of talking or writing, but I have every objection to supposing that that method is good enough for our problems. Psychoanalysis – the best psychoanalysis – is not good enough. I cannot agree with anyone who says, "Psychoanalysis has been good enough for my analyst; it was good enough for my analyst's analyst; and what is good enough for my analyst's analyst, is good enough for my analyst's analysands" – and so on, until the mind dies. We may not know what sense is, but we often recognize nonsense.

If the first thing I am aware of is envying my brother or my sister, or their envy towards me, that is what matters to me as a practical baby. But someone else may find that the first thing they come across is something which is not envy or hate, but arrogance or pride. What

is the starting point of a circle? One can only say it is where I happen to be aware of starting.

Q: If 'getting better' in psychoanalysis depends firstly on integration, on synthesis of the personality, is the synthesis offered by the process of analysis enough, or must certain techniques sometimes be used to promote synthesis?

Bion: I could say, first question: why start with this question today? Why the second question second? Why not the second question first? Second question: why synthesis? Why not analysis? Why analysis? Why not catalysis? Or why not catastrophe? I do not know any reason why not. Except possibly something like the very, very, very unimportant answer, namely, that that is where the questioner started; that is what hit me first. Using more pictorial language, that is the point at which my young brother, when he was not much more of a baby than I was myself, happened to hit me on the head with a hammer, and I died – finish; full stop. Why or how we come to have survived so far I do not know, but since we have we can start our process of thinking anywhere between birth and the present. If the first thing you are aware of is arrogance, or the first thing you notice is murderous hostility, you can start the investigation there. But in infancy the first things to which we give names are those which are susceptible to our physical senses. For example, the infant becomes aware of the vast space, the incredible spaces, the incredible numbers; and then we discover that the vast spaces are only the boundaries between 'self' and the cot in which the baby lies, or these vast numbers are the name we give to a feeling of 'threeness'. The baby soon becomes aware of a stomach-ache but is not sure *what* is hurting it, or *who* is hurting it. Of course, if the baby is a thorough-going Kleinian it might say, "This stomach-ache is inside me", or it might feel it was being attacked from outside. Unfortunately we cannot ask the baby – not yet.

Q: As the founder of group therapy you have brought psychoanalysis within reach of many middle-class people previously unable to afford the high fees for individual analysis. Even so, there are still a great many people who cannot afford group analysis. Would you favour a socialization of psychoanalysis to deal with these people? To what extent does payment affect treatment?

Bion: It would be a great mistake to imagine that I originated group therapy. I come very far down the list of people who have engaged in group therapy long before it even had a name of that kind.

Would I be in favour of socializing psychoanalysis? In other words, would I favour putting the cost of psychoanalysis on a particular group or not? Who is going to pay for analysis – group analysis or personal analysis? Who is going to pay for having no analysis, group or otherwise? And what is the price of that going to be? Many people, whether they like it or not, will have to pay for there being no analysis (assuming for the moment that analysis is worth paying for anyway, in view of the cost in time and money and effort and all the things which are not included in the ordinary scale of measurement which is provided by a financial system). I could state the problem in terms of Péguy's approach. Referring to the French motto, "Liberty, equality, fraternity", he said that liberty and fraternity are in an absolutely different class from equality. Equality is mixing in an element which is of feeble consequence compared with the other two. People are not born equal; they start life with different equipment. Péguy pointed out that equality of riches and opportunity is hardly a social problem but destitution is. The fact that people are poor does not do much harm to the community, but destitution is more than an individual problem. A destitute person rots the society, the group; destitution within a group of any sort will sooner or later destroy that group. The social problem of destitution, therefore, should never be disregarded, should never be neglected. This is not socializing psychoanalysis; it is saying, however, according to Péguy, and I think there is a great deal to be said for his formulation, that destitution is already socialized; it is a socialized quality. I do not know what the benefits of socialism are, but as usual it is much easier to see what the liabilities of socialism are, particularly the socialization of destitution – that is something which no state, community, or group can afford.

I do not know how payment has an effect on the treatment, but I consider that the treatment ought to have an effect on the payment. That is to say, one would like to produce a situation in which, as a result of psychoanalysis, destitution was decreased; that people who were incapable of earning a living or increasing the wealth of the community, should become capable of doing so. John Ruskin said that wealth meant something like that which increased the health

and happiness of the community – the life-giving properties. It is the capacity of the group to produce life-giving material which should be increased.

Money is an invention which, like language, has been proved to be useful. How to use it has not yet been discovered. The present economic failure may convince us that it is time we thought about its use. If, in analysis, we find a way of making this discussion redundant we shall not contribute anything to the solution of these problems. 'Payment', therefore, may serve, as it is doing here, to stimulate the discussion. In this respect it is no different from other stimuli of which the participants become aware during the course of the investigation itself. What it costs you to read this book, and what it costs me to write it, can only be answered if there is a scale of measurement and facts to measure.

Q: Has the number of mentally-ill people increased, or are they only now being detected and treated as a result of therapeutic techniques based on psychoanalysis?

Bion: I remember one of the leading neurologists in England, at the time I was a medical student, not having the slightest idea what was the matter with a patient who was submitted to him, but a young medical student suggested that the patient was suffering from what is nowadays called myasthenia gravis. In the short space of my own lifetime myasthenia gravis has become a medical entity; it is a recognizable constant conjunction of symptoms like 'myasthenia gravis'. Most competent physicians would now hope to be able to notice if one of their patients had such a disease and could probably diagnose it. You would have to be unfamiliar with the world of thought to imagine that doctors have been guilty of increasing illnesses; they have only increased the awareness of the illnesses. If psychoanalysis did nothing else it would have done a great deal if it made people able to recognize the existence of certain constant conjunctions. There will always be people who hold us responsible for having *caused* neurosis or psychosis; that but for us no one would bother with the whole thing, and nobody would know anything about it. But there are many physical diseases which would gradually wipe out the human race if no one knew anything about them. As I said before, only a matter of a few hundred years ago people thought it was natural and normal to die at thirty. Why draw attention to something as normal as that?

Today people say, "Why draw attention to anything so normal as dying at seventy or eighty?" You cannot do anything about it, but someone may later. Somebody may discover a cure for myasthenia gravis which is better than administering physostigmine, which is not a cure, but relieves the symptoms. Medical advance is a co-operative procedure, not only amongst doctors, but between generations of doctors; if we can record our findings and pass them on, then in four or five generations when we are all dead, someone may learn something. But that depends on our having noticed something first – very unspectacular and most unlikely to make anybody famous.

Q: We live in a competitive society; the agitated life in big cities is the cause of neurosis. Might one say nowadays that everyone is neurotic, or is this an exaggeration?

Bion: We could say that all of us are neurotic, but is it worth saying? One could say that we are all human; that might sometimes be a useful remark, however inadequate. There was once a cartoon in *The New Yorker* in which one of the seconds in a boxing match said his man would not fight until he had heard the other one talk – his way of being quite sure that the other boxer was actually human. It provided a rough and ready test of classification. In the mental world we have similar problems. Will someone who is so intelligent, such a clever animal that he looks just like a human being, ever become human? Will someone who does *not* look like a human being – like the autistic baby, or the latency child, or the adolescent – become one in time? We need to know how to tell whether someone is becoming anything. Even in illness it is useful to know whether some cough, or ocular defect is the sign of the onset of disease. It must, however, be remembered that it could be the onset of growth. Our problem could be stated: can we discriminate between benign and malignant? Both possibilities have to be entertained. One idea has to be balanced against another. A one-track mind does not give practice to the driver in a multi-track world.

We do not know what mental disease is, except in the general sense of dis-ease, un-comfort. Psychoanalysts are people who attach great importance to happiness and consider that unhappiness can reach a point which could be called destitution. That degree of unhappiness could be regarded as communicable because it surpasses the confines of the individual; the lack of happiness becomes so great

that quantity changes into quality. We should support or provide for the destitute, the person whose unhappiness has reached the end of the spectrum.

The question pre-supposes that the problem is a topographical one, that it is due to competition and rivalry. But if there were no rivalry that again would become a growth-inhibiting disease caused by a lack of stimulation. Similarly, the human unit, the couple, depends for survival on a relationship between the two parts which is self-propagating, growth-stimulative. On the other hand, in the individual, or group of individuals, destitution is inseparable from greed. The extremely wealthy man, who can be seen to be greedily wanting more wealth, shows himself to be destitute.

Q: According to Freud the experiences of life in infancy are important in the formation of the adult; from these come in great part social, sexual, emotional, economic adjustment. What advice would you give a mother so that she can bring up her child free of repressions and inhibitions which might provoke neurosis later on?

Bion: There was once a joke in *Punch* magazine: Mr Punch's advice to those about to marry – "Don't". I feel rather like that about this question. I would be inclined to say to the mother, "I think you had better not have a child". I would hate to live in a world which was peopled by individuals who had no repressions or inhibitions. This is one of the difficulties in analysis; people come to an analyst having already had a 'cure', and if the cure consists of their being incapable of repressions and inhibitions they are mutilated people. Any analysand wanting an analysis is already up against a problem, because it is not clear or certain that inhibitions and repressions are all bad. Supposing that we can interfere with this matter at all – we can also be interfering in the capacity to discriminate. Discrimination consists in being able to exclude the irrelevant. When that capacity becomes extreme it turns into an inhibition – the 'voluntary' has become 'involuntary'.

One can imagine what could happen if psychoanalysis was allowed to proliferate like a cancer – go mad, as it were. There is already a great deal of behaviour which is supposed to be based on psychoanalytic principles supposedly advocating no discipline at all. Anyone who has had an analysis knows that it is an extremely tough discipline. We do *not* advocate that people should come to have a nice time for fifty minutes a day, for five days a week, for five years.

We *do* try to introduce the individual to the fact that even if we did not exist they would have a feeling in favour of a discipline. One of the dangers of letting a child do just whatever it likes is that it does not simply do just whatever it likes. The moment it is aware that not even its mother or father can watch what it is up to all the time, and it is therefore free to do what it likes, the child at once and automatically reconstitutes the missing parent. You have probably seen one of your own children solemnly go and stand in a corner as a kind of punishment for some crime that we have heard nothing about. But that reconstituted parent has insufficient knowledge or experience to be a parent – it is simply part of the child. So that the failure of the parent to impose some discipline means that the place of a potentially sensible or wise person is taken by an inexperienced conscience and a disciplinary system which is so severe that the child may break down under its own discipline. A premature and precocious disciplinary framework produced by the infant who is not in the position to produce any framework is, possibly, part of the self-contained system which Freud called 'autism'. The result is a discipline which is so ferocious that the child cannot grow under it and would ultimately perish unless something were done to modify, but not abolish, that discipline. The personality or the group compelled to be 'autistic' is, therefore, liable to be dominated by immature and premature structures, with dangerous consequences. Unfortunately, however experienced we are we still know very little indeed about how to bring up children, of whatever age. We are beginning to know that we do not know – that is something. We are beginning to be able to plumb the depths of our ignorance, stupidity, bigotry, license, but it may take a long time before we know much about bringing up children – which seems an extraordinary thing when you consider that we do reproduce our kind. Sometimes we reproduce our own kind only too well – our children are exactly like us.

10

The tenth lecture differed in kind from the others. It could for that reason have been omitted, but I thought that, with added comment, some readers might find the account illuminating. The added material is marked with a line in the margin so that the reader can ignore it and gain some idea (in so far as the written word can transmit a live experience) of what an unrehearsed episode can evoke, to what further experience it can become an 'idea generator', and how he would deal with the same experience.

At the end I have added a few questions on which the reader can exercise his mind should he so wish.

PRESENTATION OF CLINICAL MATERIAL FROM PART OF A SESSION

Patient: I am not satisfied, I don't feel alive – although I pay for the treatment and play my part.

Analyst: You do not pay the price of tolerating the frustration which is part of life.

P: I used to dream that I was not born; the dream has become reality to me. (He blames his mother for having pushed him out. He speaks of a maid he has, who left a convent where she lived. He thinks she did wrong. In the convent everything was solved for them by God.) I had a job for six weeks. Why did I do this work, if I wanted to be dead?

A: You want everything in life without anguish.

P: Who conceived me with so little tolerance? This person must feel guilty.

A: Since you do not accept the blame you cannot feel alive.

P: (speaks of the rage he feels when thinking of the use of a cutting knife. Then starts to talk in a whimpering voice) You can't say that. How could my mother do this; I liked her so much. I'll never be right.

A: You see me as your mother who does everything.

> The analyst and patient are continuing a relationship of which I know nothing; the dialogue is new to me. Why does the analyst say this? Has he some first-hand evidence? If so, what? Or has he been told that psychoanalysts talk like that? Why does the patient talk like that?

P: (in a childish voice) I can't teach him. I don't know, it was so nice there; why did she separate me? When someone has a companion he thinks maybe the companion does not want him any more.

> Who is he 'teaching'? He is certainly not teaching me because I don't know what he is talking about, but I must hear some more.

A: What you are saying again shows your wish to be free of suffering.

P: I see a baby – myself at my mother's side, very happy. I see myself in a lake, on a plant, I'm in paradise. I don't understand why they threw me out. I know it is madness to think like this, but they threw me out. I was doing so well, why did they disturb me? Could it be that I awoke within my mother's womb? The scientists say we have no conscience. I think I am mad.

> What is the patient talking about? If he thinks he is mad he is probably suspicious about the nature of what he is 'seeing', but people often speak of having a vivid visual imagination – why does he suppose this vividly described story is not just the product of such an imagination? Perhaps the analyst will throw some light on this when he continues the conversation.

P: I awoke within the place I so much liked. I had no reason to be in a rage. I had little it's true; I didn't want anything. I had everything, love, security. One feels full, suddenly everything is over. I was angry with my mother because all was ended. How could it happen before

I was born? Is it possible to be conscious in that hour? Could it have been when I was born? I was conscious I was entering a world full of problems. My mother, instead of giving the best she had, was giving the worst. Small people already know everything. Later you forget. A small child knows more than an adult. The child knows that the first contact with life is the most important. The adult confuses things. We seem more conscious in childhood.

> Surely this is some story about childbirth that the patient has heard? Or is it some recent re-hash of so much 'psychoanalytic' fashion? The stuff about 'childhood' and the 'knowledge' of the child is suspicious.

P: At forty I am rebellious. I still speak of being born. I knew this on the first day; I don't need to live forty years to know this.

> This certainly sounds like sarcasm – if I were to tell an actual patient that, he would probably be 'righteously indignant'.

P: Today you told me that I have no tolerance for frustration and that must have happened on the first day. Crying the first day, my mother could have thought there was no motive for crying, for I had just been fed. But the fact is that I screamed, rebelling against being born. My mother becomes wicked, an egoist, beastly – I can't take this separation. You say that I could have, but I haven't, because I bestowed everything on my mother. I never thought I had arms and legs. Having these things, I never thought I could function by myself. Mother has – she functions for me. She says I oppose functioning, in spite of conditions. (He mentions his office where he has an assistant engineering designer whom he thinks of as the mother.) I don't need to do anything. He has to do everything. I know nothing; he is the one who knows; when mother (the designer) is present I know nothing. The analyst knows everything. I know nothing.

> This sounds 'genuine' sarcasm, but it is mixed up with bits of the patient's actual experiences and not just what he has read out of a book.

P. (He gives the impression of thinking about something which gives him pleasure.) It is very pleasant. Mother is a wrapping and

inside the wrapping it's good to be in there. It is much better there; mother's legs carry me; it's her responsibility.

> Chiefly what he has read in a book. But either the patient is playing a game with the analyst, or I am being made a game of for pretending to the knowledge of a 'lecturer'. But even a hoax can be interpreted. If I were analysing a patient I might have the conditions which would enable me to hazard an interpretation. No doubt he would like me to say it's a 'hoax'. Or if I did not, then he would think I was saying he is 'mad'.

P: When small, with the parents near, I felt no fear. There is tranquillity. I find this security wrong, stupid. When the designer says he has to sign some paper, he then asks who is going to break down the walls for the reconstruction (of a building). I don't want to have the responsibility of walls falling. That is part of the mother. This answer I myself as an engineer could give. I know more, much more than that, but I don't know. I don't accept doing it. Two plus two are four or not. I must exert myself to say that. It may be two or not. I had to struggle to reach that, which is so obvious. Really I'm going to remove the walls which are between the beams. The building is not supported by what I am going to remove. This is logical, but for me it is not logical.

> Another bit of 'truth'. 'Logical' is the way rational people talk and 'rationalize'. But this requires understanding by someone who is not restricted, 'imprisoned' in the logical modes of thought.

A: You reject that two plus two should be four, so what is correct and true for all the world is not true for you.

> I think the analyst is very near the patient's wave length; can his formulation be understood by the patient? His next remarks sound as if the patient was near enough to the analyst's wave length to erect his defensive barrier and to continue the communication. 2 + 2 isn't 'logical' mathematics, but two similar numbers get together. But 'he' never thought of that – too homosexual. Two homo-numerical is quite proper.

P: I reject that because I did not invent it. That is why it may be wrong. Someone discovered it and that someone could be wrong.

A: You feel it is the parents' mistake for having sexual relations. They should not have had them – because of this you are not able to gather together your pieces, for if they come together you will be full of hate and envy – you will be yourself.

P: Do you think so? I don't know, I never thought of sexual relations; what has that got to do with it? Two plus two are four, but I did not invent that. I did not invent sexual relations. They say it produces children – I don't know. I didn't invent it. I know it's stupid to think like that. I'm suspicious. I don't know of what; of a person's being able to say something that is wrong. They say that if you put one brick upon another you will make a wall. That might be wrong. I'm always in doubt; can I accept this or not?

> Is it creative? Or is it just a defensive wall? The patient would like to know – and so would I!

[*This concludes the clinical material.*]

Bion: What is this patient's problem? Why is he coming to see the analyst?

Presenter: The patient wanted treatment because he felt very isolated.

Bion: But there must be some problem about this; the patient must have some reason for coming to see an analyst.

> For example, if it is because he is lonely, merely coming for a talk acts as a 'cure' which, being ephemeral, has to be repeated; if repeated and if unobserved this leads to a never-ending analysis and ever-receding progress.

Bion: The question which confronts us is, what impression does this give you? What do you think you would say about the reasons for this person actually coming? Why should anybody want the analyst to see him?

We do not appear to know. No one has any idea how such a situation has arisen. What does this man want?

Q: I would like to ask your opinion about the client who gives a positive reason for seeking treatment, but whom the analyst cannot decide whether to treat in one interview, or the client who cannot

put his problems into words. I feel it is the business of the analyst to help the client to formulate and to know what he wants and what sort of treatment he needs. I think this is an analyst's responsibility.

Bion: I would emphatically disagree. All I purport to do is to have such training as I can get for the benefit of those who want an analysis. I can try to get a consulting room and the conditions in which to work, but after that I would certainly not be prepared to analyse whoever happens to come. I would have no right to analyse them. If I were asked to analyse them then I might try to do it, but it would be dangerous to start analysing somebody when you have not even been asked to do so. Anyone who comes into your office must expect to be asked to explain his business; it is not a public highway: it is a private room and if they come into it they must be prepared to say what they want. I would certainly not take the risk of starting to analyse and give interpretations to such a person. I should consider that I was liable at once to have an action for damages brought against me. It would be just as serious as a surgeon starting to operate on a patient without the necessary authority.

Q: The audience is in difficulties because you are trying to debate openly and frankly, and it finds itself in the position of the patient who says the only trouble with him is that he feels isolated.

> This is reasonable because it is not clear whether the audience has come for a lecture 'about psychoanalysis', a seminar on a psychoanalysis, a group therapy session, or an investigation of a particular psychoanalyst's (my) capacity as a psychoanalyst. All 'answers' are therefore ambiguous because it is a matter of ambiguity to guess what the question is that is being 'answered'.

Q: I remember a particular case from my own experience – the only case of this nature in my twenty-four years of practice. This patient, a woman, came for a preliminary interview, and I asked her why she wanted analysis. She said she had difficulties with relationships. "What does that mean?" I asked her. "What do you mean by that word, or those things? Can you tell me anything else?" "No", she replied, "Only that". I said I thought this was not much for me to assess whether treatment was indicated. I wondered if we could

work on the basis of so little information. She replied that she could not say more than that. I told her that I could do nothing on such a basis, since I could not understand why she was here. She said nothing, and I said nothing either; we found ourselves in a position similar to that here now, where both sides have fallen silent. After some time, about half an hour, I said, "I think we must close the interview. It seems to me that you don't want to be analysed; you don't want to, or cannot reveal yourself; on this basis I can't accept the job of doing an analysis. We must abandon the idea." She insisted that I ought to treat her. I refused, and closed the interview.

Bion: I am not surprised to hear it. In that situation the analyst would be running a very serious risk indeed. It may be very well for the patient to say, "It's your business to treat me", but it is not any doctor's business to be told by a patient what he must do, or how he should do it. If you feel willing to risk obeying the patient's instructions you can go ahead, but I would not do it myself. If I had a referring letter I would like the person who referred the patient to say why they were doing so, and what for.

Q: What about analysis undertaken to become a psychoanalyst? Is this not very like that case, where there are no medical grounds for having treatment? The candidate can take refuge in this idea that he wants analysis only because he needs it to qualify.

Bion: If the person wants to be an analyst I would suggest that they should go to some proper analytic authority or institute. If I were the authority I would say to the applicant, "Can you tell me on what grounds you are presenting yourself here as a candidate, and why you wish to be considered for the vacancies that we might have?" In exactly the same way, if I am in the position of an analyst who purports to analyse people, I would expect to be told by somebody, either by the person concerned or some responsible person, on what grounds they thought this person should come to me for analysis, or why they should think I was the person to analyse him.

Other analysts can do what they like about it, and I can see that they might handle the situation differently, but I cannot. I can only handle this case with such capacity as I have, and my capacities do not include a capacity to do what I call 'analyse' this patient. I do not suggest that somebody else could not analyse him, but I do know

enough about myself to know that I could not – not on those grounds. I would not be prepared to take that risk.

Q: I would like to re-read the first phrase that this patient said. "I am not satisfied. I don't feel alive." However, he said he would pay and do everything else he ought.

Bion: I would like to know what he is not satisfied about.

Q: He is not happy because he is very lonely, because he cannot communicate with anyone. He has no friends, feels unhappy because he is not taking full advantage of life, does not enjoy anything and so on.

Bion: I understand that, but I can say, "What do you expect me to do about it? If you aren't satisfied because you don't do these things, go and do them." I cannot do them for him. It is a fantastic situation – the patient says, "I am not satisfied because I haven't come here today"; I say, "All right, come here today then".

Q: Do you feel that if the patient could do it he would do it; he comes because he himself cannot do it?

Bion: Where is his nurse? Or where is the person who brings him? If he comes alone *he* is responsible for coming. He cannot say that he comes because he has been brought. If he has been brought I would say, "Let me see the person who has brought you".

Q: From what I understand, it would be enough, instead of analysing the patient, to tell him to do the things he finds difficult to do. This would solve everything. That is to say it is not accepted that the patient is unable to do certain things for deep, unconscious motives, or that he needs the analyst's help to succeed.

Bion: I do not admit that a patient who maintains the right to say he has come of his own free will cannot get to me. I cannot admit that a patient is entitled to say he cannot get to me while at the same time he has come. If he cannot do all those things I would say, "Who was it who brought you? Can you ask them to come in and see me about it." I have another example in mind. Suppose you were a pharmacist; someone comes to your pharmacy and says, "You are a pharmacist. All right. Give me those pills." The pharmacist surely has the right to say, "No, I'm sorry, I don't do that. I need a proper authority, a proper

reason before I can give you these pills. Otherwise I shall be in trouble with the law." It is true that you might be in trouble anyway. The man might draw a gun and demand to have the pills handed over. Why is an analyst any different in this regard? If someone wants an analysis the analyst can at least say, "No, I know something about analysis, and I don't do this to anybody just because they happen to want it, any more than I would hand pills to anybody who happened to want pills. I would need to be given authority to do it."

Suppose I launched out as it was suggested that perhaps I ought to do – started analysing – and found myself, the next thing, in a court of law. "But doctor, didn't you know that this patient had been to psychiatrists and analysts before?" No, I'm sorry, I didn't." "Did you find out?" "No, I'm sorry, I didn't. I just started analysing him." "But why?" "The patient said he wanted some analysis." The analyst is supposed to be a responsible person who does not analyse anybody and everybody.

Q: I cannot quite understand what it is that you demand when starting an analysis. Could you go into this further.

Bion: First of all I would want to know on what grounds the patient came to me for analysis. I would want to have some proper reason for analysing him. I do not know what other people do – in any case, it would not help me; other people are not me, nor are their patients my patients; but I do know something about myself and the risks that I am prepared to take. I am not prepared to take this one. Under no circumstances would I agree to analyse anybody unless I was given what I consider to be the minimum reasons for proceeding.

Q: Could you give an example of what you consider to be these minimum reasons?

Bion: I do not even know the minimum reasons for being a surgeon, or for being a physician, but I have a fair idea about what I am prepared to do, and I know that I would not be prepared to analyse this patient; not on the grounds of anything that has been said to me so far.

Q: If an adult comes to me and says he is in trouble, feels isolated, cannot make himself understood to others, is unhappy, cannot work, wants to better his life, and is able to pay for treatment, would you

not think all this was enough? I do not understand what is missing that is so important.

Bion: Nor do I. That is what I am trying to find out. But I do know that there is a terrible lot missing as far as I am concerned. Everybody else may be perfectly satisfied. They may feel they have all the information, knowledge and experience to proceed. It may be my experience that is missing. But I do know that it is missing and I would not proceed until I had more. Otherwise, it seems to me that one is in a position in which anybody is free, as soon as they are landed with a hopeless case and have failed to help in any way, to send him to an analyst. Analysts are there; they are a sort of communal rubbish dump for all the people, things, jobs that nobody else wants. I have nothing to say about other people who take on the patient, but I would not.

Q: From what you say and what I understand, it seems impossible for anyone to be treated by you. But you still seem to have patients. So it is my impression that you are not telling us exactly what you demand, what this element, this condition is, for someone to be your patient.

Bion: I do not see 'patients' – I see particular individuals, and when a particular individual comes to me I want to know what he has come for.

> I do not ask him, as I have just been asked, to tell me exactly what he wants, but if he will tell me in the best and simplest – not the longest and most complicated-way, I will do my best to understand him.

If the particular person is of unsound mind, or not of age, then I would want to know their parents, or their nurse, or their doctor; perhaps they would come to see me and tell me what they want me to do. If the patient is totally irresponsible I would like to see a responsible person. I am not going to risk my whole career and my professional reputation by taking on a case about which I am not told the minimum of information. If the doctor thinks that this patient is a suitable person for me to analyse I would say, "Can you let me know what makes you think so?" Any doctor would have reason to be ashamed

of themselves if they sent a patient like that to me without a covering letter, or without a nursing attendant. If I were given adequate reasons for analysing that person then I might try to do so. But there is nothing, so far, which would lead me to suppose that there is any excuse for this person taking up my time.

Q: You have talked about mystery in these lectures. I hope you are not going to leave us with this mystery which I feel we have now. I do not understand what the conditions are which you, not we, lay down before you take on a patient.

Bion: Which patient? If you do not tell me which patient, it is you who are leaving me with a mystery.

Q: I feel very much in accord with you, but I should like to know more about my own reasons. Referring to the patient you talked about in lecture seven, you interviewed the father, the sister, had a letter from a friend and a recommendation, I suppose from a colleague, maybe a psychiatrist, to attend this patient. Was any of this information of any use? The sister lied, the father told the story of the girl friend which the young man denied. In what sense was this information used? Did it help you to decide to take this patient into treatment? Did he come alone? What care and attention did he have?

Bion: The thing that helped me to take that patient more than anything else was sheer ignorance and unjustified daring. My qualifications for seeing that patient were precisely nothing. After seeing that patient and realizing what I had agreed to, I think I was a wiser man. I did not want another one of those. There was not a single one of those persons whose statements could be relied upon. The only thing that could be said about analysing such a person was that the analyst who did it was extremely ignorant and foolhardy.

Q: I should like to state what I feel are the conditions you hope to find in a patient to enable you to treat him analytically. Today's patient seemed only to complain. In a case of mine the patient did not wish to exert himself; in another, the patient was satisfied to remain a fetus. I suppose that a minimum requirement, besides the patient wanting to be analysed, is that he should wish to analyse himself too: to work with you.

Bion: I am sure that the minimum conditions vary immensely, but I do not know what they are. I do know what they are with me, but not with other people. I cannot tell other people what the minimum conditions are for them because they may require far less in the way of conditions than I do. But I can know when a situation which is developing, or has developed, is one which is beneath, as it were, the threshold for me. There is everything to suggest that it is a miracle that this patient, having reached years of adulthood, is still in existence. But nothing in the course of that life has done him any good. I would like to know on what grounds it is supposed that I could. The most exalted surgeons, physicians, psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, might all know that they could treat that patient, but I know that I could not – not so far – not on that amount of information, or with that amount of co-operation. That does not come up to my minimum requirements. I do not want to have my career cut short at any time. Something of this kind happened in an actual case in England. A member of the Board of Control – a position of considerable prestige – was sued by a paranoid patient and had punitive damages awarded against him. He was, in fact, ruined by that case. As a result, no doctor in England would certify a patient under any circumstances. The law courts, the parliament, the lawmakers had to think again, because doctors were not feeling that the minimum conditions in which they could do their job were in existence. They were being asked to do things which might leave them and their families ruined. What were their minimum conditions? I do not know, but I have no doubt that those doctors did know. It was too dangerous to have anything to do with paranoid patients. But you have to examine a patient before you know whether he is a paranoiac, and the conditions for examining such a patient did not exist, because nobody was prepared to put themselves and their families at risk. Sooner or later, somebody will have to think again before they decide that psychoanalysts are people on whom you can put any job which no one else can do, and at which nobody else has succeeded. In my opinion this is one of them. This patient is dissatisfied, according to him, because he does not do what he has to do. I cannot do it for him. If he is not prepared to use the knowledge he has, what is the good of my giving him any more?

Q: A patient, referred to you by someone, comes to your consulting room; he says he wishes to have treatment – perhaps become an

analyst – because he has difficulty in tolerating himself because he is a pervert, having committed atrocities against others. Would this case be within the minimum condition of acceptance?

Bion: There is nothing that you have told me about this patient so far which would make me hesitate in taking on that patient. I might be entirely mistaken just as I might be entirely mistaken in saying that I would not take on the previous patient. No one can tell me – it is even difficult for me to know myself – whether the rewards are adequate. We are faced with a similar though more extreme problem in the process of getting engaged or married. You can say, "Well, so far he seems a nice fellow, or a nice girl. I wouldn't mind our going out to dinner together." That might ripen or develop into a situation in which you proposed to each other that it would be a good thing to make it a more permanent arrangement. "Will you promise to go on having dinner with me for the next fifty years?" is a tall order. Fortunately, the analytic relationship is only a temporary one; in intention, at least, it is to last only for a matter of a few years at most. Only the analyst knows how much he can stand of analysing a patient, or how much he can put up with that patient's behaviour.

Referring to the patient just mentioned: I would say, "If you wish, we can give analysis a trial". If the patient says, "Yes, all right doctor, I will. But will you tell me what psychoanalysis is?" I would have to say, "I'm sorry, I would tell you if I could, but I can't. There is no way of knowing what analysis is – with me at any rate – except by coming to me." But with the previous patient I could only say, "I'm sorry, but I would be asking you to waste your time to come to me. There seems to be nothing to justify the expense of your time and money." The trouble here is that we are discussing something in the absence of the patient. One is having to fall back on some idea of what it would be like *if* such a person came to us. Of one of them I can say, "That doesn't sound to me what I want"; of the other, "That one sounds possible".

Q: When I am practising psychoanalysis, although I do not deny the importance of environment and external circumstances, I try to show the patient that his recovery depends a great deal on his own resources. The patient's attitude has to be altered. What is your opinion on this matter?

Bion: That seems to me to be a perfectly fair description of the situation. We do not think we can satisfy the patient and we cannot foretell the future. But we can say, "Together, in this consulting room, there's nothing we can do about your circumstances. But if you think that you might change and become more able to put up with the world as it exists, come along and try." But the first thing they have to find out is whether they can put up with analysis. The first patient is asking the analyst to commit himself to behaving as if he can still do something for a patient who has already said, right from the start, "I can't put up with analysis. I can't even permit the analyst freedom to exercise his own judgement" – not so blatantly, but that is about what it amounts to.

QUESTIONS TO AID THE GENERATION OF IGNATIAN EXERCISES[1]

1. How would you differentiate (a) a lecture (b) a seminar (c) a group psychoanalysis (d) supervision (e) psychoanalysis (f) psychotherapy?
2. What is your opinion of the patient described? What would you say to (a) him (b) his dependents?
3. What is your criticism of the 'lecturer'?
4. How would you have dealt with the situation had you been (a) the lecturer (b) the audience (c) the patient, if you heard your analysis had been discussed in a meeting?

[1]Reference to Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556). See his *Spiritual Exercises.*

1974 SÃO PAULO

1

The urgency of our work forces us to discriminate. We therefore have to consider only such topics as appear to be most economically relevant. Our problems more than keep pace with such progress or advances as we make. If one tries to match oneself against these problems a critical situation becomes more and more critical faster than we are able to develop our techniques and our ability to deal with it. We need some quick and efficient method of recording what we do – assuming that past experience would add to our store of wisdom. Not so many years ago people who wanted analysis seemed to have plenty of time and money with which to meet the requirement of the situation. Today even governments of states are confronted with problems which are beyond their control, or their capacity. Consider something which was once regarded as a simple matter of mechanisms of exchange and economics: when I was a small boy I once discovered a coin in one of my pockets. I had no idea that I was so fabulously wealthy – it not only made my day for me, but the next day too. Nowadays we feel well off at one moment; at the next our valuables have seeped away from our 'store'. It appears that even states experience this descent from affluence to poverty.

As for the emotional forces with which we, as psychoanalysts, are concerned, we can discern the same phenomenon in mental or psychological terms. The spirit of the country swings from a sense of affluence to a sense of bankruptcy. Which are we to consider the 'generator'? The economic situation leading to recession, or the emotional situation leading to economic recession? We, who purport to study the motions of individuals, need to state the 'direction' which the progress is taking, but we have no co-ordinates by which to indicate this primitive base. The subject becomes even more harassing in

a state of emotional turbulence. We shall have, later, to investigate the turbulence.

With regard to our mental resources, one would like to believe that we have enough knowledge or experience to run our lives in a rational manner. I wonder, in fact, how many people feel that they know how to deal with today's problems and the problems which we shall have to face tomorrow. All this seems to point to the urgent necessity to limit our analytic activities to the absolute essentials. We cannot say that everybody needs analysis; even practically it is out of the question, for our resources of time and money are limited – not only the physical resources of the earth which are now seen to be exhaustible.

Provisionally our solution will be to consider the essential problems of the patient who we shall see tomorrow, and go straight to the central point of those problems with as little dispersion of our capacities as possible. We are limited to this as we are only psychoanalysts, and not because we are unaware that our contribution is only to a minor part of a minor part of a vast domain, or because we think our importance is in any way comparable to that of our leaders.

Our psychoanalytic philosophy is based on respect for the individual. The anatomical and physiological aspect is clear to us, but is it accurate to imagine, for example, that I am these hands? Where does my personality end and someone else's start? Where does the analyst come to an end? And where does the analysand start? Where does the individual and particular become the general and non-specific? What are we to say about a mental discipline? If we were athletes we should have to be able to run, or swim, or play games and so on. But what games are we to suppose that a psychoanalyst ought to be able to play? What mental diet are we to regard as being productive of mental health? (Later we shall have to discuss what mental athletics are necessary for those who use their minds.) These questions at once confront any authority who is concerned with an institute of psychoanalysis. We do feel the need for some kind of common language; we should like to be able to talk to other analysts from any part of the world. But should any one of us be able to talk to someone who had learnt his psychoanalysis from the time of Homer? Our education tends to teach us that the works of Virgil, Plato, Milton and so on are simply beautiful literary works of art. But I do not think that that is what they were written for. It is very difficult to get past this screen

which obscures their original purpose and meaning. It will not be long before people do not understand what Freud was talking about. Can you know what you yourself were driving at in notes written six months ago? What is the message that Henry the Navigator would bequeath to us by his voyages? Historians of human thought can only conjecture. The problem is further complicated if we cannot even pass information on to each other. In trying to teach our sons and daughters something we think they ought to know it is extraordinarily difficult to know how to remind ourselves of what we were like when we were twelve or thirteen, and to believe that our passionate feelings of love for our boyfriend or girlfriend were somehow inferior to our capacity for passionate love after we have been married ten, twenty, thirty' years.

What do we investigate in 'psychoanalysis'? Do we simply want to be able to say to someone, "Ah, you will be wiser one day – I used to think like that once", or would the young version of ourselves say to our grown-up selves, "You have turned out as badly as I thought you would"? It is difficult to be sure that we could maintain that we have improved. Analysis makes it possible to reactivate the thoughts and ideas and feelings that we had once, and bring them together with the thoughts and ideas and feelings that we have today. With the patient we 'see' tomorrow our concern is a mystery, not that which we know. An 'ordinary' conversation is, and can be recognized as, a 'mystery'; it is rash for analysts to talk as if they had, or could, plumb that mystery, and a falsification to think we approach a problem that has already been solved. Analytic experience is a disaster if the human being becomes indistinguishable from a watch, or a computer, or any other machine. It may be appropriate for a child to talk to its doll or its blanket and feel that it has company. It is inappropriate for psychoanalysts to be so frightened of real life that they do not talk to each other, but talk jargon to a 'construct'. There is no future in being just like an analyst, or just like a grown-up. Our problem is not what tomorrow's patient is just like, but what they are becoming.

We may now discuss the turbulence to which I referred earlier. Adolescence is not a disease; it is a time of such mental turmoil that a great deal of which we are usually unaware comes to the surface. The analyst should consider whether the adolescent' is waking up, or growing up. He should, in spite of all the news about the dreadful things which are happening, be able to come to a correct assessment

of what the situation is. You may feel, from your own experience, that the boy or girl is in danger. On the other hand, you may feel that they will come through the experience more grown up, more responsible. The analyst is expected to pronounce on this situation. "Well doctor", the parents say, "what do you think of him?" It is a dangerous situation because analysts are supposed to be able to give an answer which is closely related to the facts approximating to some psychiatric or psychoanalytic theory with which one is familiar. But the facts that he sees may not be the ones to which the questioner is referring. One should be able to say something like, "I think it is possible he might benefit from analysis", or, "I don't think I would advise you to try analysis for him just now". But we may not be able to say what we think, because the parent, and still more the boy or girl in question, would not be able to tolerate the information that we have to give. An extreme possibility, such as suicide or murder, may be clear enough to be discernible, but in real life even extremes are not 'extremely' discernible. A patient may say he has terrible nightmares, but passes it off, saying, "I'm not really worried about it – I know they are only nightmares", or you say to him, "I hear you said you were going to murder your young sister". "Oh, that! I was just joking." It is probably true, but on the other hand he may not be in a position to know about these 'jokes'. The youngster who has just been teasing his parents by saying he is going to commit suicide, likes to believe that it is just a joke; the parents likewise. The psychoanalyst does not believe that this story starts at the age of eighteen, and knows that some of these 'jokes' have to be taken seriously. "But doctor, surely you don't think he ought to have analysis five times a week" – and you have to say, "I think it would be just as well, if it is possible. It might help."

Q: Your reference to the question of taking notes reminds me of your teaching regarding the analyst's working without memory and desire. There would seem to be three types of memory: first the dream-like memory; second, that which comes rapidly or suddenly into a session; and third, a memory or conscious recollection of the past, of some analytic experience. Your comments would clarify this for us.

Bion: Clearly, unless one used one's memory or desire or ambitions one would make no progress. During the session the patient's difficulties do not stop; he is still fully aware of his difficulties and of his

need to have attention paid to them. It becomes a serious matter if the analyst is present in mind but preoccupied with trying to remember. 'Trying to remember' is, in my opinion, being 'analytically' essentially absent. It is precisely during this short fifty minutes that one should not allow oneself either to 'remember', or to 'hope', or 'wish for', or even to 'understand' what the patient is talking about. Therefore, the analyst may not be able to make notes, but he should be able to 'make the notes' essential for psychoanalysis. I cannot offer any suggestion as to where or how these notes are made, but in my experience they are made. I have previously pointed out that I do not know where the parallel lines of a railway track meet when one sees that they come together in front of the observer, and behind him if he looks back.

I look forward to reading a paper by the questioner investigating these different forms of memory; I hope to use his categorization when they have been clarified – for example, criteria for discrimination of an hallucination from a dream. These problems cannot be investigated in books, or scientific meetings, or in the presence of the analyst's conscious theories. That is why I deprecate memory, desire and understanding *while the analysis is going on.*

2

One technical term which is often used, and probably abused, is 'counter-transference'. It is a term which should apply to the unconsciously motivated feeling which the analyst is having about the analysand in the analytic situation. The term should be correctly used, as should all terms used by the psychoanalyst. This is not a pedantic matter; it is dictated by the fact that our chosen tools, as it were, are words. If we use them wrongly we soon find ourselves in the position of a sculptor using a blunt instrument.

Someone mentioned to me a boy patient who 'doodled' on the table as if he were writing or drawing. The analyst might find it worth while doing something of this kind on paper dating it, say, April 15th, and putting it aside. Then at a later date, say, May 1st, instead of looking at notes made in a more conventional manner, one could write down one's interpretations of the squiggles or marks made on April 15th. In that way one can make use of one's conscious activities of May 1st to interpret the unconscious productions of April 15th. Drawing upon his own conscious and unconscious, the analyst would not be confusing two different analytic procedures; they are both recognized frames of mind and there is, therefore, a technical disciplinary framework.

In contrast to this there are analysts who carry their professional activities into their homes and cause a great deal of trouble by interpreting in psychoanalytic terms the behaviour of their families. I am not suggesting that we should stop being psychoanalysts, but while you may have some psychoanalytic idea in your mind about the behaviour of a son or a daughter, or a husband or a wife, you do not *have* to interpret them. If I started interpreting the behaviour of members of my family I should certainly be afraid that the family

was being deprived of a father and getting an analyst instead. That may be a lucky thing for the family – or it may not – but giving psychoanalytic interpretations is part of one's professional life; there is no harm in that, but there is great harm in depriving a family of its father or mother. The same thing applies to professional activities; we should not confuse analysis and supervision. If you are supervising it is important to make a sharp distinction between the conscious activity of supervising the candidate or analyst, and analysing him. If you start analysing him when you are supposed to be supervising him, you deprive him of his supervision. You are also interfering with his analysis and his analyst. The failure to consider these problems is causing a great deal of trouble both to the psychoanalyst and his family, and to the psychoanalyst and his colleagues. This is not a theoretical idea; it has been forced on me by what I have been able to observe for myself.

Q: I would like to hear your opinion about the question of the importance of supervision in the development of the young analyst.

Bion: In the course of our professional life we can see very few personalities. Indeed, we meet relatively few people in a life time; but that situation can be to some extent corrected by activities such as seeing plays, reading biographies and reading fiction. Perhaps I should say "reading other works of fiction besides biographies". As analysts we must be aware that accounts which purport to be portrayals of reality are, in fact, the writer's interpretation of reality. This kind of reading provides a wider experience than we can have by learning only from those few people we manage to meet. Much the same applies to scientific meetings and supervisions; you can get an idea about how other analysts work. You are not obliged to say whether you regard the scientific papers as works of fiction or not. But you can form some opinion of the kind of fiction that those particular analysts write, or the kind of reality which they describe. In this way you can augment the small amount of direct experience. I consider there is a place for meetings and discussions *about* psychoanalysis provided we are not misled into thinking that they *are* analysis. Psychoanalysis is a unique experience; it is, therefore, a serious deprivation if the analyst or analysand makes the mistake of thinking that it is just an ordinary conversation. In a certain sense so it is; but if it is experienced it is both an ordinary conversation and a unique emotional experience.

The importance of supervision consists in the degree to which a peripheral activity augments the centre of the activity. Its negative contribution is proportionate to the extent to which the periphery has usurped the place of the centre.

Q: Is there any use in recalling a session in order to discover what prevented the patient from seeing something of the emotional experience?

Bion: Trying to recall that experience is not the same thing as an experience which obtrudes spontaneously. Suppose you say, "That reminds me of a dream I had last night". One could say that at one moment there is no memory of this dream; at the next moment the whole dream is present. When you start recounting it you take time over it, and it has a beginning and a middle and an end. But that is not what it had when you said, "That reminds me": the beginning and the middle and the end apply to the conversation – not the dream. The more familiar we are with the domain of mental life, the more we become aware of these subtle differences. It is worth while, therefore, having respect for the 'way' in which we think or dream.

Too often the individual objects to awareness of some event; hallucination is one notable example. Bigotry and intolerance emerge as defences against the unwanted event. The 'denial of sex' was one of the most striking examples in Freud's psychoanalytic discoveries.

Q: Could you speak about the feelings in counter-transference which are dependent on the feelings of the patient: in other words, the influence of the transference in the counter-transference.

Bion: They are very much the same as the influence in the transference of the presence of a psychoanalyst and the effect that it has upon the patient. The conditions do not exist for doing anything about the counter-transference. In contrast, the analyst can try to analyse the analysand's reaction to his, the analyst's, presence in the room.

Q: You have referred to the analytic experience as being unique. Do you consider that the emotional experiences we have all the time have the same characteristic?

Bion: I think they must have, otherwise the emotional experiences of the analysis are of no consequence whatever. Our theory is that it is worth bothering about what happens in the consulting room and

in the relationship between analyst and analysand, because we think something similar probably happens elsewhere. In analysis we can try to discuss it; elsewhere we cannot. If you can say to a patient, "You are feeling that I am angry with you", that may be true but it is of no importance. It does assume a certain importance if the patient feels that much the same kind of experience to which the analyst has drawn his attention happens in any number of situations outside the consulting room. To put the same thing in different terms: psychoanalysis, however wonderful and however erudite, and however brilliant the analyst or analysand, should resemble real life. Putting it differently again: if someone draws a picture and says, "That's what my wife looks like", one should be able to feel, "Yes, it looks human – I've seen people like that". Of a drawing by someone of the stature of Picasso we might say, "Yes, I think I know what he means – although the person in the drawing appears to have three eyes and two noses. It may not be much use to a surgeon, but perhaps it does matter to a psychoanalyst. This may not be a good drawing if I want to know how to dissect out a seborrhoeic tumour from the face, but it does teach me something about human beings." Similarly, you might say of a play, "I think people do behave like that". The fact that Shakespeare wrote it does not matter; what does matter is that it reminds you of human beings. In the same way psychoanalysis cannot be any good unless it reminds you of people.

Q: In the counter-transference situation the analyst uses his own models to deduce the model that the patient is using. This we do in order to avoid theorizing, but every model used suffers from transformation. After some time the model may not be useful any more, no matter how creative the analyst may be. Instead of getting another model would it not be better to use another kind of system of investigation?

Bion: I think it would be better to get another analyst, because the analytic interpretations which are stimulated by counter-transference have a good deal to do with the analyst. If the analysand is lucky they may also have something to do with the analysand. Sooner or later, an analysis which is based on the counter-transference will come to disaster, or at any rate failure, because all the interpretations will have little to do with the analysand and a great deal to do with the analyst. In physical medicine this would become apparent fairly

early if the surgeon operated on the strength of counter-transference and not on the strength of the anatomical and physiological findings. Unfortunately, that is not unknown. We, as analysts, try to avoid it.

Q: We should like you to say something about groups.

Bion: The kind of experience which one has in psychoanalysis – when there are two people present in the room at the same time – can seem to happen where it is a relationship between a whole lot of people. For example, just now a number of people laughed. They must have had the same experience, or so one would think; all those people who laughed experienced the same emotional experience at that moment. If that is the case, can a single person like myself here, or any other single person in the room, say they have an idea of what the interpretation would be of that laugh? This is typical of an unspoken interpretation of 'the group'. One would have to develop a sensitiveness to what seemed to be the emotion common to the majority of the group; the group analysis would have to depend on the assessment of the 'gist' of an obtruding emotion. It bears a similarity to psychoanalysis, but it is not the same thing.

Groups are sometimes structured; the psychoanalytic institute is typical of the 'structured' group. In group practice I used to try to avoid structuring the group so as to leave any structure that might exist a chance of emerging spontaneously.

3

Q: The psychoanalytic institute here recommends that students should study Kant. Possibly this results from something you have written in which you refer to Hume and Kant. Would you clarify for us the relationship you see between certain theoretical formulations in relation to the problem of thought, and the works of Kant.

Bion: Kant was attracted by the fact that people think and that we do not all think in the same way, nor do we all see the same phenomena. Philosophers are curious about thought itself.

Most activities are apparently self-explanatory; even in extremely primitive times there was an awareness of the existence of something 'not self' and a curiosity about this other object; the self also obtrudes into consciousness and adds to the non-self experience. Objects which are not oneself can become names with the names which we ordinarily associate with things. Sometimes, in the course of analysis, one becomes aware that the analysand has had, and is still having, difficulties which appear to be associated with an awareness of himself. In practice the analyst can suspect that this difficulty, although discernible today, must have been apparent to the patient long before he can have had any equipment adequate to deal with what he was aware of. Our problem today is associated with the detection and comprehension of symptoms or signs of that awareness. You need hardly doubt that any analytic belief that that is happening would be sure to be both controversial and difficult.

If you watch a baby lying in the cot sucking its fingers or thumbs, or – that extremely admirable athletic ability – pushing its feet into

its mouth, do you think the baby might be experiencing embryonic, philosophical conjectures about its experience? Assuming that one does think so, in our hypothetical 'tomorrow's baby' are there vestiges of such a preoccupation? We know what a stir was created by Freud's suggestion that there was such a thing as infantile sexuality. We can scarcely hope to escape similar controversy about any suggested extension of 'infantile mentality'.

Q: In your book, *Attention and Interpretation,* there is a difference between the liar and the thinker. I would like to hear more about truth being independent of the thinker, and the lie needing a thinker.

Bion: In so far as we understand facts, it is evident that the fact does not owe anything to us at all. But a fabrication by the individual concerned is a different matter. If one simply tells another person the truth about some phenomenon such as where a pencil is, that is not a particularly exciting discovery or statement. But if you tell them where it is *not* and you see the individual concerned engaged on a wild hunt for the non-existent, that is a creative effort. You can see children's excitement and pleasure at having made an April Fool of someone. They learn at the same time that it is a matter of consequence as to whom you make a fool of, because grown-ups are such unpredictable, dull people who do not think it at all funny. So the process of discrimination arises in the course of activities of that kind. Waging war, or just arguing with another person, is helped and furthered by deceiving that person.

When we hear the patient talking to himself, is he trying to help himself or the analyst, or trying to deceive himself? These primitive activities have not disappeared from the realms of human behaviour. One still finds it useful to help somebody by informing them correctly so that they could further one's own aims or objects. The distinction between the lie and the truth, and the uses of both those kinds of communication, are borne in on the human being. This kind of activity has precipitated the preoccupations of philosophers who regard accurate thought as of first importance. Today, when it is not clear that man's wisdom has increased in proportion to his physical power, the psychoanalyst has taken over the responsibility for extending the philosopher's approach to clear thought.

Q: You have spoken several times about things 'never being the same'. Can there be a difference more convincing than that between a dream and an hallucination, between a dream as an association and an hallucination, and between a dream and a lie?

Bion: Those are certainly important distinctions, but I would not give them priority over other differences if and when they are observed. The point I meant to make was to emphasize that 'things' do not remain the same; history does not repeat itself. It is always new.

The child who bumps its head on the table is interpreting correctly when it hits the table; later he hits someone else. Today we are attempting to achieve a different approach. The 'difference', when we wish to establish our own responsibility for our own pain, is very great because it is fundamental.

Q: Due to insufficiency of alpha-function there are sensitive elements in an excessive number which disturb mental life. This is corroborated in recent studies in experimental psychology and neurophysiology; also the studies on the average evoked responses, evoked by sensitive stimuli on the EEG. Such studies show that in paranoid schizophrenics we often meet a predominance of the articulate attention; the attention tends to select some sensorial data and to focus on them. The same studies show that the opposite happens with non-paranoid schizophrenics. In the latter we may conclude that there is an insufficiency of alpha-function, a great number of sensory elements not selected and not elaborated. I should like to hear you speak, first, about the progress that psychoanalysis has been making on the study of the alpha-function, chiefly on the alpha-function on paranoid and non-paranoid schizophrenic patients; second, about the implications of such progress on the concept of the paranoid-schizoid position which appears to be adequate for the elucidation of the paranoid states, but inadequate for the elucidation of the schizomorphic non-paranoid states of mind.

Bion: The problem which has been stated has itself been one which has to be expressed in terms of such language as is available. As far as I am concerned I have to pay attention to a pattern of sounds which are made by somebody who is not me, and

I have to wonder what the pattern of sounds means. It is indeed very difficult. Part of this can be simply and obviously explained, but all those parts of the problem which are obviously and simply explained are hardly worth bothering about. If they really are obvious and simple, what is the problem? But as it is, the problem is difficult to state with the existing language, and the person who formulates that question is liable to be ignored on the grounds that we do not know what he is talking about. That is a simple answer, and an entirely useless one; it may indeed be dangerous if the problem that is stated, however inadequately, is in fact a serious problem. As I say, all this could be explained on the grounds that I do not understand the Brazilian language. But that is not really the problem. I do not think any amount of understanding Portuguese would get me much nearer to answering the question. For example, the speaker said, "Studies show". At this point I feel, according to the language that I talk, studies show nothing. One can look at these things, one can listen carefully, and if one is lucky one can see a kind of verbal pattern; but after that one has to interpret the study. It is extraordinary how many people think that we have learnt something when we see a smoke drum (a drum covered with smoke-soot – on which a pattern can be made) or, to use some learned language and long terms, 'an encephalogram'. I am sure that makes everybody feel a lot better. Ah! Here is something scientific! Here's the graph. Look at it! It so happens I have nothing in my hands. . . . Very often one cannot have anything which is so consoling as an encephalogram, especially when it comes to the human mind – you cannot smell it, see it, touch it, or say what its shape is. Then how do you know there is one? Nevertheless we go on behaving exactly as if there were people who have minds which we can interpret. While no one in Homeric times seemed to think there was such a thing as a mind, or a soul, or a spirit, they had no difficulty in believing that, say, Agamemnon had appeared to them in their dreams – they did not doubt the validity of that dream. In fact, it was a great deal easier for them to believe in the interpretation of a dream than in what an actual, live person told them. There is nothing new about the interpretation of dreams.

I would like to consider briefly the problem of the use of a language which is totally inadequate when applied to states of mind

and mental pain. The language of physical medicine is now becoming, for us, more of a nuisance than an asset. At certain stages like adolescence, infancy, middle age, old age, certain discomforts become apparent to the individual; he does not like what is going on and will want to fall back on the idea that it is just like some kind of pain he is used to – there is always consolation in feeling that we are familiar with and know what we are talking about. But explanations made in rational terms limit our freedom and exclude consideration of the irrational and an approach in which logic and logical thinking may be irrelevant. Our preoccupation with books and discussions may itself be a sign of mental turbulence in which we participate without any appreciation of the forces that draw us together as if we were puppets without awareness of the puppeteer.

During periods like adolescence there is a great deal of turmoil. I have to talk about turmoil, whereas an artist like Leonardo can show his preoccupation by producing many drawings of turbulent water, or hair. What he was preoccupied with we cannot now possibly know, but one could say that he could draw a line round it. I have deliberately picked on adolescence because we are all familiar with that sort of upheaval; we probably remember it in our own lives. But there are numerous other ages like latency, infancy, and the number of these 'names' is increasing all the time. Not so many years ago most people would not have heard of autism. Even we who have heard this term might be hard put to it to say what it means. However, there are psychoanalysts and others who have become curious about a constant conjunction – a state of mind becomes sufficiently noticeable for one to feel that certain features are constantly conjoined. But we do not like coming across something which is novel and which we do not understand; we are bound to want to feel that we know what we are talking about, so we fall back on the old, well-established clichés – "This child is ill", "This child is seriously disturbed". It is doubtful that there is any evidence for those statements. Unless we are tolerant of our ignorance there is no hope of doing anything about it. If we are patient enough, tolerant enough, we may be able to look at what frightens us, and although we may still not be much wiser we have to put up with that. We have to start by tolerating the fact that we

are extremely ignorant; we have to come off that particular perch hitherto occupied by homo sapiens and consider the possibility that our ignorance is so abysmal that even the autistic child might teach us something.

4

When we give an interpretation in response to the patient's free-associations it is not the same thing as transforming the free-association, and yet it could be said to be not very different. Is it really an interpretation, or are we transforming what the patient says into something entirely different? Freud considered that a great many ordinary sexual facts, with which everyone is acquainted, are treated as if they do not exist and then transformed into all kinds of phenomena which are said to have nothing whatever to do with sex.

It might be worth considering another phenomenon with which we are all familiar, that is, money or mechanisms of exchange, the exchange itself being a kind of transformation. If you have money with which you buy a car, or a house, or landed property, it could be said that you are transforming your money into a car. If you buy an analytic session you could say you are paying for so many minutes of a psychoanalyst's time. Judging by the present day economic chaos, workable exchange mechanisms seem to present difficulties for the human race. An adequate currency is essential in commerce; it is no less essential in language. Psychoanalytically the *in*adequate currency is our preoccupation – not what works, but what does not work. We have to be adequate psychoanalysts, but we do not have to be unaware of our inadequacy; admiring established so-called 'classical' analysis is not part of practising psychoanalysis.

The Babel myth is a good description of a way in which an almighty god can create such chaos that people cannot even cooperate in the building of a tower. Different languages make it difficult for one nation to talk to another – a matter of importance to us who would like to feel that analysts throughout the world could talk a common language. Mathematicians have not achieved this.

Intuitionism is still controversial; so is quantum mechanics. I hope it is true of psychoanalysis. I have not been convinced that our capacity for controversy is yet adequate – 'no' is not an argument against 'yes'.

We have a sophisticated mechanism of exchange, but this does not mean that it is adequate. Primitive language is often highly complicated *and* inadequate. Highly complicated, sophisticated psychoanalysis deserves scrutiny, but not awe.

The infancy of money, cowrie shells as used in religious and other activities, has been taken over, but its use for the purpose of commerce has been obscured by its worship and by the awe with which its devotees still regard it. In short, its 'infancy' survives today when its 'scientific purpose' has been submerged. Often this is easier to observe in a group than in an individual analysis. The two modes of observation are not exclusive; they could be complementary. "If he's content with a vegetable love, which would certainly not suit me, Why, what a most particularly pure young man this pure young man must be!" [Gilbert and Sullivan, *Patience*]. That sarcastic observation, divested of its sarcasm, might describe a recurrent emotional phenomenon.

It was the early system of religious exchange, bride-purchase and wergild [see p. 9] that was taken over by people who wished to make financial exchanges; if you parted with something valuable you were compensated by being given some money in exchange. Something which is consciously and rationally known and which is governed by apparently rational laws, is in fact closely geared to emotional experiences of the utmost significance-like marriage, death, murder, religion. That is tapping very powerful emotions. The financial chaos which threatens to overwhelm the whole of economic commerce may be being influenced by deep emotional forces which will never be approached by any rational, economic conference.

Coming back to what the analysand is paying for: we do not know why anyone asks for an analytic session, nor do members of the public know why someone says he or she is an analyst. What is the mechanism of exchange by which you change the patient's free-association into an interpretation? There are all kinds of interpretations and all kinds of facts which have to be interpreted. You may care to think of some of these kinds for yourself. An example would be the man who looks at the sky and says, "I think it will be fine". We do not usually bother whether he is a qualified meteorologist or

not, but we do decide whether to take his word for it, as if he were an authority on the weather. The problems to which I am trying to draw your attention are as familiar to you as that, but the domain in which we operate is not familiar.

Freud foresaw correctly that the symbolism of dreams would be sure to change, because the unconscious knows how to defend itself by changing the symbolism as soon as it has been recognized. The analyst may not be as flexible as the unconscious. The language that he has to use is certainly not flexible, but has to be one which we are accustomed to use in everyday life. Mathematics are perhaps the closest approximation to what Croce called a 'universal linguistic', speaking of aesthetic, as any of us are likely to meet. We do not usually tell a highly qualified mathematician, "I don't know what you are talking about", as if it were his fault. A psychoanalyst, on the other hand, would be surprised if he did not detect that note of contemptuous hostility when he draws attention to what is unknown. As psychoanalysts we should be wrong to imagine that we are free from the same contemptuous hostility when we do not understand.

Freud said it would be unrealistic for a psychoanalyst to compile a dictionary showing what various psychoanalytic symbols meant, because he foresaw changes; we, his successors, are not so open-minded. It is un-psychoanalytic to adhere to some rigid system as a substitute for using our minds. The analyst must have a training, but it is not a memory training in learning the meaning of psychoanalytic symbols. Even in language itself a dictionary is not all that is needed; one has to understand the nature of language as well as the actual language in which one is attempting to speak. In analysis there is not time, as there is when reading a book, to consider what sort of transformation, interpretation, mechanism of exchange to use before we can give the analysand the interpretation. While the analyst is trying to understand, more free-associations occur and he has failed to hear them. That is why I say that 'understanding' is inappropriate during the analysis. The analyst needs a certain disciplined agility of mind in order to interpret or transform what the patient is saying into a currency which he himself can use.

Although money, like language and art, has turned out to be a valuable invention, it can be and has been debased. The skill to manipulate it can be acquired without the ardours of thinking the

problems through. As psychoanalysts we are inviting the 'yes I know' group, however large, powerful and wealthy, to suspend the operation of that valuable but dangerous frame of mind. Fear and hostility are aroused at the prospect of what might take its place. The mental 'black hole' is a case in point [see p. 100].

We know that we believe, to speak analogically, that only when a 'debased currency' has been discarded is there room for something better. We cannot guarantee that it will be better; not even analysed people, or experienced men and women, are better characters than they were when children – 'better' is a matter of opinion which is possible after the comparison can be made.

Q: The experience I have had in relation to your work has wakened me to the field of reality and truth. The reality or the truth and the experience itself fits into an area of infinite space. Your communication brings a need for order and reasoning, and in this there is the process of restriction and the loss of something more. You attempt a new form of becoming able to know – not of knowing, which the mind is already used to. That is a poison which creates the expectation of the habitual or normal. I think you are providing, fragmented and scattered, a new sense of knowing, or a new form of meaning in which that which is significant remains in the dark. Does this bear any relation to your experience?

Bion: Although we are accustomed to think of psychoanalysis as a revolutionary change, we hate revolutions and changes when they affect us personally. Consequently, there seems to be a constant warfare between the attraction of something new and one's wish to remain in a familiar field, or state of mind. If we keep in contact with the actual practice of psychoanalysis it is constantly a surprise to find that we are, in fact, still involved in a revolutionary experience. I am reminded – in astronomical terms – of being able to detect the continuing appearance of a colossal explosion which took place three or four, or a hundred light-years ago. The psychoanalytic experience is still exploding, and we can still experience moments when we are suddenly aware of being caught up in a mental turbulence. It may be worth re-considering the discussion of the 'black hole' [see p. 100 et seq.], considering it afresh in the light of your personal experience 'tomorrow'. Every time an analyst sees something freshly, everything that he has considered becomes worthy of re-consideration. This

'repetition' is an inevitable concomitant of growth; it must not be confused with 'repetition compulsion', although sometimes it may seem to be similar. I leave it to the reader to consult his own experience and the extent to which it throws light on the present and future, and not simply the past. Can he 'detect' turmoil? We are unlikely to welcome the capacity to do so. This continuing mental activity can be so hated or feared that the person who experiences it thinks that he is having what he calls a 'mental breakdown'. The practising analyst must get hardened to mental breakdowns and become reconciled to the feeling of *continuously* breaking down; that is the price which we have to pay for growth. We cannot fall back on the idea of being cured, because that is an old-fashioned and inappropriate term. We have to be reconciled to the feeling that we are on the verge of a breakdown, or some kind of mental disaster; we have to have a certain toughness to stand this continuing experience of mental growth. The alternative to it is to try to reconcile oneself to the fact that one is over and done with, that one has reached the final upheaval of mid-life, or old-age, and so forth. But then you have to pay the price of feeling that there is nothing more to come. So you can take your choice: mental stagnation and decay on the one hand, or perpetual upheaval on the other – like living in the middle of a mental breakdown, without being clear whether one is breaking up or breaking down.

Q: I would like to hear you speak about transformation in hallucinosis.

Bion: Hallucinosis is a word which one uses as a compact summary of an emotional experience. It has a somewhat pejorative meaning, but the thing itself has to be treated with more respect than to be deposited in a psychiatric dustbin. I would like to see the state of hallucinosis treated with the kind of respect which we expect to accord neurosis, dreams, nightmares and other mental phenomena; we can then hope to learn more about it. I would like to say to the questioner: don't bother what *I* think about it, but have a good look at it when you feel that you have a chance of examining a state of hallucinosis. If we can respect hallucinosis we may be regarding a future mathematician – not mere mental debris.

Q: You have said that one of the difficulties the analytic institute training committee has to face is a question of who to qualify as analysts. You suggest that this should be someone who could come

to feel that he is not invulnerable to a mental collapse. I would like to know what you think about the question of intuition to which you give a great deal of importance for the analytic job. I want to know if it is possible to see or recognize the qualities of intuition in someone who is to be qualified.

Bion: I find it difficult to believe in the intuition of anybody who is afraid of, say, hallucinations, or breakdowns, or any other frame of mind, because intuition is indivisible – either the person has intuition or he has not. He cannot say, "I will have just a little intuition, but I don't propose to have anything to do with people who are hallucinated". If it were possible for a candidate to talk in those terms I should say "All right; you can leave out psychoses and all that, but if you do you will very soon find yourself wanting to know nothing about terrifying dreams", and from that time on the individual concerned is firmly set on a course of rejection and retreat. I do not think I would be impressed by a candidate who thought that his troubles were all over when he was qualified; I would wonder what those troubles were that were all over. In the same way, our troubles are not all over when we have finished our childhood. Childhood, and even analysis, is only a sort of prelude to real life. Marriage is not the end of your troubles; there may be an end to playing games like 'fathers and mothers', but when you have finished playing your games then you *become* a father or a mother – that is the real thing. One thing you might learn in the course of your childhood games is that they are, after all, games. So, when you come to your real troubles it might be helpful if you could mobilize the kind of feeling you have when playing a fascinating game. It is not necessary to regard married life as a tragedy, the kind of thing which makes people say, when a friend gets married, "There goes a good man".

Q: Although Freud rejected philosophy as a rationalization which could obscure the truth, we know nowadays that our philosophies are various points of departure – mathematics, history, the power of reason, or irony, as in the case of Socrates. Do you consider that we are seeing the beginning of a philosophy of the soul which is also threatened with collapse?

Bion: With regard to Freud's idea of philosophy as a rationalization, I do not think that we can afford to kick away the ladder up which we climb; although the classical, philosophical views of Plato do begin

to prove inadequate, they nevertheless served their purpose. If one sums up Plato's writings about injustice as a belief that every cobbler should stick to his last, then all would be well if every individual stuck to the work for which he is best suited. It is not a bad idea, but it does become inadequate. By the time of Saint Augustine the classical philosophical approach had to be extended in the way in which he attempts to do in *The City of God.* That was partly an attempt to repudiate the responsibility of the Christians for the fall of Rome, suggesting that there was another kind of city of greater importance. Today we could say that there is a frame of mind which is more important than that which can be summed up as "every man sticking to his last". Analysis suggests that classical, philosophical disciplines and views are not enough; they have to be augmented by recognition of the unconscious and unconscious motives.

Philosophers are aware of 'rationalizations' though the term has not been in frequent use. They are concerned with correct thinking because they are aware of incorrect thinking – although they may not have devoted much time to the elucidation of the 'incorrect'. Usually, incorrect thinking has been relegated to grammarians and rhetoricians as if they were an inferior class, not worthy of the title of 'philosophers'. Incorrect thinking has thus been enabled to flourish undetected until it has now reached its present dominance and power. We may not now be able to arrest its triumphant progress. As one of the depressed classes, thinkers (whatever else they may call themselves) labour from a position of weakness; from my reading of history I doubt that this is anything new, although it may be novel to advocate awareness of discomfort.

5

Q: What is your opinion with regard to the teaching of psychoanalysis in universities or medical schools? If psychoanalysis is confined to the experience between two people, how can this experience be made use of in large groups?

Bion: The difficulty is to know what it is that the university, or the institution which is not psychoanalytic, expects from the analyst. The accounts that I have had in the past from people who have responded to the invitation to make some contribution to the university curriculum appear to be somewhat unhappy. The analyst often seems to find that something is expected of him which is based on a misunderstanding of psychoanalysis. This may be because we have made much more progress than we realize and are, therefore, familiar with a way of thinking and a way of teaching which is considerably separated from the ordinary conventional methods. My experiences of psychoanalytic training were, in fact, very depressing. Like the first railway coaches which were made to look as much like horse-drawn vehicles as possible, I found the whole apparatus of training was just a copy of the methods suitable for conventional training in conventional experience. But as I became more and more acquainted with psychoanalysis, the more utterly unsuitable this seemed. Some of it was due to the fact that we were all tired people, listening to people who were even more tired at the end of a day's hard work, who then fell back on doing what everybody else did. As I sat in small, overcrowded, uncomfortable rooms I thought that this was more suitable as a penitential exercise than anything connected with a cultural activity. And the more I became acquainted with psychoanalysis, the

more frightful this experience seemed to be. I do not feel optimistic about these requests which are made to our institutions, or about the effect it would have on our members. I would not discourage anybody from going to a university, or joining such a course, but on the other hand, I would not encourage them to believe that they are in for an enjoyable experience. It takes only a short time to discover that the students and other colleagues have a low opinion of psychoanalysis and the intelligence of the people who engage in it. This peculiar gap is very difficult to bridge.

The fact that psychoanalysis is fundamentally based upon a respect for the individual is liable to exacerbate the respect that we must also feel for the community of people. It is one reason why a study of the group may be a valuable adjunct to the psychoanalytic study of the individual, and vice versa. I think it is premature to pronounce an opinion on how these streams of experience are to be harmonized when groups and individuals meet. The problem is worth studying.

Q: I would like you to speak about your analytic experience with schizophrenic patients.

Bion: I once would have thought that I was having some experience of schizophrenic patients, but I am wondering how I would describe that experience now, and how I would regard the patients who I once thought were adequately described by the term 'schizophrenic'. I even used to take it for granted that the categories into which they had been placed were adequate. But as time went on I thought that these diagnoses were meaningless. I could not help being suspicious of a diagnosis which seemed to include a large proportion of all psychotic patients. Kraepelin [Emil Kraepelin, German psychiatrist, 1856–1926] himself seemed to feel that there was something wrong with the diagnosis. Of course, should the patient make any progress it can always be said that the patient was obviously wrongly diagnosed – however authoritative the diagnosis. It is possible, but I think there is something wrong with the assessment of the progress. If that were applied to physical medicine one would have to say that any case successfully medically treated cannot have been ill in the first instance. In fact, there is something wrong both with the diagnosis or its implications, and the whole experience of the analytic approach If I have not subjected the individual to analysis, I have no material on

which to form a judgement. If I have, they have all been patients who were aware of the relationship with myself. How they would or could formulate the experience of that awareness gradually unfolded with the passage of time. I have tried to describe it in occasional papers. Today I do not regard any diagnosis as an abridgement on which I could rely for illumination. I hope that my analytic approach would stimulate both the analysand and myself.

Q: What is your opinion of the case in which the patient cannot make any further progress due to an impasse in the analysis?

Bion: The analytic relationship between the analyst and the analysand is not unique. What would be the point of it if it were? The relationship between those two people is reminiscent of the relationship of any other two people. The impasse needs analysis both to enable the analysis to proceed and to familiarize the analysand with a problem which he is sure to meet in real life. Why do husband and wife sometimes seem to come to an impasse? If we have the chance of analysing one of such a pair we are sure to meet the impasse at some point; if not, what has it to do with real life if we never have a close-up view of something which is so common? Similarly, if frustration and anxiety are a part of real life one ought to come across them in analysis. It is the analyst's function to help the analysand to some experience of an impasse, frustration, or anxiety, and if possible to enable him to become familiar with dealing with it.

Q: Continuing the remarks about these impasses in analysis: when should analysis end?

Bion: It does not end; the relationship between a particular doctor and a particular analysand does. The ending is an event of no importance; everything comes to an end. The only reason it becomes important is because the individual has difficulty about termination. After all, we all die at some time. It is difficult to see why anyone attaches the slightest importance to it, except that one could say that dying is a dangerous thing, because most of us feel that if we died we should end up by being dead. That event assumes such importance that it is liable to obscure the short experience which intervenes between the time we are born and the time we die. We do not live for more than a few short years and it seems amazing that so much attention should be paid to such a trivial and unimportant affair as the finish.

People regard the termination of life as a sort of prize-giving; they are waiting, as it were, to receive their prize – or perhaps a very bad report. So, while time and energy are devoted to this unimportant event, life flows by.

Q: What are the similarities and differences between interpretations and constructions, principally in relation to your theory of transformations?

Bion: The view, expressed by Freud, which I found has a great deal of meaning for me is that many of these interpretations are almost meaningless, but these constructions are not. I remain unexcited by being told that I am omnipotent, or that I am helpless. I do, however, feel slightly more interested if somebody says that I think I am God; if it means nothing else, at least it means that somebody is being rude. To that extent it is an improvement on being told that one is omnipotent. But I would go further; I would like the individual concerned to tell me what sort of god I was behaving like. There is a large variety of gods which one's behaviour could resemble. If the individual, instead of being rude or hostile, would tell me which kind of god I resembled, I would find that construction much more meaningful and comprehensible. There is much to be said for a short story which I can understand and which, therefore, is a vehicle which communicates meaning. For example, if somebody said that I am like the god of Babel, that I am so jealous and envious that I would not like anyone to climb up a higher tower than the pedestal on which I was happening to sit myself, that I would like to make them so confused and on such bad terms with one another that they would not be able to construct a better and higher and more glorious tower – if I were given that sort of interpretation I would feel that I had a clearer idea (although I might not like it) of how I appeared to somebody else. That is why I am more in favour of the construction than some word that I could look up in the dictionary leaving me no better for the expenditure of time.

Q: What is the analyst to do if the patient suffers a psychotic episode and has to be hospitalized?

Bion: If the minimum conditions for analysis still exist I continue to analyse the patient. Putting the patient into hospital has little to do with the patient's personality; it has more to do with the public, or

the family, or the people who are feeling inconvenienced – perhaps seriously so – by the patient. If the patient is going about wanting to murder his fellows that is very inconvenient indeed. Extremes of this kind are easy to comprehend; it is more difficult when the person in question is a nuisance – like Solzhenitsyn. Should he be hospitalized in a psychiatric 'cancer ward', or just exiled? This matter of diagnosis is often a question of what degree of irritation or annoyance or inconvenience the person is creating. However, as analysts with a prejudice in favour of the individual, we would like to know what *kind* of nuisance the person was. Even if we narrow it down sufficiently to use some term like 'psychosis' we would like to know which particular variety of psychosis.

Q: Is it possible for religious feeling and psychoanalytic thought to co-exist in the same person?

Bion: Psychoanalysis is primarily a method of investigation, and we are, therefore, sure to come across some evidence of the views or beliefs of the individual. But I regard that as an irrelevance; in theory we are not supposed to impose our views on other people. I can see that there may be psychoanalytic views about religion, but they are departures from a method of investigation. Just as in any investigation we have certain preconceptions, it is impossible to ask a question without betraying your knowledge about that question. For example, any question regarding sex shows that the questioner knows something about sex, and at the same time shows that he does not know much about it. When it comes to an investigation of a religious belief the same thing is true of the analyst; it would be clear that he was showing his religious belief *and* religious ignorance.

Q: I would like to hear something of your experience of alcoholics and your ideas on the subject of alcoholism in general.

Bion: Alcohol, like any other form of food or drink, can be turned to good account or to something harmful. There is nothing particularly wrong with alcohol, but there may be something wrong with the individual who is taking it. There is a long history of the belief in the value of alcoholic drinks, wines, and a long history of the greed which affects the quantity taken. No one asserts that food and drink are harmful, but the consumer can take either food or drink in such quantity that the actual food or drink ceases to be adequately assessed

by the quantity and becomes a qualitative change. The harmless substance becomes toxic. It is one of these instances in which change in quantity leads to a change in quality. The same thing can be said about psychoanalysis; taken in moderation it is good for us. But what is moderation? In everyday life one likes to believe that the parents have an idea where to draw the line: not so the child. For a certain period in life there should be somebody who says, "I think you have had enough". It is awkward when there is no authority to make that statement, because the individual is no longer a child, and cannot justifiably be put in a mental hospital. Although 'alcohol' is not a crime a considerable number of families have been ruined by the excess of one member. Similarly, the predominance of one or other quality of an analysand may amount to an 'excess' to the ruin of that individual. That does not mean that the quality was a defect. Excess of brilliance of illumination, literal or metaphorical, can be as 'blinding' as obscurity. In short, to say that the person is addicted to a drug may save him from the need to submit to or seek investigation, or it may indicate the 'area' in which investigation is to be pursued. From the exercise of judgement there is no relief.

To return to the subject of the universities; would it be a good thing to introduce a psychoanalyst into a university, and would an analyst be in a position to say, "I think that your university is poisoning the youth of this nation"? I understand that Socrates got into some trouble in this matter; he was effectively dealt with on the grounds that he was corrupting the youth. Plato, in his *Apology*, argues very strongly against that view. However, it did not do Socrates much good. What is to be done about the poisonous food which may be destroying the future chances of the human race? Nobody has found a way of telling what kind of knowledge becomes toxic when one is talking about the mind or personality. It is a matter to which we should pay attention. It is something of a race against time.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME VIII

Garden at Little Cottage
Oil painting by W. R. Bion

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VOLUME VIII

Edited by Chris Mawson

Editorial consultant Francesca Bion

KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume VIII): 978–1–78220–236–3

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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CLINICAL SEMINARS

1975/1978

‘Clinical Seminars’ was first published in 1987 in *Clinical Seminars and Four Papers*, by Fleetwood Press, Abingdon. It was reprinted in 2000 as Part One in *Clinical Seminars and Other Works*, edited by Francesca Bion (London: Karnac Books).

Clinical Seminars

INTRODUCTION

In 1975 Wilfred Bion and I were invited by Professor Virginia Bicudo to spend the month of April in Brasilia. During that time Bion worked with individuals and groups, gave three lectures at the university, and took part in three panel discussions (entitled *Brasilia, A New Experience*) at the Buriti Palace to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the city. Panel members, representing the arts and sciences, dealt with aspects of the character of the city and the problems involved in forming and developing a new community. I have included his contributions to these discussions.

In April 1978 we spent two weeks in São Paulo – our third visit. Bion held fifty clinical seminars, daily consultations, and ten evening meetings (published in *Bion in New York and São Paulo*). Such a volume of work demonstrates his remarkable vigour and stamina at the age of eighty.

These clinical seminars, at which Bion preferred the number of analysts present not to exceed six, were all recorded. I am grateful to those responsible for having made possible this printed version.[1]

Owing to the variable quality of the recordings, I have been unable to piece together some of the clinical material, and after a lapse of so many years it has proved impossible to retrieve what has been lost. The necessity for translation (in both directions) significantly reduced the amount of ground that could be covered in each hour.

I have chosen to publish only those seminars that are sufficiently complete to form a coherent whole. The necessary editing in

[1][Francesca Bion was not present at the Clinical Seminars, in view of the confidential nature of the material discussed. They were attended only by clinicians. *Ed.*]

transferring the spoken word to the printed page has not in any way altered the content of Bion's contributions or his style of expression. I have adopted the same methods as those I used in the past with his approval.

He had no prior view of the material presented; the patients under discussion were being 'seen' by him for the first time. His responses were, therefore, spontaneous and give a clear indication of how he worked as one of the psychoanalytic pair.

Francesca Bion
Abingdon, Oxfordshire
August 1987

BRASILIA

1975

1

Presenter: I would like to discuss a session I had today with a thirty-year-old woman. She came into the consulting room and sat down; she never lies on the couch. She smiled and said, "Today I won't be able to stay sitting here." I asked her what that meant; she said she was very agitated. I asked her what she considered as being very agitated. She smiled and said, "My head is dizzy." She said her thoughts were running away, running over one another. I suggested that when she felt like that she also felt that she was losing control of her body. She smiled and said, "Perhaps; it looks as if that were true." When I continued, suggesting that when her mind was running away like that, her body had to follow her mind's movements, she interrupted me, saying, "Now, don't you try to make me stand still."

Bion: Why should this patient think that the analyst would *do* anything? You cannot stop her coming or send her away; she is a grown woman and presumably therefore free to come and see you if she wants to; if she doesn't want to, she is free to go away. Why does she say that you would try to stop her doing something? I am not really asking for an answer to that question – although I would be very glad to hear any answer that you have – but simply giving an example of what my reaction is to this story.

P: I was interested to know why she had said, "Don't try to keep me still". She said she didn't know the answer to the question, so I suggested that she was preoccupied by my being quiet, still. She said that she did not regard me as being still, but as dominating my movements, my mind controlling my body.

B: As you have been seeing this patient for some time, you both know a certain amount about one another. From the point of view of the group here, I wonder what any of us thinks so far. Do you get a

feeling that you want to know more? Or do you feel that you would not want to see this patient again? In fact, I would like to hear what she had to say without my asking questions – were it not for the fact that that is such an extraordinary way to behave. We tend to forget that we may be much more used to analysis than the patient is. It would be quite natural to me to sit there silently and hear what the patient has to say, but the patient might not be able to stand that. A patient coming to me for the first time might be so frightened at such peculiar behaviour that he would get up and walk straight out. So as usual we come back to this point: in *theory* we can read what we like in all these great books on analysis; in *practice* we have to have a feeling about what the patient can stand. One's behaviour has to be a compromise; one has to have some concern and make allowances for the patient to whom this is such a frightening experience. I think this is an argument in favour of our behaving in a fairly conventional manner to make it easier for patients, who are under a strain anyway, to say whatever they want to say.

I would like to make a guess here as to what I would say to this patient – not in the first session but later on. "We have here these chairs, this couch, because you might want to use any of them; you might want to sit in that chair, or you might want to lie on that couch in case you feel that you couldn't bear sitting there – as you say today. That is why this couch was here when you first came. I wonder what has made you discover this today. Why is it that only today you have found that you may not be able to sit in that chair; that you may have to lie down or go away?" All that would be much more appropriate if she had discovered it at the first session. But she was too afraid to discover it.

P: In earlier sessions this question of sitting in the chair and lying on the couch had already arisen. But I am considering the idea of this being the first session.

B: Every session is really a first session. Today isn't yesterday; what the patient is saying today is because it is another day. Of course it is true that it is also because the patient happens to be that particular person.

P: You mentioned making a compromise when the patient first comes for analysis. If every session is a first session, why would there be a reason for changing attitudes afterwards?

B: Because time is passing and the patient is changing. If it were possible for the patient to make no change at all, there would still be a change because the world is going on; it doesn't stop because we refuse to grow up. It is made a bit easier if the analytic pair remains recognizably the same; it gives a certain familiarity. Similarly, the mother needs to be recognizably the same person every time she comes to the baby; the baby needs to feel it is the same mother. In the analytic situation it is more difficult because the patient is not a baby and the analyst is not the mother. So once more the analyst makes allowances for the patient by being recognizably the same person. But that doesn't mean that one has agreed that the situation should remain static, frozen. Indeed in this respect one is really putting pressure on the patient to grow up, not to remain a baby or a patient or a neurotic or a psychotic for ever. The analyst expects something from the patient besides just punctuality, fees and so on; he expects some improvement.

P: Your suggestion of what to say to the patient seemed much simpler than what is usually said by an analyst.

B: In a way psychoanalysis is extremely simple, but like every simple thing, for some reason it is awfully difficult to carry out. Similarly, while we always talk – and I think rightly – about sexual problems, it appears that physiologically and anatomically nothing could be easier than having a baby. The objects concerned only have to wait until they are fourteen, fifteen, maybe much earlier, and then they can have a baby. What could be simpler? But the trouble is that we, rightly or wrongly, believe that there is such a thing as a character or personality – the whole of psychoanalysis is based on that somewhat all-pervading theory. So this very simple activity is complicated *if* the person concerned knows that to have a baby there has to be long preparation beforehand – thirteen or fourteen years of it anyway – and a long time afterwards. Birth is nothing at all – it is a sort of milestone – but there is a long period of development both before and after it. When it comes to the mind or personality, we still don't know how long it takes to create that.

As the analyst, one hopes to go on improving – as well as the patient. That is why I think it is a good thing to leave oneself a chance of learning something and not to allow the patient, or anyone else, to insist that one is some sort of god who knows all the answers. If

I knew all the answers I would have nothing to learn, no chance of learning anything. So while the mother or the father must be able to bring up the child even after birth, it is also necessary to leave room for the person to be able to behave like an ordinary human being. It is hopeless if one feels condemned to be, as it were, the great father, or great mother, or great psychoanalyst, or great anything. What one wants is to have room to live as a human being who makes mistakes.

To come back to this patient: if I make allowances and say, "All right, sit in the chair if you want to", or "Lie on the couch if you want to", will the patient make good use of that? Or will she feel that if I have allowed that much freedom, then she will take a bit more? For example, the patient can then say, "Well, all right; if I can lie down here, I'm going to lie down and go to sleep. I'm going to have a never-ending analysis. I'm going to spend the rest of my life coming to you for analysis. I'll camp out in your house".

P: I felt that the patient was trying to feel free to talk with me, but that the liberty to talk with me was at variance with the terms she wanted to impose. I asked her what she would think if I behaved like she did – my mind not controlling my body. She said it would be excellent.

B: I don't think I would want to ask that question because I would be afraid she would give me an answer which might not be the correct one.

P: When she said it would be excellent, I suggested that she was telling me that she saw a chance of us both being connected, married. She said she didn't like the word, 'married'. She remembered then – although she insisted on not using the word, 'married' – that she had had a dream that night in which she saw our faces and mouths close together. The sensation was a very exciting one although there was no orgasm involved.

B: She can say, "I'd like that", but this depends on the belief that you wouldn't do anything; she is sure – or thinks she is sure – that you would not marry her. In other words, she wouldn't mind saying how much she would like to have sexual intercourse, or how much she would like to be all alone with you, or her father, or her mother, provided she didn't have to do what fathers and mothers do. So far it's not so bad; she may have been very close to you, but it was only a dream so it doesn't matter. But we, as analysts, think dreams *do* matter, and so would this patient at some time in her life before she

made a distinction between a fact when wide awake, and a fact when fast asleep.

I would begin to be a bit suspicious about this patient; I would wonder whether she really knows the difference between a dream and waking life, or whether she knows the difference between courtship – a love affair – and a psychoanalysis. However, the immediate point is, what shall we say to the patient? It is time, as it were, that we gave her an interpretation. There are millions of interpretations, but there is only one experience, and that is the experience which the analyst here had with this patient – while none of us had it. We can discuss the matter, but that is not analysis; that is *about* analysis. The feeling the analyst has that something is taking place, can only be known if the patient comes to him and gives him a chance to experience it.

2

Presenter: The patient is a woman, about fifty years old. In the session I am presenting she arrived, kept silent, and then in a demonstrative way yawned and showed that she was sleepy. Then she said, "Why did I come here if I am sleepy? I should stay at home to sleep. I don't come here to sleep". Between each phrase she was silent. I said nothing. After a longer silence she asked, "Why do I come here?" I asked her, "Yes, why *do* you come? What does coming here mean to you?" She answered, "This means that; this is that". I pointed out to her that this didn't tell me anything. She continued, "Well, I come here to get to know myself better. I think that with your help perhaps things will be clearer to me". But she said this in a very unrealistic way.

Bion: One could say that if that is the answer, then what is the trouble? She is hardly likely to come to ask a question to which she thinks she knows the answer. If you ask her, "Why did you come here?", then she can say that is what she is asking you. So I think I should simply leave it and say to her, "You have posed the question; perhaps later on you will be able to say what the answer is!", or simply say, "You have posed the question". I would rather leave her the chance of saying what the answer is when she has found it. It is as well to bear in mind also that there are two people in the room and that this question can apply to one or the other, or to both of them.

P: Suddenly she interrupted herself as if remembering something I had told her before. She lay down on the couch and turned her head towards me saying, "Didn't I say anything? Well, you said it doesn't mean anything". She stared at me and then said, "You said I didn't say anything – perhaps I didn't say anything". I said, "You

look at me as if I know the right answer and that you are supposed to guess it but you can't". Then she said, "You could help me, but you keep saying that I have to do everything by myself here". I said she was attributing me with the ability to help her.

B: I would have thought that you were working too much. My own feeling about this – as far as I can tell, not having been there – is that I would prefer to remain silent and leave the patient to tell me the answer to this question. If I wanted to say anything at all I would leave it in abeyance. She has asked a question and nobody has answered. The only thing I have heard is a silence; there is apparently no answer to it. I wonder in what way she knows that she has to do all the work. Who has told her this, and what is she hearing in this silence? I don't object to the silence because there are in fact some forms of communication in which people remain silent. There are 'rests' in music – the instruments don't play. So I think I would still leave it at that, or I might – depending on how familiar I think she is with this situation – draw her attention to the fact that she must have some way of hearing what has been said when nothing has been said. Either that, or it is not true. As far as I am concerned I would expect somebody to tell me if I have to do all the work. Otherwise you may get into a situation where you are supposed to help her without any assistance yourself. You haven't gone to see her; she has come to see you.

P: She says she doesn't know why she comes.

B: My reply to that would be, "I think that is very unlikely – if you don't know, certainly nobody else does". It sounds much more likely to be true that she doesn't know why you, the analyst, have come. But she may be puzzled as to why both these people have come; there are two people in this room alone, but she doesn't know why they are there, or what they are there for.

In this situation her explanation of finding out about herself is more or less plausible; it is a reasonable explanation; it may even be a psychoanalytic explanation. It sounds to me as if she has come into this room where there are two people and has started asking questions about what they are doing. It would be much easier if one could say that there is a little girl watching what these two people are up to.

Let's leave the matter and let her go on talking if she wants to, so that we can then listen to what she is saying to that man who is in the

room with her. So far, apparently, neither the man nor the woman has said anything except something which sounds like a very unconvincing psychoanalytic interpretation. In short, the mystery is unsolved.

P: I brought this case because I am very uneasy about it.

B: Yes, and so is she. She doesn't know why those two people are there. You have to attach great importance to what she does say – all these 'whys'. The patient who asks a question and sees to it that you can't give an answer because there is already an answer there, leaves no chance either for you to be curious, or for her to be curious. She can ask a question and she can get an answer which tells her nothing. The same thing applies to you; you are asked the question, but you are told nothing. If you try to give an interpretation, the patient retreats further on the basis that, "If you are so very clever, you tell me". You shouldn't give in to that, but make it clear that if she wants answers to these questions she will have to keep you properly informed. Analysis isn't a game – not as far as the analyst is concerned – in which you are asked to give an answer with nothing to go on. You give an answer and she gives you another question; in the end you find yourself trying to give help with no way whatever of giving it. Alternatively, if you don't give her any interpretation, if you maintain silence, she can say, "There you are – I am supposed to come here and do all the work". That is really a sort of blackmail. She will prove that the analyst is wrong anyway; either he is so ignorant that he doesn't give any help, or else so clever that he can do the job without any assistance.

Member: In talking about impressions you have, you suggest what the analyst might have said to the patient. You also mention interpretations that occur to you but that you would not say to the patient. Listening to these two kinds of interpretations I feel that any of them could be given to the patient.

B: In the *practice* of analysis the analyst has to make up his own mind what the situation is; there is nobody to tell him this – only his senses, what he hears and sees for himself in the room. It is the fallacy of training that one is told the interpretations to give. The only place where you have a chance of knowing what the interpretation is, is in your own consulting room. Nobody can tell you more about it than you know yourself. With different people, different situations arise; even with the same person – today isn't the same as yesterday. It is a dynamic situation; analysis is not static. Analytic theories are quite

useful for about three sessions – you know nothing about the patient and therefore have to fall back on theory. After that the answers are on the couch or in the chair, and in what you can see and hear for yourself.

P: I told her that when she says I have the power to help but don't want to, and that I say she must do everything for herself, she means that she is completely dependent on me, addicted to me. But as she knows that I have this power, she can go to sleep till I make up my mind to help her. The only thing she said was, "I am not addicted".

B: In that case she must know what she *is.* Why doesn't she tell you what she *is* if she knows that she is not something? Psychoanalysis is not a way of telling people things we don't know; it is much more a question of finding out something. The analyst hopes that he will know a little bit more about the patient each time they meet. We are not trying to teach patients that we know all the answers, but that if *they* do the work they may find the answer. Nobody is going to do the work for them because no one can.

P: She came back to the point about what she gets from the analysis – knowledge about herself and so on. She said, "How difficult it must be for you to stick it with me". She told me that although it is terribly difficult here with me, she knows that she is improving. Then she said something absolutely unintelligible as if she was eating the words. I told her I didn't understand what she said. She replied, "I mean the confusion in my mind". I told her that even when she wanted to get closer to me it was very difficult for her because as soon as she started to say that she was improving, she felt unable to talk freely and had to cause confusion.

B: If she was being fed, she could fairly soon discover that the food had something to do with what came out of the other end of her body. But you are not feeding her, so one has to think up something else. I could say, "You are feeling that you take in my good analysis and turn it into a lot of confused stuff, and then you have to have some more". If we were talking about the alimentary canal, we know that it takes a long time before a child connects what it eats with what it evacuates. By the time it is old enough to know the answer, it has forgotten the problem, it has forgotten the question. All this is much more difficult if you are talking about the mind – which is what we purport to do. Patients can feel as if they get good, clear analysis, but that it is turned into a lot of rubbish.

What is one to say to the patient? This is where *you* come into it; you are there and you know by this time something about the language that this patient understands. It is not simply a question of what *you* understand, but whether this patient could understand an interpretation that you could give. To take a ridiculous example, you can't launch out into a great explanation of the biology of the alimentary canal to a baby. It may be true, it may be the correct interpretation, but it is a nonsensical waste of time.

3

Presenter: The patient is a twenty-four-year-old man, a hospital physician. He arrived ten minutes late for the session. He started by saying, "I was downstairs. I hesitated to come up to the consulting room. I went to buy some cigarettes. I came to the consulting room but I stopped. I couldn't stay here. I took the elevator, not feeling well I thought it would be too difficult for me to come to the session. I thought that if I stayed here I would die. I almost went away. I really thought it was going to be too hard for me". He kept on talking but changed the subject. "As I told you on Thursday (the previous session – this session was on Saturday) I was afraid of being on duty on Friday – it was a twelve-hour job. When I finally went on duty it was too hard for me". This was the first duty he had been on for four months – it was impossible for him owing to his anxiety.

Bion: Was he physically ill?

P: He thought so but in fact he was suffering an anxiety crisis. He said that while he was talking with the other doctors he had the feeling that he was going to be ill.

M: Would it not be interesting to interrupt the patient at this point? I feel there is too much material.

B: Yes, you often get a patient who, in contrast to saying nothing at all, floods you with information. I gather that this is happening here. Ordinarily one expects there to be some kind of structure to which the total communication conforms. But if the patient is always changing the subject he isn't really conversing; he is flooding you with free associations, not assisting you, not keeping you informed so much as keeping you unable to give an interpretation. But I don't think I would be inclined to stop him until I got a clearer idea of what

he was up to. I suspect – I don't know of course; it's just a suspicion working in my mind – that this patient is one of those people who take up medicine because they are so frightened of some catastrophe or disaster. He can then converse with other doctors and thereby hear about all the diseases there are. Then he won't die, or disasters won't happen, because he is the doctor, not the patient.

M: Is this suspicion of yours one of those things the analyst should keep to himself, or could he tell the patient?

B: I think I would keep it to myself because one does not want to flood him with interpretations. He is already being greedy, wanting more and more, but instead of its helping him he gets flooded with it, he gets more medicine than he needs. A common manifestation of this sort of thing happens when medical students go to the dissecting room to learn anatomy. They break down; they can't go on with it because it causes such an upheaval in all their views and attitudes if they dissect the human body.

P: I have the feeling that the patient didn't change the subject – he only apparently changed it.

B: This feeling of yours is where the interpretation comes from. Otherwise, if you interpret all these various changes of subject, you miss the point, you miss the subject which hasn't changed. When you begin to feel that all these different free associations are not really different ones, because they have the same pattern, then it becomes important to wait until you know what that pattern is.

P: In a seminar with a training analyst, the analyst told me that every good interpretation should contain three elements: a description of the behaviour of the patient; the function of the behaviour; and the theory which is behind that behaviour.

B: In a sense these theories, such as this one you mention, have a use for the particular person who mentions them. Some of them will also mean something to you. While you are trying to learn, all these things are very confusing. This is why I think you can go on too long with training and seminars. It is only *after* you have qualified that you have a chance of becoming an analyst. The analyst you become is you and you alone; you have to respect the uniqueness of your own personality – that is what you use, not all these interpretations. If you can feel, like your feeling just now, that the subject hadn't changed, *that* is important. Then after a time you may have a chance during

that session, or next week, or next year for all I know, of finding out what this pattern is.

Take the session as far as it has gone: some idea could come to you and you could feel, "*Now* I can give the interpretation". But by the time the interpretation is ready to be given, the problem is solved. Every interpretation means that a change takes place – if it is a correct interpretation. The puzzling situation which has been made clear by the interpretation at once disappears; it is once again an entirely new situation in which there are new problems.

It may take a long time to deduce what the unchanging element is. In physical medicine we can find out all kinds of things about the patient – temperature, pulse, blood pressure and so on – and then add them all together. We may have to say, "I don't know what this is", or we may have to tell the relatives, "I think it may turn out to be an ordinary cold, but we'll watch him; keep him in bed and I'll come and see him again". A good doctor has to be able to dare to say to the anxious relatives who ask, "Doctor, what's the matter?", "I don't know yet – I'd like to know some more", or, "I don't know yet, but I think it may be turning into –" whatever the complaint is. In analysis the analyst has to be satisfied, otherwise he is under constant pressure to give an interpretation. With this patient you can feel that he wants, or ought, to get back to work, and that it is a serious business that he is absent. But the analyst has to be ruthless; he has to resist the pressure because his business is not whether somebody gets back to work or not, but that somebody be given the correct analysis. You are *always* under pressure. While you try to listen to the patient, he keeps on trying to shove you – "But doctor, I've got to go back to work", "I've got to do this", or, "I've got to do the other". All that has something to do with his life, but nothing to do with the analysis. If a surgeon is operating he cannot tolerate a great noise in the theatre; he cannot have people talking; there has to be a discipline so that he can concentrate on the particular job.

In this case you have to try to get the conditions in which you can give an interpretation. The patient will push you, give you so much material that you feel, "If I go on listening to this I shall never know what interpretation to give because there are so many associations". You have to try to resist that, to insist to yourself that you are going to go on listening to what he has to say until you are convinced that

you want to say something. Otherwise you can find yourself in the horrible situation of spending your life giving what you think is an interpretation that somebody else would give, instead of giving the interpretation *you* want to give. I don't think you can ever do good analysis if you are not satisfied with what you say.

While the analysis is going on you may remember something that someone has said – like the statement of the training analyst. It is like remembering something that you saw in a ward while you were a medical student. There is a lot to be said for hearing the way different people do analysis, but it must never make you lose sight of the fact that the only thing that matters is the way that *you* do it.

Let us go on with this case now. Perhaps we shall get some idea of this unchanging subject you have mentioned.

P: The patient had the impression that if he remained on duty he was going to feel ill. He was not feeling ill – he had the impression that this was going to happen.

B: In other words, he wasn't going to get cured – he would get these illnesses. It sounds possible that he has never really considered that he has to be very tough indeed to be a doctor at all. In this profession you are always dealing with people at their worst; they are frightened; they are anxious. It is no good taking up that occupation if he is going to end up by being anxious, depressed and frightened too.

P: So he left the room to lie down. At this moment he was called to the emergency ward. He went; he worked perfectly. He thought it very curious that he could work well without any difficulty.

B: There is a saying, "Every fat man has a thin man inside trying to get out". Could one say, "Every hypochondriac has a doctor trying to get free"? Or, "Every neurotic has an analyst trying to get free"? The answer is, of course, no. But to the surprise of this patient he discovers that there is a doctor trying to get free. He goes off to this emergency, and instead of having a heart attack or whatever, he finds that he can be a doctor. Using this not only for this incident but for many others, you can begin to feel that the patient may after all be a doctor or a potential analyst if, when it comes to a crisis, the doctor emerges. But why in a crisis? If it is really true that he may after all be a doctor, not just by title but the thing itself, why hasn't he discovered that till now? Why is it that he *had* to be neurotic or hypochondriac, or go to an analyst before finding out this point? Of course, we believe,

as analysts – rightly or wrongly – that analysis is helpful. But that belief is liable to hide from us the extraordinary nature, the mystery of psychoanalysis. Such a lot of analysts seem to be bored with their subject; they have lost the capacity for wonder.

P: Later on in the same session he asked himself this question and said, "If I had known that analysis could do this for me I wouldn't have waited for a crisis before coming".

B: One of the peculiarities of progress is that it always makes you feel depressed or regretful that you didn't discover it sooner.

P: He also talked about what an effort analysis was for him.

B: What he is not noticing is that he is actually expressing appreciation of the analysis. That might seem to be a very slight point, and as a matter of fact it is, but it is like the tip of the iceberg showing when most of it is out of sight. The patient does not notice that he is capable of putting up with his jealousy, envy, rivalry, and is then able to express appreciation or gratitude to the analyst. In all this mass of material which almost suggests that he has no faith in analysis and doesn't expect it to do any good, he is in fact saying that in his opinion analysis has done some good – or rather the analyst has done some good. That point frequently escapes attention partly because of this belief that analysts are concerned with finding fault – crime detection as it were. But we aren't; we are trying to find the patient, whoever or whatever the patient is. It is important, if you get the chance, to draw his attention to these expressions of admiration or affection or sympathy, because they are felt – particularly by a patient like this – to be such feeble things that they are not worth mentioning. He is dominated, I think, by the need to make reparation, to cure people. Behind that lies his dread of being destructive, or of being a person who is much more likely to make people ill than to cure them. It is very difficult to be condemned to be a doctor who cures people; it is a different thing to *want* to cure people. You are an analyst, or a father or a mother, because you believe you are capable of the affection or understanding which is so necessary but which is felt to be so unimportant. On a larger scale, it is felt to be much more marvellous to be a Hitler than simply someone who is concerned with the welfare of his fellow men. It is liable to be lost sight of that what we, as doctors and psychoanalysts, are concerned with is helping human beings, not making them miserable or upsetting them. We may have

to upset them in the course of the analysis, but that is not what we are trying to do. With this patient it may be very important to show him, when the time comes, that there exists some capacity for affection, sympathy, understanding – not just diagnoses and surgery, not just analytic jargon, but interest in the person. You can't make doctors or analysts – they have to be born.

4

Presenter: The patient came on time, looked very anxious, lay down on the couch, and was silent for a long time. Then she started to talk, saying that she couldn't come last Friday; she was cut off by the rain when she was leaving her job, so she couldn't take the car or get a telephone message to me. She was silent for a short while and then said, "Today I notice that I am afraid of you". She said she became aware of this fear when she heard there was a very famous psychoanalyst in Brasilia. She wondered if, being a psychologist, she could attend some meetings. People came to ask her how they should go about getting a place at the talks this analyst was giving. She didn't know the answer so she thought she would ask me about it. She said she was carrying on an inner dialogue with the following argument; "If I ask her, I know she won't give me the answer; if I don't ask her, I shan't know where the meetings are going to take place". So she decided to speak out and to explain the situation to me. I pointed out that the conversation with herself was a way of avoiding speaking directly to me.

Bion: Why did she say she knew she wouldn't get an answer?

P: Later on I raised this question. Her answer was that this arose from the kind of relationship she had with me.

B: How often does she come?

P: Four times a week. I have the impression that sometimes she feels in contact with me, and I myself feel in contact with her, but only occasionally. She has been in analysis for over a year. She has a baby girl, eighteen months old. A month ago she got a job as a psychologist, but not in the clinical field. Since she started working full time, her sessions are at the end of the day after she has finished work. Before this she never missed sessions or forgot to

pay the account or came late; now she arrives late and sometimes misses one session a week.

B: What about this point that when she does come you feel that she puts distance between you and herself? How does she do that?

P: I get this impression when she starts explaining why she is late, as if she were giving an explanation to a teacher or a mother.

B: Were you able to make that clear to her?

P: I have tried. Her attitude was one of, "Well, I know I am going to make excuses", and so whenever she arrives late she says, "I know I am going to begin to make excuses". I feel that she conveys something of an inner dialogue with herself, but that she never expresses fully what she wants to say to me.

B: There must be some reason why, knowing that she won't be able to make a contact with you, she bothers to come. Perhaps she thinks that famous analysts are people who are too famous to get near.

P: She uses the informal 'you' when speaking to me. She said, "I am going to put a question to you. I know you won't answer it, but I need to have an answer". I said, "You speak with yourself before speaking with me, and yet when you speak to me you don't actually do so because you already know the answer I am going to give". I got the impression that this both annoyed and saddened her. I told her that she seemed to be under constraint, not at ease. From past experience I have observed that whenever I mention something that I notice in her behaviour, she seems to wake up, to become livelier. She seems to be closer to me because of the vividness of her expression, happy when I make such an observation. And yet I do not feel I ever get near to her, even though she may express this kind of happiness.

B: What kind of happiness do you think it is?

P: I feel that when she suffers during the session, she uses distance to alleviate, expiate her feelings of guilt. When I point out that she is suffering she says, "No, not me, I'm not suffering".

B: It seems to me that she feels guilty and frightened because she is having an experience which doesn't accord with the psychoanalytic rules – as she knows them. I think that the 'famous analyst' is a person she doesn't feel able to talk to, and that famous analysts are not people who talk to *her* either. How does she know that the 'famous analyst' wouldn't have anything to do with her?

P: She usually feels that she is being criticized: she could have done better, she could have done more –

B: But I think something has happened to make her discover that she is near a 'famous analyst', and that therefore she must not talk to famous analysts or even know where they are. I suspect that she is feeling that a 'famous analyst' is disguised in the person to whom she comes for analysis. Leaving aside for the moment what one would say to this patient, let us discuss why it is that the 'famous analyst' is too famous to be spoken to.

P: Perhaps this is related to the fact that she has a sister who is very successful in her profession of clinical psychologist, whereas the patient only managed after a year to get a job. So even though she is a psychologist she has to keep to her schedules and be bound by the requirements of a job. Whenever she wants to mention something of importance to me, she puts her sister first and says, "My sister thinks . . .", "My sister mentioned . . .".

B: I suspect very strongly that she is discovering that her baby is a person. Something has happened which makes her think that the baby is something to be afraid of: if it were older, perhaps it might be much cleverer than she is; it would know if she deserted it and came to see you. She is afraid of this object which is felt to be a dangerous personality who knows a great deal more about infantile psychology than she does. She feels that *if* she could be as clever as her baby, *if* she could go back to that state herself, then she could know a very great deal about people. We give all kinds of interpretations like, "You felt this", or, "You felt the other", including those which are appropriate to something like being at the breast. But I think the baby knows a lot more about being at the breast than just ordinary psychologists and psychoanalysts.

Trying to put that into more 'reasonable' language, I suspect that this girl is very surprised at what she has produced, and is filled with admiration of that baby. Your interpretations may remind her of something she has forgotten from childhood or even infancy – the baby certainly will. The baby isn't her analyst, but the emotional situation between her and her baby is nevertheless one which stirs up feelings more powerfully than any analytic relationship does. She has been having verbal intercourse with you for some time; therefore there is always the chance that she might be pregnant. So in a way

she is really talking about feelings which she apparently did not work through before the baby was born, that is the fear of pregnancy, what the mother has inside her – even though she is now the mother. It is as if she has learnt all about psychology, but is afraid that psychoanalysis is either just 'the same old thing', or that it is something different. Then she will be rebelling against the psychologist – she being both the psychologist and the rebelling person. I think she fears knowing, not just hearing, that you have a relationship with a 'famous analyst' – whatever that is. So in this respect, if she comes to you she is very close indeed to a sexual parent – husband or wife. The same thing applies the other way round: if you are a good psychologist or psychoanalyst, you will know that she is pregnant, or you will know that she is going to give rise to a baby. We know of no symptoms in the mind like those of pregnancy, but this patient as a child could have known when her mother was pregnant even before the mother was aware of it. So there is anxiety about this 'famous analyst' who is sometimes her analyst, sometimes herself, sometimes her baby, and sometimes something which will emerge.

This brings us back to her statement that she is afraid of you; you have been hostile and envious either because she has this 'famous analyst', or because she is able to realize that her baby has a character and a personality. Nothing is likely to produce so much mental growth as being pregnant and having babies.

M: What about the man?

B: The man, instead of being the enviable, superior person who has a penis, is the envious, unlucky person who can't have babies. So whether you, the analyst, are a man or whether you are a woman, it is dangerous for this patient to have anything to do with you, or to come near you, because she doesn't know what you will do to her baby. If she behaves as if she has a famous baby, as if she loves and admires the baby, then sooner or later this will show in the analysis. So far it has been safe: so far she has not got near to her analyst; she has only spoken to her analyst as if there is a long 'telephone' line between the two of them. But she can feel a conflict between treating the baby as if it were a doll or a chunk of psychoanalytic jargon, and treating the baby as if it were a person. In a sense, one could say that a mother is being born; so there is some fear of allowing herself to say or show how pleased and how proud she is of her baby, because she doesn't know how jealous or envious her 'father' analyst or her 'mother'

analyst will be of this situation, or how angry the baby will be if it is left while she goes off and sees the father or the mother analyst.

I have talked a lot about that, but we haven't touched the real problem: what is to be said to this patient? You can't say what I have been saying to you – the patient would either go to sleep or walk out before you had finished talking. You have to consider which interpretation feels like the one you would like to give. The very close relationship between the mother and the infant is where you have a chance to find out something about yourself and something about the baby; that is a very superior sort of analysis. Psychoanalysis is simply 'playing at' knowing about mothers and fathers and babies – not the thing itself. What is at stake here is whether this girl would dare to allow herself to use her intuition and to be a real person talking to this child, and whether she will allow the real child to be a real child, and not get angry or frightened when she finds that the real child knows a great deal – or seems to. In other words, mothers and daughters and female babies are all things which are felt to be likely to cause a great deal of jealousy or envy.

I would hope to bring up to the surface this thing which is making it difficult for the patient to come to her analysis. It doesn't do the baby any good if the mother remains stuck with it. If you ever deal with a patient who has succeeded in preventing the father or mother from doing what they wished – being so disturbed or crying so much that the mother couldn't leave it – then later on in life that person will be unable to leave others.

5

Presenter: The patient is a thirty-five-year-old woman who has been in analysis for seven years and is in her second year with me. We agreed at the start on two sessions a week because it would be impossible for her otherwise. In the second year this was increased to three sessions a week. Last year I considered ending work with her, but I changed my mind. This year I have had the impression that we are beginning to talk to each other.

Bion: What made you feel that it was hardly worth your while to go on?

P: I felt that there was some kind of obstacle preventing us from communicating so that we could not talk effectively to each other.

B: What is this impression which grows up? I ask because it can happen with any patient; the analyst feels that it is too unrewarding a relationship to continue. The sense of an obstacle can crop up in anything, but sometimes it presents a challenge, a stimulation which makes one want to go on. I remember, when I was a student, having a patient who seemed to be so boring that it was difficult to keep awake. And then I began to feel that it was so boring that it made me wonder how he did it. So you may begin to be fascinated by the obstacle, and then it is possible to go on. But when you feel that it is so unrewarding that it is not worth continuing, that is a matter to which we need to pay attention.

M: Do you agree that there are some patients who are unanalysable?

B: I think that is true. It is sometimes forgotten that analysis is in its infancy, and to assume that it can cope with all kinds of patients may be quite fallacious. It may not be the fault of the analyst or of the patient, but simply that we just don't know enough. In physical

medicine tuberculosis was not so long ago regarded as a fatal illness. Today many tubercle experts are without a practice; the specialists have become redundant because of the advance in medicine. There may be things which will be treatable analytically fifty or a hundred years hence, but that doesn't alter the fact that they may not be treatable now. One could ask about this case: what led you to feel that it was time to terminate? And conversely, what led you to feel disposed to go on?

P: I was never sure if the difficulty of establishing contact lay with me or with the patient.

B: That is always worth considering. But here again I think there is a fallacious argument because analysts think that they can use a counter-transference. That is an inaccurate way of thinking. You can use a *feeling* you have, but counter-transference you cannot use. By definition I cannot do anything about my counter-transference; there is nothing to be done with it except to go to an analyst and get analysed. But most of us have to put up with the fact that there is no analyst to whom we can go.

One can feel one is bored with a patient, or the work is unrewarding, or the relationship doesn't progress It may be both the fault of the patient *and* the fault of the analyst – who is to blame doesn't really matter. There is nothing that can be done about the analyst's fault except to make allowances for it. The only question that remains is, can anything be done with the part of it that the analysand contributes? In a way the progress of analysis depends on just that – it seems to be possible to help one's analysand to be a better analyst than one is oneself.

P: At the same time that I was aware of these feelings I also noticed that the patient never missed a session. But I had the impression that the language I used did not touch her and that she could never understand it.

B: Who pays the patient's fees?

P: She herself.

B: Does she pay the right amount regularly?

P: Yes – she is never late with her payments.

B: This is something which is very characteristic: the absolute regularity of attendance and of payment. You can tell the time by her coming; she can tell the time by the analyst's coming. Financially it always looks as if one knows exactly what one is being paid – you can

count the dollars or cruzeiros or whatever the currency is. So there are two things that *appear* to be comprehensible. I have known this regularity of payment and keeping of sessions with a patient who had been certified and yet was able to keep the appointments – whether wet or fine, a strike in progress, it made no difference. How can such an ill person do something that seems to ignore all kinds of facts, and go on operating as if they didn't exist? That is the sort of thing we have yet to learn. You may find some clue to it as you go on with your patient.

P: She was married three years ago and is now seven months pregnant. She showed a series of reactions to pregnancy: at first she wanted very much to become pregnant, but whenever her menstrual period was late she got into a state of panic; when she in fact became pregnant she was very afraid; she was afraid of having a deformed child; she thought she was too old to have a baby.

B: Two points occur to me. Why didn't she feel these anxieties much earlier? And how sensible of her to feel them now. She seems to be showing signs which I think are very reasonable. If I were a woman and had to give birth to a child, I would be scared out of my wits. There are a few classes of people, like doctors and airmen and sailors and coal miners, who face the issues of life and death all the time. It is often difficult for patients to realize that they are dealing with these fundamental issues when they say they want babies or don't want babies. When I say, 'life and death', I don't mean 'death', but *life* and death; it is the birth of the individual that is also the continuation of the race itself.

From what you have said, I would think that this patient is making remarkable progress and is very well adjusted to be having fears and anxieties that are so often denied. But what is to be said to the patient who pushes it forward to you as a sort of neurotic symptom? I pose the question, but let us leave it alone for the time being and continue with the story.

P: I could never understand why she sporadically mentioned that she felt better. I am not sure that getting pregnant is something I could consider as a form of progress, in spite of the anxiety and fears she was expressing.

B: It might be helpful to consider the possibility that this bother about the periods, pregnancy, and so on, can all be a sort of unconscious sarcasm. It is as if she didn't want to triumph over the analyst,

but if she did she could feel that of course she's better, she's fitter and fitter. She is able to do this wonderful thing, but naturally a poor feeble creature like a male would be upset if the woman was pregnant, if her periods stopped, or if she had some sort of physical development, because that is the way men are – stupid, silly creatures who can't understand that a woman could do this thing. It is complicated because she is also frightened. She can be feeling well *and* be feeling that it is a dangerous situation. The man may not be able to tolerate the fact that the woman can be pregnant, or he may have a breakdown because he is so anxious and frightened about the pregnancy. We need to have more analytic understanding about the pregnant woman; we also need to know more about the mental reactions of the pregnant male. The generating unit of the human race is a couple, so when a couple are having a baby, the male may be tempted to get as far away as possible from the sexual pair as he can – even though he is one of them – or he may stay it out. In analysis you get only one side of the picture presented to you. This patient is feeling as if you were the husband; she is also feeling that you are the analytic husband in the sense that you may not be able to believe in the possibility of psychoanalytic pregnancy, that there can be such an outcome of the psychoanalytic intercourse that one could legitimately talk about 'a psychoanalytic baby'. She can be afraid that her analyst will disappear because she is pregnant, saying, "Oh well, if you are pregnant, if you're cured, if you've got a husband, good-bye, I'm going"; or that the analyst might get frightened and say, "You must be psychotic, you must be seriously disturbed to think you are pregnant. You had better go into hospital and have surgical intervention". I'm exaggerating it for the sake of clarity, but it does arouse a certain degree of anxiety in her, and she is afraid of what it arouses in you in the way of envy and hostility and fear – especially if you are able to achieve a successful analysis.

P: She was anxious only during the first three months of pregnancy. Then she showed signs of miscarrying and had to stay in bed for several days. After that she began to feel very attractive and calm, and told me that she even forgot about being pregnant. I got the impression that this was actually so.

B: All one can do is to go on analysing. But I think that she does produce this complex relationship; she does in fact dare to tell you that she is pregnant and even that she has various anxieties. And

since you have not got rid of her, she is encouraged to come again and to go on coming.

Do you know anything about her husband?

P: The impression she conveys about him is that he is as ill as she is, and that they live in a state of rivalry, one trying to control the other. She masturbates a lot and therefore they have less sexual intercourse.

B: The adolescent patient can remember very well what it is like to be a child because he still is, and he can know a good deal about what it is like to be grown-up because he is. So at that stage we are dealing with two peculiar objects. Much the same thing happens over and over again at different stages; it can happen with the couple because the two may never have individually been married before. They both think they know all about sex, but in fact they don't; they only know what they *used* to know – masturbation and all kinds of sexual activities with which individuals of both sexes are quite familiar. One could say that potentially a married couple is being born, and a sexual pair is ceasing to exist.

P: I would like to tell you something of the last session. She was already talking when she came into the room – this is a very common occurrence because she can't keep quiet, she keeps on talking about routine things for the whole session and leaves smiling and looking very happy. If I interrupt her she gets very irritated. I asked her, "What are you wanting to tell me when you speak about these things?" She replied that she didn't know, but if I wished she could go away because she was very irritated with her husband with whom she had had a quarrel that morning.

B: The test seems to be whether you can stand this flood of domestic trivialities.

P: She gives the impression of being fascinated by trivialities.

B: I think that perhaps you are felt to want something grand like a domestic disaster. desertion, the break-up of the family. The analyst, like the husband, cannot do anything wonderful like producing a baby, so there is every chance of his being so jealous or so envious that he would like, even if he cannot produce anything else, to produce a disaster. So her reaction is, "Well, if that's what you like I'll clear off and bust up my family – *then* you can feel what a wonderful analyst you are".

6

Presenter: I have a patient who behaves as if he despises me deeply. This situation is very painful for me. I feel I ought to have been able to show him my limitations.

Bion: Why do *you* want to show your limitations? The *patient* should state what he thinks your limitations or capacities are. You are analysing the patient; therefore you want to know what the patient thinks. I don't understand the point about the *analyst* making his limitations known.

P: The patient acts as if I had no limitations at all.

B: When a patient comes to an analyst, he should learn something about himself. The fact that an interpretation is often given in terms of the relationship with the analyst is not because the analyst is of any importance; it is simply because the analyst is trying to draw attention to the character of that particular person who is showing certain beliefs about the analyst. For example, if the patient displays, or demonstrates in some way, feelings of contempt or hostility for the analyst, the important thing is that it tells you something about the patient. If a patient says that he is very grateful, that doesn't really tell you anything about the analysis or the analyst. But it does tell you a lot about the patient. It tells you that the patient is *capable* of feeling grateful. Another patient, by contrast, may be incapable of expressing any gratitude because he is so jealous or envious that he never expresses gratitude at all. One gives interpretations like, "You are feeling that I am . . "., not because the analyst is a person of any importance, but because it gives the analysand a chance of recognizing what sort of person he himself is. If he is capable of love and affection and gratitude, it is important that he should know that – and so on through the list of his capacities and incapacities. In analysis it is

possible to see the kind of relationship that the patient is able to have with somebody who is not himself.

P: So if the analyst makes a mistake, it is important to analyse not the mistake, but the patient's reaction to the mistake?

B: That's right. We all know that we are human beings; one thing that is absolutely certain is that we all therefore make mistakes. If we didn't, it would be very difficult to account for the chaotic mess in which the world is today. It is run by human beings who are making mistakes the whole time. Take this particular patient: if he cannot have a relationship with people who make mistakes, he will have to give up having anything to do with human beings. But if he does want to mix with human beings, then he will have to learn how to associate with people who make mistakes and are always in trouble of some sort. What one must draw attention to is, "You are very upset because I . . .", whatever the mistake was. "This is again the same grievance – you are not able to forgive the fact that, as far as you are aware, I appear to have made a mistake".

P: But isn't it very comfortable for the analyst to take this approach – not to stop to think about our mistakes?

B: I don't think it is true that we don't stop to think about our mistakes. Most of us agree that we ought to know as much as possible about ourselves; if we have the time and the money, we might be able to afford to go to an analyst. But even suppose we are wealthy enough to do that, the amount of time available in the short space of one life is very, very little. Although we try to be aware of our weaknesses, it is extremely unlikely that we ever would be, even if we were analysed all the time. While an analysis is going on we are changing; it is very doubtful that any analysis could keep pace with our own characters. So we become people who are able to make still further mistakes. I don't think we ever *believe* that as we grow older we become wiser – we only *hope* so. We can only hope that by and large the community becomes wiser. Analysis has had a considerable effect on the general attitude towards certain problems in the last hundred years; people have a less exaggerated or rigid view of themselves and other people.

To return to your problem: what mistake have you in mind with regard to this patient?

P: I was paying too much attention to what the patient was saying rather than what he was doing. His attitude – showing no respect

for me – worried me very much, and I was curious about my own reaction.

B: That may be so, but it is the kind of thing you can take up with your own analyst or in some other situation. Suppose a trained nurse finds, when an accident or disaster occurs, that she has to carry out some emergency procedure on the spot without any of the usual equipment. Then suppose that same procedure is carried out in a properly equipped operating theatre with adequate nursing staff and a surgeon skilled at that particular operation. Of course it would be done better. But what is a nurse to do when she is confronted with a man or woman who has just been shot? All that she can do is something in accordance with what she knows about medicine. It is no good her regretting that she didn't take medical training – that is irrelevant. The only relevant thing is to use her common sense and do what she can to assist this particular casualty. In England you cannot take legal action against a doctor because he has failed to cure a patient; the failure to cure is not a crime – even being an incompetent doctor isn't a crime. What *is* a crime is to be negligent; you can bring an action against a doctor on the grounds that he didn't try. In psychoanalysis it is one's obligation to *try* to help – you cannot be under an obligation to help. You can try to draw the patient's attention to what you think is the truth or a fact, but you cannot consider that you are obliged to succeed. The mere fact that somebody else might or could succeed is irrelevant. It is a painful situation over and over again; we can be aware that we don't know enough, or that somebody else would know better how to deal with a particular problem. But I don't believe that we would be in any less difficult a position in any other job. While it is dangerous to be so complacent that you are completely satisfied with whatever you do, it is equally dangerous to believe that you are a bad analyst simply because the patient is having a holiday enjoying attacking you. This is something that cannot be completely dealt with in the course of your own analysis, but can only be learnt *after* you have become qualified and have finished your own analysis – then you have a chance to find out who you really are.

This patient, if I understand you rightly, is behaving as if he knew the right way to treat his analyst. But on what grounds does he think that is the right way to treat an analyst, or somebody who isn't very good at his job? Even if I am an incompetent surgeon, for example, to treat me with contempt or hostility is not necessarily the best way

to behave – in fact I think it is doubtful if it is the right way to treat anybody. If possible, you ought to draw attention to this fact: "You are feeling that, compared with you, I am a very unsatisfactory person. But you also seem to feel that if you are so superior to me, the right thing to do is to show your superiority by being rude and contemptuous". That would give him a chance of seeing how he feels about you. And if he is contemptuous and hostile to you, he is probably very much the same in other situations. It also gives him a chance to compare that sort of attitude with any other ideas he might have.

P: When I pointed this out to him he became very emotional, covered his face with his hands, began to sob, and said, "I am lost".

B: That is a very striking response. This attitude of superiority and contempt is not felt to be good enough, but then he is afraid that if he gives it up he is lost. It is hardly a qualification for being superior because it is obviously very vulnerable, very feeble. Of course one's object is not to make the patient cry, but to give him a chance of understanding what he has just said. This is what makes analysis so very painful for the analysand. If this patient cooperates, his facade may crumble; it is very difficult for him to stand being seen for what he is. There are patients who won't lie down on the couch but want to sit facing the analyst. They don't realize that the couch is there not in order to show how inferior they are, but because it might be easier if they use it. A patient who does that will often resort to wearing dark glasses, or to turning away uneasily, or to finding some method of avoiding being regarded – either physically or mentally. The patient discovers that although it appears easy to have an analysis, in fact it is very unpleasant to be in a situation where there is another person who has some respect for his personality and is prepared to look at it.

7

Presenter: The patient is a forty-year-old unmarried man, a diplomat. He came for analysis six months ago, not knowing what he wanted. He presented some physical symptoms and had the impression that he couldn't deal with his problems. His physical symptoms were migraine and gastro-intestinal disturbances like colic, constipation and digestive disturbances. This material is from the most recent session, last Saturday.

He lay down, started to talk, and told me he had had a dream. He dreamed that he was in hospital having an operation on his haemorrhoids, and was very worried because he wanted an English anaesthetic used. After he woke up he tried to work out the meaning of the dream, but came to the conclusion that he couldn't understand it. It confused him because he had already had an operation for haemorrhoids last year. He had a friend (who was also having an operation for haemorrhoids) who had told him, "I hope they use the kind of English anaesthetic that makes it easier to evacuate afterwards". Since he was confused about the dream, he decided to leave it to be analysed together with me. He was afraid to go on thinking about it because he felt he would become more confused. I said, "You were afraid to go on dreaming".

Bion: Were you intending to stop analysing him?

P: No.

B: How often were you seeing him?

P: Four times a week.

B: If this was the Saturday session, when would you see him next?

P: Usually on Monday, but last Monday he was not well. He

had in fact asked me to change the Monday session to another day because he is often too busy on Mondays.

He agreed that he was afraid to go on dreaming because he knew he might understand the dream, and even if his understanding was wrong, it would still be something that would have a meaning and so be analysable – he would rather come to an understanding of the dream with me.

B: He seems to have some doubt that there would be any free associations, but also some fear that there might be. This point is of some importance generally: a psychotic will very often have a dream that has no free associations, so the dream is useless. This patient's dream would be similarly useless if there were no free associations to it. But he *is* associating to it, and there is consequently some anxiety about what might emerge. Of course, a great deal depends upon what sort of job he has. As a diplomat he is supposed to keep confidential information to himself. So one of his problems is how to have an analysis and keep you correctly informed, and at the same time keep secret affairs secret.

M: Why did you ask about the termination of analysis following the material about the operation for haemorrhoids?

B: Because he is indicating that he is going to lose something or have something taken away from him. He is going to be operated on, and something is going to be removed from one end of his anatomy.

P: Two things are linked with his anxiety: one is the fear of being confused with things like dreams; the other is the fact that he has already been operated on for removal of the appendix. He came for analysis just after the doctors had recommended a laparotomy because of his digestive problem. He was afraid and didn't agree with the medical opinion.

B: He can't believe that it would be an operation that would be of use to him or he would agree to it. I think his fear is of losing something valuable. But a good deal depends on this 'English anaesthetic' which enables these removals to take place without his being aware of it. He can't make up his mind whether he wants to be aware of this loss, or whether he wants to remain unaware of it and just allow the loss to be sustained.

P: He said he thought his dream was related to something in the analysis. I told him that he already knew what kinds of anaesthetic

there are for physical pain, but he did not know what kinds of anaesthetic there are for mental pain, or even if there are any.

B: I think the anxiety here is that his analyst may really be on the side of some sort of dangerous organization, or of people who want to take something valuable away from him.

P: He told me some time ago – and I knew it was a fact – that he is very rich and owns a lot of real estate. His job as a diplomat is not a very well-paid one; he only holds it as a sort of security because he is afraid that a revolution might cause the loss of all his other possessions.

B: Even rationally it raises a serious question as to whether people who are in positions of responsibility or power should be allowed to have an analysis, because they may part with information of great importance. It seems to me that something has happened which makes him afraid of associating both with his analyst and those with whom his analyst associates. His analyst might be a communist, or he might be a capitalist, or he might be in the pay of a foreign government, or he might be in contact with spies. For example, if the patient knew that you were associating with me, then he might be afraid of what sort of information could be passed on to a foreigner. There is a danger, from his point of view, that he may either have to part with his job or part with his analyst. It depends on what other people think of his associating with a psychoanalyst. In this situation I think you have to consider seriously this problem of the traitorous activities of certain people. How is he to have an analysis without at the same time running the risk either of actually being associated with a traitor, or of being accused of being associated with one?

P: His object relationships are curious. Although rich, he earns very little in his job; sometimes he has to telephone his mother in New York to ask her for money; or he asks for money from his chauffeur, an old family retainer on whom he vents his hostility. If he wants to invest in a building, he keeps postponing the business with the lawyer until the very last moment. He finds no pleasure in his work – he only works because it is necessary for survival. But since he earns so little, owns so much, and has no pleasure in working, he doesn't know why he works at all.

B: One of the earliest noticeable forms of work is having to urinate and defecate. The other sort of work – at the breast for

example – is very rapidly rewarding. If things go well the baby sucks at the breast because it is so obvious that it gets an advantage out of doing so. That doesn't apply to the workings of the alimentary canal; it may not be at all obvious to the baby why it should have to use the pot. For one thing, there can be painful feelings about actually passing a motion, especially if the baby holds its faeces to a point where they become hard. It is something very nearly like being bitten at that end of the body.

Bringing that back to the present: the difficulty is to know what is going on with this patient. One could say that if he keeps all this money to himself, then he fears having to part with any of it because he would expect it to be very painful mentally and physically.

P: I told him that he seemed to use his mind like an alimentary canal, to absorb things and to expel them. This made him very confused. He was silent for so long that I asked him what was the matter. He said, "Lots of things come to my mind, but since they are meaningless I try to avoid speaking about them".

B: He is reserving the right to retain various thoughts on the grounds that they are of no importance – a very common thing.

P: I suggested to him that he was keeping to himself things he didn't want to evacuate.

B: I think that is right. He *is* retaining material. But how does he know that it is insignificant and unimportant?

P: I said that because he didn't evacuate he couldn't get any help or relief.

B: In either case he cannot: if he tries to keep all this confused stuff inside him, then he feels that he has something very bad inside; on the other hand, if he talks, then the analyst can see how confused he is. So he is anxious about what you would say or do if you knew this. In a way it is simpler if he can make it clear that it is your fault that he is confused – you can be blamed for the confusion. Otherwise there has to be some other explanation, and there is no knowing what your reaction might be to confusion.

P: He tries to avoid this confusion by a belief he has that he can stop thinking – he only has to follow the thought of another person. He suggested that this person would be me.

B: I have no doubt that he found a way of coping with the early, primitive situation; patients can either become 'constipated', and so avoid having the painful experience, or they can become, as it were,

'diarrhoetic'. Suppose he keeps what he knows to himself: then he is really putting a stop to analysis. On the other hand, if he cooperates and talks freely, then I think he is afraid that it becomes a sort of verbal diarrhoea, he is afraid of losing everything. In some ways it is felt to be like not just parting with his confusion and other rubbish, but also like losing part and parcel of his own body. In primitive terms, there is a fear of either being constipated, or of losing everything including a sort of penis. It is true that there can be the rational fear of losing all his money – after all, money today is supposed to have a kind of potency; we usually use it to do something with.

P: I have a feeling – corresponding to what you describe as 'diarrhoea' – that he cannot use his mind to preserve his money. At the same time he is very afraid of change. For example, he travels all over the world to buy paintings, but he never hangs them because he is afraid that after all he might like to change them and then it would cause him so much trouble to take them down and put them somewhere else – he would rather leave them leaning against the wall.

B: In this respect he is using the pictures as if they were a form of currency.

P: When he returned from Italy he brought some Persian rugs which were later stolen from his apartment. He did nothing about the robbery – he didn't call the police or notify anyone. He feels uncomfortable about his inability to preserve these things.

B: These pictures are undoubtedly felt to be something valuable. I think he also feels that his pictorial ideas could be useful. But in fact he told you that he didn't mention them because they are so unimportant. So all these ideas, or potential ideas, present their anuses – not their front views; those are facing the wall. So the ideas he presents to you are felt to be unimportant because they are only like the products of the anus.

P: I would like you to explain the meaning of the 'English anaesthetic' which is not to be used during the operation to obliterate pain, but afterwards so that the patient can evacuate without pain.

B: The patient's concern is how to have a painless analysis. He feels that it is all right to talk about his dreams because they are of no importance; free associations are equally all right because they are harmless rubbish. In other words, if he told you something that really mattered, then you might use it for your own purposes. Even consciously there can be an anxiety of that kind: people do make use

of the information they are given. It is only in analysis that we are particular about that; it is considered to be a serious matter that the analyst should be scrupulous about the use to which he puts information he gets in analysis, and not to take advantage of the analytic situation to make use of such information for his own private purposes. This patient's difficulty is this: he knows that he comes for analysis for *his* own private benefit – after all, what else could he do?

8

Presenter: This is a case which has already been discussed (Seminar 4). I would like to mention the change that occurred between that session and the most recent one. The patient began to move more freely after I mentioned envy in the interpretations. She lay down on the couch, and although she was silent as usual, I noticed that she was moving. Instead of just lying still, she seemed to be trying to find a comfortable position and was therefore moving her whole body. I also had the impression that she was mentally more mobile. After a silence of about fifteen minutes – the usual length – she said, "I feel untied. I recognize myself in these bad things I think and feel, like envy which makes me feel destructive".

Bion: From the negative point of view of the patient, I think she is describing a fear of the loosening of whatever it is that holds her together. So although there can be the comfort or relief of feeling less rigid, more mobile, there is also the anxiety that whatever binds her together into one personality is disintegrating – as if the personality was no longer held in any tense structure. One of the advantages of the patient's being able to feel better – it is very difficult to say what is meant by that, but it usually means some nice feeling – is that it gives a certain degree of confidence to go on having more analysis if there appears, in spite of these horrible feelings, a loosening of the fibres; it is a compensation. It is also one of these situations in which the presence of the analyst is very important – one always assumes that, but sometimes it becomes more apparent. In other words, while the patient is having a horrible fifty minutes, it is helpful to have the analyst present who is not feeling like that in the same fifty minutes.

P: She experienced the feeling of being untied as something good, and she expressed the fear that she would lose the ability to become less rigid.

B: She can express fear in a number of different ways, but fundamentally the fear is the same thing that is in fact bringing her relief. I am sure she will show in some way that she is anxious about this situation even if she welcomes it.

P: She said she felt an intense hatred for herself because she was afraid of not being able to maintain this change. I had the feeling that I was excluded.

B: Even if the *analyst* is able to maintain it, that doesn't alter the fact that the patient is afraid that *she* cannot. So there is a great anxiety about this feeling that the analyst probably has something to do with it, and about what would happen if there was no analyst there. In what way did you feel excluded?

P: She said that although she was happy to feel untied, at the same time she felt surrounded by a shield. She said she was mobile inside her cast, but had this feeling of enclosure, of being without air, living but entirely bound in the cast. I thought she was talking about things which concerned not only herself, but also the relationship between us.

B: There is one way for the patient to deal with a situation like this: to make the movements of the outside – whatever it is – conform to the movements of the inside. And the same thing the other way round. If they conform absolutely, then there is no way of being aware of the uncomfortable conflict between the two. This state of affairs repeats itself in much less primitive situations in which the child is anxious to agree completely with the father or mother, or to get a parent to agree with what it wants. If it succeeded there would be no awareness of the fact that they are two different people. However, in view of what you have said about this patient, I am suspicious that this is something extremely primitive. It is quite easy to imagine – I don't mean therefore that it is true or correct – that the baby in the womb tries to conform to the movements of the mother, or that the mother tries to conform to the movements of the foetus.

P: She rejected my interpretation that she was giving the impression that she was being born.

B: In the course of analysis – and in the course of life at large – people experience many 'rebirths'. I don't know if it makes it any

clearer if you say there seem to be situations in which the patient emerges from one state of mind into another state of mind. In the analytic experience you have a chance of seeing something which appears to be that kind of event – this upheaval in which the patient's attitude or personality seems to be changing.

M: Referring to what you said about the patient making the movements of the outside conform to those of the inside, and vice versa: if the patient succeeded, the analyst would be deprived of working with the patient. Would it be possible to express this to the patient?

B: It is a problem to know how that is to be expressed. The individual has certain ideas which are brought into harmony with the accepted conventions of contemporary society. If, in that situation, the revolutionary communist is existing in a conservative society, then there is friction. That disagreeable situation can appear to be dealt with by making everybody communist – then all is well, peace and quiet, no trouble, no difficulty, everybody is happy and cured. Except that – as usual – there are always some people who rebel. They may be capitalists rebelling against this smooth, satisfactory society. Or some artist, painter or sculptor will rebel against the accepted conventions. Once the representation of the human form, as done by Praxiteles in the Hermes, is accepted, someone like Rodin wants to display not the classical, physical, external appearance of the human being, but something like the character or spirit. The situation repeats itself all the time: Rodin is the revolutionary; then he becomes conventional, everybody sculpts just like Rodin. Of course, they may sculpt *just like* Rodin, but they are not Rodin. The same with painting: everybody agrees what a beautiful man or woman looks like. Then there comes along a Picasso who draws people he says are men and women, but who seem to have no conformity with the anatomical structure with which we are all familiar. Then it becomes the accepted style to paint 'just like' Picasso.

What is the material in which *we* must learn to work? If we were teaching sculpture we could say, "You have to learn to respect your marble". A good sculptor must look with respect at his marble or clay, or whatever the material may be; otherwise he will torture and mutilate it into some unsuitable form. This respect can be seen in Michelangelo's unfinished work in Florence; figures are appearing out of the marble, still showing chisel marks.

What material does a musician work in, or a mathematician? What are we working in? What are we trying to make emerge? We hope that what will eventuate will be a human being capable of using his own life. That is why it is so important that the analyst should respect his patient, or at any rate be capable of *trying* to respect the person he is talking to. This is difficult when the patient seems to have no respect for the analyst; patients often consider it a sign of great inferiority to have to go to a psychoanalyst.

Somewhere in the analytic situation, buried in masses of neuroses, psychoses and so on, there is a person struggling to be born. It seems to me that the analyst's function is not to demonstrate all these neurotic and psychotic mechanisms, excepting as an incidental in the course of freeing the patient. It doesn't seem to be fanciful to say that just as Michelangelo, Leonardo, Picasso, Shakespeare and others have been able to liberate this mass of material, actual forms which remind us of real life, so the analyst is engaged in an analogous occupation – an attempt to help the child to find the grown-up who is latent there, and also to show that the grown person is still a child. These two might very well go together, not simply in order to make them indistinguishable, but in a creative or profitable manner. This patient is potentially a mother, but it is all covered up.

9

Presenter: The patient is a doctor, a pathologist, who has been in treatment with me for five years. During the first month of treatment he had frequent migraines which came at the week-ends. After the first month he became free of these headaches. Recently they appeared again.

Bion: Why did he come for analysis?

P: His chief complaint was difficulty in sexual relationships. He seemed to be very glad that his migraines stopped, but he was never interested in exploring the fact. He has occasionally mentioned it during the five years, but has shown no signs of wanting to go deeper into the matter. I get the impression that the headaches returned because we were dealing with envy in recent sessions. And I think envy also had something to do with their disappearance.

I thought the following session was interesting. He came in, lay down, and remained silent – which was not typical of him. Then he started speaking about his brother who is in analytical training. He had had a phone call from his brother who told him that he had just bought an apartment – he is very wealthy. The patient said he felt very envious and angry, but was nevertheless able to talk to his brother and even listen to him and learn something from him. The patient said he knew that envy was very destructive, and this time he had managed to control it.

B: What did he expect to happen if he didn't control it?

P: I asked him what he meant by controlling his envy. His reply was verbal silence accompanied by movements which he usually makes when he is anxious. He usually lies on his back; this time he lay on his side and kept moving his body. After a while he said he felt

very distressed and, "You are trying to confuse me because I wasn't able to control my aggressiveness".

B: Well, somebody seems to have been controlling somebody. He started off by saying that he was controlling the envy. Now it appears that one half of the conflict at any rate is inside the analyst. If he wasn't controlling envy, what was he controlling? And now, who or what is complaining about being controlled?

P: I wanted to find out by my question what was happening, what the patient actually did.

B: He controlled envy, and his envy is extremely annoyed about it.

P: I was trying to clarify what he had experienced while on the telephone.

B: What seems to me to be important here is that you have a chance of knowing what evidence is available. If I identify myself with the analysand, I have controlled the envy; if I am the envy which is being controlled, naturally I complain that 'the other' – whoever it is – is trying to control my mind. The patient says, "I control my envy". He also says, "The analyst is controlling my envy, trying to control my mind". Could anything be more infuriating than having an analyst who tries to control his envy? Is it any surprise that he is impotent when he is not even allowed to be envious?

There appear to be at least three people in this group: the controlling person who controls X's envy; X's envy which is being controlled by him; and the analyst. Are you reminded of any theories, interpretations – analytic or otherwise – which correspond to this peculiar situation which is not unusual in the consulting room? Is there any known theory in all these vast volumes on psychoanalysis which appears to match this story?

M: The triangular situation reminds me of the Garden of Eden.

B: Yes. Freud always seemed to insist that the hallmark of analysis was that it illuminated, or brought out into the open, the Oedipus situation. Can you match this clinical event with the theory about the Oedipus story?

P: I now have the impression that the question I asked the patient was inadequate.

B: If you had been practising analysis as long as I have, you wouldn't bother about an inadequate interpretation – I have never

given any other kind. That is real life – not psychoanalytic fiction. The belief in the existence of an analyst who gives correct and adequate interpretations is part of the mythology of psychoanalysis. I certainly would not be inclined to bother if you felt your interpretation was inadequate. I *would* be rather bothered if you felt it was adequate. The practice of analysis is an extremely difficult occupation and one which hardly provides space for dogmatic statements.

M: What remains for the analyst? Only feeling?

B: Practice – the inestimable advantage of having a patient who so far has continued to come. The analyst may not know much, but he knows more than anybody else about this patient; he knows what the facts are. When I talk about this patient, I haven't the advantage that the analyst has – I don't know the patient. But I can believe that if I were this patient's analyst I would have no doubt about the hostility of this statement that I was controlling his mind.

Another analytic theory which appears to me to be reactivated by this story I have been hearing is that of projection: I would be strongly suspicious that this patient was projecting onto me and – to introduce another theory – into me, a part of his own personality and feelings. I wouldn't want to engage in an argument with the patient – "You projected your ideas into me", "No, you projected your ideas into *me*", and so on *ad infinitum.* In my experience anything like that is a waste of time. But on the other hand I wouldn't want to let it be supposed that the story that *I* was controlling his mind was one to which I subscribed in the slightest degree. So this *theory* about projection – although I think it is applicable and relevant here – doesn't solve the problem when I am engaged in *practice.* The analyst is in the unfortunate position of having to give a correct interpretation, if he can, while being subjected to the patient's hostility. It is an advantage if he can remain detached from this situation in spite of being told that he is controlling the patient's mind.

Note that I mentioned two theories: one, that the patient was projecting *onto* me his own ideas and feelings; the other, that the patient was projecting *into* me his own ideas and feelings. The first is applicable to a relatively simple situation; the second is related to theories about the sort of patient we would call psychotic. I would want to put over to this patient that he is projecting something *into* me, while still avoiding the point I mentioned about it becoming a terrible waste of time having to argue about who said what.

I might say something of this sort: "These feelings that you describe appear to me to have a very long history; I suspect that the relationship between you and your brother goes back to when you first became aware of a baby brother at all. You seem to feel as if I were really a blood relation like an older or younger brother. Sometimes you feel that you control your envy, sometimes that you are the envy which has been controlled". I have no idea what the patient's response to such an interpretation would be, but I could guess. The advantage of analysing such a patient, if he keeps on coming, is that you don't have to guess.

P: The patient behaves as if *he* is the analyst; he explains his feelings with his own theories and presents them to me like an analyst. I try to ask the kind of questions that might put things into their proper place.

M: So when the analyst stops him with a question he is confused?

B: I think he *is* confused, and his way of dealing with that situation is by saying, "I'm not confused – I'm the analyst. I'm not confused – *he* (the analyst) is. He's the younger brother – I'm the elder brother". Having the experience of being treated like this by a patient is indeed an unpleasant and difficult one. But you have to be able to go on thinking while having all these accusations and projections thrown at you.

P: I get the impression that the patient wants me to keep silent because he is trying to avoid my being able to analyse him.

B: It is quite likely. But keep in mind the fact that patients don't know more about the job than you do. It would be ridiculous for a patient to maintain that he is a better surgeon than the surgeon because he has broken his leg, or because he has cancer of the colon. But it is common in analysis for people to think that, because they have neuroses or psychoses, they are therefore better analysts than the analyst. It takes time to become adjusted to the fact that in spite of learning a terrible lot about our defects, we are nevertheless in the position of being the analyst if patients come to us. On no account, therefore, is any useful purpose served by agreeing that we know less about neurosis than a neurotic patient does, any more than a surgeon is entitled to give up operating on the grounds that a patient with cancer knows more about cancer than he does.

10

Presenter: The patient is ten years old, the third of four girls, and has one brother. She came for analysis because the family was worried by the fact that she was getting very bad results at school. She was unable to remember the alphabet or to learn numbers; she pressed her pencils too hard and had poor ability in copying the letters of the alphabet. She underwent a test which confirmed that her spatial and temporal co-ordination was poor; it also revealed that she is very intelligent.

Her mother has twice had psychotic crises and was in hospital on both occasions. She is in a psychotic state almost all the time and pays little attention to what the children are doing. She has always complained about this child, saying that the other children are intelligent but that this one is dull and stupid.

Bion: Did you think that the account of her test fitted in with what you see of her?

P: Yes. She seems to have no conventional sense of time. It is difficult to follow her because in her play everything seems to happen at once.

B: So she tells you a very great deal in a short space of time?

P: Yes, especially by her actions – carrying her dolls from one place to another, going out of the room, coming back, and so on. She often shows also that she doesn't understand the limitations of space. She tries to go into the other rooms; she can't stand the limitations of the play-room. The main thing I noticed at the beginning of the analysis, and now in this last month, is that she loves to pretend that we are at school and she is the teacher. In this last year she has progressed slowly and she can now read and write a little. She likes to test me to see if I can write or if I know how to add. In the last

session she was trying to find out if I knew how to multiply. She used to be very severe, always threatening me, "You must do this", and "You must do that".

B: I think that what you are describing is an experiment to find out what happens if she isn't so strict; she can try being your mother if you will be her baby.

P: She feels that if she could imitate the mother, that would avoid further dangers?

B: I certainly think that she must be feeling that she missed the chance of growing up, of being the young mother. She hopes to have the chance of being the mother with you.

P: Recently she was very sad and depressed. I said, "Perhaps you could tell me why you are sad." She said that she would be having her birthday party in two days' time and she was sad because she had had a quarrel with her boy-friend. I pointed out that she had not mentioned this before. She said she had had this boy-friend for four months and two days. I continued to try to find out why she was still sad and why she thought she would not get back on good terms with her boy-friend. She said she didn't want him to laugh at her; he had also said that he wasn't in love with her any more.

B: What had made the boy fall out of love with her?

P: I don't know. This came up in the last session and was something new.

B: So she didn't tell you how or why they had ceased to be friends?

P: No. Here in summertime the children go to the beach and have many parties and the opportunity to play and be together all the time. They have a different life from small children in Europe; little girls of eight or ten years old go dancing and already have boy-friends.

Two things had happened which made the session important. One was that her eldest sister had been taken by the father on a business trip to Germany for a week; she was very jealous and upset about it. The other thing concerned her brother – the only boy – who had had special presents for Christmas (a tape recorder, for example) and she was very jealous. She usually complains very little, but on these two occasions she was sad and complained a great deal.

B: It seems as if she has never had the chance of working out her rivalry and envy – that is either her envy of others or their envy of her.

It is quite likely that the analysis gives her the first chance she has ever had to feel rivalry, jealousy and envy without it causing some sort of catastrophic reaction. How does she come to the analysis?

P: A chauffeur brings her – always the same one.

B: Does she ever refuse to come?

P: No, never. She likes to come; she never misses a session. At the beginning of the analysis she couldn't bear to see another child doing something she wasn't able to do or owning something she hadn't got; she wanted to do the same thing and have the same thing. When she was playing with me she cheated almost all the time – she couldn't bear to lose a game. In the last three months she has stopped doing this.

B: What do you think has happened? Why is she not doing it anymore?

P: While she was constantly playing with dolls – being the mother, having babies, feeding them – I tried to show her how much she needed to do that so as not to be envious of her mother and of me. Three months ago, after a vacation, she stopped playing at being the mother, and she didn't try to cheat any more in our games.

B: You are dealing with a dynamic situation with this child who seems to me to be prematurely and precociously intuitive. She was able to 'see' (in our sense of the term) much more than she was able to stand at a very early stage.

P: I would like to describe one of the last sessions of last year. She brought me a doll and put it by my side. She said, "Now, you cover yourself and stay there; we'll call the doctor; you are going to have a baby".

B: In this dynamic situation she feels as if she were growing up, as if a sort of analytic baby will result from this game she is playing with you. There is also an anxiety about what sort of baby this is going to be, what sort of baby she herself is turning into. It is complicated by her feeling as if she is turning into both a baby and a mother – she is *becoming* a mother. But if she allows herself to be a mother, there is the fear of what sort of baby she will have. I would have thought from what she has already said that her fear is that the mother will slip round, as it were, and become her baby. Will it be a good baby or a bad one? Putting it in other terms, she fears that she might turn into a bad mother – not a nicer person but a worse one. This is part of the problem of being a very intuitive child; she fears

the increase in her capacity to be intuitive because of what she might do if she was in the position of the mother.

M: I get the impression that she uses the consulting room rather than the analyst.

P: I agree. Last year she often played at taking trips, going in and out of the room with her babies. Many times she said the babies must go to sleep, and then she wanted to lock the door and stay inside, putting me outside for a couple of minutes.

B: Outside for what reason? What was your impression?

P: I felt that she wanted to stay inside feeling like a mother and maintaining that position with her babies.

B: One question is, are you to protect the mother and her babies in this room, or are you a bad, hostile object who will damage them?

P: Sometimes she experimented at hating me for a week or ten days, but then she would give it up and I was admired again. The wish for me to have a baby came later. At another time I had the impression that I was in the position of a maid – she called me to look after the baby or to give it medicine while she was shopping.

B: There has to be a good mother somewhere, whoever it is. But I think there is also this problem of the dangerous father, the envious or hostile one who is excluded.

P: The father first appeared in the analysis when he travelled to Germany. For about three days she pretended that she was the mother who was travelling abroad while the father was here in Brazil; they had long-distance telephone conversations. The only other time that the father has come into the analysis was during almost a whole week when she was pretending to be in the United States in Disneyland. She pretended to be the mother, accompanied by all the children, calling her husband long-distance and saying, "Oh my dear, you should come; we miss you very much; the children are so sad, you should come quickly". Then she told me, "He can't come – he's too busy. He always comes at the end of the vacation".

B: The father is apparently a good one.

P: Yes, he is.

B: The telephone makes it possible to have a contact with something she has forgotten or never really worked through properly. There is a 'getting into contact' with a love affair she hasn't had yet – with the father of the family. She may be aware of something *behind* the actual father and mother. It is the future casting its shadow

before, as well as the past casting its shadow on the present. From this point of view, going to school is for her a waste of time because it is not possible to see what the kind of thing she learns in school has to do with having babies. It is striking that in the analysis she seems to feel that *that* is what she wants, *that* sort of game is really necessary.

11

Presenter: The patient is an eight-year-old girl. She draws a great deal in the sessions. In the one I am reporting, she drew a house with a girl looking out of the window. There was a road passing the house and two people standing there playing instruments. They were playing some music that she had learnt at school, about a boy singing a song to his girl-friend.

Bion: How does she bring in this music? Does she sing it?

P: No, she explains it.

B: A sort of running commentary on the drawing?

P: Yes. I said, "You are telling me about things you like, such as having a boy-friend, but also something you don't like that you cannot keep". She erased the girl and the two boys, and then drew a girl sitting in a hammock slung between two trees, and the sun drawn with the face of a person.

B: What about the expression on the face of the sun?

P: It had no special expression. She erased the drawing again and drew small fishes in the sea and a fishing boat. Then a big arch at the bottom of the sea. She said the arch was full of hidden treasure; a thief had stolen it, had run away from the police, and had thrown it into the sea. I said she was afraid of the hidden things inside her, and afraid that I would not understand. She drew a shell and a necklace inside the arch, and a man swimming close to the arch. I asked her about the swimmer; she said he wouldn't find the arch because he was swimming with his head turned the other way. I said she was afraid that these hidden things might not please me and then I would not like her any more. Then she rubbed out the swimmer and re-drew him facing in the direction of the arch.

B: Has anyone any questions before we hear the interpretation? Where do you feel are the biggest gaps in your own knowledge?

M: I think we want to hear you.

B: Yes, I'm sure you do. I would gladly give an opinion but what do you think a supervision is? What is the object of the exercise? If I were analysing this child I would have no chance of discussing the matter with anybody; I would have to think of an interpretation and hope that it was on the right lines and related to the facts she was putting at my disposal. There is a great deal to be said for being an analyst, provided of course that one can learn how to be a better one. But is there any point at all in supervision? I don't think it is any worse than a scientific meeting which is hardly any use whatsoever. I can give a number of reasons why I think there is something to be said for them from my point of view, but what you have to consider is this: when you have very little spare time, can you really afford to spend such time as you have on scientific meetings, supervisions, or anything away from the actual practice of the job? What use can we make of *this* meeting?

M: We can exchange points of view.

M: I would use the Kleinian point of view in the session with this child; her relationship with her mother, primary objects –

B: I think I would do the same if I were tired and had no idea what was going on, and if this child wasn't telling me anything. If, in fact, the worst came to the worst, I might fall back on Kleinian theories, Freudian theories, Abrahamian theories, any theories.

P: It seems to me that the patient's anxiety is related to the primal scene; the girl looking through the window.

B: I do not disagree with you about that, but why musically, why sound? Why in drawing?

P: It suggested itself to me because it was a love scene.

B: I am not quarrelling with that at all. But what is this child trying to say to the analyst? And why has she to fall back on her capacity as an artist or a musician? I think this idea of the love scene or serenade may be important; and it may have been important to be able to draw it.

P: The feeling of a love scene is very strong because it has been in one drawing after another; she is maintaining a conversation through the drawings.

B: If the child is sufficiently gifted she may be able to make up for the difficulty in conveying to the analyst what it is she wants to communicate. That is why I ask: what is this child's language? To some extent it is complicated because she is obviously able to talk – she describes what is happening in the pictures.

P: She has the capacity for expressing poetry.

B: She has to use every capacity she has if she is going to talk to the analyst. She has to be able to draw; she has to be able to see; and she has to be able to give a verbal description of what she is drawing. Using all that, she still has a hard job to make clear her problem. I sometimes feel that a patient's job is made even more difficult because he or she has to get through the analyst's preconceptions.

M: Do you mean that besides the theories the analyst has, he also has preconceptions?

B: Of course.

M: Would you say something more about it?

B: If a young child came to me for analysis I would be surprised if she stayed in the room for more than about two minutes; I would expect her to feel that she didn't want to talk to someone who looked like me. But that might not be true; I might remind her of somebody she knows, like a grandfather who listens to what she has to say. So she might be prepared to tell me quite a long story in the hope that I would listen. That problem arises with every one of us. In fact one of the difficulties about undergoing analytic training is that we tend to forget that the real puzzle, the real mystery, is that anybody comes for analysis at all.

To return to this patient: she seems to feel that it is worth while trying to draw in order to tell you something. What vocabulary would you use if you are going to ask any questions? You certainly don't want to give the impression that it is a bad drawing, but it would be interesting to know what the sun is doing, or what its expression means. I am pursuing this because we can be reasonably sure that a child who talks so intelligently almost certainly was the observer of what you described as the 'primal scene'; a child or infant very early on gets suspicious about what is going on. If you cast your mind back to any occasion when you have seen a baby stare, you will recall the effect that it has – I have known a mother get quite anxious on being stared at by her own infant. Sometimes this stare seems to be 'what?'; sometimes it seems to be more 'why?' That is why I ask,

what is the sun's expression? I am sure that at some point it would be an expression of what her feelings were on witnessing or being aware of the parental relationship – although at present it seems to be more an observation of her relationship with her analyst.

What happened after she had drawn this picture with the sun and a hammock slung between two trees? Do you remember anything else about that picture?

P: In previous drawings there had always been a sign of being unable to sleep. But in this one the figure was asleep.

M: My phantasy is that she could go to sleep because she has stolen the mother's place.

B: There is always the chance that if you can have a phantasy it might turn into an interpretation.

M: I am doing a mental exercise for you.

B: 'Mental exercise' is right. Isn't it surprising that one might have to do a mental exercise for a child? There are so many people who assume that nothing could be easier than to bring up a child.

M: I think the 'mental exercise' is necessary because a child has very little capacity for symbolization.

B: I often feel that the same remark applies to psychoanalysts. I don't feel that a child is so lacking in capacity as we very often want to believe. In fact I think it is much more useful to consider the possibility that one does not know a great deal about this subject, and that even a child might teach us something if it could be persuaded to tell us a bit more.

I have quoted before from a letter Keats wrote to his brother in which he said it occurred to him what the great strength of Shakespeare was – he could tolerate mysteries and half-truths without an irritable reaching for certainty. The important point about that is the 'irritable reaching for certainty'. Pressure is put on us as analysts always to know what the problem is which is so obscure, so difficult to grasp, and which is unfolding itself in front of our eyes. This child is cooperative, friendly; she draws, talks, describes; one is bound to feel that one ought to know the interpretation. But the really important thing is that we should be able to watch this drawing, or join in the conversation, so that the child can have a chance of saying what she is able to see or feel or hear which we cannot. The 'primal scene' becomes extremely convincing when it is portrayed for you by a child; sometimes even the gifted grown-up finds a phrase which is

a short, concentrated description of exactly this scrutiny, this stare at the parental pair, or, to make it more vague, the sexual pair. This stare can either be at two parents engaged in some sort of sexual activity, or it can be a parent scrutinizing two children similarly engaged. It is worth searching your own experience to re-mobilize some of these possible expressions of that scrutiny, that threesome situation – the observer and the two observed objects. The exercise can be increased still further by considering what is observed. Sound? Sight? Smell? What sense? It would give you an enormous variety of what we call 'psychoanalytic interpretations'.

12

Presenter: The patient is a twenty-six-year-old man who has been in analysis with me for six years. He wanted to be analysed by me – not by anybody else. He was worried about his homosexuality.

His father owned a farm of thousands of acres, a large house, and was a very powerful, wealthy man. His mother was born in China, then went to Russia; from there she came to Brazil before she was thirteen. His father met her when she was about fifteen years old. She was described by everyone who knew her as a beautiful girl. She was always afraid that her son would be regarded as Chinese or Russian, not Brazilian.

He said his mother had a very easy delivery when he was born and he was breast-fed. His brother, who was born seven years later, became very ill and could not take the breast. The patient remembered being very anxious about this. He also remembered once trying to kiss his mother when he was eight or nine years old. He kissed her mouth, and she said, "No, you mustn't kiss my lips – that's not allowed."

He still feels like a father to his brother who once almost fell from an eighth-floor window when trying to cross from one window to another on the outside wall. Five years later, when the patient was under the influence of marijuana, he had been tempted to jump from the window of his home on the tenth floor. But he thought, "I am in analysis – there is hope in my life."

He has a great friend, a woman, who is an internationally famous painter. His mother is very jealous of this friendship. Once he invited this friend and her husband to stay at his farmhouse. His mother said, "This woman is very interested in you. I don't want you to continue

this friendship – it will lead to scandal – she will leave her husband." He says his mother has always been jealous of his friends.

When he was only ten years old, he suspected his mother of having a sexual affair with a woman. He became very anxious and started spying on his mother, even in her bedroom.

At about the age of thirteen he started to take an interest in men; he tried to have sexual intercourse with the maid's brother. He continued to have sexual relations with many young men until he met one whom he described as a new type of beauty; he said he was like Dorian Gray. This continued for two years, during the analysis. Then he told this young man, "I feel that we are becoming friends, and as your friend I won't have any relations with you. I never want to see you again." He offered him a large sum of money, but the young man refused, saying, "No, we are friends."

Next he had a sexual relationship with a young woman who was a well-known expert in manipulating the stock exchange. He gave her four hundred thousand shares to deal with and lost them all. He said, "Oh well, in a few months the shares we have will bring us in much more than I lost."

He is an accomplished painter, but he only paints ugly figures. For instance, a typist without hands; a violinist without arms. Each one has ugly features. The pictures are always black. Somebody asked him, "Why do you paint these pictures?" He replied, "Because I am an artist, and you know what 'artist' means – it means looking for beauty and looking for truth – and *that* is the truth about humans."

Bion: What do you think he comes to you for? He insisted on coming to you, whether you wanted him or not. Why have you got to see him? From your account of him, he has everything – brains, intelligence, money.

P: He came to me because he hates himself so much. He once said, "It is better to be a leper than to be a homosexual."

B: What does he mean by "homosexual"? You could draw his attention to the fact that this is a technical term. What is the evidence that he is homosexual? You could ask him that. And how does *he* know that he is homosexual?

P: The evidence he has is that he prefers men to women in sexual intercourse; when he was young he hated all women. He says, "I want company only until I have had intercourse – afterwards I don't want to see anyone."

B: Terms like 'homosexual' are no longer employed as technical terms – the are just part of the language people use over and over again; unfortunately the whole language we employ is debased. From one point of view there is absolutely no difficulty about a sexual relationship – children, even infants, have sexual relationships. So it is no particular surprise to me to hear that this man can have sexual relationships. The sexual relationship has become something which is easily done – like everything else he does. He prefers men to women. What of it? A great number of women prefer men to women. A sexual relationship is pushed into a position in which it matters very much whether he has one or not – which is simply not true; it is one of the few things which any animal can do. He is behaving as if he cannot have a sexual relationship, but his trouble is that he can. So I would like to consider what it is that he cannot have. Apparently he can have almost anything. What is it then that is arousing a feeling of despair?

Freud said, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, that the symbols would change. Of course he was right. As a matter of fact the symbols which are employed by any particular individual are that individual's unique contribution. So when he is using a symbol, one must consider what that symbol symbolizes. In a sense he can solve this problem by having a sexual relationship like everybody else – 'homosexual', 'heterosexual'; these words are now symbols which have lost their original value and have new meanings.

This young man could have a sexual relationship at the age of thirteen; long before that there was no difficulty about using his genitalia. But there can be a realization that the sort of experience he had as a thirteen-year-old was not 'it'.

M: What is psychoanalysis for him?

B: Psychoanalysis is only another example of the sort of thing he is familiar with. In so far as it is just a conversation with somebody else, I think it is very unlikely to have the slightest effect upon him; he is unlikely to believe that psychoanalysis could do anything to alleviate his feelings of despair. But this peculiar fact that he picks on a *particular* analyst and insists on coming to that analyst, seems to be different from feeling that analysis is like everything else.

I think that this man has never been able to love and has never experienced being loved. But at the same time – and here's the puzzle – he realizes that there is something better than just fiddling around with men and women, having these easy sexual relationships.

Those experiences are always expressions of hate, and always lead to the emergence of hatred of the sexual experience and of the partner. I don't know why the vocabulary concentrates on this matter of a sexual relationship with the same sex, except that it gives a simple explanation which is no explanation at all. Sometimes a sexual relationship is called 'marriage' or 'engagement'; one is fooled into believing that the person is a mature individual. Whenever we have to deal with a patient who says that he or she is happily married, I think we always need to see if we can bring out into the open this element of hatred for the partner in the sexual experience. This is one of the peculiarities of a 'homosexual' relationship – it is unsatisfactory because the two always hate each other. I say 'always', but that is not right. You may come across two men or two women who really love each other deeply – for example, David and Jonathan. The mature relationship of passionate love between a man and a woman is something which comes very late, and it never ends – there is always more to learn.

M: I would like to know your opinion about a loving relationship between two people of the same sex who also have sexual intercourse.

B: I would have to see and meet those two people, and then I could tell you what my opinion was. This is the whole point about psychoanalysis. That is why I say, by all means read all these books and everything else you want to, but don't let it get in the way of your forming your own opinion of the person with whom you are dealing.

P: A few weeks ago the patient said to me, "Doctor, why aren't I interested in women as other men are?" I said, "I think you are doing what you did with your man friend – you recognize that women deserve respect, and you see in each woman not the woman, but the man." He became very nervous and said, "I can't understand such things. If I see women as men, that's bad." He didn't come to the next two sessions; then he came again but didn't refer to the previous session. Later on he said he was very depressed.

B: This young man is told something about his sexual life, and his immediate reaction is, "That is terribly serious", as if he had heard some sort of bad news. In short, he is expressing his hostility to the analyst for telling him something. But if the analyst is telling him something which is true, that is no particular reason for hostility. So even the *analytic* relationship is one in which you can detect this same hostility even though it is only verbal intercourse which takes place.

The seriousness of this condition is that sexual activity is probably the most intimate method of expressing love and affection. That is why it is so serious when it is debased, when it becomes the kind of thing that can be had with anybody and everybody.

13

Presenter: This patient originally came for five months and then left on his own initiative because he was suffering from a severe case of obsessive neurosis: it took him so long to wash his hands – an hour – and to take a bath – four hours – that when he arrived for his session there were only five minutes left. A year later he returned and started again. We agreed that if he didn't come for at least half an hour of each session until the end of January, then I could not continue the treatment. He was unable to meet these requirements, so the sessions ended on January 31st. I told him that we could continue when he thought he could manage to arrive in time to have at least half an hour of the session.

The session I would like to present occurred two months after the analysis was interrupted by me. It was possible for me to see him because it was Easter week and I had a free hour.

Bion: I would be doubtful about interrupting the analysis. It seems to me easier to say right at the beginning, "If I have a vacancy I shall want to see you X times a week, and I would like you to conform to my holiday arrangements." You can say you will expect the patient to pay if he takes time off; you expect the time you make available to be paid for. What the patient does with that time is another matter. This patient could say, "Well, I come regularly; I do the best I can; I come so many times a week – I do everything." You can agree to make your time available for the time being, but you cannot tell the patient what use to make of it.

M: Isn't there something implicit in the concept of work that both people should work together – actually work?

B: You would think it should be so, but it very often isn't. The background of this could be that the child believes that the parents

must look after it. But in fact they don't – that is why there are children who are abandoned. So I don't think you want to appear to enter into a contract which you cannot in fact keep. You can try, *if* you get some help from the patient, but you don't want to get edged into a position in which you have said that you will cure him or do something for him no matter whether he helps or not. He may not come, or he may be thirty minutes late, or he may come and say nothing. But you cannot contract to help the patient whatever he may do, any more than you can contract to bring up a child however hostile or unhelpful it is.

M: Would it be worth saying to the patient, "You are sacrificing yourself", or, "You are sacrificing the session"?

B: I wouldn't say that. I would say that he seems to feel that he has so much time and money available that he can afford to spend it in that way.

P: Another condition I had made was that he should leave his parents' home because of his mother's hostility towards him. When he lived with other people he managed to keep appointments. When he arrived for this session (twenty-five minutes late) he was already living away from home in a boarding house. The owner was a neurotic woman who had many difficulties in bringing up her own children. He was not allowed to use the telephone or to occupy the bathroom for long periods. The time he took to do things created a climate of tension between him and the landlady. For example, he wanted to heat some milk, but she wouldn't allow him to; they started quarrelling because he insisted on heating the milk, saying it would only take a minute. So she threw a plaster statuette at him – which he avoided. Then she tried to throw a chair at him. One of her children arrived and made peace between them, but the landlady told him to leave. So he went to his room and started packing. But as usual it took him a long time. After packing, he went downstairs and asked the landlady to give him back half his month's rent deposit. She said she would only return the money if his parents came to fetch it. Then she put him out in the street. He kept protesting that this was impossible because there was a contract between them and he had paid his account.

B: What contract would there be in childhood or infancy? How would he pay? It is all very well for him to say he paid the deposit and so on, but what deposit did he pay his father and mother? What

contract, in other words, is there in which the parent is bound to bring up the child?

P: I told him that he was treating me like the landlady. He now wanted *me* to pay a penalty for breaking the contract.

B: What contract is there with the analyst when the analyst isn't even a father or mother? Yet he is expecting you to do something which nobody has done so far.

P: After I gave this interpretation he said he couldn't understand, so I repeated it. I added that this situation is one already well known to him; he feels he is owed something by others; they should have patience with him and pay attention to him. He feels that these things are owed him because he was ill-treated by his mother.

B: But they aren't; nobody owes anybody a happy life or a proper up-bringing. The only place where he gets anywhere near it is with the analyst, and there he expects from a complete stranger something which nobody else has done.

P: I thought there was a connection between what he said and the milk he wanted to heat; it was in two plastic containers in the refrigerator. I suggested that he felt he wasn't getting good milk, that the milk his mother gave him was cold.

B: But suppose it was warm: who has warmed it? Whose contract is it to warm it? Where has he got this idea from? We hope to get some cooperation from a patient, but we don't know why this is expected. The only contract that the analyst enters into is that he will do his best – not that he will be successful.

M: Is this not a case of infantile narcissism?

B: The point is, what does it look like in the session? Where does his right to be loved come from? Why should any mother love her baby? Why should any child think the mother or father owes it an education, an up-bringing? You could draw the patient's attention to this. "You are talking as if somebody had entered into a contract to give you a happy life. But we don't know where you get that idea from." Patients will often say all sorts of things about what bad fathers or mothers they have. All right. But then, where does the idea that there is a good father or mother come from? One can say why the patient does not expect to get good analysis or help but it doesn't explain why the patient thinks he *will*. I could go further: there is an idea here that somebody will pay for the analyst to be properly analysed and supervised and so on. But who provides an analyst with

the knowledge which he has to have? It is hard to say where this expectation comes from unless what the patient wants is a 'mother' who will look after him. There must be some reason why he expects the analyst to be properly equipped.

M: I am reminded of patients who say they didn't ask to be born, but since they are in the world they expect it to take care of them.

B: Quite. Even in the constitution of the United States of America there is the statement that every man has the right to be happy. However, when it comes to our job here, where do patients get this idea that the analyst will take the trouble to be analysed, educated, qualified and so on? And where do they think the analyst gets the money from? Analysts have to ask patients to pay not because we are trying to take their money away from them, but because somebody has to pay for all this training and education. In the meantime, this idea that there is a fate or god waiting to put right all the things that go wrong, can be a dangerous one. This statement, "I didn't ask to be born", is a complete repudiation of any responsibility. Who or what is this patient defending himself against?

M: Perhaps against the fear of what he will have to pay in return for receiving analysis.

B: If he makes good use of the analytic experience, then he is showing that his parents gave him something he can make good use of, so they can't be absolutely bad.

M: I think he would tend to preserve the idea of feeling hostile towards the parents.

B: It is quite possible; it would contribute to the need to go on proving that he has a bad analysis; or, if he has a good analysis, it shows how badly he was brought up because he has to have an analysis. We could translate this into technical terms such as, "This is the genesis of repetition compulsion". Your patient has to keep on coming time after time after time, and still has to keep on having a bad analysis. You can go to a lecture about repetition compulsion, or read about it, but it is very difficult to recognize the animal when you see it in analysis.

14

Presenter: The patient is a woman of twenty-six, an only child. She is a psychologist, has just graduated, and was sent to me by the Institute of Psychoanalysis. She started analysis, four times a week, about a month ago. Right at the beginning she said that what had happened during the last nine years of her life seemed to have happened only yesterday, and that she didn't pay much attention to anything before that. What had happened was this: nine years ago her father got into trouble with the police over an involvement with a fifteen-year-old girl. The patient heard the news on the radio and read about it in the newspaper. From that moment on she followed all the activities of the police and the lawyers – her parents never talked about it, but she knew everything that was going on. The family moved from one town to another, running from the police. Now the father is on bail awaiting trial. The mother married against her family's wishes; she was very wealthy, but the father was just a janitor in a building downtown.

At the beginning of the session I am reporting, she did something different from usual – before she lay down she looked at me and smiled. Then she said, "Today I just can't think about anything. Why is that? Yesterday when I left here I felt quite free."

Bion: It is as if she felt that nine years ago something emotionally important happened with the result that she has never been the same again. But with you just then, she was afraid that the same thing had happened again, namely, she smiled at you – and there is no knowing what troubles may happen now. In other words, it is felt to be typical of one of these incidents which are apparently of no importance, and yet it starts such a train of events that you can never forget it. On the other hand, if she isn't going to dare to smile at the analyst or other

people, that is also a desperately serious situation. One of the very early experiences that the infant has is of smiling. That often triggers off most surprising results: the mother or father at once notices it. "Look, the baby is smiling!" So in a sense this trigger action is felt to have inconceivable consequences. I would try to draw the patient's attention to that; "I think something must have happened which reminds you of that disastrous series of events. Perhaps it is because you smiled at me." Or you could just say, "It would be useful to know what it was that scared you so much. You are frightened that it triggered off an imminent disaster." A great deal of experience makes me suspect that this is something fundamental, as if the foetus was responsible for starting birth. I don't see any way of ever proving that, but I certainly find it useful to bear in mind as being the first instance, even before birth, of a sort of catastrophic event. Then come these later events after birth such as the smile – which, as you know, is called everything from a smile to wind or indigestion. There are other occasions – adolescence seems to me to be typical – when the person is child enough to know what it feels like to be a child, and is grown up enough to feel very grown-up. There are many of these stages in which people are accessible to feelings which may not be quite so noticeable at other times.

To return to your patient: there is this event nine years ago, and this event a moment ago when the patient looked at you and smiled. All you can do is to hear and see what happens next. In the course of your own analytic work you not only have to manufacture your tools with which you carry out the analysis, but you also contribute to what is already known and appears to confirm psychoanalytic theory, or may indeed cause psychoanalytic theory to change, to become more expressive. In other words, if the subject is growing, then the existing theory has to be flexible. We have to learn all these theories, but it is a perfect pest in the end. We suffer from 'indigestion' of theories and facts, until it is almost impossible to hear what the patient says. The trouble today is not ignorance of psychoanalytic theories; the trouble is so many theories that you cannot see the patient for them.

The advantage of having parents who are happily married is that so many fears and anxieties don't matter very much. If things go wrong, then there may develop an individual who appears to be able to laugh but never smiles; unless the stimulus is very great he can't overcome the inhibition to do something which is just a smile.

Patients over and over again are able to laugh but not to smile, or if they smile, their eyes are always unsmiling. As a matter of fact I think analysis frequently makes it worse – it shouldn't, but psychoanalysts themselves sometimes appear to be unable to enjoy life or to do the equivalent of smiling. It is almost impossible to describe this kind of thing, but the advantage of psychoanalysis is that you get a chance of seeing real people.

Most people don't mind whether their children smile or not – there is no point in talking about it. But with this patient it strikes you: *that* is important. It is not a matter of the slightest importance whether this is mentioned in analytic text books; what does matter is that this patient smiles and *you notice it.* That can be the beginning of a train of thought, a chain reaction with you.

This patient can be afraid that you will kiss her or start making love to her – or that you won't. If you don't, perhaps it is because you don't love her, or because you are angry with her for smiling at you. The whole trivial business assumes great proportions. But had that event not happened nine years ago, or had it been properly dealt with at the time, it wouldn't today be of such tremendous importance and she would not be living in expectation of an imminent disaster. I would be prepared to bet that almost certainly something else contributed to the problem before that event nine years ago, probably during infancy.

15

Presenter: The patient, who had been absent for a few sessions before this one, came into the consulting room and sat in the chair. She remained silent and appeared to be suffering some sort of anxiety. I told her that I sensed her anxiety and that she was consequently experiencing some difficulty.

Bion: Why did you say that to her?

P: I sensed an atmosphere of tension and anxiety, almost physically.

B: I was wondering why you felt it was necessary to mention it to the patient. I am not suggesting that you should or should not; I am merely wondering why you did.

P: It came to my mind, and I felt it was interesting to show it to her.

B: But why? I am not suggesting for a single moment that I am asking you some simple question.

P: I don't know how to answer it.

B: I think you are quite right, but it is a matter of some consequence because otherwise one gets into a habit of thinking that the important thing is to say something to the patient. But you were there and you saw her. I am therefore interested to know why you thought it important to tell her what you did. However, let's leave it aside and see what happened.

P: She smiled and said, "Yes, it has been difficult to come. It isn't agreeable here, and it's boring."

B: She doesn't have to come, so what is the problem? If that is all that is troubling her, she only has to stay away and do something else.

P: In fact I asked her, "Why do you come?" She replied, "It is less difficult now than it was at the beginning, but I thought that this was

the time of day to be relaxing. I want to give up analysis and take a painting course where I would be more gratified."

B: Why not? It only intensifies the mystery as to why she had turned up at all.

P: She said it was a long time since she had done any painting; a course would provide her with the company of highly qualified people.

B: All this seems to me to be a very good reason for going to a painting class, but nothing whatever to do with her presence in your consulting room. In fact the only thing I gather she has said so far explains why she should not be there – not why she is.

P: I said I thought it was hard for her to come to the sessions because she did not want to admit her difficulties in the relationship with me, and because she did not like her own behaviour.

B: Why do you think she would like to be any different? In any case, what is stopping her – if she wants to be different, why shouldn't she?

P: It seemed to me that she could not tolerate feeling anxiety in front of me, that she was perhaps ashamed.

B: But I imagine there is a door to the room and she can walk out if she wants to. If she doesn't like your company she can find others in the way she has already said. It still doesn't explain what she is doing in your consulting room. It seems to me that you are trying to find an excuse for her, but I don't see why you should, and I don't see why you shouldn't expect her to say why she has come.

P: She thought about what I said, and then she replied, "I have always been like that; I have always liked to be the best. When I was a child in school, I was friendly with the headmaster's daughter. We were both supposed to recite a poem at a concert, but when the time came I couldn't say the poem because I was afraid of not doing well in front of the audience. And then I cried because I felt the teacher had trusted me and that she was disappointed in me." I told her that it seemed that she wanted to be my best analysand, that she wanted to have no difficulty with the analysis, no anxiety.

B: But she hasn't said that you are her favourite analyst. And you have said that in many respects her company is somewhat deficient. For one thing, she hasn't turned up for a number of sessions; I would like to know why. I would also like to know why she *has* turned up, who she thinks the analyst is, and who she thinks

she is. I might say to her, "You are very frank – you have told me that you find me boring. Do you tell most people this? Or is it the sort of comment you reserve for a psychoanalyst?" I am not saying this because I think it is very important with regard to this particular patient, but because you are liable to lose sight of this fact. A patient might come and use a flood of bad language, or draw a lot of funny pictures if he was a good artist, or bring a powerful musical instrument. Then it is sometimes useful to say to the patient, "You have just . . .", whatever it is. "Do you do this with everybody, or do you come and behave in this way only with me? If so, why?" You don't want to scare the patient, nor do you want to give the impression that you consider yourself to be a doormat should anybody want to wipe their shoes on you. After all, I take it that you intend to be an analyst all your life. So it is a matter of importance how you propose to spend your professional life. Most of us have undergone a prolonged, expensive and tiresome discipline. Was that simply for the purpose of being regarded as boring, or of being treated as people of no consequence and not worthy of respect?

If you say what I suggest, it introduces an element by which it can be made clear to the patient that you are aware of the way in which she is behaving. I am not sure that your interpretations really give her a chance of understanding that you expect something of her – this is a matter about which you have to make up your own mind. We all spend a lot of time analysing unconscious motives, but this is another matter – this is a problem which arises when you make it known that you are available for consultation. Saying that you are available for analysis in fact says nothing, but it is a convenient way of making it possible for patients to express what *they* think you are. For example, does this girl think it is useful to have an analyst *in case* she might want to see one, or *in case* she is feeling like being rude to somebody? We don't know, but at least you can have an idea of how you want to spend your time.

We are liable to drift into analysis for no better reason than that we happen to be good at it. Most of us are good at something or another, but do we therefore want to spend the rest of our lives doing it? And can we really expect our husbands and wives to share such an occupation with us? The question is a far-reaching one. It has nothing whatever to do with analysis, but it has a great deal to do with real life. It is a sad and depressing fact that the analytic world is

littered with people who set up as analysts for all sorts of reasons, and patients who are in serious states of mind because of that simple fact.

It sounds as if this girl wasn't at all sure that either she or her friend wanted to be in the delightful position of being the teacher's favourite. I suspect that she is afraid that you don't really want to analyse her – whatever that is – but that you want her for some private purposes of your own; that you want either to be her favourite analyst, or her to be your favourite analysand. She may not be particularly keen on either idea. She may indeed know already what it is like to be expected to do or to be certain things which she herself has not chosen, but which have been chosen for her by somebody else – like a parent, uncle, aunt, teacher and so on – who treats human personalities as if they were available for any purposes whatsoever. Most of us are familiar with being victims of precisely that attitude; our fathers or mothers have a phantasy of wanting us to be great men or great women. Sometimes they dress up little boys like girls with curly hair; and little girls like boys with page-boy haircuts – you can continue the list for yourselves. So patients, without knowing it, are really hoping that we are different, that we have some respect for their personalities. Although they may treat us as if they have no respect for our personalities, I don't think I would be over-impressed by that. Some kinds of behaviour are intended to be evocative or provocative so as to stir us up and then to wait and see what we do about it. Your reaction to that situation (I am not bothering about your interpretations) seems to have been sufficiently reassuring to make her feel it worthwhile telling you something which she may never have dared to tell her teachers or whoever was favouritizing her and her girl-friend. Everything the patient says – especially in the early stages – is a statement which may tell her something about the analyst and, if she is lucky, may lead to her learning something about herself.

What the interpretation of this story is I don't know and don't care. But I *would* care and *would* concern myself with explaining to her why she has told this particular story to me, and what lies behind it. My guess is that a patient who hasn't turned up – and who *has* turned up in this way – is suffering from a very considerable misfortune. I don't know what misfortune, but she wouldn't be coming and spending all that time and money for nothing. So far she puts over what she does not want: she doesn't simply want some person who is going to produce the same boring old stuff; nor does she want somebody

who treats her as a favourite. That is vague enough in all conscience. But if this patient goes on coming to you, then it may become a bit clearer because material accumulates. At first it is vague and you have to fall back on theories, but each time the patient comes you will have more to go on. This story about her and her girl-friend will form the basis of an interpretation which you will give six sessions later, six months later, six years later. That is why it is so important to have your senses open to what is going on in your consulting room in front of your own eyes.

16 [1]

Presenter: The patient has been in analysis with me for six months, four times a week. When she started treatment she had some psychosomatic problems – haemorrhage and diarrhoea – and she was getting thinner.

Bion: Who gave it the name, 'psychosomatic'?

P: I did.

B: What did *she* call it?

P: She said that she was physically ill. She felt that the problems were related to various occurrences during her life.

B: She was simply complaining of a whole series of things? Anything from being anxious to having a haemorrhage?

P: Yes. She was anxious because she had had a year's treatment with a psychiatrist who had once kissed and embraced her.

B: Do you know the psychiatrist?

P: Yes.

B: This is a great disadvantage. One would like to discuss a particular patient, and yet one can get involved in the professional behaviour of a colleague. It's a nuisance, a real problem. At the same time there is nothing to stop stories being told about *you.*

There is a great deal to be said for conforming to a certain discipline. In England it used to be accepted that a male doctor never saw a woman patient without having a nurse present. That is quite impossible in analysis; it has to be a private relationship. You have to establish the sort of rule you propose to follow in your own professional life, what sort of relationship to have with the people who come to see you professionally. People who are already known to you, or have met with you socially, often want to come to you for analysis. How that is going to work out I don't know. But if someone wants

to have an analysis with me, I would like them to conform to certain standards; and I myself would like to conform to a certain discipline, certain rules of conduct. For this reason I would not like to encourage the idea that I was available for kissing or any other activity which might be perfectly harmless, and even proper in a social relationship. The analytic relationship is a different one; the job is different. In some respects I think it is fair to consider that an analysis is as serious as a surgical operation; the operating surgeon preserves a certain discipline. I have only known one case in which a surgeon seemed to be allowing himself a freedom of action and behaviour with catastrophic results. Not that the surgeon was doing anything improper at all, but he seemed to be allowing a certain frivolity in the course of the operation – conversation, people joking. I think they were terribly misled by thinking that it was a very simple operation. So it was. But the patient, a child, equally simply died. Suddenly, in the middle of this somewhat easy atmosphere in the operating theatre, tragedy occurred. Emergency measures were immediately thrown into action, the whole atmosphere changed – all of it too late.

That is why I cannot admit that there is such a thing as a 'simple' psychoanalytic case. I have heard this sort of statement: "Students ought to be given only easy cases." It is sheer nonsense – I have never come across or heard of a simple case – never. Take the case you are presenting: the last thing I would dare to think is that it would be simple. In some respects I would far rather you had a complicated and horrible supervision than that you had a horrible and complicated analysis. So by all means let us get the worst of it into this situation, not into the thing itself.

P: The patient said that when the psychiatrist kissed her she felt that something exploded inside her like an atomic bomb.

B: Shall we go direct to the most recent session now?

P: This session took place the day before yesterday. She came in and sat down – she doesn't lie on the couch. She used to lie on the couch but now she prefers to sit. She appeared very anxious and said, "Why don't you speak to me?" I said, "What makes you think I am here to talk to you?"

B: You might say, "You seem to feel dissatisfied with the language that I do talk. You sound as if you felt that you wanted me to kiss you, to talk that language; but it seems to me that you are also very anxious that I should do nothing of the sort. You don't even take

the risk of lying on the couch in case I were to start using a language which you do not want me to talk." I don't think that it would in fact be a good thing to say this to her because I would like her to say a bit more so that I could get clearer what it is she is complaining about.

P: As she lives in another town she comes by car with a chauffeur, and another woman comes with her as companion. She said, "The woman who comes with me asked me if my husband had known you for a long time, and I said he had. She said it is good to know the person with whom one has analysis; it avoids problems. Then I began to wonder what she knows that makes her ask me these questions. I don't want to tell my husband what happened with the psychiatrist."

B: How old is the patient?

P: Thirty.

B: And the husband?

P: I don't know. They have two daughters.

B: How long have they been married?

P: Almost ten years. She says she doesn't want her husband to know the story because she doesn't want him to feel afraid, as she is, that everybody will get to know about it. "I don't want my husband to ask me who knows and who doesn't." She was crying when she said this.

B: My impression is that she doesn't want you to tell everybody what goes on in the consulting room – she wants it absolutely hidden. I wouldn't give an interpretation at the moment because I would like to have some more evidence. It is like watching a television picture which takes shape in front of your eyes, but you have come into the story in the middle. The patient was sitting in the chair facing you, and crying?

P: Yes.

B: Able to see you?

P: Yes. She continued crying and said, "My sister-in-law had a lover. My husband said that if that happened to him he would kill his wife, the lover, and then would commit suicide. Once he picked up a revolver only because a man spoke to me. Once you told me that perhaps my husband couldn't stand knowing these things and that perhaps this could destroy our life together."

B: It sounds as if the important thing here is the threat of violence; it becomes dangerous for her to have a conversation with

anybody who is not her husband. Even her conversation with him was at some stage with somebody who was not her husband – when they were not a married couple. That would mean that it was dangerous for her to look for a boy-friend. It is quite bad enough looking for one anyway – you never know what sort of potential husband or wife you might be talking to. The trouble about this whole business of finding a possible mate is that neither of the two people knows who the other one is – they don't usually know themselves either.

To get back to the middle of this story: an analyst, and sitting opposite in conditions of privacy a woman of thirty, anxious, weeping. Supposing we come into that room: how would we burst in on this scene? Carrying a revolver in our hands? From the point of view of this patient she can be feeling that someone might do just that. You could say something of this sort: "I think you can be feeling as if you were a little sister of mine and I were a little brother of yours; as if you and I were playing some game which caused a violent and hostile intervention by some kind of father or mother with a dangerous weapon." Would that be helpful or not? Let's try another one: "You are feeling as if you are a young girl who is carrying on some sort of game with me like kissing, and that a father comes in and is extremely angry." Which story is one to tell? Which interpretation? Freud said that it is not simply a matter of interpretations of words, but 'constructions'. This is where the analyst has to be an artist – he has to make constructions of what is going on.

P: When the patient said that I had once told her that her husband couldn't stand knowing a story like that, I asked her, "Did you hear me say this?" She said, "Yes. You told me that some people could stand it. And I think that my husband couldn't. Once I came home late after a session with the psychiatrist, and my husband asked, 'Wasn't your session only for an hour?'"

B: Is her husband ill?

P: According to her he is mentally ill.

B: Capable of violence?

P: She says so.

B: We all know that crimes of violence are often associated with sexual events, and this can indeed make psychoanalysis a dangerous occupation. It is obviously dangerous to ignore sexual elements in the patient – that would not be analysis. On the other hand, to take up these sexual elements is itself a sexual act because there are two

people, in private conditions, talking and using words like, 'breast' and 'penis'. The pair are in fact in danger of being attacked on the grounds of behaving in a sexual manner. So the analyst can either be criticized for not doing analysis, or attacked on the grounds of having sexual talks with a married woman. I mention this not as a matter of anxiety – we have to face these things whatever job we do – but to sharpen up the problem of what interpretation to give this patient.

P: I remembered that I had started her session five minutes early because the previous patient had been absent. It came to my mind because she had said on another occasion that sometimes the psychiatrist didn't stop a session after fifty minutes and continued without noting the time. This made her feel very guilty because she talked so much.

B: There are some patients who would always object if you were two minutes late. But they will also object if you are twenty seconds early. You almost need a computer to be right. This is why it is important to establish your own discipline and stick to it. Of course you can always take up the point with the patient: "You are feeling that I have started late (or early, or gone on too long). You are disturbed by the fact that I haven't kept exactly to the schedule." How did it go on after that?

P: I said, "Perhaps you are wondering why I saw you five minutes early." She replied, "I didn't notice anybody coming out of your consulting room. I asked my friend what time it was. I didn't notice you saw me five minutes early." I said, "I think you noticed something, otherwise you would not have asked your friend what time it was."

B: I think you can only say, "Well, you don't agree with my interpretation. I still think it is right, although it may be wrong. Perhaps we could leave it to see how it turns out."

P: One other point I would like to mention is this: she had said earlier, "I feel that what happened with the psychiatrist can't be undone."

B: One could say, "Knowing the facts which you know, and knowing what sort of person you are, you feel that a mistake cannot be corrected or modified." If it is simply a question of sticking from that day onwards to a mistake which has been made, then she can feel very frightened of making *any* mistakes, or even of the analyst

making mistakes. Under these circumstances it is hard to see how two ordinary human beings could possibly make a success of it.

M: Do you mean that the analyst should have the discipline to treat a fact that is felt by the patient to be a catastrophe, as something normal?

B: No. I think he simply has to have a discipline which he preserves inside his own consulting room. For example, you cannot stop a patient, if she chooses, from throwing her arms round you and kissing you. The only thing you can do is to be in a sufficiently disciplined frame of mind for the patient to have a chance of recognizing that she is having no respect for you, that she is treating you as an object on which to exercise her lips. If she feels entitled to do this, where is it going to end?

M: Would she be trying to frighten the analyst?

B: It is quite possible. He is, after all, supposed to be sensitive to what is happening. But the patient can behave in a manner which makes it very difficult for him to remain aware of the situation, open to these sensations and at the same time able to think clearly.

16 [2]

Presenter: This is material from the second session on the same day. She had a very tense expression, more anguished than sad. She said, "When I got here this morning for my first session I felt very distressed. I went to visit a friend who told me that she had had a sexual affair with a teacher and as a result was pregnant. She had told two other people about it and soon everybody in the town knew about it. Her husband knows about it too, but they are making a show of living happily together for everybody to see. It reminded me of what happened with that psychiatrist; I felt that what had happened to my friend had happened to me. I was so upset I could hardly disguise my feelings from my friend. What confuses me so much is the fact that when I went to the psychiatrist I didn't want any such thing to happen." The psychiatrist had told her that she should work it through with him. Sometimes he held her hand and said that it would help them to feel close and would also give her the feeling that she had a body. I told her that I thought she had difficulty in recognizing facts, and that therefore she felt as if she *was* her friend, living her friend's life.

Bion: Did you draw attention to what she was afraid you might do?

P: Yes. She said, "What I am afraid of is that you won't understand my feelings.' I asked her what her feelings were. She said, "I would like you to embrace me but that nothing should happen."

B: She may want to have a physical contact with you, but at the same time she is afraid that you would tell the whole town about it. She also feels that if you embraced her, then *she* would tell the whole town about it. So while she may want an analysis, she is afraid of its

being a situation of frustration, danger and publicity in which everybody knows what is supposed to be secret.

P: She *is* afraid that people in the town where she lives know about what happened between her and her psychiatrist.

B: And there is also the anxiety that *you* know what happened – especially when she is telling you. The problem is how to have an analysis and keep you correctly informed without at the same time telling tales about herself and you. It is felt to be very difficult indeed to have an analysis *and* a private life, especially if she tells tales about herself. On the other hand, if she doesn't say anything about herself, how is she going to get any analysis? This brings out the real difficulty: it is felt to be important that analysis should be private, and at the same time that somebody should be helpful, that there should be somebody to whom patients can talk about their troubles. I know from experience how difficult it is to bring home to analysts that they should keep things private; it is absolutely vital that they should be discreet. How are we to have supervisions, scientific meetings and so on, and at the same time have respect for the privacy of the patient?

P: I said, "You would like to be held in my arms and caressed like a baby, but you are afraid that I won't understand that you only want to be treated like a baby."

B: The time to want that was when she *was* a baby, not today when it is too late.

P: I had a feeling that something very important had happened to her during her first year of life, something connected with being abandoned. In fact her mother had left her with the grandmother and had stayed away for four months. When she came back the baby didn't want her.

B: These facts are important, but what is especially important is *this* which is taking place today. We often talk of past situations – it is quite useful – but the past is past and there is nothing any of us can do about it. What we *can* do something about is the present. So, what has happened that has made this patient talk like this to you *today*? She is no longer a baby.

P: I wondered if she knew that I was coming to Brasilia and felt abandoned.

B: She certainly doesn't want to be abandoned or forgotten, but on the other hand she doesn't want to be talked about either. And she

can feel that you don't want to be talked about, that you don't want the whole world to be told that you are seeing her. Will you tell other people that you have a hysterical patient who wants to kiss you? Or is she afraid that *she* will say that her analyst behaves like that? It is felt to be extremely difficult to find out anything about a sexual life. If you want help, then it is considered that you must be hysterical. If you want a private life, then it can be said that you are paranoid. This patient will have been familiar in childhood with the feeling that it is impossible to have a private life; there were always people to tell tales, and parents to listen and watch. Coming back to the present: she is looking for a civilized adult, a responsible person to whom she can talk about things that she has never before been able to express to anybody.

P: She continued, "It was only after that thing happened between me and the psychiatrist that I discovered that I didn't want it to happen. Perhaps something I did induced him to act in the way he did. I always felt I was an unprincipled person; I think he must have realized that. When I was a young girl I went into the cathedral in the town where we used to live. I looked at a statue of Our Lady; she had a wound on her breast. And I looked at the crucified Christ and I started imagining things." I asked her what things. She said, "You can well imagine what the things were." I said, "Do you suppose I can see into your mind?"

B: She might be quite glad to know what you have in mind – it is so much nicer to know what is in your mind than to tell anybody what is in hers.

P: She said, "I was imagining tearing away the clothes of Our Lady and sucking her breast."

B: What ought she to be thinking in a cathedral? What ought she to think in an analyst's consulting room? One way to answer that is to find out what the analyst allows. If she says you can imagine what she would feel, then she invites you to say what you imagine. If you give an interpretation, then she can find out if you are struck dead or what happens to you. But if you survive, then she might dare to say whatever she thinks. So it is felt to be very important not to be the first one to tell.

One might expect that a woman of thirty would have worked through all this in the course of finding boyfriends, or of finding a husband. But she seems to feel that she would never dare to take

the initiative, would never dare to say things – especially sexual things – to the analyst. If the analyst had a crucifix or an image of Our Lady in the room, then she would know what was or was not allowed. But even then she can be shocked at the way in which the Virgin Mary behaves.

P: One of her phantasies appeared in an association when she said that she could have been a prostitute.

B: Supposing the prostitute, the sexual person in herself, wants to be free, wants to be liberated. You might know this, and might or might not allow it. Suppose you say or do anything which suggests that you don't mind her being sexual; or suppose you behave in a way which suggests that you think the Virgin Mary is really a prostitute. Then there would be trouble. She is afraid that if you do say it, she will go away and say, "Look what a blasphemous person this analyst is." But on the other hand she can still feel that she is also a person of some integrity and honesty.

You might find a way into this problem by drawing her attention to the fact that there is an honest woman wanting to be free, but that she feels it is frightening to want to be honest. The difficulty is how to be honest, how to be God-fearing, how to be sexually mature, how to have children in the environment in which she lives. All these are felt to be problems which haven't been solved; some of them are felt to be problems which will never be solved until she tries them. But by the time she has kissed her psychiatrist it is too late. Before that, she doesn't know what she would feel; afterwards, the damage has been done.

No child can run the risk of asking questions about sex without being told, "What! Don't you know that?" Or, "However do you know about things like that?" This point also applies to religion: if a child goes into a church and sees a figure of the crucified Christ, it is felt to be very difficult to ask, "What is that?" It is difficult to learn *anything* because you dare not ask questions. If you do, you always know too much or not enough; you are ignorant, or you are religious, or you are an atheist. This woman of thirty has to come to an analyst and hopes that she can ask questions without getting into trouble. But of course one analyst is felt to be very much like any other, one small child very much like any other, one parent or grown-up very like all others. It is difficult to get the kind of mental food that makes the mind grow up.

17

Presenter: The patient is a man of thirty-four who has been in analysis for about a year. He was born into a very poor family in a small town outside São Paulo. When he was about twenty he went to the city; he had no money and was starving. He met a girl whom he married six years later. He says he didn't want to get married but did so because of social conventions. He complains of being unhappy and says he has had a stomach ache for about three years. He has a theory that this ache is due to his unhappy marriage. They have no children. During the past seven years he has become extremely wealthy but has not told his wife. A month ago he left home.

I would like to present one recent session. He arrived, said "Good morning", shook hands with me as he always does, and lay on the couch. He said, "This week I had no dreams. Today I was supposed to phone my wife at one o'clock but I didn't. I have no telephone so every day at lunch time I go to a friend's office. At ten past one my wife called me – I don't know how she discovered that I was there."

Bion: I am puzzled. He is describing a situation in which his wife doesn't know he has the use of a telephone. So that's all right – there is no mechanical communication. The next thing you hear is that *he* doesn't know how *she* guesses where he is. What apparatus is she using to find out where he is? I am not asking the question to suggest anything about an interpretation, but to draw attention to the fact that this seems an extraordinary story. He becomes very wealthy; his wife doesn't know anything about it. What is this apparatus which is being used by which he doesn't let anybody know his whereabouts or whether he is rich or poor, and this same apparatus by which this is found out?

I would remain quiet about this, but I would like to know what is the clue to this system of communication which is also non-communication – but which seems to work.

P: He continued, "I went to the bank to talk to a girl who works there. I noticed she had been sunbathing, so I asked her, 'Do you go sunbathing every week?' And she said, 'Yes, every week.' I asked her if she was going to do so this week-end, and she said she was. I asked her where she sunbathed. She said at home. I asked her if she had a swimming pool at home and she said, 'Oh, no. I live in a flat, but the sun shines in the whole day.' I suppose she doesn't know I'm a millionaire and that I have a swimming pool. Then I told her that I was betting in the sports lottery in order to get rich. She said, 'If I won in the lottery I would try to see the whole world.' I said, 'Oh, the rest of the world is the same as it is here. It isn't worth while being rich because then we get preoccupied with not growing old and not dying.' She said, 'Oh yes, Onassis would know all about that." Then he said, "I think I am getting a cold again. I'm convinced that my illness has nothing to do with my wife. She is not guilty. I am trying a test: I'll stay at home until the end of the year; if my illness isn't cured by then I will definitely leave." I asked him, "Why do you think you have a chance of being cured?" He said, "I don't know. But I do know that my wife isn't guilty, and besides that, I can try Positive Thinking." This is a kind of church run by a Japanese.

B: I find myself wondering about his visit to the bank. People usually go there for financial reasons, but *he* had a most interesting conversation – which is not what is ordinarily arranged by a bank. He is apparently sure that it is only one-way traffic: the girl who goes to the bank, theoretically to make a living, couldn't possibly know anything about finance or about who has any money. I can see that employees of a bank might know very little about the bank's business, but on the other hand I should be extremely surprised if they don't occasionally talk together about the clients who come to the bank. Why does he suppose that whatever he uses to investigate the girl – whether she is available at weekends for example – couldn't equally well be used by the girl to investigate a possible boy-friend? Does he believe that analysts never meet, that they couldn't have a sort of central bank of information about patients? I am not particularly interested in the answers to these questions, but I *am* interested to know what this one-way system is that he relies on.

M: He was hiding his wealth again – the situation at home was repeated in the bank.

B: It gives some idea of the use to which he puts his home, the use he makes of his office, the use he makes of the bank. One wonders why he is coming for analysis.

M: Perhaps he wants to know how his system functions in analysis.

P: I have formed the opinion that he is emotionally very poor.

B: Yes, right. How would you make that clear to him? Theoretically you give an interpretation, but of course when you do that there has to be a receiving end to it. So there is the problem of what he would hear you say. Could you go a bit further in expanding this idea of his being emotionally poor?

P: He wears bad clothes, he can't eat without having an ache, he doesn't know how to use his money.

B: That doesn't surprise me because money is only valuable as something which is usually exchangeable for something else. But if he doesn't know what to do with the money, it hasn't any value. Let us go on with the material now.

P: He says that he knows his wife is not guilty because after he left home his pains persisted.

B: This makes it seem as if he was afraid that she was trying to poison him. It might be anything from physically poisoning his food, to some other kind of poison. This is an illuminating comment of his. What concerns us is what he thought she was guilty of.

P: I said to him, "Does this make any difference to your difficulty in living together with a woman, sharing your inner feelings, trusting her?"

B: It might perhaps be wiser to say, "You don't seem to feel that you could trust anybody – or at any rate, any woman. Although you seem to have relationships with these creatures we call women – a wife, a bank employee – I think you are very suspicious of them." The next point is more controversial: I would like to say, "I think you are also very suspicious that you have a sort of woman inside you. When you talk about a stomach ache, you are really talking about a bad thing inside, and you are frightened of it. Sometimes it is as if it were outside you, like your wife or the girl in the bank. I think you feel that *I* am really a dangerous woman whether I am outside you or inside you." I am hesitant about that because he may not have got far

enough to understand such an interpretation. I haven't the slightest doubt that he would reject it, but that doesn't necessarily mean that he wouldn't be able to understand it. However, I am simply talking about my impression and what I feel I would be *inclined* to say to the patient. Although this interpretation is probably correct, in practice there is this difficult question of whether it is the right moment to give it.

P: He said, "I think I'm going to change. My new house where I am living alone has a fault in the water system and I have to replace it. I have another flat that is not ready yet, so I think I shall return home to my wife. Besides that, living alone is beginning to interfere with my business." I asked, "Why is that?" He answered, "Well, I need someone to take care of my clothes and to prepare my food."

B: All this seems to me to be making excuses, giving explanations which cover rather than illuminate why he goes back to his wife. It might be more productive to say, "You seem to feel as afraid of this home to which you are returning as you felt about it when you left. Indeed I think that you fear that if you go on talking to me it will be like getting back to the state of mind which you have forgotten, getting back to what we call your 'unconscious'. And you feel much the same thing about the woman's inside, your own inside, and mine." He is afraid that he would never escape from it.

P: I said, "Since you have no financial problems you could employ a laundress, or a cook, or a maid. I don't think you realize that in returning home and setting a fixed period in which to get cured, you are playing with other people's feelings." He said, "You are clearly saying that I shouldn't return home."

B: I think the objection to your interpretation is that it had a certain moral quality. It is important to avoid appearing to be either his conscience, advisor, parent, or authority of any sort because he would be anxious for you to take over these functions. If he really feels he is cooperating with you, then he is returning to a frame of mind which might be appropriate to his being a child. But a state of mind suitable to being a child is not much good to the grown man. So there is a fear that he is getting back into a state of mind in which he is dependent on a woman – originally presumably the mother. Of course the final version of that would be going right back into the woman's inside, into the womb itself; there would be fear of having anything in the nature of genital intercourse with a woman either

because of the point you mentioned – his mental poverty – or on account of his physical equipment, the danger of going back into the woman's inside penis first.

It occurs to me that there is a feeling that he started his trouble by deserting his mother. But the next 'mother', that is the father, is also a source of anxiety. So there is the impulse to go back to the mother again. I think it is also related to the feeling of having robbed the mother of something if he leaves her, and of using the father's penis with which to get back into the mother. Potentially he has both parents against him – the deserted mother and the robbed father.

The internal object – the thing he calls a stomach ache – is in fact a frightening conscience. Indeed he fears the analyst as a reincarnation of the 'ghost' of the mother. One could say, "When you talk about going to the bank, what you are really meaning is going back to the mother's insides; but in the mother's insides you find still another mother, and you are afraid that these mothers have more and more mothers inside them." It depends on whether the patient can understand that. Here we can discuss any interpretation whatever; in the consulting room we can't. There is only one person with whom to discuss it, namely the analysand – and that is not supervision. There is always pressure to give the right interpretation – even when we don't know what it is. But the right interpretation must be within reach of the patient's comprehension.

M: It seems to me that he had made some progress when he said, "I know that my wife is not guilty."

B: I am not sure about that. It is difficult to say what constitutes progress. I think this is the nearest he has come to admitting a paranoid anxiety. From our point of view it certainly is a sign of progress if the patient is able to say something so clearly that we can at least try to interpret it. We can always argue that this is a sign of analytic progress: we hope that 'analytic progress' is the same thing as 'progress', but we don't know. I wish somebody would draw up a map of the human mind showing various directions analogous to north, south, east and west, but marked 'progress', 'regression', and so forth. You could mark the different kinds, like different instruments on an orchestral score – infantile, adult, or adolescent. So according to which one of those aspects of the score you were talking about, you could mark whether that was progress or not. The total picture would be one in which there would be arrows showing progress in one

direction, and progress in the opposite direction elsewhere – minus progress.

P: When I said, "If your problem is a place to sleep, a laundry woman and a cook, you can get all that with money", he replied, "But I feel lonely." I said, "I think that too could be managed with money."

B: Why did you say that?

P: Because I felt that he wanted an object to serve him.

B: I think it would be served with money if it were simply a question of *looking like* having company. But that doesn't solve the problem he has confessed to, namely of being alone. Would it be possible to draw his attention to the fact that he isn't quite alone because he always has his stomach ache? In a sense the loneliness is the desert which he feels he has created with his greed. Whatever it was that has been eaten up and destroyed leaving nothing, has turned into a bad stomach ache. If that is true, it suggests that it is extremely primitive, probably going back to the earliest meals of all. He may even have a kind of reminiscence of being so greedy that he finished up with having a stomach ache. The thing he has eaten has travelled right down to wherever his stomach ache is, and there it is felt to be operating as a kind of conscience. This loneliness is sure to crop up more than once. That seems to me to be progress – a confession that he has been able to get everything except love or affection; even in a crowd he is lonely.

He talked about the girl in the bank having mentioned Onassis. Did he say anything about what Onassis means to him?

P: The day after Onassis died, he told me this: "I read about Onassis' fortune in the newspaper. I calculated that his fortune was three hundred times greater than mine." For the last two weeks he has been very preoccupied with getting old – a rich man who gets old and dies. This is something new.

B: What is Onassis' wealth? Three hundred times as much as the patient's bank account? Or the fact that Onassis is dead? This is a matter of importance if the patient is expressing suicidal despair. In spite of these movements from one place to another, I think he can be afraid that the best fortune of all would be to be dead.

P: When I said he could use his money to get company, he said, "Oh yes, a female companion. I think it's possible that I don't really want to go back home because I never take my suitcase out of the car." This was a reference to the fact that he went to the flat three times to

return to his wife, but left his suitcase in the car each time. He said, "Just now when I was running down the street I saw a couple. He looked about forty-five and she was a very pretty slim girl of about twenty-three. At first sight I felt envious; I would have liked to be in that man's place. But then I began to think about death and old age. I must give up running after women – it is really absurd – there is something ridiculous about it that doesn't satisfy me." I said, "I get the impression that what frightens you so much is the idea of having a sincere relationship with a woman in whom you could put your trust." He said, "I don't think I would ever tell a woman my business. It wouldn't be worthwhile and would complicate things." I said, "I don't think you are aware to what extent you are suffocated by money. It is as if you were in a room, filling it with coins." He said, "I feel I must take advantage of my good fortune because I can now earn in one day more than I used to be able to earn in one year. At the end of this year I shall make a large profit and then I shall feel calmer." I said, "It seems to me that you feel you have to earn money endlessly. What will be the result of that?" He said, "Then I shall be safer." I asked, "In what way?" He said, "Nothing will trap me – not war, no crises, nothing."

B: If that were true, what is his problem? He has already spoken about his fear of the attractive girl. He seems to feel that there is no danger at all that he would ever be so foolish as to tell a mere woman that he is a rich man; he knows that the real danger is that he might easily appear to be an attractive prize for somebody, either because he has money or because he is capable of making money. He feels that there is no shortage of people who would want to marry him. His difficulty is how to combine this situation with the feeling that he needs a companion.

It seems as if his little excursion away from the womb leads him back to his wife who, according to him, is a most unsatisfactory mate. What is he daring to expose to you in analysis? You mentioned his emotional poverty, but he can be afraid of being emotionally rich as well. Whether it is his poverty or his riches, neither problem has been solved. If he shows his emotional potential, his emotional wealth, his gifts, he feels that everybody will want them. Therefore he wears appropriately shabby clothes and an appropriately mean state of mind, so that there can be no worthwhile motive for anybody to want to get hold of him. It can be said that if a man is poor enough in every

way, it is understandable that he will have a problem because nobody will love him. But this seems to be a rather different problem: that of the person who is not poverty-stricken, and of how he is to find a mate who would actually love him. The fundamental point here is that the person who lives alone in the desert is sure to be greedily impelled to satisfaction, greedily impelled to get some substitute for love or affection. This would apply to either of the potential pair: how is the potentially wealthy man to find an appropriate wife, or the potentially appropriate woman to find an appropriate husband?

M: Patients frequently tell us they want to be loved not because they are rich or good, but because they have faults and are bad. They feel there is no advantage in being loved for their good characteristics.

B: Who is likely to want to fall in love with bad people? On the other hand, if the person in question has everything, why on earth should he want to marry? Can psychoanalysis find some kind of solution to this profound problem of why the human unit is a couple? This teasing question runs through the whole of philosophical history; analysis is only a relatively recent approach to it.

This is the problem the patient is presenting to you: how are two people to come together in a way which is an adequate solution both of the wealth of each of them, and of the poverty of each of them? To put all that simply and primitively: how are the penis and the female genital ever to get together? People behave all the time as if it were the simplest thing on earth; there is hardly a boy or a girl who isn't convinced that they know all about it – or at least they think it's a good thing to pretend they do. It is over-simplifying things to say it is a 'sexual' problem. We need to consider the possibility that there is something which is not so simple as that; it might be useful to call it 'passionate love' – you have to find your own way of describing something which goes on extending long after adolescence. In certain rare cases a person is not satisfied with making money or having sexual intercourse, and hopes that there is somebody – perhaps a psychoanalyst – who will know the answer. I am sure there is an answer that nobody has yet found, so it is quite an adventure in which we are involved.

18

Presenter: When this patient, a man of fifty, comes into the room he has a ritual way of doing it. He takes off his coat and hangs it on the chair.

Bion: How long has he been seeing you?

P: Less than a month.

B: Did you know anything about him before he came to you?

P: No.

B: So he is really a stranger.

P: Yes. When giving his reasons for coming to analysis, he said, "There is a part of my character that I must tell you about. When I am away from home I am happy and I like to joke with people, but when I get home I change. I lose my authority, I complain to my wife about everything; if something is moved from the place where I put it, I get angry. I blame myself because my wife is a nice person."

B: He seems to feel that he can express these various unlikeable qualities to an analyst. So both at home and in the consulting room he tends to behave in a way which is not typical of the way he behaves in the street or in public. One could say, "Well, what of it? It's a usual sort of story" – except for one very important point. Why is he mentioning it? Why is a man of fifty bothered by it? And why is he coming to see you? That is unusual.

There is no reason to suppose that, if this story of his is true, he will behave any differently in the consulting room with the analyst from the way he would behave with anybody else. Of course his description of his behaviour may not be accurate. But I don't think I would ask him; I would assume that what I could see and hear for myself in the consulting room would almost certainly either bear out this summary he has given, or he would have to alter his views

about that summary. If he says his behaviour with you is different, you could say, "Why do you reserve this special behaviour for me?" But I would rather leave the matter alone; I would rather have the evidence of my own senses.

P: He said that he had the feeling that he was beginning to control himself, even at home; he was being less aggressive with his wife. I said that he was talking about this change in himself since starting analysis as if I was supposed to expect it. He said, "Yes, the last session was very useful because it showed me my egoistic side which I was not aware of. Before I started analysis I was always in a hurry: when the time came to stop work at the office I left in a hurry; when it was time to go to work I left home in a hurry. Now I'm not in such a hurry. And I can sleep without taking pills, although I have to leave them on the bedside table." I said, "Perhaps you are talking about capacities that you have been unable to use before – to sleep without drugs and to be able to think about them."

B: What strikes me is that although all his statements seem to refer to fairly blameless activities, he is speaking of them with hostility and with a certain degree of alarm. What is he complaining about? It is hardly likely to be any of the things he has mentioned. And yet he is probably complaining about something which is available for scrutiny in the consulting room.

M: I have the feeling that he is talking about something he hasn't experienced, as if he were a journalist who writes about the facts but hasn't lived them in reality. So he speaks about himself as if he were in the theatre, looking at something but not living it.

B: All right. What is this spectacle? I think it is one of these times when precise interpretations don't really meet the situation. Perhaps one would need to give an even more vague interpretation than the statements he is making.

P: I feel that he complains about things as if he knows there is a right way of doing them. So perhaps it would be useful to ask him how he thinks these things should be done.

B: The activity which is prominent could be summarized as a sort of ritual – coming to see the analyst, putting the coat in the right place – which is usually directed towards controlling an internal event. I don't think this point is part of psychoanalytic doctrine, but you may find it illuminating to make this kind of division – privately anyway. The contrast to it would be ceremonial which is over

and again intended to control some external event. There's nothing hard and fast about it, but one could say that military ceremonials are devoted to controlling some external source; private rituals are nearly always directed towards an internal condition. In this instance I would say that the patient is objecting to change. I would go further and suggest that he is not so much objecting to changes in the environment, as to changes which he feels are occurring within himself and which are out of control unless he employs some sort of ritual. He hates *any* change in himself and therefore feels it is important to preserve the status quo, to run the home as it has always – apparently in his experience – been run.

P: One of the things he complained about was that he felt he was behaving like the widening circles seen in water when we throw in a stone – but in an inverse way, as if he were going from the outside in.

B: I think the change in him is related in his mind to a deterioration, to a state in which there is not an expanding universe, but a contracting one. You could say, "You have given me a number of instances which all have one characteristic: you seem to object to the fact that there is evidence of change in you." If you think he can understand that, you can leave it at that point and see what his reaction is.

There is another interpretation which is of consequence: if he cooperates, he feels that his state of mind is nearer to that of a small boy; at the same time he can feel that he is mourning for his lost youth. Next I would want to point out to him that even if he were nought or five years old he could be mourning for his lost youth and fearing both his inability to do what other people can do – probably the parents – *and* his dissatisfaction with what he has been able to do so far. The feelings of discontent have been there for a very long time, even from the beginning of his life, and are still there today. Whether it be now at the latter part of his life, or then at the beginning of his life, there is an objection to change.

I wouldn't want to say that until he had had a chance of expressing a great deal more because it very easily turns into reassurance; it is like introducing a cure before he has been able to express his anxiety. I strongly suspect that he has never really been able to express his feelings of despair, depression, inadequacy and dissatisfaction. People dismiss a small child's depression as if it were of no consequence. That doesn't give the child a chance to have a real, good depression

which does no harm, particularly at times when it is appropriate. But people of fifty years old are liable to resort to drastic methods of expressing dissatisfaction, depression and resentment. There is a danger that this patient might take the law into his own hands and proceed to deal with the situation in a very unsatisfactory and inadequate manner. After all, there is something most unsatisfactory about a man of fifty who goes about behaving as if he were the 'life and soul of the party'. It is still more unsatisfactory if he gets fed up with the whole lot, and murders himself. These pills he keeps by his bedside are useful, but it does depend on who uses them and what for. I think he should be given plenty of time to have a thorough complaint about his inadequacy and resentment, including of course the hopelessness of analysis and analysts. Let him do all that, but don't let it obscure the fact that this is nothing new. As I say, he might have been mourning for his lost youth as a five-year-old or younger. We don't know what the drugs were then; there are plenty of things, like masturbation, which children are able to use as a method of overcoming feelings of depression or despair. The snag is that they work for the moment and then there is further depression and despair about the cure. So we should not be too precocious or too premature in giving an interpretation which the patient will use and regard as just one of these same old reassurances.

We always have to consider how we are to describe to the patient the situation he is telling us about. For example, why bother about his wife being ill-treated? The point that is of importance to the analyst is that the patient *is* bothering. When he is aware of the pressure to have and to love a home of his own and the inhabitants of that home, then it is important to draw his attention to the fact that he hasn't previously expressed so overtly his fear that he might be loving or affectionate or sympathetic – all of which are felt to be inferior, not at all grand states of mind.

19

Presenter: The patient is a twenty-seven-year-old married woman. I have been seeing her for six months. She has a great deal of difficulty in speaking during the sessions; she is silent for long periods. When she lies down on the couch she becomes very anxious.

Bion: Whose idea was it that she should lie on the couch?

P: She chose to do so. When she arrives she has a radiant expression and looks at me in a penetrating way with brilliant eyes; then she lies down. Every session since the beginning of the analysis has consisted of long periods of silence and signs of fear and anxiety; she described the fear as 'undefined' and cannot explain it. I would like to recount one of the most recent sessions in which I got the impression that she was more communicative. There was the usual long silence at the beginning of the session. Then, while she was still twisting her head, wringing her hands and pushing at the sleeves of her blouse, I asked her what was going on in her mind.

B: There are two people in the room, but the patient knows something that we can't know – that there is also a silence in the room. That silence isn't just nothing; therefore if she is afraid of the silence, she is not afraid of 'nothing'. The silence must be, as it were, the place where some person or thing is. I could put it like this: there are three people, three things present – the analyst, the patient and the silence. And it seems that the silence is the frightening one – at the moment.

P: The question I asked myself was, why is it so difficult for her to speak? Why does she think it is safer to keep quiet about what is going on in her mind rather than tell me?

B: If this object is silent, she would feel frightened of doing anything different from that.

P: After this long silence something very strange happened. I got the impression that there was an Egyptian mummy lying there and that there was a resistance in the relationship between us. I was surprised when the patient began to speak and said, "You talk about the things that I can't express. It is very difficult for me to talk at all, but harder still to think. When I try to think and can't, I feel very frightened and paralysed like a dead thing."

B: It becomes clearer that the dead mummy is very dangerous: if the dead mummy won't talk, then it is felt to be dangerous to be alive *and* to talk. If you listen to the silences as well as to what is said, then it becomes easier to understand what the silence is saying. If you talk, or she talks, it is impossible to hear the silence. Putting it in pictorial terms, it is a very lively ghost.

P: She said that when she managed to think and found the proper expression for it, she felt the tension ebbing away and was more relaxed.

B: The relaxation may be a nice experience, but it may not. One has to consider how she is lying on the couch; is she relaxed because she is on a couch? Is she more relaxed than the analyst who isn't on a couch?

P: At first it was very difficult for me to relate to the silence, and I couldn't listen to it with ease. But after a time I began to feel more comfortable when I thought about what was happening during the silence. I also caught myself thinking about things other than those happening in the session. The patient says she is very afraid that she won't last out the analysis.

B: It sounds as if she means until she is dead, as if she felt she had no right to a life.

P: When she said she couldn't speak I pointed out that she was in fact speaking.

B: I think you also need to point out that she has discovered that you can't speak if you don't know anything, if you aren't kept informed. So her silence makes you silent too: one of the two people in the room can't be an analyst, and the other can't be an analysand – neither of them can be satisfied. This object is a very hostile one; if she is not allowed to talk, then analysis is impossible. You might try drawing her attention to the fact that if she talks she is afraid of starting something; she is afraid of the opposite of the silence, afraid of talking so much that you cannot hear yourself think.

P: When I asked her what was going on in her mind and explained that I asked this because I couldn't go on working with no material, she replied that the only things she could remember were those from the past.

B: But she didn't mention them?

P: She mentioned that she remembered her father who was very severe and was always criticizing her. I asked her, "Do you feel that I am criticizing you?" She didn't answer.

B: I think there is great fear of the opposition and hostility of the dead father or dead mother to the person who goes on living. So it provides a sort of defence to say, "I may still be living, but it isn't a life worth living." What she seems to lose sight of is that if the analysis is not allowed to proceed, then there is no analysis. How did she come to believe that somebody or something would save her from that disastrous state?

P: She said she was afraid that I would send her away because she didn't say anything. I said that we should both try to forget that for the moment.

B: But should she forget it? Should she forget that the analyst might expect something?

P: I have tried to show her that collaboration is necessary.

B: The difficulty is how this is to be put to her. It isn't you who are stopping the analysis, going away. If there is no analysis, there is no analysis. In fact she is inviting you to say, "Oh no, I won't desert you." Then she will be able to show that you give her permission, as it were, to avoid having an analysis. But it leaves out the point that if you want to do analysis it is no good going on if you are not allowed to do it.

P: She was referred to me by her obstetrician because although she wanted babies she frequently miscarried. So she came for analytic treatment in the hope that it would help her overcome this problem.

B: Yes, but she is also wanting to be assured that if she gets pregnant she will have a good baby, or a good cure. But you haven't told her that a good analytic baby will be born. There can be a feeling that there is such a thing as a successful analysis, like a successful pregnancy, but what is born is another matter; she has to put up with the baby, whatever it is. It doesn't seem that she has ever worked out this point. I would be inclined to draw her attention to the fact that she feels able to come for analysis if she is sure that it has no effect.

In physical terms, if she is sure that she won't become pregnant she can do what she likes sexually. In the meantime she is not prepared to risk having a sexual conversation with you. But if sexual matters are never dealt with it is a strange sort of analysis. On the other hand, if it is the kind of analysis in which sexual things are talked about, there is also the fear that it will bring about some sort of pregnancy. Even rationally she can feel that if she changes in this respect her husband would be more prepared to have a relationship with her.

Almost anything you say to this patient is wrong; whatever you say gives the idea that she can go on behaving in that way and that you can still go on doing analysis. You are trapped into agreeing that she can come for the rest of her life even if there is no result at all. Analysis is practically the only contractual arrangement between two people in which you feel you can keep on for ever – or anyway for as long as you like – without anything ever happening. It is difficult to know what to do because you need to give an interpretation which isn't, as it were, an accusation.

P: Sometimes I feel like letting the silence continue to enable me to know what is going to happen.

B: It is worth trying. But there again you have to be careful. The analyst can be silent, can give the patient plenty of time, and yet it can be an expression of hostility. The patient must think that there is some reason for spending so much time and money; and we know that there is no advantage in having a useless analysis.

M: There may be masochistic impulses present – a form of punishment and guilt.

B: It is true that one suspects that there must be some pleasure or satisfaction obtained from it. For example, if as a child she refuses to pass motions or urine, that would be a very effective way of upsetting the mother. She can get pleasure out of thinking that you mind what happens to her; alternatively, she can get the satisfaction of feeling that you don't care. It can also be a sort of mental masturbation; she can get sexual gratification out of the feeling that she gets nothing out of the analysis.

20

Presenter: The patient is an eighteen-year-old who has been in analysis with me for two years. He had to wait for two months after the initial interview before I had a vacancy; he wouldn't consider going to another analyst. His father, a doctor, died a year ago.

He always arrives in a great hurry, looking scared and anxious, his hair uncombed, his clothes untidy. He complains of pains and says he has to fight with himself to come to the sessions.

He arrived late for the session I am reporting, saying that his car had run out of petrol. He was even more anxious than usual. He lay on the couch but couldn't speak. After a while he said, "I'm very frightened because I can see something but don't know how to describe it – I can't find the words. There are scenes, like a movie, passing so fast on the wall at the end of the couch that I can't connect with any word in time."

Bion: If you lay on that couch, what would you see on the wall?

P: Just a bare white wall.

B: He *can* see something. I think he can see your words going right over his head and hitting the wall.

P: He said he would like a special machine to collect his thoughts. Then I could translate the thoughts and understand what he was seeing.

B: He is reasonably sure that you, like most other people, cannot see anything on that wall.

P: He said he was able to control pain. I asked him what sort of pain. He said, "It is too complicated a process to explain to you. If my father were alive he would understand and explain because he was a very good man."

B: This statement that his father was a good man is intended

to be heard by the father. But this father is a dead father – and that is a different matter. The dead father is sure to be very angry, very hostile to the son who goes on living. And the situation would be made much worse if the son did anything which made his own life worth living. The dead father becomes a very bad, envious, hostile and lively ghost.

I don't think this is a matter of much importance at the moment; these feelings go back a long time before adolescence – they would certainly be the earliest feelings of all. In a somewhat technical way one could say that when the baby is born it kills off the father and takes possession of the mother's breast which is the father's property. Those feelings are ordinarily made more bearable if the father and mother are happily married and the atmosphere in the family is flatly contradictory to this frightful story. But suppose there are no reassuring father and mother visible – only a blank, white wall. It is possible to see *anything* on that wall, however terrifying and however intolerable. If there is a good, real father who is able to have a good, real loving relationship with the mother, then that wall will not be so blank.

This blank is brilliantly described by Milton in *Paradise Lost* where he talks about not having sight; he is surrounded by "ever-during dark". And "for the book of nature fair" he is presented with "a universal blank". This "universal blank" means 'nothing', but it also means 'white'.

Ordinarily we do not reassure patients; we do not tell them about our private lives or anything of that sort. So we do present them with a universal blank. "And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out", says Milton. If we obey the ordinary classical rules of psychoanalysis, we seem to be doing exactly what the patient is afraid of – giving him no good 'sight'.

P: He often complains that if he knew something about me and my life he would feel much calmer.

B: One can only assume that *so far* he feels that you are a friendly human being, not a horrifying and dangerous ghost. But I can see a difficulty: if you try to draw his attention to these terrifying ideas, then you are becoming a hostile person who tells him terrible and frightening things. I think he has enough sense of reality to feel that you are a very important person. In so far as he is able to 'push out' towards the analyst, he meets a different 'thing', something which is

'not him'. And so far he feels that it is something helpful, that you are a bit more good than bad. I don't know how much more; probably very, very little. I might try to say, "You think that if I told you I was a good father, you would find it easier to come here. As it is, we don't know how you have managed to get here again today."

P: He says he only comes to the sessions because he is unable to sleep at night when he is lonely and sees frightening things. He is very angry about having to come to analysis; when he does come he cannot tell me what he feels. When he understands something I tell him, he gets even angrier.

B: If he goes to sleep he is afraid he will never wake up again. That has already been described by Shakespeare in *Hamlet:* "but in that sleep of death what dreams may come?" So far he has probably been saved from killing himself because he is afraid that things would be even worse if he were dead amongst all these ghosts and horrible things which come when he is asleep. You give him a chance to believe that there might be one good person. He knows he wants to believe that, yet there is no reason to believe that you are any better than anybody else, no reason to believe that you are a good father or a good mother.

P: He quarrels with his mother at home. She often weeps and says she wants to kill herself because she cannot bear her loneliness. He tells her, "My analyst doesn't cry."

B: From a very early stage the baby can press out and get in contact with – we hope – a good breast, a good mother. But the father is a 'mother' who doesn't put the baby to his breast, so this is one of the first ways of telling a difference between a father and a mother. One could say that, in a sense, the father is a bad 'mother'; and the mother isn't really a good mother because she doesn't produce good milk from her eyes. A baby may not be in contact with the breast, but quite soon it can follow the mother about with its eyes. In this way it is possible to have a good relationship with the mother who isn't even in contact with the baby. But the mother this patient can see with his eyes, can take into himself with his eyes, doesn't produce milk but tears.

You could try saying something of this sort: "You are afraid that if you try to get good health from me, I shall not produce good milk but bad tears." The baby can feel that it wants or tries to get good milk;

or good analysis in the case of this patient. But what he produces isn't good milk – it is urine.

This patient has continued trying for two years to behave as if you are a good analyst. He is still alive, so it may be that he is right. You could say, "It doesn't prove it, but I think it is sure to be making you feel that I might be helpful – even though you are very frightened of my being extremely hostile."

21

Presenter: The patient is a thirty-nine-year-old woman who started analysis four years ago. She complained of feeling very strange; she didn't know who she was any more, she only knew that she was not herself and was afraid she would never come back again. She thought a 'head shrink' would be able to bring her back.

I am reporting a session that took place four months ago. She said she wanted to tell me something that happened the previous day. "We were on our way to a party but couldn't find the number of the house where it was to be held. I began to feel bad, as if I was going to disappear. I quickly got into the car and felt more secure. My husband backed the car and we found the right house. The moment I was under a roof I felt secure – it seems that the roof and walls give me a great feeling of security. In the living room I felt very well, but the moment my husband asked me if I was feeling well, remarking that generally I don't feel well in unfamiliar places, I started shaking and feeling bad. I was talking to some friends and looking at the food – I couldn't wait to start grabbing it."

Bion: She seems to be telling two different stories: one is about the feeling of security; the other is the answer to her husband. I don't know to whom the first one is the answer, but it is probably what she feels able to tell the analyst, and even to some extent herself. But the moment the analyst becomes somebody who wants to know, "Are you feeling well?" – like the husband – then the language she speaks is suddenly quite different. Why are there these two different stories? Is the one she tells her husband told in that particular language in order to make it easier for him to understand, or to make it more difficult? What she told her husband or anyone else is, in my opinion, of very little importance. What is important is what sort of language this

patient is likely to speak to the analyst. I would ask myself whether I would be able to do analysis if the patient speaks these two different languages to me.

It is quite likely that she describes these peculiar feelings if she thinks it safe to talk to a particular person. But she may be afraid of what will happen if the analyst turns into a sort of husband, the sort of person who could see her as often as a husband. She might speak what seemed to be fairly ordinary conversational language – unless she was going to continue seeing the analyst. In that case she is almost sure to speak this other language.

P: It is very difficult for me to understand with whom she is talking. I feel as if she is talking with herself.

B: That is an important point: people do talk to themselves. So even though the analyst is there, the patient may be talking to herself – and the analyst can hear that conversation. I think I would try to show her what seems to be going on while she is in the room with you. For example, I might say, "I don't think you are talking to me; I think you are behaving as if I weren't here." I would try to draw her attention to the fact that she seems to be busy making noises so that she can feel somebody is in the room with her. If a mother leaves her baby alone, it may start making noises, 'talking', to help it to believe that somebody else is in the room. Sometimes the baby makes angry noises in order to feel that if someone in the house is being angry, that at least proves it is not alone.

It seems clear, from what we have heard, that this patient is afraid that if she comes to the analyst often enough – and certainly if she is married and lives very close to a person who is not her – then the analyst or husband will be bound to find out all sorts of things about her. Some of them she wouldn't mind: it is usually felt to be quite respectable to be ill, to have these feelings she has when her husband asks her a question. But suppose she is at a party where there are a lot of nice things to eat and she proceeds to eat as many of those things as possible, that would not be respectable. Similarly she can feel that she has been well brought up, has a home, an income, a husband, and now she wants analysis as well. That also may not seem so respectable; it may seem to be very greedy. That is not a nice idea, either about herself or about the analyst who may equally be very comfortably off and yet be glad to have a particular patient as well.

The analytic situation is a dynamic one and the analyst has to be able to see that dynamic situation which is *always changing*. Consider even the little we have heard about this patient so far; you can see what an enormous number of stories can be worked out in a short space of time. What the analyst has to know is, which story at which time and, if possible, why. What leads this patient to be afraid that she might be accused, if the truth were known, of being very greedy? Another time she might be very afraid that the analyst will say, "You are so ill, you are trembling and shaking so much, that you will have to go into hospital." Indeed, in this respect the patient may feel that it is difficult to know what language to speak, or whether to make clear what she is talking about, because there is no knowing what the analyst, or even her husband, would do if he knew the truth.

It is this dynamic situation which is very badly served by trying to impose upon it a rigid system of psychoanalytic dogma or theory. There is no substitute for what patients and analysts can see and hear for themselves. For a patient to go by hearsay about any particular analyst is dangerous and contrary to *genuine* analytic theory or philosophy. Similarly it is dangerous for an analyst to try to substitute some dogmatic authority or person who has told them how the patient should be treated. That, you can be reasonably sure, is how *not* to treat the patient.

22

Presenter: When I started with this patient four and a half years ago, it was my first analytic case. I saw him five times a week for four years; since I came to live here I have been seeing him twice a day on two days a week. During the whole of the time I have been treating him I have been doubtful whether I would ever be able to become an analyst – he always made me feel very insignificant, and besides my own problems his behaviour confirmed my fears. I want to raise this question: why does this patient make me feel like that?

The motives that brought him to analysis were twofold: he was going to work as a publicity agent – he said he usually destroyed everything he most loved, and this agency was something he had always dreamt of doing all his life; and he had a bad relationship with women.

Bion: How did this patient come to you?

P: Through the Institute of Psychoanalysis.

B: We don't know what he had heard about analysis beforehand, but patients frequently feel that the analyst knows very little about it. You yourself may know that you don't know much about it – it would be very extraordinary if you ever thought that you did. If you ever think that you know much about analysis, you can be reasonably sure that you are deteriorating.

P: Then I am happy!

B: It is often helpful to go to the very thing which obtrudes: if you feel that the patient is able to make you feel guilty or frightened or anxious, that is what you need to investigate.

P: Should I cope with it in my own analysis, or with my patient?

B: There is no reason why you shouldn't take up the point with your own analyst, but I think it is a different matter with the patient.

Wanting to be analysed is a different state of mind from analysing somebody else. The two states may look the same, and if somebody was able to record it, it would sound the same, but they aren't.

There are many people who regard doctors and surgeons as inferior creatures. After all, it is a situation which has a long history; in England barbers were the earliest form of surgeon. You must always be ready to find that patients secretly think they are socially superior to you. There are many different varieties of this; it is only in the analysis that you have a chance of becoming interested in *how* patients manage to make you feel inferior. One could say that surgeons and doctors are relatively respectable; but who are psychoanalysts? Nothing at all. They are the most inferior of all.

P: The patient appears to value psychoanalysts highly: his wife is a psychologist and she is training to be a psychoanalyst; in his publicity agency he uses advertising with a psychological background, and he is very successful with it. Nevertheless none of this appears in the analysis.

B: For whom is he being a publicity agent in the analysis?

P: I don't seem to fulfil any useful function for him. He never gets into real contact with me; he only talks about his publicity agency and how wonderful it is, how well it works. He has a sister who is psychotic and is regularly committed to mental hospitals – she has recently been committed again. At these times he finds I can be helpful – I acquire some function.

B: He can be anxious that you will not be interested in him unless he is a serious case, unless you could say that you have cured a psychotic patient. He can be afraid that you want to use him to show what a good analyst you are. I think this changes all the time: sometimes it will be you wanting to be publicized; sometimes it will be his wife; sometimes it will be himself.

P: Before I moved here I noticed that although he never missed a session he was very punctual in his unpunctuality – he was always twenty minutes late. I tried every way to analyse this but he continued to come twenty minutes late. But since I started a different schedule here he has never been late. At the same time he went into a depression – for the first time.

B: Who does he pay?

P: He pays me directly.

B: Does he pay a reduced fee?

P: He did at first, and I have made adjustments in line with the rate of inflation. Nevertheless he still pays less than any of my other patients. I like him very much; I don't know whether this disturbs the relationship.

M: Perhaps he doesn't feel entitled to use the whole session because he pays a low fee.

B: I think that is right. It is one way of paying for the session: "I may not pay the full fee, but then I don't have a full session, so it's all right." I think he feels guilty about this.

P: He was breast-fed until he was five years old, not because the mother had enough milk for him alone, but because the two sisters born after him were not breast-fed – the first died and the second is the psychotic I mentioned before. There is a third sister, the youngest, who was breast-fed.

B: The other members of the family are not getting any analysis, so he is the only one who is favoured. I think he can be afraid of what he will have to pay for this favoured treatment. There are two possibilities: one is to be a good publicity agent for you; the other is to knock off twenty minutes from the session or get depressed. But there is another possibility; he might have to go into a mental hospital like his sister.

P: He is the only successful member of the family. He enjoys the situation but feels uncomfortable about it, so he doesn't enter into any close personal relationships with members of his family. He has an enormous number of friends and is always together with groups of them.

B: It seems to me that there is anxiety here about being the favoured patient and the greediest patient who takes everybody's fees, everybody's analysis. So he gets the analysis – the good breast feeding – which the other siblings do not.

P: He is the first patient in the morning – the first to be fed!

M: Superficially he gives things to others through the publicity agency, but he doesn't actually give anything to the family.

B: Yes, there is a great deal of greed and meanness about it.

M: One of his reasons for coming to analysis was the fact that he had difficulties in relationships with women. I see a parallel between this and his relationship with the analyst.

B: I think that when he says he can't have a relationship with women, it isn't really true; the real truth is that he cannot relate to

anybody. It sounds more plausible to say his difficulty is with women. A patient who says he is a homosexual isn't fond of men – he hates them. The real difficulty with a patient of that kind is that he hates people.

Anybody can be married – there is no difficulty about that. Then he can say to the whole world, like a publicity agent, "Look! I'm married; I'm just like a normal man; I'm just like a father who loves his wife and children. Look at my family!" I certainly think he wants the analyst to fall in with that and help show what a good man and husband and father he is.

P: I feel that his relationship with himself is a publicized one, not internalized. Therefore he can't have relationships with other people.

B: Yes. He doesn't mind about his wife, children, psychotic sister; what he minds about is that they can be used for purposes of showing what a good man he is. In other words, the wife and children are not loved – they are simply used for purposes of loving himself.

P: At the beginning of the analysis he had a serious problem with hypertension which improved later although it had not responded to medical attention. I discovered later that he was taking appetite depressant pills as a stimulant.

B: I think that he feels he has a very hostile object inside him which he covers up with all this publicity and family affairs in order that he cannot look inside himself and see what this very bad thing is which he calls 'hypertension'.

M: Would the adipose tissue be a way of holding on to the bad object?

B: It could be. In the meantime he attacks this bad thing inside him: he throws amphetamines at it, he throws food down his gullet so as to hit it, to kill it; he tries to starve it out of existence. Whatever he does, this bad thing which is felt to be a bad part of himself might just as well be somebody else because he has no control over it. He is only a sort of publicity agent: it is his business to look nice, to act as a disguise or cover for this bad thing inside him which is greedy, violent and hostile.

P: He says he is better. I notice that he is thinner.

B: That is what his *physical* appearance tells you. But that is on the outside – like this adiposity. His fear is of what you might tell him; indeed, there is always the risk of what an intuitive wife, son or daughter might tell him. Coming for analysis, or even having a

family, is taking a great risk – the risk of being found out. I would be extremely suspicious about the nature of the improvement, of its always being a part of the publicity, of his wishing to get you to agree with it.

23

Presenter: The patient is a man of thirty, a child psychotherapist. When he came to me he had had four years of previous analysis. At the age of fifteen he had experienced a religious crisis. At that time he had eight months' psychotherapy with a Jungian priest. He is the oldest of six children – four boys and two girls. When he was eleven he seduced his nine-year-old sister; he appears to link that experience with one of a homosexual nature with a cousin of seventeen when he was fourteen, and a second experience with an employee of his father's, aged twenty. During his medical training he had a three-year homosexual relationship which ended violently. He chooses handsome men of good education, and psychiatrists like himself, with whom to have homosexual relationships. Apparently these relationships consist of oral and physical contact, but are without orgasm. It is not clear whether he has engaged in fellatio. The partner has to be young and married; he tries to seduce the young husband by behaving in an intellectual way.

In every session he says, "I had a dream."

Bion: Whose idea was it that he should tell you these dreams?

P: He is psychoanalytically oriented; he makes interpretations and wants to control me.

B: Such a patient as this thinks he knows what the analyst would like, and since analysts like dreams he will give the analyst dreams. It is one thing to be told dreams if that is the quickest and easiest way in which the patient can talk to the analyst – dreams are very useful if there is nothing better – but does he tell you these dreams because it is such a useful way of informing you of something you cannot know, or does he tell them because he thinks you would like to be

told dreams? What is his motive? Is he mentioning them in order to seduce you, or because it is the best way of talking?

P: He has difficulty in relating to me – except homosexually. It seems that the dreams are used to communicate something he cannot contain because when material comes into the session that he cannot contain he weeps.

B: One of the striking things about this is that he is in fact very frightened of sex; he is frightened that you might have some sexual relationship with him, and he is frightened therefore of having any relationship with you, whether you are a man or a woman.

P: This is one of the dreams he told me: "I was with a group of people who were soccer players. I was a press reporter and found myself with Pele. He was in front of me and I crouched down close to him and had oral sex with him. I fought against the relationship. I had an ejaculation in the dream. When I woke up I remembered that my little brother had a great admiration for Pele." His brother, whom he admired very much, was a good soccer player but the patient was never able to emulate him. On the other hand, he had a poor opinion of his father who had been an immigrant, worked as a pastry cook, and was alcoholic. The patient suffered greatly during boyhood because he was never sure who would take care of him. They had no money to pay the rent or buy food; they had to ask for help from the mother's family. My interpretation of the dream was that he was trying to establish the same relationship with me that he had with Pele, trying to absorb something valuable from me. He assumes the role of the wife of the one he loves.

B: I think the trouble is that as soon as he wants the feminine role, he becomes afraid of it and wants the masculine role; when he has the masculine role, he is afraid of that and wants the feminine role – and so it goes on. In short, he wants some assistance from you but doesn't know how to get it; he is afraid of you, whatever you are. In so far as you are the mother, there is the fear of needing to have a relationship with you, or you as the mother's breast. But then he is anxious about the intercourse in which the breast would penetrate his mouth. As the baby he is anxious to be able to walk; he wants to get about by himself; he would like to have feet like Pele because then he could be a wonderful athlete, but it's no good – he can't be Pele the Athlete.

There is yet another difficulty: in so far as he *wants* to do what his mother wishes, he also has to *do* something. One of the earliest things he has to do is to evacuate his bowels. That is made easier if he finds he gets sexual pleasure out of passing faeces through his anus so that he has a sexual feeling with this black object which is inside him. For a while that solves the problem of the sexual relationship which is partly with his mother who wants him to evacuate his bowels, but partly with this bad thing inside him of which he is frightened. So this is another failure.

In the next phase he tries to have a sexual relationship with his sister; he tries to be just like the father and mother. There's nothing particularly dangerous about having sexual relationships with a sister. Why it is discouraged and why it is not thought to be 'normal' is because children who try to do that are sure to fail, and the form that the failure takes is that they find there is no pleasure in it. All they learn is that they can't have sexual intercourse, and that since there is no pleasure in it there is nothing to look forward to. The boy also probably learns that something frightening has happened to the girl's penis. So the lesson that is learnt from this premature sexual marriage is learnt at an impressionable age and is very difficult to unlearn. As a result the boy doesn't want to see the girl's genital if he can help it – it is too frightening, it is not pleasurable, it is not sexually exciting, there is no advantage in having such a relationship. So he is as far away as ever from a happy sexual life.

P: I forgot to mention earlier that he despises women because they don't have penises.

B: He can also despise himself because he has no breasts. Next, he tries a brother. (I don't think it's one after the other at all; all these things probably happen in any order.)

P: He used to sleep with his brother. Because he suffered from enuresis he had to wear a diaper in order not to wet his brother, and although he was older than his brother, his brother had to help him change his clothes.

B: The relationship with the brother is also awkward. If he tries to feed from the brother by taking the penis into his mouth, he doesn't get good milk out of it; if he tries to feed his brother he can't feed him with good milk – only urine.

So: the mother is no good; emptying his bowels is no good; trying to walk is no good; trying to have a sexual relationship with a

sister is no good; trying to have a sexual relationship with a brother is no good; trying to feed a brother is no good; trying to be fed at the penis is no good. They are *all* failures, one after another. By the time this boy enters the latency period everything is a failure, everything without exception. He has no feelings at all, or if he has any feelings they are depressed.

Then he goes to see a psychoanalyst. What is the good of that? Everything has always failed and the analyst only talks. So he tries another psychoanalyst. What happens then? Another failure – he knows it is bound to be no good. So he goes to a third analyst. But more and more analysts are not going to be any better – they are all as bad as each other; they just talk. How is a patient like this possibly to believe that verbal intercourse could be the slightest use? One could say that he would have to be stupid or in a very bad way to believe that it is any good at all. In other words, he has learnt, thoroughly learnt, at a very impressionable age, that *any* relationship is no good. It is no good at the breast – something has gone wrong; it's no good at the other end of the alimentary canal – the anus is no good either; it's no good with a sister; it's no good with a brother; it's no good with a penis; it's no good with a vagina; it's no good with the mouth. There is only one thing which stands between him and death, and that is analysis. Suppose there is some truth in this idea about dreams – this would make it slightly hopeful. If he talks about dreams, perhaps you will say or do something that will save him. It is such a very faint hope that it is almost like fooling himself. All you have to go on is these dreams; and all *he* can believe in is the hope that it isn't all nonsense.

You are dealing with a very dangerous situation; at any time this patient may simply be overwhelmed by despair or resentment or hatred, and kill himself. Although he may not know how dangerous the situation is, you do – so much so that you can almost be afraid of giving an interpretation.

P: I do have great difficulty in giving him interpretations.

B: Yes, there is such a mass of things to deal with that it is hard to know which one to choose. I think my inclination would be to try to bring out into the open the fact that he does not believe in psychoanalysis or in you, because he thinks it very unlikely that he will be cured or helped in any way. Indeed, how did he manage to come at all? I would try to uncover this fundamental hopelessness and

despair for one thing, but underneath that, his hatred and resentment of this hopeless situation. There is always the fear that he will either do nothing at all, or break out and murder somebody – and the one person who is always available is himself.

The central problem is: how can you find a chance of drawing his attention to the fact that it is very difficult for him to come to you without believing that he is fooling himself or fooling you? In other words, he is feeling that he has to depend on a lie.

P: In order to deny the depth of his distress he said, "I am lying to you." He wept, then said of his homosexuality, "I can't explain it; it is a compulsion. I can't keep it inside myself." When he leaves his sessions he goes to look for a partner.

B: I think I would say to him, "It is true, what you say, but I think it feels as if this bad sexual partner which you call 'homosexual', but which really means bad sex, is something inside which you feel is you, but it might just as well be somebody else." This bad thing inside is felt to be determined to have a sexual life, so it uses him, his mouth, his penis, his anus, in order to do so. And he has to have an intercourse with whatever this thing inside him insists on – anything; it doesn't mind what. But he feels that this same object has forced him to come to analysis whether he wants it or not. So he is frightened by a situation in which all of him is false: he doesn't want an analysis; he doesn't want sexual intercourse; he doesn't want *any* intercourse, not even a conversational one. But this thing inside him is determined to burst out and have an intercourse, using him to have it with.

24

Presenter: I would like to raise a point about a patient who has been in treatment with me for a year: whenever she makes any progress she becomes quarrelsome. This session took place last Monday. She arrived very happily saying, as she came into the room, "Now you must explain to me why I was so happy after Friday's session, and why I am happy now." In fact the Friday session had not been a happy one; she had mentioned suicide and the fear that she was going to die of a heart attack. She said, "I don't understand what you say to me; you don't even talk to me. However did I manage to get better?" She lay down on the couch and said, "You don't need to be so nervous and so tense. Why are you making noises with your fingers?" I pointed out that she couldn't accept the idea that she could get better just by talking.

Bion: I suspect she is setting a kind of trap in order to find out what you think. I would be inclined to say something of this sort: "What you have just told me I could not possibly know unless you had told me. I am assuming that you are speaking the truth, otherwise we should have to consider why you tell me lies. As it is, you have drawn my attention to a mystery – you are feeling better when there is no known cause for it. We can now continue the discussion of this extraordinary problem." That doesn't commit you to saying that you or analysis cures people – I think that is nonsense. Certain people do seem to be able to make use of analytic sessions in such a way that they become more capable of working, more socially acceptable. But why that is so I don't know. The only *fact* I know is that when I have given an interpretation, I have either been wrong – which doesn't matter – or I have drawn attention to what, in my opinion, is already there. I wouldn't say that to the patient, but nor would I allow her to

manoeuvre me into a situation where I am agreeing that I have cured her or made her feel better. One could say, "Assuming that you are right about this, you ought to know how you feel, and therefore we assume that you feel much better. But so far we have heard nothing about why."

P: I tried to draw her attention to the fact that she always wants explanations and that she herself didn't know what happened to her between Friday and Monday. She said, "If I were to give explanations, I would suddenly get worse. My husband said, 'You were feeling so ill, and now you seem so much better. Dr X must be a very good analyst to have achieved that.' And I said, 'I don't even know how it happened, because he doesn't talk to me."

B: So if she is better it must have something to do with not talking.

P: She again said I was very tense. Then she complained that I was very hard with her. "If you don't give me any explanations I shall certainly get worse." I said I thought she was afraid that, since she was feeling so well, she had robbed me of something good.

B: How is it that you have become so 'tense'? It might still be the same answer: if she has taken a cure away from you, that would explain why you have no cure left. I think there is a suspicion that when two people come together they can't both benefit, either because it is 'only' analysis which is 'just talk', or because she will have to take something away from you, or you will have to take something away from her.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO PANEL DISCUSSIONS: BRASILIA, A NEW EXPERIENCE

1975

I find myself in a peculiar position because in some sense I must know less about this matter than any member of the audience. But in so far as I have concerned myself with an attempt to understand the way in which human character develops, I feel that it gives me a chance to contribute more to that particular way of looking at things. I am reminded of the fact that apparently the idea of Brasilia was formulated at least as long ago as 1820. The curious thing is that it then seemed to disappear, but we who are able to come to it one hundred and fifty years later can all look around us and see this extraordinary edifice which developed out of an idea. It is very puzzling to know why or how it developed at that particular date. One could say that perhaps the time was ripe for it; there were people who had studied architecture, the foundations essential for any particular building, and indeed of this city. This point may seem obvious, but when an idea is transformed into action it is as if the action commits the people who think like that to an irreversible course. If it were possible to look at this city and guess at a sort of reconstruction of the original idea, it could hardly be put more clearly than in the language used by one of the English poets. I refer to the *Areopagitica,* and in particular to one passage in which Milton says, "I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation." The remarkable thing is that that idea appears to be able to transform itself into actions. I have heard it said that another poet, Shakespeare, is the person who was really responsible for giving his people the idea of what they might become. How do these poets come to formulate ideas in a way which makes them fertile? If we could turn back the pages of time we might be able to see the primitive people who wanted to find some way of settling here. But it didn't have any marked effect because it seems that a very long time had

to elapse between the wish of those people, and the coming of others who were able to translate those ideas into action. Somebody must be able to sow a mental seed which is capable of germination. That is why the poets, philosophers and mathematicians are so important; they make it possible for an idea to become an action. Kant once said that intuition without a concept is blind, and a concept without intuition is empty. That phrase is particularly wide-ranging; it is one of these statements which, like a seed, germinates and turns into some kind of tree or forest.

To come now to something more immediate and practical: it doesn't matter very much what members of a panel think, but it *is* important if it starts sprouts of thought all over the place. This sounds simple, but in my experience it is not; in my experience these ideas can be stamped out before they have had a chance to develop. It would be nice to think that groups of people will form and devote themselves to the development of some idea which they have heard expressed during one of these meetings.

Milton, in the passage I quoted, talks about the eagle "kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam". Can somebody living in this city, maybe in this very meeting, dare to kindle their undazzled eyes in the full midday beam? This idea is very old: in the *Mahabharata* (that part of it which is the *Bhagavad Gita*) Arjuna presses Krishna to reveal himself. Krishna agrees to do so with the result that Arjuna is blinded by the spectacle, but he survives. Is this significant, since it was written so many hundreds of years ago? By itself perhaps not, but it seems to be something which people in all ages have experienced. The religious mystics like Meister Eckhart, poets like Dante, and many others, had the same experience although they were separated by hundreds of years, by nationality, by race, and by language. So I think that you, the inhabitants of Brasilia, need to realize that this may kindle a candle which will shine through the world's prevalent darkness. I am not suggesting that this can be done only by psychoanalysts or poets or philosophers, but between them all they may be able to light a flame which illuminates the darkness of man's mind. I think we are more aware nowadays of the darkness; we do not quite so easily see everything in a rosy glow of optimism. But we must not allow the shadows and the shades to crowd in and destroy that small flicker of civilization which springs up here and there into a

supernova illuminating the darkness of the universes of galaxies. The situation is clearly serious and urgent. In fact the progress of science may have developed greatly out of proportion to the development of the humanities. This does not mean that it can be dealt with by putting an end to science. But nor can it be dealt with by putting an end to any of the other activities of the human mind. This is why the governors of states, of communities, are such important people; they can give the arts, sciences, and what one sometimes rather vaguely calls 'religion', a chance to develop – not simply to become a dead, undeveloping aspect of the mind which then decays, leaving a gap where some important aspect of the human mind ought to be.

* * *

The idea of Brasilia has been successfully turned into marble and stone so that there is a habitation for the people of the city. What is not so clear is how this city is to be adequately and appropriately inhabited, not only now, not only in the past, but also in the future. The fate of Brasilia, and probably the fate of Brazil, is being settled *now*, not by the housing of the population – all that the architects can do is to make it available – but by every single one of the inhabitants. There is no difficulty at all in individuals having a family, but those individuals have to make preparations long before that, long before birth – and long after it. It is not enough for *this* generation to be occupying Brasilia now; it also has to occupy it in such a way that something is left which will make it an even better place for future generations to inhabit. The spirit of a nation is very difficult to comprehend: we talk about these things and then tend to think that, because we have given them names, they therefore exist, that there is no need to do anything else. But nobody can opt out of 'naming' the present Brasilia and the future one – everybody is drawn into it, thereby starting a chain reaction.

Psychoanalysts have to do a great deal of work in order to be able to express an opinion of what constitutes the mental food that will propagate or make possible mental growth. This is the kind of thing which libraries have done from the beginning of time. But libraries from the beginning of time have also been burned down because they are such a terrible irritant; people hate having their thoughts stirred up. So a nation has to rely on individuals who dare to have ideas *and*

who dare to propagate them. And governments have to dare to make it possible for universities, libraries, the arts, to flourish. None of us here would have much difficulty in recalling situations in which the development of independent thought, whether scientific or artistic, has aroused powerful, destructive forces. Whether that happens here is being settled now; it is being settled by the fact that the government is apparently prepared to give assistance to the thinkers amongst this population. That is the most hopeful sign in a world in which there isn't a great deal of ground for hope.

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Anything can be done with psychoanalytic terms – as I have good reason to know. I haven't noticed any particular lack of bigotry, intolerance and ignorance amongst my colleagues or myself. All one can do is to be vigilant and aware of the danger of assuming that a self-imposed characteristic may not have much to do with the truth. All sorts of people call themselves enlightened, or make excursions and experiments into the sphere of human activity, without apparently being touched by these same discoveries themselves. There is a sad passage in the biography of Max Planck: he said, of his difficulties when trying to elaborate quantum mechanics, "This experience gave me an opportunity to learn a fact – a remarkable fact in my opinion – that a new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it." So the last thing I would want to suggest here is that psychoanalysts are in any way exempted from the characteristics of the rest of the human race. We ought to know something about ourselves, and indeed we attempt to do so; it is one of our rules of training that students should themselves get analysed. I am sorry to say that, even so, it in no way precludes the possibility of the analyst being narrow-minded and intolerant. So I don't think that the spread of psychoanalytic theories is going to solve this problem. Why is it that one person is capable of tolerance, compassion, concern or respect for his fellows, and another isn't? I don't know. No amount of labels that he can collect and wear really affects this point. It is very sad.

A mathematician *is* able to prove a lot of things. Newton, for example, told Halley that it was obvious how the movement of the planets was governed. When Halley asked, "Can you prove it?",

Newton replied, "Give me two or three days and I certainly will." The 'poet' Newton made the discovery; the 'mathematician' Newton proved it.

We don't seem to be able to grow or develop to order, but we can find plenty of ways by which we prove that what we do is right – it is a curious aspect of the creative human being. One would like to achieve the kind of thought which might make it possible not to be deceived in that way. So even those few people who are disposed to explore the possibilities of psychoanalysis have a great deal to do; it cannot be assumed that it is a subject which has been settled, that it stopped at Freud in the way that the waves of the ocean might stop at the feet of Canute. The world of reality does not conform to the capacities of human beings; that is why it is so important that scientists and others – all of us – should have some respect for reality, and should not allow ourselves to distort our view of it.

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There are limits to what can be done in the way of building a city which will reflect Brasilia. Is it a distorting mirror that clutters the inhabitants? Or is it a mirror that shows the inhabitants the faults and dangers which beset them? I am aware that if you are going to build a city, then you have to stick to certain disciplines and rules of building. But I don't know what rules of building you would stick to if you were going to create a city which reflected the personality or spirit of a people. Saint Augustine tried to do it with *The City of God*, which had a profound effect. In some ways it ushered in a dynamic philosophy and a dynamic psychology, not one which was so rigid or so clear-cut as the Platonic philosophy.

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I am often reminded of the quotation, *si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*[1] Does anyone here want a monument? Certainly we can see one if we look around, but that is not what Brasilia is: it is a great city and it is waiting for somebody to come and live in it. People who complain that Brasilia is empty are really talking nonsense. It is supposed to be available for the people who are sufficiently great to live

[1]Inscription over the interior of the North Door in St Paul's Cathedral, London; attributed to the son of Sir Christopher Wren.

in such an edifice. It is not a monument to the past: it is an aspiration to the future – or so it seems to me.

We are not concerned with the *building* of this city; we are concerned with *living* in it. How are the inhabitants to grow up and go through the tribulations which appear to be inescapable? Milton, in *Paradise Lost,* describes his long sojourn in the Stygian pool, this frightening, dark descent, and "up to re-ascend though hard and rare". I don't think anyone can escape this. The only thing wrong with the magnificence of this city is that it might mislead people into thinking that they have nothing to do except just live in it, but they have to go through these painful spiritual, mental experiences of loneliness, anxiety, fear about the outcome. I don't see how there will ever be a population of this capital city fit for the problems which the future holds for the human race. They seem to me to be dark and threatening, and I don't think that any looking to the past is going to help except as a warning of what mistakes to avoid.

I cannot say how this is to be done – I don't think any of us can. Nothing short of hard work and thinking is going to solve that problem. Those in the university will have to work very hard indeed, much harder than getting through examinations and qualifying – that is a trifle. The real trouble starts after they are qualified, after they have grown up.

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A psychoanalyst should not be particularly disturbed because patients cannot stand analysis, and leave. Some will think better of it later on, and come back knowing a bit more about it and trying to make some use of it. I don't think that the analyst should produce some form of simplified analysis for people who can't tolerate it; nor do I think that the authorities of Brasilia should try to adapt the shape of Brasilia to suit the people who can't put up with it as it is. By all means be open to criticism, but it would be a great mistake to allow the critics to dominate the situation and to degrade the standards of Brasilia because it is too magnificent, too much for them, beyond the capacity – as they see it – of the nation. It may be, like analysis, beyond the capacity of some people who discover that it is an unpleasant and harsh discipline. But it is not going to be improved by making the discipline less.

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Certain people have undergone the severe discipline of engineering, or architectural, or mathematical training. I am not sure that if they had been asked why they were undergoing that discipline – say twenty years ago – they would have been able to give a particularly convincing answer. They could have answered in terms of their discipline – that they were going to be architects, engineers or mathematicians – but *now* we can have a strong suspicion that what they were all 'up to' was building a city. The kind of training that I have had leads me to consider a particular aspect of the facts with which I am confronted at any given time. But what I am stimulated to express, to formulate, may have very little to do with the ostensible reason for the stimulation. So when I see this extraordinary manifestation, the effect it creates on me is to make me feel that behind it there is an invitation and something which is responsible for that invitation – a reality which I would call 'the spirit of the Brazilian people'. It is an inadequate phrase, but I don't feel quite so dissatisfied with the idea that it is an 'invitation' as I do with any other formulation that I can think of, such as that it is a 'challenge'.

I suspect any invitation of having a fleeting nature. It may be difficult to see it, or hear it, or interpret it, and every individual will hear a different interpretation and a different invitation. It doesn't surprise me in the least that a great number of people dislike the invitation very much because of the suspicion that if it is accepted they will all be participants in having to fulfil a promise. That is a fate of which most people are frightened; it is subscribing to saying either 'yes' or 'no' to the invitation to participate or cooperate in a creative activity. What creative activity? Nobody tells us that; nobody knows what the response will be to that invitation. I would say that it looks like an invitation to greatness. What a nasty prospect that is! One feels like saying, "What, me? What, us? *We* have to be great?" It is so much simpler to say that we have a previous engagement and choose not to accept the invitation. But in this curious mental world that so fascinates me, there is no such thing as doing nothing – doing nothing is a response; it is a sort of acceptance of the invitation. There are no negatives in this world; every formulation is in fact a positive acceptance whether we like it or not.

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One of the great difficulties in trying to assess what has happened in Brasilia is that we have to consider it *while it is still going on.* I suspect

that the city itself, in the way that it has come into being, is the visible part of an upheaval, an outburst of mental turbulence – rather like the kind of thing Leonardo often formulated in his Notebooks with his drawings of hair and water. He was aware of a state of mind which is by no means rare and which repeats itself over and over again; he could attempt to 'put a line round it'. There can be a conjunction of a whole number of people – a family, a professional family, a nation – and as an outcome of that coming together there is an emotional explosion. In some respects the same people who are responsible for participating in that turmoil are the victims of the same turmoil. It is like trying to make up your mind what it is that has hit you while you are being hit; it is still more difficult to do while you are not being hit, for then you don't know much about what you are supposed to be investigating or feel impelled to investigate. While the turmoil is in progress, however, there is plenty of evidence that it is difficult to assess that evidence. I am reminded of the statement that it is not difficult to be a *successful* general, but a *good* general has to be able to think while he is being fired at and bombed and shelled; he doesn't have to be very intelligent, but he has to be durable. The same is true of a nation which suddenly finds that its own collection of people has produced a city. In Milton's words, "Methinks I see in my mind a mighty and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks." I don't think any of us much like being a part of this mind that sees that kind of upheaval taking place. We wish that the strong man rousing from sleep would be so good as to go to sleep again instead of bothering us by tossing about and giving *us* bad dreams.

I say 'bad dreams' because it is impossible to participate in this kind of upheaval without having bad dreams. From the little that I know about history and the way in which minds, personalities and characters develop, it seems to me most unlikely that the people who are affected by Brasilia are going to have a nice time. They will have to do some thinking in these superficially comfortable circumstances which are not emotionally comfortable at all. Outwardly it is seductively simple, but anybody who is sensitive to the emotional experience is in for a very uncomfortable and unpleasant time – although as with some nightmares and dreams, they can apparently be turned to good account.

SÃO PAULO

1978

1

Presenter: The patient, an economist, is thirty-eight years old and has been in analysis with me for almost a year. He and his sister were sent, as children, to live with the grandparents because the parents decided to devote all their attention to the brother who is mentally deficient. The patient refers to himself as "an orphan with living parents". His physical appearance is good; he is well-mannered and is punctual. I have the impression that his contact with me has some ritualistic aspects.

Bion: What part of his behaviour seems to be symptomatic of a ritual?

P: His walk is rather mechanical; the way he walks to the couch and lies down seems like a well-finished product of something. I notice it also in the way his first phrases are constructed at the beginning of the session. For example, he breathes in deeply and then always says, "Very well, Doctor", and he uses certain expressions such as, "I have brought you some dreams today", or "I want to believe that we are going to work well today."

B: Why does he say they are dreams?

P: He simply tells me so.

B: It is one of these words which are so commonly used that people think they know what dreams are and speak about them without question. On what grounds do we say that the patient had a dream? And what strikes you about the patient's statement that he had a dream?

Member: I would first ask myself why he starts telling me that he had a dream.

B: Yes, it is an important question. We do not ordinarily say to a stranger, "I had a dream." So why does the patient come to see a

psychoanalyst and say he had a dream? I can imagine myself saying to a patient, "Where were you last night? What did you see?" If the patient told me he didn't see anything – he just went to bed – I would say, "Well, I still want to know where you went and what you saw." If the patient said, "Ah, well, I had a dream", then I would want to know why he says it was a dream.

P: I get the impression that when he says he had a dream, he wants to let me know that he has something very important to say and that I am going to be interested in it.

B: That I can understand, but when he says that, he is awake and 'conscious', as we call it. So – both the patient and you are in the same state of mind, and that is not the same state of mind as you or he are in when asleep. He is inviting you and himself to be prejudiced in favour of a state of mind in which we are when awake.

P: He has been taking his holidays either before or after mine. In the first session after his last holiday he apologized for forgetting to send me a cheque for his fees. Then he said he had forgotten to apologize because he was so busy during his vacation.

B: These are the problems this raises in my mind. I have already asked one question: why does he say he had a dream? I'll ask another: why does he say he is an economist? If he is an economist, why does he say he has forgotten to pay his account? Aren't economists supposed to know about accounts? This is a peculiar story: it doesn't fit together; these bits of news don't harmonize. Perhaps he thinks that psychoanalysis is a kind of religion and that analysts follow a ritual of three-times-a-week, four-times-a-week, five-times-a-week at such-and-such hours; and that if the ritual of the psychoanalytic religion is properly carried out, then the patient will end up cured. I would like to hear some more about this peculiar state of affairs.

P: I suggested that he was too preoccupied with himself to remember the account. Then he said that he was not worried or concerned about himself; the most important people for him were his wife and children.

B: This is again very peculiar. He says he isn't worried about himself; the only things that worry him are what I call 'facts'. As I understand that, 'facts' are things you can't do anything about. If there is something wrong with the patient, then I can understand that he might try to discuss it. But if there is nothing troubling him – and we know there isn't because he has said so – then these 'facts' are

nothing to do with us; we can't do anything about his wife and children, and we can do nothing about him because he's all right. So why does he come to you?

If you agree with me that we can't do anything about these 'facts', then what do we think we are doing? We could say that we might try analysing him, but if he has no worries about himself what are we supposed to do? Who or what does he think the analyst is? Does he think you are a surgeon? A physician? A priest? An economist? An industrialist? Does he think your business is collecting money from him? And if so, why has he forgotten to bring the money? I think I might say, "If what you say is right, I wonder why you have come to me. There must be some reason why you are spending time and money to come and see me. Can you tell me what you think I am, or what I do?"

P: It occurs to me that he thinks of himself as the analyst. The times which are productive and in which both of us can work are those when he becomes very upset, says I have confused him and he cannot put what I have told him into any category.

B: Why go to somebody who treats you like that? Why spend time and money on someone who 'confuses' you?

P: He frequently says that he comes to me because he thinks that I have something good to give him. But he feels he has to take possession of the ingredients of my life; he wants to know how I reach an idea.

B: I would be inclined to say, "I thought you said you are an economist. You seem to be behaving as if you are a psychiatrist or a psychoanalyst." What makes him think that you have anything valuable that you would want to part with, or that he would want to get?

P: He came to me after a former 'psychoanalysis'. In that so-called psychoanalytic treatment he conducted every session, and his 'analyst' was supposed to agree or disagree with what he said. He was therefore very shocked to find that I did not conduct the analysis in that way. He said that with the previous analyst he had known everything about himself but nevertheless still felt very distressed. With me he didn't know anything about himself or about me, but in spite of this he felt better – he thought I must be some kind of witch. When he first came to me he brought his 'psychodiagnosis' – his 'oedipal situation' and his 'mechanisms of defence' – and wanted to discuss it with me.

B: What an extraordinary story! Can he say what an 'oedipal situation' is? And what have 'oedipal situations' to do with psychoanalysis? It is an important question because it is the kind of thing we are liable to have said to us. People learn, if they are clever enough, to read books about 'oedipal situations', 'dreams', 'interpretations', and so on and so forth. And indeed they sound *just like* psychoanalysts or psychiatrists. But when these people who sound so knowledgeable and who use all the 'correct' terms – 'father figure', 'mother figure', 'oedipal situation', the whole psychoanalytic rubbish bin – are actually confronted by a psychoanalytic experience, they show great fear; the person who is so knowledgeable, knows all about it, becomes 'confused'; the mind which is so wonderful, cured, simply disintegrates.

One could say to this patient, "Why, when we are using – as far as I know – ordinary articulate speech, should you become confused? Suppose I am the patient that you, with all your psychoanalytic knowledge, are going to cure: why do you get confused? Either you have made a mistake in thinking that you know all about it, or you shouldn't be a psychoanalyst. You ought to take up something like economics; you shouldn't be coming to analyse me."

In the practice of analysis such a patient, who is apparently wide awake, sensible, rational, well-qualified, cannot stand the strain of being an analyst. Nowadays there is a chance that all of us will get more patients like this – patients who know *all* about psychoanalysis and are much superior to us poor analysts.

2

Presenter: The patient I am going to talk about is one with whom I have great difficulties. He suffers terribly during the sessions and shows his suffering physically – he sneezes, moans, sighs. He gets very desperate. And I always feel that I fail to understand what is happening.

Bion: What does he talk about when he behaves like that?

P: Very often he doesn't talk; he puts his head in his hands and says, "Oh, my God!" In yesterday's session he looked at me when he came in and smiled with a happy expression – this often happens – and then lay down. There was a long silence of ten minutes and during that time I tried to watch him.

B: When do you think the session starts? Are you waiting for him in the consulting room?

P: No, I fetch him from the waiting room.

B: How does the session end?

P: I say the time is up. I get up and he goes out. Often, after a very bad session, he looks at me, smiling, and goes out happily.

B: And you go out with him?

P: No, except once three days ago when the lights went out and I had to go with him with a candle.

B: Some patients want to prolong the session; when they stand up to leave they go on talking. I don't like giving interpretations then because that lengthens the sessions more and more – like a prolonged good-bye. So when I have said the session is over, I stop.

P: He once complained that he is the one who has to start talking in the session.

B: That is his misfortune. He might complain that the session

ends when he has a lot more to say and hasn't had a chance of saying it. Whatever you do, there are disadvantages.

P: After ten minutes' silence he started talking. He said that when he was coming up the stairs to my consulting room, and in his house earlier, he felt sure that he was going to fight with me. But when he arrived he felt relieved. "But now", he said, "I want to send you to hell – I don't know why."

B: What is your impression of this? I would like you to imagine that you are seeing the patient for the first time. Do you want to take him on or not?

P: I am doubtful that I would continue with him; I might suggest another analyst.

B: In a way every session is the first because people change: the two-hundredth session is still the first, but you are now prejudiced by what you have seen in the previous one hundred and ninety-nine. By then *you* may be sighing but he may not. This "Oh, my God!" is a state of mind. Whose state of mind is it? Who is feeling like that? Is it the patient? Or the analyst at seeing him again? Or is it his mother or father? Or is it what you are *going* to feel like? In other words, what are you looking at – a historian or a prophet? Is this a person who is writing with his body about past events? Or times to come?

P: He once said, "I feel you can't stand me."

B: You could say, "I think you are feeling that you are not taken in by the fact that I behave in a polite and civilized manner; that if I were sincere and honest, I would be feeling and acting in the way you suggest."

P: He continued, "I think you want to say, 'It's no good; go and look for another kind of therapy; analysis is not for you.'" I felt he wanted me to send him away.

B: This may be a reminiscence, something his mother felt – too tired to deal with such a troublesome boy always requiring attention, always expecting to be loved and wanted. Perhaps he had a brother or sister who also got tired of playing with him; or a girl-friend who didn't want to marry him. Similarly it may be that his analyst does not want to go on with the analysis when he wants to have more; or he doesn't want an analysis with this analyst but with a 'better' one. Or he may feel, "No, this can't come to anything because I don't want to marry this analyst – I have somebody else in mind." In any case the

analysis cannot end happily; patients don't 'live happily ever after' with their analysts.

These are just a few possible stories: which one shall we tell him? There are two people in the room – who is going to get tired of the other one first? And what is the game that is being played? When the number of choices is considerable, you can see that the chances of choosing the right one are loaded against you. You don't know whether to choose in terms of past history, or present, or future.

P: He was engaged to be married some years ago but broke it off. He does the same with his professional life. He is always changing jobs, always changing his choice of career. He was a surgeon; he left surgery to get scholarships in Europe where he spent three years. When he came back he worked in laboratory research. During the six months before starting analysis he changed jobs three times, dismissed from at least one of them for inefficiency. I don't know what he is doing now – the information I get is very vague and confused – except that he is taking a course in philosophy.

B: Now the situation gets a bit clearer. It is not simply a question of choosing his doctor, analyst, wife, father or mother; it is also a question of choosing his profession. But things are just the same; he has always been unfaithful to his chosen profession and has tried another. But the new one is no better than the old. Sooner or later he is saying, "My God, this laboratory!" Or, "My God, this medicine!" Or, "My God, this philosophy!" Or, "My God, this analysis!" At present he is doing all those things – he is confused and is saying, "Take all this rubbish and choose the best one from it." When he sighs, he is evacuating flatus; and when he talks, he is evacuating ideas.

P: Yesterday I asked him if he had ever considered that he has a head to use for thinking, not as a bowel or intestine full of shit. He said, "I'm full of shit."

B: He doesn't want to be to blame. So you can choose: a man who is full of care, trouble and worry (which is your fault, and the fault of father, mother, brother, sister, wife and children because they chose him), or a man who smiles and is pleasant, polite and civil (which is again your fault for making him carry this heavy burden of being agreeable and nice whatever he is feeling like). He doesn't want to work or to be cooperative and friendly whether he has a headache or is ill or tired. He could say that if you want to analyse him or marry

him, then you can't complain if you have someone who is tiresome and bad-tempered because he warned you that that is what he is like. His problem is how to avoid being responsible for his own behaviour, and how to find somebody who will take that responsibility.

Consider the ramifications of that: it is even the business of the job itself to be interesting. That is not unreasonable; one would like to choose work that is interesting. So – he tries being a patient; he tries being a baby; he tries being a child; he tries being grown up; he tries being a doctor; he tries – and so forth. But what he is looking for is a job that will be 'interesting'. Contrast that with this point: is it the *job* that has to be interesting? Or does *he* have to be interested in the job? There is a big difference.

P: At the beginning of the analysis he was absolutely convinced that I was in love with him and that I came to the consulting room because I wanted to be with him.

B: But it has to be a particular sort of love. You are exactly the person who would be interested in *him,* who would love *him* – not the person he wants to love. He doesn't want a wife and children he would have to look after; he wants to choose a wife and children who will look after *him.* He wants to choose a job that will look after him and provide him with a living.

When he says that he loves someone, what does he mean? Which *direction* is he talking about? When he loves his food, must the food love his digestive system, do him good? Or does he want to love the food in a way that would make it love his insides, would eat him back again from inside? In other words, he wouldn't mind a meal, but it mustn't give him indigestion or ulcers, or eat *him* up.

P: He often complains that his stomach burns.

B: I expect you have a similar expression in Portuguese as the English one: to be inflamed with love for someone. This love for the partner is like a flame of everlasting fidelity. But it is not the sort of flame that burns up this patient, gives him 'indigestion', or turns into a sort of cancer and starts eating up his insides.

3

Presenter: The patient is a thirty-eight-year-old man who has been in analysis with me for eight years. At the beginning of the session I am describing, he came in smiling as if he felt superior, condescending. Still smiling, he said, "I saw your name in the telephone directory and you are under the heading of General Practitioner." My impression was that this was something which made me inferior, although I didn't understand why this should be so.

Bion: It doesn't matter if you don't understand because the patient has only just started talking. And the previous eight years don't matter because this is a new session and a new patient talking to you. Unfortunately it is also true that he is an old patient; he was the same old patient when he was born – and maybe before then.

When you are observing the patient, you are really observing a live archaeological specimen; buried in the patient is an ancient civilization. The patient says it is quite modern – it is in the telephone directory. But it isn't only in the telephone directory; it is in the 'telephone' which goes back much further. It goes back further than his nervous system – *that* telephonic system which travels from the cerebellum down to the toes.

As with the archaeologist who uses a spade, at a certain point the spade must be put aside and a brush used to remove the mud. This patient is also carrying out an archaeological investigation of you. He doesn't use a spade; he uses his mind and he uses a very blunt instrument – a sense of social superiority. So he can discover that you are one of these inferior people like GPs – very poor class. That keeps him on top – that's fine. But what have *you* uncovered? With his blunt instrument he can make it very difficult for you to think. Nevertheless you don't have to be superior to him; you can go on looking at him,

listening to him, excavating his mind to see what sort of personality he is. He is afraid of what you might bring to light and make clear so that he could see it; he doesn't want this superiority disturbed; he doesn't want you to understand – but he is afraid you are going to.

We all have to be aware that patients are frightened of us. They are afraid because they think we are ignorant, and they are possibly even more afraid that we are not ignorant. This patient is afraid of you for both reasons: you don't know enough to help him, and you know too much to want to help him. And the previous eight years make matters worse; now that you know him better you may not want to go on seeing him; you may not want to help a person like him. The analytic experience is potentially a nasty one both for the analyst and the analysand, although the analyst is more used to it. It is like being at sea: it is just as stormy for both people, but one of them may not be able to stand the storm. Here it is an invisible storm; these are storms of emotion. Psychoanalysing a patient causes an emotional disturbance; sometimes it creates so much emotional disturbance that it is not even confined to the consulting room – the waves spread out to the patient's husband, wife, children or other relatives. So it is not surprising if they also spread to the analyst. It is not possible to be an analyst, any more than a sailor or a soldier, without knowing this turmoil, this storm which is raging. In spite of the apparent calm of this superior person who looks down on the analyst, we know that he is frightened.

When you get far enough to uncover the patient's psychotic capacity he may mobilize his relatives who will want to come to see you. Being afraid that you may uncover what he would call his 'madness', he may want to upset you so that you will stop analysing him.

As you come nearer to what he doesn't want you or anybody to know, he is bound to be upset, and he is bound to want to look calm. In a surgical operation we can anaesthetize the patient: in an analytic operation we cannot. On the contrary, we make him aware of his pain and try to tell him where it comes from. He tries to deal with it by saying, "I haven't got a pain; you have the pain." Or to put it in other terms, how awful to be a doctor whom society needs; how much nicer to be society which is superior to doctors.

P: I told him that I noticed he seemed very happy in feeling superior to me and in thinking that I was at his disposal – waiting

and expectant. He usually arrives early and has to wait for me, but this time I was waiting for him.

B: I am sure that he wants to make it clear how lucky you are to have such a cooperative, pleasant patient. The difficulty is, how are you to make this clear to him without appearing to be sarcastic? In the middle of this emotional storm you still have to be able to speak in a way that is not hurtful; you have hurtful things to say but you don't want to hurt. To fall back on a pictorial image borrowed from surgery: you have to use a scalpel to cut into the flesh, but you don't need to dip your scalpel into poison before you make the incision. So you have to denude your statement of any hostility or sarcasm – if possible – because it is bad enough for the patient to know the truth about himself without it being made worse by the way in which it is made clear to him. It is difficult because the patient is doing his best, without necessarily realizing it, to upset you and make you want to be sarcastic.

P: Do you have the impression that I spoke sarcastically?

B: No, I don't. I think he would have reacted differently if you had. You can always see from the patient's reaction if your interpretation has something of that kind wrong with it; unconsciously the patient can give you a clue as to whether you are on the right track or not.

P: I think he agreed with what I said. He gave a slight smile. But immediately afterwards I had the impression that he was troubled.

B: You have the chance of observing these things you mention. It is like being able to listen not only to the words but also to the music; it is not simply what his words tell you, but also what the little facial muscles tell you – something that is very difficult to describe to another person. It certainly sounds as if you were getting through to him to a point where he was not comfortable. We hope, of course, that the patient will feel better, just as we hope that a patient will feel better after a surgical operation.

P: He then seemed to change the subject and asked, "What time is it by your watch?" I had noticed that his watch was slow, but I didn't consider it at the time although I remember it now.

B: I could ask: what time is it? And whose watch are you going to use? Shall I look at mine? Or the calendar? Is it April 5th? 1978? 1948? 300 BC? What *is* the time? Where have you got to with this

patient? What age is he? We know he could say that he is thirty-eight, but what is the date of this material you are discussing? Apparently it is *now* – but one wonders. Is it geological time? Or cosmic time? Is it historical time? We have not yet found out what analytical time is. Perhaps someday there will be a psychoanalytic calendar by which we could date the material. Was this patient born late? Was he post-mature or pre-mature? It is difficult to find out; even a mother is liable to forget that it was a painful labour because the baby was, say, a big one. If the baby is premature it might be an easy birth but a very difficult survival.

As I say, I don't know what calendar or watch we use for psychoanalysis. In historical time we talk about BC and AD; are we going to talk about 'Before Freud' and 'After Freud'? It is quite artificial, but might be useful.

4

Presenter: The patient is thirty years old, a university departmental director. He came for analysis because he had a problem with premature ejaculation. He has a phantasy of soon becoming President of the Republic.

I am reporting a mid-week session. He arrived punctually as usual, wearing a stern expression – also as usual – and was silent for a while. Then he said that he had been choosing what to say about something that was causing him great anxiety: a friend had told him that a former girl-friend of his had returned from abroad.

Bion: Supposing you were God and said to the patient, "Right – go on 'President of Brazil'." Would that be a premature ejaculation for him?

P: It could be – he is always ahead of himself, always puts the cart before the horse.

M: Do you think that the patient's silence was related to his fear of premature ejaculation?

B: Yes, and I think his attention could be drawn to the fact that his fear is of such a kind that he has to go to the opposite extreme.

P: When he got home that evening his wife was waiting for him in bed, but he was so disturbed by the news of the arrival of his girl-friend that he didn't go to bed and decided to watch television until three o'clock in the morning, although he knew that his wife was waiting for him. He said the programme he was enjoying so much was the presentation of the Oscar awards; he could see all the stars he admired so much.

B: We all think we know what 'television' means, but we forget that it actually means 'vision at a distance'. It is all right to want to be President if it is far enough away, but not if someone says, "All

right – you go and be the President." It is all right to *see* someone having intercourse, but not close to. If he has a wife, he can see the couple having intercourse but he is one of them. He may not be much better at having a loving relationship with a wife than he would be at having a loving relationship with the Republic. He is always ahead of himself, as you have described it; he is not simply having a conversation with his analyst; he is also watching and listening to that conversation.

P: I told him I thought he was approaching me with great caution so that he would know what he was going to tell me and what I was going to answer. I said he enjoyed watching himself and his analyst in the same way as he enjoyed watching television and discussing ideas; and perhaps that could be a masturbatory or voyeuristic attitude.

B: Yes, but that means that he can be afraid of what he would say if *he* were the analyst. That is why he is afraid of what you will say. It is not a question of being President of the Republic, or the husband of his wife; it is a question of being the analyst of his analyst. If he knows so much, you might say, "All right – you be my analyst – I'll be your patient." This would also make him afraid of what he might say if he didn't think very carefully. It is much easier to be the analyst at a distance – in time or space – but not when the two people are in the same room at the same time. The same thing applies to being in the same room at the same time with the girl-friend. It is worse still if the girl-friend has become a wife and he might have to become a husband.

P: After my interpretation about the possibility of a masturbatory or voyeuristic attitude, he choked and coughed and said, "Mm . . . mm . . .", babbled, and then said, "Why did you say that to me?"

B: Now – which intercourse are you witnessing? The 'babbling' may be a premature verbal intercourse; it can sound just like talking. A good actor can act *just like* a king, a queen, a president – anybody. But not *the* President. Or you could say, "Yes, you can be just like an analyst, but not *the* analyst." I think this patient is talking like the analyst, but that is not the same as giving interpretations. Your difficulty is how to make this clear to him without making him feel foolish. He can be afraid that you may make him look silly or stupid; he can be afraid that his wife may make him impotent – she can be a better mother than he can be a father. But that depends on whether

he feels that the relationship is one which is intended to show who is top, who is first, who has won, rather than a loving one. It takes time to learn about passionate love, and one of the pair may reach this state before the other.

This patient prefers to watch television rather than to get into bed with his wife; he may prefer to have an analysis as a way of putting it off, as a protection against the marriage bed. Yeats wrote, in his poem 'Solomon and the Witch', ". . . Maybe the bride-bed brings despair, For each an imagined image brings, And finds a real image there". We haven't words for the real thing, the thing itself. There is always the danger of falling back on 'psychobabble' in order to sound like a real analyst.

5

Presenter: I have not prepared a case for presentation –

Bion: It is just as well to get used to the fact that you are unprepared. There is nothing more to be said about what you are prepared for; what you know, you know – we needn't bother with that. We have to deal with all that we don't know.

P: I would like to talk about a patient, a young woman of twenty-five, who has been in analysis with me for a few months. She insisted that she wanted to be seen by me so I arranged an appointment. When she arrived I was impressed by her appearance: everything about her was like spring, but the story she told me about herself was not, and certainly did not accord with my feeling that she was charming and full of love. I thought I would like to accept her for analysis but she couldn't afford my usual fee and didn't want to ask her father for the money. So I lowered my fee so that she could have five sessions a week.

B: This is a very important point. We never know anything whatever about the patient's financial capacity – nothing. What we do know about is the bill we shall get tomorrow at the supermarket; it is no good saying, "Look, I can't pay you for this food, but I've got a very charming girl patient, so will you give me the food free?" You cannot really say that you will lower the fee – or at least you can say it, but whether you can afford it is a much more serious matter. Although it is difficult to know how much money we need, we can have an idea of what it costs us to remain in existence. A patient can say, "I may not be able to pay, but I want the very best doctor, the very best psychoanalyst. I don't want polluted food – I want the best." But who is going to pay for it? The apparently simple request made by this very attractive girl means that you are invited to feel she is

worth paying for – in other words, seeing her for less and thus paying the fees she can't pay. If you are very wealthy or have independent means, you might *appear* to be able to pay the fees. But a father or mother who says to the son or daughter, "I'm very rich – you can have whatever you want; do what you like", cannot have any feelings of love or affection for the child. Whether we like it or not, sometimes we have to say, "No".

P: The experience I have had with this patient is the opposite of my first impression.

B: Quite. As Shakespeare says (in *Macbeth*), "The primrose way to the everlasting bonfire." The road is lined with primroses; the road to the analyst is lined with beautiful girls and boys; it leads to hell in the end.

P: I think she is doing what she can to make my work impossible – not unconsciously, but deliberately. She never has anything to tell me apart from giving her opinion of herself.

B: Thanks to psychoanalytic theory, everybody knows all about psychoanalysis. I myself create just such difficulties: every lecture I give increases the supply of theories about psychoanalysis. One hopes that it is of some use to analysts, but in fact over and again it makes things more difficult. People are able to throw these technical terms around: they don't feel angry, they feel 'paranoid'; they don't feel depressed, they are in a 'depressive situation'. Did you ever hear such nonsense? It's a kind of hell of our own making, a sort of psychoanalytic hell.

Can you still find a patient buried somewhere amongst all this rubbish? This patient can put on a suitably spring-like costume, this cosmetic cure, but she can also put on this mental cure; she can wrap herself in psychoanalytic terms. So we need to get through these layers and layers of 'cure' to reveal the suffering patient. It is no good saying to her, "Give up all these cosmetic appliances – I want to know where it hurts." But if we listen long enough we may be able to 'see' where it hurts.

P: At the beginning of the analysis she was very disturbed, distressed, and complained of a lot of pain. She wanted me to prescribe medicine to stop her suffering, but in the sessions it was always very clear that she was not suffering physical pain. I felt that she wanted to involve me in what was happening outside the analysis.

B: My impression is that this girl is suffering from a very bad attack of cure. She can never get properly treated because she is so cured; she has learnt all the tricks of how to be exactly like a charming little girl whom everybody loves. But she knows who she really is, and she suffers this painful fear that the analyst also will think that she is this beautiful spring-like creature. A conflict is bound to arise because she doesn't know whether to be what everybody says is a 'good girl', or to say, "No, I feel horrid and I'm going to be horrid – I've never had a chance of being nasty." From what we have heard, I think that she is getting relief because she is able to be nasty, she is able to give her analyst hell. But so far you haven't broken up or broken down, or said good-bye – or, "You're cured", which is just as bad. So the very fact of feeling relieved is indistinguishable from feeling far worse.

To give a dramatic example of what I mean: the survivors of a shipwreck are drifting on an improvised piece of wreckage. They aren't frightened; they are just hopeless and they are starving. But when a ship is sighted, anxiety, fear and terror break out; the calm of despair disappears. Theoretically the position is better; they are within reach of rescue and safety. But instead of feeling better they feel worse.

It is similar with this girl. The possibility of being able to be horrid can bring a kind of relief which is also horrid; it is worse than being in a state of despair. The person who is in despair doesn't show any particularly marked feelings, and would sometimes like to be left in that state because it is less upsetting than the possibility of rescue.

This patient may feel, "Yes, this is what I want; I don't want to be treated as if I were a beautiful, loving creature. I would like somebody to know that I'm hateful and horrid." But at the same time there is the fear that if she believes that, she will suddenly find that you don't. You might say, "Oh well, if you are such a nasty creature, I won't see you any more."

P: Now I understand better something which surprised me at the time. Whenever I give an interpretation about something 'nasty', she laughs, secret laughter like a child who has been discovered doing something naughty and does not want to be seen laughing. It seems to give her pleasure.

B: If she values herself, she knows that while she wants to be

cured, she would also like to retain her 'self'. I use this term because it hasn't already been 'polluted' with meaning and associations. If I say 'her body', or 'her mind', we all know what that means but it doesn't give an idea of what it is that this patient values. Fundamentally, basically, tucked away somewhere, is the feeling that she has a self that she doesn't want interfered with – improved, cured, or anything else. On the way to finding her self, it would be useful to find a fulfilled self. A man or a woman cannot be fulfilled unless they have found a mate. Then potentially they can become fulfilled if these two personalities come together mentally in the way that their bodies come together. On the way to that it is possible that analysis might help. But the analytic relationship is different; it is not the fulfilled one. It could be called 'transferent', 'transient', not permanent It is like a lodging-house you find on the way to somewhere; it could be a stage on the journey towards a real communion between two people. It is useful to remember that 'transference' also means 'transient'; it is not *it*. I have to use a word like 'it' as the best way of talking about the real thing, the thing-in-itself. In this work one has to fall back on these 'transient' expressions.

There are all kinds of transient situations: a boy can love a boy-friend; a girl can love a girl-friend. But after a time it becomes rather unsatisfactory; they can't be married. Nevertheless it may be a stage on the way. Masses of laws, rules, conventions might help someone to find the real thing, but very often they can be a bit of a nuisance. That is why it is useful to allow a patient to say how much she loves her girl-friend; any suggestion of homosexual behaviour kills the growing shoot, for being able to love somebody who is just like yourself can be a step on the way to something else. We cannot say that we ever meet the 'perfect couple', but sometimes we can feel that a married couple get close enough to it to remind us of what that state might be.

P: There was a time when I had a feeling that she was having a homosexual relationship, but when I spoke of it she didn't mention it again.

B: That may have been because you had made it clear enough, and once something has become clear there is no need to talk about it any further. That is one possibility; another is that she dared not speak about it again. What language are we to use to explain to patients what they are talking about without giving the impression that we

either disapprove or approve? We are not expressing an opinion about whether something is good or bad – that is up to the patient.

A patient may make no reply at all to an interpretation, so you can get no idea whether it has had any helpful effect or not. But if you go on listening, you may find that the patient's whole mode of conversation alters. The tone of voice changes; the tension in the vocal cords disappears. You don't then need to be told that your interpretation was correct – you know it was, because the relationship between you and the patient has altered completely.

It may nevertheless be very difficult to put up with not giving all the many other possible interpretations. We are always dealing with an unknown situation, not what we or the patient know already. We may have seen the patient for ten years, but today's session is a new one.

M: Analysands who are training candidates, psychologists and other therapists, often think they know everything. One gives an interpretation – they know it already.

B: Some of the saddest words one hears are, "Yes, I know; yes, I know; yes, I know." It is terrible to have a patient who says that all the time.

6

Presenter: The patient, a fifty-year-old man, has been in analysis with me for a year. His background is a simple and modest one, but he is a very interesting and intelligent man. The session I have chosen shows the chief aspects I have noticed in my contact with this patient.

He came in, shook hands with me and said, "Good morning, how are you?" Then in a complaining voice, "I've been up since four o'clock. I've been thinking too much. My entire life has been like that – always thinking, thinking. I can't stand it any longer. I've also had problems with impotence – I'm worried about it." He continued, "When I arrived at the central bus station" (he comes from another town for his analysis) "I ate a meat roll, some pears and two tangerines. I didn't eat the cellular part of the tangerines because I don't think it is digestible. Nevertheless I now have indigestion – they are heavy in my stomach."

Bion: He is always thinking, thinking. Where? In his head? Or in his stomach? In the alimentary canal? Or with voluntary muscle?

P: That reminds me: in the next session he said, "I ate fried manioc and steak for lunch, and they are still inside my head."

B: Mental indigestion.

P: I have the feeling that he digests thoughts with the alimentary canal, and food with the head.

B: I would remind you of something else which may be similar. Somewhere inside the head is the 'rhinencephalon' – the nose–brain. Why is that? Do our noses think? Have our noses got brains? Why did the early anatomists call it the 'rhinencephalon'? Where did they get that idea from?

Fishes use the sense of smell as a long-distance receptor; sharks and mackerel, for instance, can smell decaying matter a long way

away. As embryos we go through a state when we are like fishes living in a watery fluid before we are born. After birth we carry this same watery medium inside our nostrils so that we are still able to smell when in a gaseous medium – air. If this happens when we change from being a foetus into a new-born baby, does something similar happen when we change from being an unthinking animal into a thinking one? Conversely, is there a time – as with this patient – when we give up trying to use our voluntary muscles and start thinking instead? Is it possible to be thinking too much? Is it possible that we lose the use of our limbs? Is it possible that we lose the capacity to use our digestive system as might, for example, a patient who is so anxious that he begins to have gastric and duodenal ulcers? Perhaps we shall be able to answer questions of this kind through an analytic investigation.

P: He continued, "I know life is a habit – I have learnt that already. God help me, I don't want to make analysis a habit. I have read so many books that people told me to read, and I've been forcing my personality, trying to keep all those things in my head."

B: Most people have become used to the idea that someone will 'cure' them – physically or mentally. And they have so often heard that 'there's a good time coming' that they don't want to hear it again. Nevertheless, something is making this patient think that perhaps he can hope that psychoanalysis will solve the problems which have never been solved, and which he has had to keep within himself. But he doesn't want to get married or devoted to psychoanalysis or psychoanalysts. At the same time he doesn't want to be disillusioned – he is too used to being dis-illusioned – and he doesn't even want to believe that psychoanalysis might help.

M: Do you think he has a religious attitude?

B: I think there is always a religious attitude, and the religion is always changing. At some time the god might be a footballer like Pele. Now the fashion is a psychoanalytic religion – the great god, Freud, and all the lesser saints. I don't think this patient wants to adopt the psychoanalytic religion or the psychoanalytic pantheon of gods and saints. I use the term 'pantheon', but don't forget that it always also means 'pandemonium'; every demon has its accompanying saint; every saint its demon. In the same way every cure has its accompanying disease.

M: Do you think that this patient's anxiety about his stomach

refers to a symbolic system that he has been unable to develop, or does he think of his digestive system as a god?

B: It is possible to speak of someone having 'his belly as his god'. Similarly we can say that people have as their god the intellectual life. For all this patient knows, psychoanalysts are just like that; they have made thinking into their god and ignore all the rest of life. Indeed, I think it is possible in dealing with anxieties, for us to appear to mean that there is nothing to be anxious about. But if a patient is frightened of being robbed or murdered, we think that it is better to be aware of that fact, and aware that there is something to be frightened of, than to pretend that it doesn't exist by not thinking of it, getting rid of it by pushing it into the unconscious where it will fester and grow.

What is cropping up here is not a real disagreement between the patient and the analyst (that is only part of it), but a disagreement between the patient's alimentary canal and the food, *and* between his mental alimentary canal and his mental nourishment – neither of these being endo-psychic conflicts. As well as that there is a disagreement between his alimentary system and his mental system. His mind feeds on nourishment provided by thinking too much, but his alimentary canal gets ulcers. In other words, he is so anxious that he doesn't digest his food properly.

In analysis we get nearer to a disagreement between the patient's ability to think and his ability to exercise his muscles – voluntary and involuntary. It is this conflict – now an endo-psychic one – about which we can do something; all the other conflicts are not affected by us; we can do nothing about them. For example, we cannot stop a patient from drinking so much alcohol that he poisons his system.

This patient may not be altogether wrong to be afraid of thinking. There can be such a thing as too much cerebration, the cerebral hemispheres used to the detriment of the sympathetic or autonomic system. And so the marriage between this patient and himself has never really been consummated. He is very glad to be hopeful of analysis, but if he has been starved of mental relief, what starts as hope rapidly becomes greed.

7

Presenter: The patient is a woman of forty who dresses as if she were much younger. She is French and speaks Portuguese with a strong accent. She has been in analysis with me for only two months, four times a week, but consulted me from time to time for about a year before that. When she first came for an interview she was very excited and happy because I had an hour to spare. Just before starting analysis she went to Europe on holiday. In London, amongst the crowds, she suddenly felt ill and frightened of being alone, frightened of something happening to her with no one to turn to.

Bion: This is a fundamental point. You can be 'all alone' with yourself; 'all alone' with your analyst; 'all alone' in a crowd of people in London. It is a curious combination: being all alone *and* dependent on people and things not you. We seem to be the kind of animal that has to have a society; we depend on it and are all alone at the same time. It is true at the age of forty, at the age of four, and at the age of nought.

P: The need always remains with us?

B: I think so. It is something to which the analyst tries to introduce the patient who has either forgotten it or has never been conscious of it. It is like having the experience but never being aware of it.

P: Her father died four years ago and her mother one year ago. She is an only child and had lived with her parents for some years prior to their deaths. She told me that since her mother's death she has kept her parents' bedroom intact; she has never moved any clothes, furniture, ornaments or photographs.

B: The advantage of 'the facts' is that they make it easier to talk about the furniture of the room than the furniture of her mind or character. But it is a step in that direction; it is a way of 'getting

to know' who she is. It is a sort of 'transient' relationship; a sort of 'transference'. It is felt to be more bearable to know your self than to be ignorant of your self. But on the way to knowing her self it is easier for this patient to know the furniture of her house. She might get to know the furniture of her mind in time.

P: She was married for one year when she was seventeen, and had a child. She said she couldn't stand that life, being tied to the child and the home; she wanted to travel and enjoy life. She left her husband, and his family kept the child. She went abroad where she lived alone for some years. She has never seen her child since, nor is she interested in doing so.

B: I think she is afraid that if she goes on with these conversations with you she will get to know herself as a child; then she may think that the clothes she wears are not appropriate to who she is now. That is easier for you to see than for her.

The feelings of a mother for a son or daughter can be very powerful. So what has happened to them? She is hoping to escape from them by moving about the surface of the earth, but whether she can really escape is a different matter. There must be some reason why she comes to see an analyst, but I don't suppose she knows what it is.

P: I have the impression that she spends her life escaping.

B: She is probably more expert at that than at anything else.

P: Last Monday she came to the session looking very miserable and said, "I feel so lonely. The week-end was like all the others. I am worried about the future. I feel more and more alone all the time. Yesterday some friends took me out, but I got no pleasure from it at all. They were very kind, but what help was it?" Then she wept.

B: I think this is again part of the fundamental story that she can't tolerate being all alone with her self even when she is with other people. This 'self' won't leave her – it goes with her. But we don't know what this 'self' is – it certainly isn't a self that she wants to be alone with, so she is always reaching out for somebody else. If she couldn't come to you she would certainly go to someone else; if she couldn't find anyone else, she would find a crowd of people in London, anywhere where there are masses of people so as to avoid being aware that she is with her self whether she likes it or not.

It is difficult to describe what she is talking about, but I feel it is a sort of 'urge to exist'. And this urge is completely indifferent to human beings; it doesn't care whether we die in childbirth or in any

other way. Her parents' urge to exist forced them to give birth to a child whether they wanted one or not. So she herself is a product of that same urge and is at its mercy. She is frightened of being all alone with that urge to exist which doesn't mind what happens to her – it is completely ruthless. And she is terrified of being a slave to the urge as her parents were. In a similar way bacilli and viruses are completely indifferent to human beings. If we are wiped out, another kind of 'thing' will exist instead.

P: Something like an 'incarnation' theory?

B: Yes. Or in*plant*ation – plants will do just as well. It is not only the bacilli, but also the cocchi; not only animal but botanical life. Recently it has been suggested that there is a form of animate object which is neither animal nor vegetable.

M: Where would you put what Freud called 'the instinct of self-preservation'?

B: One could place that in the human being because it is the *human being* who wants to go on existing. But this impulse to which I am drawing attention, and of which I think this patient is frightened, doesn't mind what happens to her provided life goes on. . . .

8

Presenter: This patient has been with me for thirteen years. At the beginning of the analysis I didn't know why he came because he didn't seem to have any complaints and apparently knew everything. He even asked me to read several books, and as I was interested I did so.

I have the impression that the analysis falls into three phases. The first was when symptoms and complaints started to appear and he wanted to understand exactly what I said. He brought a dictionary to the sessions and would look up various words I used. Then he brought an etymological dictionary also. I tried to show him that all his efforts were really an attempt to avoid understanding what I was saying.

Bion: What language is being used by the analyst and by the patient? The relationship seems to alter when the patient has 'symptoms'. Who thought they were symptoms? The patient? Or the analyst? Who *called* them symptoms?

P: I used the word as a characteristic of the patient at that stage.

B: Did the patient think they were symptoms?

P: At first he couldn't accept anything that might mean he was ill.

B: Yes, I understand that, but what has happened to make him think that there are any illnesses?

P: For a time, both before and during the analysis with me, he tried several different kinds of treatment such as group therapy.

B: The questions I am asking are very difficult to answer. What is going on with this patient? There is no physical illness; no mental illness. But there is a great outbreak, an eruption of treatments and

cures. Would you not begin to be suspicious that there must be some diseases somewhere? Why should there be a concentration of cures and methods of treatment in one place? It seems to me that we have to consider that there is something wrong. What you have been describing here is not an outbreak of patients, but an outbreak of analysts wanting to cure you. You are suffering from somebody who has nothing wrong with *him*, but who has a whole lot of books with which he can treat *you*.

Let's hear some more about this curious 'treatment', this outbreak of cures.

P: In the second phase I noticed that he was worried about time and space. For example, he wanted to take a lot of physical exercise. He spent more than thirty minutes of every session running up and down the consulting room, and spoke only after this seemingly fixed length of time.

In the third phase he continued to be worried about the meaning of words, but now expected an absolutely exact sense of the words I used. If I mentioned this to him he became violent and even broke two chairs.

Although he seems to be getting worse in the analysis, in his social and professional life he is getting more and more successful. He has married, bought apartments and cars, and has had written work published. Perhaps he leaves all his bad aspects with me while becoming successful outside the analysis.

B: Most patients don't believe that they have mental pain. This patient hasn't any troubles, but if he doesn't know that he is ill, it also means that he doesn't know when he is cured either. He has to know something about mental pain and mental health.

P: I suspect that he has provoked in me a response similar to the outbreak of treatments. There has been an outbreak of supervisions. I have even been abroad for supervisions on this case, and have had three years of supervisions here. I remember that one supervisor said I should read Piaget and other authors; I became even more confused – the illness was transmissible.

B: It is a puzzling situation: the patient has nothing the matter with him; he has become better and better, and more and more successful. But the analyst has become worse and worse.

P: Even financially the pattern has repeated itself: on the grounds

of hardship he paid reduced fees. And I have spent a great deal of money on travelling and supervisions.

B: The patient gets richer and richer; the analyst either stays as poor as usual or becomes poorer and poorer. The patient gets cleverer and cleverer and becomes successful; the analyst gets more and more ignorant and has to have more and more supervisions. It reminds me of that theory about the baby being able to evacuate its mental troubles into the breast or the mother, in the way that it can evacuate urine and faeces. The baby gets well, but the breast or mother gets ill and dies. That's all right if it is Melanie Klein's theory of projective identification. But this man isn't a baby, so although I am *reminded* of the theory, it isn't right; it doesn't fit this story in which everybody does so well except the analyst.

Why is it that the more experience psychoanalysts have, the more they realize how ignorant they are? What is the disease which causes us to realize how ignorant we are, and then to have to have more and more congresses, conferences, supervisions, analyses? I think the disease is a mind. Once the human quadruped started standing on its hind legs it had to become an acrobat. And the more civilized we become, the more difficult it is to behave in a civilized manner. The moment we become involved in thinking, we have to learn how to think properly; the moment we learn to stand on our hind legs, we have to learn how to stand on two legs, not four. When we have learnt that, we have to keep both those legs healthy and strong; the moment we find we are thinking, we have to think clearly. That is never-ending – the more we learn, the more we shall find how ignorant we are. You will never know what this patient's troubles are, but you will certainly know what *yours* are. To take an exaggerated example: in war you can know that you are terrified, but you don't know anything about the enemy. The enemy always seems to be well-off, brave and trouble-free. Psychoanalysts know where it hurts. It is easy to envy people who are wealthy, and have no troubles or difficulties, but we are supposed to know ourselves, our characteristics; we are not allowed this easy cure of looking and behaving as if we had no troubles. We are also supposed to be like leaders. Officers aren't supposed to run away in war, nor are they supposed to be so stupid that they don't know that it is dangerous. We know that these neuroses and psychoses are not just imagination – they are real. And we have to judge

how to tell the patient the truth about himself without frightening him.

I don't think this patient knows why the analytic discussion helps him to improve, to get better. But he does know that he is better for having discussed these matters with you. So he wouldn't like you to stop seeing him. That is why he has been coming for thirteen years; and that is why he would probably come for thirteen more if he could.

9

Presenter: The patient is an eighteen-year-old girl who has been in analysis with me for five months. Her parents, who came to see me first, said they were very worried because she was refusing to eat. She had been in treatment for a year previously with a man analyst, but had asked her father to find a woman analyst instead.

Her illness appeared to have begun when she was fifteen: she didn't want to be fat, although she was not in fact overweight. She had always had a beautiful body – as both she and her parents told me – but in order to be fashionable she wanted to be thinner.

She had had a boy-friend who lived a long way away from her home town, but she stopped seeing him and only kept in touch by letter. When she eats she prepares the food herself; she can only eat one egg or a little fish, and has the feeling that her stomach is unbearably full. She also takes strong laxatives – as many as fifteen tablets in a few days. She told me that she feels addicted to these pills which act as tranquillizers.

When I first saw her she aroused my sympathy. She shook my hand formally and said in a tense voice, "I want treatment because I am afraid I can't stop something that will kill me – but I don't know what it is." Later she said that she was full of aggression, that people feel she is very arrogant, and that the only impression she can give to other people is one of coldness.

Bion: She feels very beautiful, like a distant star; it glistens like a diamond, like steel; it is very far away – and useless. The same thing applies to the beautiful woman, the beautiful queen whom nobody would dare to approach. If you did approach her you would find she was sterile. And somehow she knows this. On the other hand, she fears that she could become pregnant, and then her beautiful body

would swell up, she would no longer be athletic, no longer able to compete in a sort of Olympic Games.

I think this story centres on the feeling that she is a person of no importance and that she is the slave of forces which don't care what happens to her.

P: She had a dream: her bitch was pregnant and she felt that the animal was experiencing the same feelings as she does when she evacuates.

B: It is entirely true.

P: She said, "When I went to pick her up, I saw she had been changed into sandwiches."

B: It is in line with the feeling that there is an urge to exist; it is felt to be something which doesn't care whether you are a dog, a bitch, or a beautiful woman – it is completely indifferent. The mother may die, the offspring may be eaten up, but all in the service of this force. If the human race blew itself out of existence with the neutron bomb, the force to exist wouldn't mind in the least – it would be just one more discarded experiment. So the patient can be afraid of being used simply as a means of perpetuating existence.

I don't think it would be the slightest good saying that to the patient, but it is something that would be useful to me if I were analysing this patient because I would expect everything to fit into that basic theory. I would expect it to crop up all the time – the patient waging war against this force, wanting to remain a person, a beautiful person, and not liking being a slave to that force, that power, that energy.

P: She always complains that she feels she has to be a beautiful daughter, a tender child, always smiling. She feels that her father invades her privacy and controls her, but at the same time she tells me that maybe it is not true, maybe it is only her feeling, maybe her father is suffering because of her illness. But when he is affectionate and tender towards her, or touches her, she rejects him.

B: I think she feels that her father also is an instrument in the progress of existence. I use the word 'existence', but I am trying to describe something which has no human characteristics. If the father is a slave to this same power, then these little rules about incest don't count, and if he submits to that force he will unhesitatingly seduce his daughter into producing more babies. There was a time when the pharaohs had incestuous relationships as a privilege. Nowadays it is

not fashionable but it still exists. The force behind it is very powerful, much more powerful than the sexual urge or sexual pleasure – those are simply things which we are aware of as human beings.

This patient would be afraid that you are just one more of these objects which are slaves to this power; or alternatively that you are also engaged in a hopeless war for individual existence against this massive force. It seems that she has found no way of mobilizing any resistance against that kind of omnipotent drive. I think all her problems are related to this one; all the individual problems are aspects of the same thing. It is like looking at one's hand: looked at through a microscope one sees individual cells, but they only add up to a totality we call a 'hand'. The individual piece of life – whether it is a dog, or a plant, or a human being – is simply one little particle in this total existence. The force doesn't mind what happens to it any more than we mind what happens to single cells of our skin which we shed and don't even know we have worn them out.

The patient knows nothing of this in any conceptual form. She probably thinks she is beautiful because she wants to be. But her beauty has very little to do with her – it is simply a way of leading her to be seductive so that somebody would want to have intercourse with her. She herself, unaware, is aiding the process; the more beautiful she is, the more likely she is to be used as a mate. Her problem is how to be beautiful but unapproachable, on the grounds that she is *so* beautiful, *so* majestic, that nobody will come near her.

P: Sometimes she tells me, "I shall only recover my health when I want to be well again", as if she can control her illness.

B: She may not be able to do that, but she can control you. She can get you to agree that she has that power; she would like to have the kind of analysis in which you would say, "Yes, you are quite right; you have all that power, you are potent, you are omnipotent."

P: When she has to go to see the physician, she is very anxious. She says that she doesn't believe he can do anything for her.

B: A patient like this feels she has no character, no opinions of her own, no feelings of her own. So she is frightened by examination, whether it is a temporary one by a doctor, or a longer one by an analyst, or a still longer one which occurs if she goes so far as to marry somebody. The married couple are sure to find out a great deal about each other; there is no experience quite like that of marriage for laying bare the personality in all its nakedness.

M: What are the chances of her having a psychotic breakdown?

B: Not yet – but later when she has made more progress. It is something of which she is frightened now, will be very frightened of when it happens, and will also want the analyst to be frightened. What is more, she will mobilize a lot of people to say, "What have you been doing to this beautiful, gifted girl? She was all right till she came to see you." So you have all that coming.

10

Presenter: The patient, a twenty-year-old girl, came in, sat down and said, "Do you know what happened? My phone was disconnected. I went to ask what had happened and they said the account hadn't been paid. They said they would reconnect it. It's not right, is it? Do you think it's right?" Then she said, "Guess what mark I got in the test I took – you must guess – I won't tell you. Maybe you don't want to tell me because you're going to give me a bad mark." She stopped for a moment and then said, "I got nine out of ten."

Bion: Do you want to go on being analysed by the patient? She makes an evocative statement, "You guess – then I shall know who you are. If you say nine is a bad mark, it ought to have been ten, then I shall know that you are the sort of analyst who is like a very bad conscience."

P: I said, "I think you are very worried about the kind of marks you think I am giving you." She agreed: sometimes she says, "Yes"; sometimes she expresses agreement with her eyes; sometimes she smiles. Once in a while I ask her what she is smiling about. She says, "Oh no, it's nonsense."

B: There is something about the way in which you observe her that makes her afraid of what marks she would be given as a result of that examination. "What were you thinking about?" "Oh, nothing in particular; please don't pay any attention." It is always the same reaction: "I didn't say anything. I didn't do anything. I didn't think anything. Don't be an analyst and pay attention and observe me. Everybody gives me nine out of ten; don't you dare give me less."

P: She always asks me questions like a small child. Sometimes I feel that she looks like a small child who wants to know everything she hasn't been told. And sometimes I feel that she asks me the

questions because she doesn't stop to think. Everything she tells me has a question mark.

B: In the *theory* of analysis one is supposed to tell the patient the truth: in *practice* it is much more difficult because one does not know whether the patient is strong enough to hear the truth. Patients are sure that they want to know the answer to the question; what they don't know is that the answer may be very unpleasant. We may be asked, "Is life worth living?" Knowing as much about existence as we do at our age, we might be frightened of telling patients what we know. On the other hand we can be equally frightened of *not* telling them – or our children for that matter – what we know. But it may be important for children to know what real life is like; not the life in story-books, or even in psychoanalytic case histories which are more often like bad novels.

There is no particular reason to doubt this assessment of nine out of ten; it can mean that this girl is intelligent enough to understand what is said to her. So in a sense it puts a bigger burden on you who cannot therefore rely on her being so limited or so stupid that she wouldn't understand what she is not really prepared for. She could learn something prematurely, precociously, before she is in a fit state to tolerate the truth. So you have to sum up very quickly whether the person who is asking the question is robust enough to hear the answer. No amount of books are going to answer that question; we can't read some more Freud to find out. But so long as the patient comes to see the analyst, and the analyst has a chance of seeing and observing that patient, there is always a possibility of finding out what we might dare to pass on.

Melanie Klein said – and I think it is borne out – that at the very experience of birth itself, the full-term foetus feels castrated, mutilated, as if the mother's genitalia cut something off. Severed the umbilical cord? Severed the long-distance sense of smell? One would have to be this patient's analyst to guess, conjecture what the telephonic system is that has been cut off; what the messages are that she can't get. There is nothing wrong with her intelligence – nine out of ten is a good mark – and she may feel that the analyst knows more than she does. One could say that while her *intelligence* is nine out of ten, her *wisdom* is not the same as that of the analyst. Wisdom is a long-distance affair and takes time to develop; it has to be experienced. To put it another way: her tele-phone, her tele-vision is

defective, but she may be intelligent enough to know that she doesn't know the psychoanalytic language, the language her analyst can speak. But she must *feel* – she doesn't *know* – that a psychoanalyst is a helpful person, otherwise why come to analysis? It is another of these imaginative or rational conjectures which have to take the place of facts because she hasn't got far enough to know what the facts are. At present she doesn't know her self, but you may be able to help her to know her self.

Again one wonders: what is the distance between her and her self? How 'tele' is it – whether it is tele-phone or tele-vision? Analysis sounds and reads as if we are concerned with the past. So we are, but our past mistakes, our stupidities, our faults and our crimes are not the whole story – although it is quite useful to know what they are. This girl can know that she also wants to be wise enough to know something about the future. It might be all right to be 'married' to her analyst for a certain length of time, but if she wants to have a husband and children, then the communication has to be even with her unborn children. But that method of communication is cut in much the same way as the umbilical cord is cut; we don't really remember the past, and we can't remember the future because it hasn't happened yet. So a great deal of our present knowledge is conjecture about the past, and conjecture about the future. And yet we do feel that there is a lot to be said for prudence and foresight. Implicit in, "What shall I tell the analyst, and what is the analyst going to tell me?" is, "shall I ever be able to profit by past mistakes? Shall I ever be able to know what I did right? If I could, then perhaps I might foresee the future and make decisions which would show forethought."

M: I have been thinking of what Freud said about phylogenetic inheritance. Do you feel that this is something which can help the patient to develop and to live better in the future? How can we bring this about?

B: According to Freud and others, by psychoanalysis. But in *practice* it is quite a different matter. For example, I had a patient who, as a baby, was asleep with his mother, brothers and sisters when a man entered the room, murdered the mother and all the children, but missed him. We don't know what that baby saw – and it was believed by the foster parents that he knew nothing about it – but the patient who came to me had terrifying nightmares, terrifying impulses to be cruel. One day, for example, he saw a pretty girl in the street, put his

foot out, and 'accidentally' bumped into her. She fell and was badly hurt. He was terrified of what he had done, and terrified that he would go on doing it. What that was all about I don't know, but of course I could guess that it had something to do with this dreadful story. But we don't *know.*

What is the correct procedure? To analyse it and make what is implicit and unconscious, explicit and conscious? Or to forget it? But the theory is that you can't forget what you can't remember, and that you have to remember things, otherwise they fester and grow out of control in the unconscious. But as analysts we are not concerned with *theories*; we are concerned with, "What shall I say to this man?"

11

Presenter: The patient came in, greeted me, and lay down on the couch. Her speech was interspersed with sighs and weeping. She complained that she woke up several times during the night. During the day she is unable to take care of her house; she has to stay in bed most of the time and needs her mother with her all the time to comfort her. Although this calms her down, it has been a cause of worry and annoyance to her husband.

Bion: Do you get the impression that she suffers from insomnia?

P: Yes. During the three years she has been coming to me she has had alternating states of insomnia and sleeping well.

B: I don't know what all these sighs and tears are about, but supposedly the patient is in a state of mind in which people are when they are awake. The fact that a person is what we call 'asleep' could also be described as being 'in a different state of mind'. Patients say they had a dream and did this, that or the other; it is quite useful if we can interpret these 'remains', but suppose the patient doesn't have any dreams. Why does this patient not want to 'go to sleep'? Where does she go? And where does she go when she apparently sleeps well?

P: She continued with her complaints, telling me that her husband wants her to look after the house without her mother's interference. I pointed out that her mother's presence had not resolved her feelings of despair and abandonment. I said, "I think your despair is based on the need to know what this despair is about."

B: This crops up with some frequency. It is quite often necessary to point out to patients that they can have feelings of despair about despair, and they can be very angry about it. Putting it as a more general principle: patients hate having feelings at all; whether

they are feelings of anger or despair or depression, they are all hated. They would like the analyst to 'cure' them or make them incapable of having feelings.

P: She changed her position on the couch and sat up facing me. She said that during the morning she hadn't wanted to come to the session because she was feeling very low. She had heard news on the radio that frightened her: the death of a young boy, the son of a politician, in a car accident. She phoned a friend, who had already heard the news, to talk about the accident. She gradually calmed down and then decided to come to the session.

B: Analysis, like other facilities such as the radio and telephone, can make it possible to hear things that could not otherwise be heard. But as a result of being able to stretch our ears with mechanical instruments, what we hear may not be at all pleasant. In analysis, patients are likely to become aware of things they didn't know before; the analyst can enable them to see more and to know more. But that doesn't mean to say that what they can see more of is nicer – it may be nastier. Why does this patient come for analysis? Is she hoping to hear nice things? Or has she changed? Has she begun to be able to hear nasty things? It seems to me that from your point of view the fact that she decided to come again is quite an important indication. It is so easy to feel that if the patient gives up analysis we have failed. Well, maybe – we don't want to dismiss that idea because we can never be such good analysts that we don't make plenty of mistakes. If this patient dares to come again, although analysis is probably as unpleasant as it has always been, it could be an interesting sign of what sort of progress she is making.

P: I said, "I think you came back to find out with me the reason for the mental disasters you have suffered and which you think are irrevocable." She said, "It's true", and then fell silent and became increasingly anxious.

B: I have the impression that she is surprised to find that she helps you by telling you when you are right. But the discovery that she is capable of cooperating with you is very frightening.

P: She said, "On my way here I was thinking about the friend with whom I discussed the accident. She is a good friend because she is always receptive, but I feel inferior because I realize I need her help. It may be because I always want to be the one who is superior." I said, "You came today to make sure that I had not been destroyed by your

phantasies of wishing me ill and wanting to destroy our relationship. You are afraid that you may have destroyed me internally just at the time when you have the most need of my help." She calmed down and said, "This is the vital point. But I still don't know if I shall be able to bear to go on coming to analysis." The session ended there.

Shortly after this a patient who comes four times a week telephoned to say that she was going on a trip and would miss a week's sessions. She added that she was going to look for other psychiatric treatment so that she could get some lithium she wanted.

B: There are always plenty of things to do besides analysis. And if you don't give the patient drugs, there is no difficulty whatsoever in getting them from someone else. The same thing applies to interpretations which can be a drug; if she can't get the kind of interpretations that she likes, she can always get them from another analyst.

Your difficulty is to know what you did wrong. But it is also important to know what you did right. Giving the right interpretation can lead to the termination of analysis just as well as the wrong one. So if this patient finds somebody else whom she prefers, she too may discover that she has made a mistake.

It is very difficult to assess the analytic association. It is easy to be misled by wanting to forget our mistakes, but it is equally easy to be mistaken by assuming that we are going to make mistakes. The analytic experience is a disciplined and unpleasant one – neither the analyst nor the analysand can do what they like. There are masses of seductive alternatives, but the job of analysis is a tough one. This helps to explain why analysts *must* have rests, *must* have some kind of life other than the analytic one. It is very unsatisfactory if they make their home life into a kind of psychoanalysis. It seems to me that analysts often fail to recognize that analysis is a very good thing for analysts – if that is what they want. But if they want a family, then they don't want a kind of psychoanalytic museum. It is extremely easy for them to start interpreting their husbands' or wives' remarks. I think it is a great mistake.

12

Presenter: The patient has been in analysis with me for two years. In an interview before the analysis began, she told me that she had chosen me because she liked what she had heard me say at a conference. She said she was coming for analysis because her husband had problems and she thought that perhaps she could help him to start analysis too. I suggested that it might be interesting for her to work in some way other than psychoanalysis.

She returned for a second interview and spoke in a very incisive tone of voice. "I know I need an analysis for my own work." After a long pause she said, in a different tone of voice, "I know I am very fat." I agreed to start analysis and a schedule was arranged.

She had great difficulty in tolerating any hostile feelings towards me. The things she talked about seemed to belong in fairy-tales; she described her wedding, her wedding dress – everything was so beautiful. She said, "It will soon be Christmas and my husband is going to dress up as Santa Claus – I almost believe he *is* Santa Claus. After all, I believed in him for a long time." Everything was beautiful, her whole life was beautiful. Nevertheless she suddenly said, "You are bad; you make me say things I don't want to say. You're like the witch in the fairy-tale who forced people to speak."

Bion: If she thinks that, why does she come to see you? Alternatively, if she comes to see you, why does she say you are bad? A tremendous number of people have learnt what they think are the sort of things that analysts want to hear. It is an increasing difficulty for us.

P: She reports dreams in that way, as if she is giving me something I would like to listen to.

B: She can dress up in any kind of clothes, or in any state of

mind. The character she chooses to wear can hide her from herself. It is easy for her to feel that both she and you are dressed up, but who the two real people are, in the same room at the same time, is quite another problem.

P: It is as if she offers me a wardrobe and we both have to choose different costumes. At present there is a great deal of confusion. For example, after I made an interpretation along these lines, and after a long silence, she spoke with considerable emotion but the words she used could be found in textbooks.

B: The glimpse of confusion that you get is very important – it is nearer to the 'real thing'. Confusion is a nasty feeling, so patients always want to get the analyst to behave as if he or she knew all the answers.

P: There is something of this pressure in my always feeling compelled to add to the interpretation I have already given, or to give another interpretation seen from a different point of view. There are times when it is very difficult to form a working relationship; she either quickly agrees with everything I say, or she thinks what I say is an accusation.

Sometimes I feel that some emotion is surfacing, although the words she uses are standard textbook ones. Once, when I had pointed this out to her, she said, "Decipher me or I will devour you." I get the impression of cultural poverty; I am therefore very surprised when she shows a knowledge of literature or refers to trips to Europe and the USA.

B: It now becomes much clearer that this is all part of the costume, part of the culture she wears to disguise the poverty of her personality. If you are able to see the person without all this costumery, all the states of mind she has assumed to cover up her poverty, she is not going to like it.

Suppose this patient came to you with a physical complaint: she might be able to put up with the request to take off her clothes for a physical examination. Some patients *like* doing this. In analysis, patients may get a secret pleasure out of analytic examination, the fact that they are stripped naked, and you think they are going to go on coming for ever. On the other hand, the analytic experience may become so frustrating that patients learn to like being frustrated. So – they can like being flattered; they can like being insulted; they can like being frustrated.

I think that whatever you say to this patient there will almost immediately be a reaction. The problem is to see what the reaction is.

P: I am reminded of something that illustrated the fear she felt. She said, "A friend of a friend of a friend of mine told me that she had had a baby in an elevator without any previous warning. This seems unbelievable – just imagine if something like that could really happen, that something could go in or come out without one's knowing it."

B: This is a very important statement. Patients come to analysis but don't believe it has any effect. So it can be very frightening and unbelievable if in fact it works, if there is a result of analytic verbal intercourse. This patient can be afraid of being pregnant, of having a kind of mental baby; and afraid that you likewise would not know what to do. There would be two people in this elevator who would be taken by surprise.

P: She said, "I read in a magazine that in China people don't have any sexual education – young girls are afraid of getting pregnant even in swimming pools." After a short interval she said, in a voice showing more emotion, "Those girls gained knowledge and lost fear simply by talking about it."

B: What we call a 'sexual relationship' has hardly any meaning – it is borrowed from anatomy and biology. But a girl can feel that a certain type of conversation can have serious consequences. If a brother and sister play 'Mothers and Fathers', the attitude of each to that same game is very different. Sometimes both of them get frightened, stop playing, and ask the mother or father, "What shall we do now?" They don't know why they stopped playing or why they want somebody to tell them to do something else.

In the psychoanalytic game plenty of people are taken by surprise, are frightened, and frightened of being frightened of playing this rather dull, conversational game.

13

Presenter: The patient started analysis with me three years ago when he was twenty years old; he was a second-year medical student and had failed his anatomy examination. He complained of anxiety. His parents are Jewish: he says he doesn't feel like a Jew but accepts that he is because people tell him so. But he doesn't follow the Jewish religion.

Bion: How does he know that he doesn't feel like a Jew? What does a Jew feel like? If you say, "I don't feel like a well person", it means that you must know what it feels like to be a well person. If I were told, "I don't feel like a Jew", by this patient, I should feel suspicious about it. It must in fact be that he doesn't want anybody to know he is a Jew. In a sense it is like saying, "I don't feel like a Jew; I feel superior to a Jew."

In any choice whatever, you are bound to choose what you are *not* choosing. To quote an Arabian poet (recalled by Lawrence of Arabia), "For Lord I was free of all thy flowers, but I chose the world's sad roses, And that is why my feet are torn and mine eyes are blind with sweat." The Arabian style of poetry and the Arabian discipline get nearer to what I am drawing attention to. At some point these various choices are made: instead of "all thy flowers" I could say, "all the options"; we cut down the number of options to the number of things that we choose; but we also choose *not* to choose the rest.

This patient chooses *not* to be a Jew. It is a matter of some importance if he chooses not to be one of his parents' children; and if he feels, "I don't want to be like my father and mother", it is more serious still because it means, "I don't want to be like my father or my father's father before that." That is a repudiation of his ancestry. So with what is apparently a simple statement, probably made at a time

when he didn't know very much – he might not even know that the Jews have a very ancient culture and history but just chooses not to be one of these inferior creatures – he has wiped out thousands of years of the history of his race.

This is all conjectural of course, what I mean by 'imaginative conjecture', what I want to include as part of scientific thought. That doesn't mean that I don't want to know some more about this patient, but it seems to me to help map out an area which we might populate with ideas or knowledge.

Have we any idea of what this patient wants to know instead of himself? What area of himself does he want to know nothing about? Falling back on 'rational conjecture', a rational psychoanalytic theory, he could be said not to want to know anything at all about sex, because genetically he must have both a father and a mother, and they may be Jewish. It doesn't tell us very much because we don't know what 'Jewish' fathers and mothers are; it is no good looking up 'Jewish', and 'father', and 'mother' in the dictionary. There is no way of answering this question except by *observing* this personality that has come into the room.

P: I have observed that he is very hostile to his parents. Sometimes he makes comments like, "My mother is a really crazy woman – the only thing she can do is to interfere in my life." And, "My father is a weakling and is often away." When he first came to analysis and had failed his examination, he was having difficulties in relationships with his fellow students. His feeling of inferiority was associated with what he felt was his parents' poverty – both financial and cultural.

B: I can imagine a situation in which, having decided not to feel like a Jew, he at the same time loses his ability to be tolerant and achieves an ability to be bigoted and selective; he achieves a whole area of 'not to be'. We could say that only a fraction of himself is left, and there is a vast area which he cannot learn about because it is inferior. And now he is supposed to pass an examination. It is hardly surprising that he fails if he is engaged in saying, "I don't know this; I don't know that; I don't know the other – it's inferior." How is it possible for him to know himself? To know himself involves knowing his 'self', his 'breed'. Not to know his breed involves a repudiation of breeding.

The analyst is like a person who is turning the pages of a book rather idly. The analysand can say, "Page thirty", or to put it in

different words, "I'm thirty". The analyst is then listening to the story of the book which is open at age thirty. As the patient reads the story of his life, starting at page thirty, can you imagine what happened on pages one to twenty-nine? Can you imagine what will happen on pages thirty-one to forty? These things we call interpretations are really 'imaginative conjectures' about the missing pages. *This* patient has already torn out a whole number of pages – all the Jewish ones. How are we to read this story? How is he to pass the analytic examination if he says to the analyst something analogous to saying to a physician, "I have a pain – oh no, I don't want to take off my clothes – no, I don't want to have an X-ray – no, I don't want a blood test." We try to make the analytic examination as easy as possible for patients and also for ourselves. So you could *feel* – I don't suggest you *say* – "I'll have to know more about this patient; I'll arrange to see him tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow."

As Shakespeare puts it: "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, / Creeps in this petty pace from day to day, / To the last syllable of recorded time; / And all our yesterdays have lighted fools / The way to dusty death." This patient's yesterdays, his tomorrows which creep at a petty pace, are in fact all over very quickly – the time between 0 and the day of his death; we don't know how many pages there are to the book. So the patient and the analyst don't know at what metronome speed – borrowing a musical term – the analysis should be conducted.

14

Presenter: The patient is forty-six years old. He has three older brothers and two younger sisters. His father was a powerful, wealthy man who died a few years ago. The patient's difficulties go back to early childhood. His testicles remained in the abdominal cavity and two surgical operations were unsuccessful; consequently he is sterile. He didn't finish high-school education and has never had a steady job. His brothers work in the family business, but because his relationship with his father was so bad it was impossible for the patient to enter the business also. He described his father as a violent dictator. The patient left home and lived in a slum for four years. He took to drink and gave his money away to any new acquaintance.

When he started analysis three years ago he was drinking heavily, had hallucinations at night, and was very anxious about the possible death of his father who was very ill.

The first year of treatment was confused: he missed many sessions, drank a lot, and sometimes phoned to say he wanted to come to the session but was too afraid. He made the analytic work very difficult by lying all the time.

In the second year, after his father's death, he changed completely. He became apathetic, stopped drinking and came to the sessions accompanied by his mother. He usually started by saying, "Doctor, I am on foot – I haven't anything to say."

Member: For how long did he come with his mother?

P: Every day for a year.

Bion: Whose idea was it that his mother should come?

P: The family's, because he missed so many sessions and was apathetic.

B: Why did he miss the sessions? Because he didn't come or

because he didn't listen? Or because his mother brought him – not his own legs and feet? If the mother insists on bringing him, not when he is four or six but forty-six, *she* comes to the session.

P: During the second year I felt the analysis was empty. Month after month: "I am on foot." Silence. And a phantasy about having won a football pool, and what he would do with the money – he would buy a large apartment, have a lot of cars, and so on. These were the only communications, month after month.

B: Who is this who says he is going to win the pools? Put it like this: X is betting on the pools; X is expecting to win; if X wins, X is going to . . . Who is X? Of the two people in the room, is it the patient? Or does he think that the analyst is the person who is betting on psychoanalysis and hoping that he will make enough money never to have to do any more work? Who is this person who would choose not to do any work? Is it his mother? Is she betting on having a son who will support her for life? Then she would never have to do any more work and would be looked after and protected.

Having posed all these questions, you can send your senses back to get more information. You have to listen again tomorrow, listen day after day to the patient saying the same phrases – *apparently.* But they are not the same. If he says them today, they are not the same as yesterday; if he says them tomorrow, they are not the same as today; if he said them at age four, they are not the same as when he says them at age forty-six. There is something wrong with the story. It would be all right if he were a four-year-old, or even a six-year-old, but not a forty-six-year-old. Your eyes may tell you that this patient is forty-six; your ears may tell you something else.

It is possible that he *has* to go on repeating – apparently – the same words. I once had a patient who for months on end said, "I don't know what I mean."

P: What was surprising were the changes in him. In the first year he was one kind of person; in the second, completely different; and in the third year he became completely different again. He started talking, and referred to his behaviour during the second year as that of a robot.

B: Sooner or later this patient has to walk on his own feet – not his mother's. Socrates said he was a midwife; he attended the birth of a mind. The same thing applies to us; we can help a patient to get born, to emerge from the womb of thought.

15

Presenter: The patient is an eighteen-year-old girl who has been in analysis with me for five years, four times a week.

She came in, lay on the couch, and was silent for a while. Then she said, "While I was silent I kept wondering whether I was going to speak or not. I thought the couch was hot. And I thought it would be very difficult for you to separate one person from another."

Bion: Patients often do this. I find that it is important to draw their attention to the fact that they are putting distance between themselves and themselves. This patient says, "I wonder what I am going to say." It might be useful to reply, "Well, what is the result of your wondering?"

P: She continued, "As a test I stayed silent to see what would happen." I had the feeling that she was not sure if I could distinguish one patient from another.

B: You could say, "Well, I'll remain silent too, and then there will be two of us who can wait to see what happens." This suggests that there are three people present – she, herself and somebody who is neither of these. So if any two of these could get together, they might hear what one of them alone could not.

P: Might that not imply, "I can also provoke and tease you"?

B: Possibly. That is why we have to be careful with the tone of voice, the inflection and so on. There is not only the difficulty of having to give an interpretation, but also *how* we give it, what musical accompaniment we put to the words.

P: I told her that I thought she was wanting to force me to speak. She answered, "I wanted to know if you were thinking of another patient." I felt that she was afraid of being mixed up with all the other patients, like the children of a very big family who fear that the parents

won't be able to distinguish one child from another. I suggested that she was confused about her own identity. After a while she said, "I have never thought about it." And then, in an anxious tone of voice, "I think I am afraid of losing myself from myself. It upsets me terribly."

B: It may be true that she has 'never thought about it', so thinking can bring with it all the surprise and anxiety of a completely unfamiliar experience.

P: She was silent for a while as if she was thinking about something. Then she said, "Are you saying that I don't understand the words I use? Do you think I use you too much as a sort of reference?"

B: It is curious. Why can't she talk to you? As the analyst I would not object to being 'used', but I would wonder why the patient could not talk to me. Is the practice of analysis making people lose the capacity for ordinary human intercourse? I can see that there is a lot to be said for analysis if that is what you want, or if you want to be an analyst, but not if it is going to take the place of other activities. I would rather play chess, or tennis, or piano duets than be in a state in which I was simply restricted to the very narrow sort of conversation which is psychoanalysis. I don't think one wants to be less, but more of a human being as a result of analysis. But this patient is talking as if she is unable to have an ordinary conversation.

P: It is true that the patient and I very often have great difficulty in establishing normal conversation.

M: Does the analytic relationship form an obstacle to other kinds of contact outside the consulting room?

B: No, but it does put restrictions on behaviour *inside* the consulting room. Although the conversation sounds like an ordinary one, because we use ordinary words, we ought to use those words very carefully. A surgeon cannot use any old knife to make an incision in the skin of a patient; a surgical operation must be carried out in a disciplined and precise manner. Both in analysis, and here and now in what we call a supervision, I use ordinary English because it is the language I know best. But I nevertheless consider that there is a certain discipline which is proper to both these situations. It is alarming to hear two married people, both of whom are analysts, talking as if they were analysing each other. Good gracious! Haven't they anything better to do? They could discuss painting, music, all sorts of things. They could even have a sexual relationship. If the analytic relationship is made into a substitute for other activities, that seems

to be a serious and dangerous by-product of analysis. I have no objection to having the analytic experience which makes it possible for me to take up the analytic profession; I want to be a psychoanalyst. But I do not want that experience to make it impossible for me to have a life worth living where I could never go to the theatre or a picture gallery, or paint or swim.

M: Patients cannot have any social contact with their analysts. What are your views about this?

B: Analysis does make the social relationship more difficult. If, for example, you were a surgeon and your son or daughter fell ill, I don't think you would like to operate on your blood relation; it would be sure to arouse very powerful feelings. That kind of emotional experience would interfere with the necessary clear thinking and destroy your dispassionate technical ability. Similarly in analysis; if you begin to have feelings of love for a patient, that interferes with the analytic relationship and the capacity to think in a dispassionate manner. The analyst should remain under a discipline and refrain from letting down the barriers and having a rhapsodic response – that is, throwing his arms round the patient and having a passionate love affair. That is just as bad as saying, "You don't want an analysis – all you need is to get married." That is nonsense. If you are dealing with a patient who is suffering mental pain, then it is silly to say, "All you need is a holiday by the sea", or, "All you need is a nice man or woman to marry." That is not a cure – marriage is for something else. It is not supposed to be a cure for neurosis or psychosis. But analysis *is* supposed to be.

16

Presenter: The patient lay down on the couch and started to talk. "Mrs J is the owner of the house where I live. She is eighty-eight years old. I dreamt that she was walking along the road, talking about the rental agreement." Then she started shouting, "What are you doing there behind me? Tell me *immediately*. You are a dishonest liar!" This took me by surprise.

Bion: I wonder what the difficulty is. If she knows that you are a dishonest liar, then obviously you would be telling lies behind her back. At the same time, why ask you what you are doing behind her back? Presumably you will only tell her more lies. Alternatively, is she afraid that you do *not* tell lies? If she thinks there is a chance that you speak the truth, that would explain why she asks you what you are doing. To put it another way: there is something wrong with this story; either the patient is lying, or she is slandering the analyst. Otherwise why should she spend her time with a dishonest liar?

P: I said, "I am listening." She replied, "Yes, that's important." She calmed down and continued describing her dream.

B: That is a very interesting sequel. Notice that the analyst didn't start an argument about whether or not he is a liar; he didn't get up and leave the room; he didn't lose his temper. The effect on the patient seems to have been quite helpful. It is not a cure, but a little bit of a cure; it is enough of a cure to make another minute or two possible. Not only does it matter what you say or do; it also matters what you do not say or do.

P: She continued to describe her dream: "Mrs J wanted to come into the house and look it over. There was a portrait of a nude in one of the rooms and I knew that she would not like that. So I tried to

stop her coming into the house, but I couldn't. In the kitchen there were two blood-stained garments."

B: The patient said this was a dream. Did you believe her? It sounds very likely that she wanted to stop you from seeing what was in her mind, leaving her feeling naked. But she wasn't able to lock the door; she wasn't able to make you leave; she wasn't able to put a stop to the analysis right away. So now you may find out what kind of person she is. However, there is always a safeguard: if you give an interpretation she can say, "It doesn't matter – I don't really think like that – it was only a dream."

P: She went on, "I was afraid the house-owner wouldn't renew the contract, complaining that I didn't take care of the house – although it was in an even worse condition when I first rented it. With a magic wand she turned the nude portrait into a Negro woman dressed in a rose-coloured dress. The Negro woman started to move. I saw a door I had never seen before, opened it, and found a dying plant. I was afraid the owner would be angry because I hadn't taken care of it. I tried to revive it with the magic spell she had used, but couldn't." Then she began to shout again, "What are you doing there? You are a liar. You are doing something you don't want to tell me about. I hate you. I want to destroy you, tear you into pieces and throw the pieces away." She was very, very angry.

B: What are you doing to her? She has continued to talk, so she is taking off her own disguises. If you take off the black skin, there is a person there; if you take off the dream, she herself is there. I think she is worried about what you are doing to her. Why do you make her speak the truth? It seems that you are only talking, but she knows it isn't only that. You are talking in some peculiar way which makes her expose the truth. This analytic conversation is very disturbing and frightening to the patient; she doesn't know what will appear. She is frightened of you because you don't only hear what she says, but understand what you hear; and she is frightened of herself for coming to see you. When she is so angry that she hurls these accusations at you, it also means that she is very frightened – being frightened and being angry are so nearly the same thing; they are feelings which are fundamental; they could be felt even by an embryo – in medical terms, the development of the adrenals. These fundamental, primordial feelings of fright, anger and hate are seeping up so that the patient cannot think clearly. So it would seem to be quite a good idea

to make the analyst frightened and angry too: let's start by calling him a dishonest liar and see if that will frighten him or make him so angry that he won't be able to think. Then it will be all right because he won't be able to think any better than she can. But we know it is no use at all to have *two* people in the room who can't think. So although it is horrible for the patient, it is just as well for the analyst to remain able to think. But we cannot settle this matter by being unable to be angry or frightened; we have to be able to have these strong feelings *and* be able to go on thinking clearly even when we have them.

17

Presenter: The patient is a fourteen-year-old boy. He came in and lay down on his front – not in the usual position. He began by saying, "If you were ill next time, we shouldn't be able to have our session and I would save money." Then he looked at me and said, "You are moving your fingers." He kept glancing at me all the time. Then he asked, referring to a boy who he knew had been one of my patients, "Did he leave you?" Then, "How long does an analysis take? Is it possible that I shall be here for ten years?"

Bion: I might say something like this: "You are not really sure whether you are the boy who came here and never came back again, or whether you are the boy who came here and has come here again today. But since you are the boy who has come here today, you are beginning to be afraid that you might also be coming here for ten years. And you would like me to be able to tell you how many years you have been coming so far, and how many more years you are going to come."

I suggest that this boy feels he has already been coming for fourteen years – in fact ever since he was born – and that it's quite long enough. At the same time he is not quite a boy – he's a young man; and he's not quite a young man – he's a boy who needs a father or mother or psychoanalyst to come to. In short, we are looking, at rather close quarters, at what is known as an adolescent. It's no good telling him that because it wouldn't mean anything to him. But he could possibly understand if one said, "You are feeling like a grown man and you are tired of being a boy. But you are frightened of being a grown man and would like to be a boy for a bit longer – perhaps for ten years more. You want me to tell you when you will be a man and when you can stop being a boy."

These are just rational guesses, rational conjectures. But during analysis you don't have time to discuss this kind of thing. Here we can imagine that the patient is waiting for the interpretation, but in real life he wants an answer straight off. This is the analyst's problem: how to answer on the spur of the moment – literally, for the moment is a spur which is provoking an answer – and how to give an answer which helps the analysis to go on but which isn't too much or too little. This is why treating adolescents is so difficult.

To give a pictorial image: if you are the captain of a sailing ship on a stormy sea, you have to know *at once* what sails to carry or what sails to strike. That is why the experienced captain has an advantage; he doesn't have to think too much because he has done the thinking beforehand. In the same way we have this kind of discussion so that we can do our thinking before we have to answer; it is useful to keep our own imaginative and rational conjectures up on the surface, ready in case we want to use them.

P: He got up from the couch and asked me, "Don't you want to give me the small box?" This contains things for drawing and painting which he used when he first came to me at the age of twelve.

B: "Can't I be a little boy a little longer please?" He doesn't want to grow up just yet.

P: He began to draw a copy of the cheque he had brought for the monthly account, saying that if he were the analyst he would keep the cheque for himself. He spent the rest of the session drawing the cheque – a very exact likeness. Then he tore it up and, indicating the real cheque, said, "I'll take this with me." He looked at me, took the torn-up drawing and left the cheque.

B: You are dealing here with an emotional storm, a dynamic situation. So whatever you do will probably be wrong the next moment – or possibly right. That is the problem with having to reply instantaneously in a situation which is constantly changing like the waves of the ocean.

M: Perhaps he was drawing the cheque because he isn't able to earn money and write real cheques.

B: When will he be grown-up enough to write cheques of his own, and when will his own cheques be worth as much as those of grown-up people? If he could write the cheques himself, perhaps that would pay him.

M: He may be identifying with his father, drawing the cheque in competition with his father.

B: Yes, but his pencil, his penis, isn't a very potent one. Cheques which his pencil or penis can make are not as powerful as the cheques made by his father's pencil or penis – or the analyst's. He is at this awkward stage where he is not a boy or a father; he is both of them at the same time.

P: I felt that he wanted me to impose limits on him.

B: It is perfectly true that he may want you to do that, but he also wants to be free. So how are there to be limitations which mustn't be limitations? I find the pictorial image of the storm-tossed sea useful, the motto of the city of Paris: '*fluctuat nec murgitur*'; storm-tossed but not submerged. This boy is saying, "How high are these waves going to rise? How high are these emotional feelings going to rise? What are their limits? But there mustn't be any limits – I don't want them to become a prison."

18

Presenter: The patient is a woman journalist. She came twenty minutes late to the session I am reporting, did not use the couch, and sat in the chair. On some days she uses the couch, on others she sits in the chair; sometimes she changes places during the session. She arrived looking tired, as if she had been running, but she was well-groomed and well made up. She said, "I wish I had come earlier because I would like a rabbit to come out of my hat today. Lots of things have happened: my mother is going back to the States, and my sister is getting divorced. I have been thinking about leaving analysis because my sister will need money for the divorce. I have other problems as well." After a pause I asked her what she meant by 'other problems'. She said she didn't know, but she thought she should stop the analysis because she didn't deserve to have so much money spent on her; she should move to a little house in the suburbs instead of living in several houses.

Bion: I get the impression that she has become aware of the fact that there are an enormous number of options. The problem is, how is she to spend the limited time and money she has? And because they are limited it matters very much what she buys. She could spend the money on a divorce for her sister. Or she could spend it on herself. But it sounds as if she would be unable to tolerate her guilt if she spent her resources of time and money on herself.

I don't think I would say any of that at the moment because I am not sure that she could stand it. I would probably want to hear some more. In the meantime I would keep to myself the opinion that this is a fundamental, basic guilt, the kind of conscience that, if one took a religious view, one would call 'original sin'. But from my point of view these are symptoms of a very dangerous conscience which is

more of a liability than an asset. It doesn't tell the patient what to do; it only tells her what she must not do. So I suspect she is afraid that you are that kind of conscience.

If I were the analyst, what interpretation should I give the patient? Or should I remain silent? If I remain silent, I am slipping into the position of being the conscience who is no good to her. I need more information and would therefore prefer to remain silent until I hear some more. But I would not know whether I could afford to wait or whether it would make her more than ever frightened of me as the unhelpful, hostile conscience. On the other hand, if I gave her that interpretation I would be afraid that it was premature. In either case there is a risk that she will walk out and not come back. Could I say something that would be neither of those mistakes?

P: Perhaps I might say, "How about looking inside this hat you mention, and trying to see those rabbits?"

B: The danger I would anticipate with that would be of the patient thinking I was being frivolous or taking her statement seriously. I don't say that is necessarily an objection to it; I think there would be an objection to whatever you said or did.

P: I got the impression that she was bringing a divorce upon herself.

B: Divorce, like marriage, is only an institution. The question is what does one use either of them for, and why one rather than the other? Why does this patient think that divorce is the best present she can give her sister?

I would be inclined to draw her attention to the fact that there are actually two people in the room, but there is also an observer who is watching this verbal intercourse between you and herself; while she is participating in a conversation with you, she is also listening to it. I might add, "In other words, I think that you and I are being watched by a very inquisitive person who is also you." If that is right we are dealing with something basic. It is reminiscent of the biblical story about curiosity which impels a character to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. This is a dynamic situation involving these three characters – analyst, analysand and observer. But we don't know which is playing which part at any given moment; they are constantly changing. It is also fundamental in the sense that it is called a 'triangular' situation.

P: It occurred to me that she wanted to leave analysis as a way of coping with feelings of abandonment and separation. Her mother is leaving her to take care of her sister, making her feel abandoned, so she will abandon me and leave me alone too.

B: The two are left alone, again with a primitive conscience. I could put it in these terms: two young children need a parent because that parent has a great deal of experience; this primitive conscience has no experience and does not know enough to look after two children. The experienced mother is liable to seem very strict because she is always saying, "Don't do this", "Don't do that", "Don't be naughty", and so on ad infinitum. But in fact the experienced mother is much milder, much less severe than the inexperienced conscience. So the danger of leaving two young children alone is not only all the naughty, bad things that they would do, but because they would be at the mercy of a very severe, harsh and inexperienced conscience. At a much later stage the danger in that kind of moral system is that it can impose a sentence of death unnecessarily; in other words, it is the sort of conscience that can drive a patient to suicide.

Although we are dealing with this in terms of childhood, we are in fact dealing with something which would be very serious if it were left untreated. This is what makes the analytic experience so important; patients can be helped to modify their ideas of right and wrong in comparison with what they now know. We do not say, "With a conscience like that, leave it to them to keep themselves dominated by such a conscience for the rest of their lives." The analyst may, like the mother, appear to be very restrictive because he wants patients to behave in a civilized and polite manner, not simply to go straight from some impulse to action without the intervention of a pause for thought. That is one reason why we believe that there is a lot to be said for discussing these matters and thinking about them. You may get a patient who, instead of working it out with the analyst, goes to the United States or England or France – acting first and repenting at leisure. It is a serious situation if a patient telephones to say, "I want to see you Doctor." "All right." "But I can't – I'm in the United States." Instead of spending all these months and years in analysis, the patient goes straight from the impulse to action, doesn't know what to do, and can't get back for the next session. So this patient is actually being quite sensible; she doesn't go to the United States; she comes to see you.

19

Presenter: The patient, a woman, has been in analysis for two years. From the first I had the feeling of being in the presence of an unprotected and defenceless person, although she did not express this verbally. In the session I am reporting she said that she had a phantasy that she came from an egg and that in leaving the egg she hurt herself. She said that before the analysis she lived without being conscious of more than half the things she did to herself. "I had no idea if it would be good to leave the egg or not. I just jumped, and plop! I hurt myself. After starting analysis I tried to leave the egg more carefully. I think you were right to say that unless I want to know the truth, the analysis can't go on. It is like the chicken hatching from the egg; if the chick isn't ready to leave the egg, it could hurt itself by trying to force its way out. I think I shall know when the egg is right. Can you hear me? I feel you are so far away from me that I can't see you."

Bion: You had not left the room; nor had she. So what had happened? The physical senses don't seem to throw any light on this. However, I have a very great deal of respect for what the patient says. What senses is she talking about? Is it possible that she has eye-sight which tells her one story, and in-sight which tells her another?

The baby seems to be aware that it is dependent on something else – something not itself – such as a breast, a bottle, a father, or a mother. It seems also to know when there is nobody else in the room. It is an unpleasant experience, this feeling of being dependent, incomplete, and at the same time the feeling of being all alone. This patient can be aware of being all alone with a psychoanalyst in the same room; she is dependent *and* all alone with the object she depends upon. When she came out of the egg, or her mother's inside, she could experience these feelings but would not then know how to

communicate them; today she can communicate them verbally, but she has forgotten what they are. I say she has 'forgotten' what they are, but as analysts we may have to revise our views about 'forgetting' and 'remembering'. Has this patient 'forgotten' what it feels like to be a new-born baby? Or is she 'remembering' what it feels like? I don't know. These words have so many meanings that they are of no use to us. If we want to make a scientific communication, we shall also have to make a work of art.

P: She said, "I feel the need for sensual contact like the need for oxygen. I need to touch people, to embrace them, to stay close to them. Since I have been in analysis this feeling has increased." I said, "I think you are confused by feeling like a small child, unprotected, defenceless, who only feels safe in close contact with the mother."

B: She might say, "I don't understand all this talk, but if I use my hand I can understand this table, or if I could touch your body, then *my* body would know what *your* body was saying. I don't understand these noises in my ears; let me touch you, and then my hand will understand what yours says." If she cannot stand the situation, she may actually hold your hand. What she doesn't know is that if she does, she will have such powerful feelings that she will get frightened. In fact she could get so frightened that she might never come back again – not because she has been prevented from touching you, but because she has been allowed to. So – what are we to say to a patient who wants physical contact? Or what are you to say if a patient tells you, "I don't understand this, but if you had a piano here, then I could play it and you would understand what I mean. All this talk is no good – I can't talk"? Or perhaps a patient says nothing at all but just gets angrier and angrier, and more and more hostile. At last he says, "Why don't you *do* something?" "Well, why haven't you told me anything?" And the patient replies, "I've done nothing but tell you – I've been telling you for the past two weeks." As far as the analyst is concerned, the patient hasn't said a word; he has come every day, five times a week for about two months without saying a word. But he is furious because he has told the analyst so much, yet the analyst knows nothing of it.

People often fail to realize that besides talking, analysts also listen. I think the patient we have been hearing about knew that the analyst was listening – that is why she said, "You've gone away." She must have known that the analyst was still in the room; something was

there, and she had the intelligence to know that although it couldn't be smelled or touched or felt, the analyst was thinking.

There are cultures which expect people always to be talking, always making a noise, so that anybody who is thinking is assumed to be doing nothing. The analyst has to be able to respect and pay attention to his own intuition while pressure is put on him to say something, or to do something, or to touch the patient, and to give up remaining in silence where he can at least hear himself think.

20

Presenter: The psychiatrist who referred this patient to me diagnosed him as psychotic. He had been committed to hospital. I didn't have a vacancy but I interviewed him and we agreed to leave it until I had a vacancy. Later he left hospital and phoned me, but I still had no vacancy. I said I would phone him when I had a mutually convenient time.

Bion: Where does this idea come from – that the patient needs help? We can understand that the psychiatrist would think so, but the interesting thing is that apparently the patient thinks so too. In other words, he is not so mad that he doesn't know he needs help. There are plenty of people who are what we would call 'insane' but who wouldn't want any help from anybody; they could feel that they were quite all right. But this patient seems at any rate to be sufficiently well to know that he is ill.

P: When he first came he gave the impression that he expected a great deal of me. At the same time he couldn't articulate words to express himself in order to communicate with me. I experienced this problem of mutism with another patient, and based on this I had the impression that this patient would remain silent for a long time. I knew he was studying architecture, so I suggested that he might like to do some drawings for me if he was having difficulty in using words. He accepted the suggestion enthusiastically, and has drawn in every session since.

A kind of ritual has been established: he does the drawing; I ask what he has drawn; he gives it to me; I look at it and ask what he thinks about what he has drawn. Sometimes I ask, "How do you interpret the drawing?" Or, "What have you drawn?" In the last session I said, "Give the drawing a title." He thought for a while

and then answered, "Bestiality Advancing". I asked him, "Are you representing the advance of bestiality by a foot that is advancing?" He replied, "Bestiality is not a foot; it is something that has feet." He spoke quite quickly and then drew a line round the picture as if it were a framed painting. [Hands the drawing to B.]

B: I could say: this is a funny piece of architecture; this looks like a drawing of a part of the anatomy. If that is the case, then perhaps he thinks the human body *is* a piece of architecture; it has a skeleton in much the same way as buildings have – iron girders, ferro-concrete. But *this* building is a plan for one of flesh and blood.

P: This might be the 'bestiality' to which he referred.

B: It is very interesting: this patient, who has been diagnosed (probably quite correctly) as psychotic, is also well enough to know he is ill. That is point number one. Point two: he is also well enough to know that the analyst is likely to help him, so he doesn't mind cooperating by drawing a picture. He doesn't tell you in words where the pain is, but he draws a picture of it.

M: Isn't it dangerous to consider that a drawing of this kind is a mental communication?

B: I think it is dangerous to consider anything. Psychoanalysis is a dangerous occupation; so is being a doctor or a fireman. In all these occupations people lose their lives. And it is just as well to remember that analysis is a dangerous occupation *whatever you do* – if you don't do anything, or if you *do* do anything.

This drawing is *of* something. If it were a house on fire, one could say that the flames were advancing. But if it's a drawing of a piece of human architecture, then it is a state of mind that is advancing – bestiality. In other words, he does not feel that he is becoming more civilized, more polite, more cooperative, but more bestial; not more human but more like the beasts.

While we are dealing with the advance of bestiality *now* – which may have advanced too far already – it would also be useful to know where it started, where its origin was. If we knew that, perhaps we could stop the origin from feeding the advance. If we were dealing with a fire, it would be important to contain that fire to prevent it from spreading. But it would also be important to know what was feeding it. If it was a physical ailment which was advancing, it would be useful to know where the source of the infection was. In fact I think that your asking the patient to draw is helping to contain the spread.

Drawing is quite a civilized procedure; it has a long history; it even goes back to cave paintings twenty thousand years ago. We can see signs in the patient of something which has a long history, is right up-to-date, and we come into the story very late.

21

Presenter: The analysis of this patient seems to have been through three phases. In the first she was chiefly preoccupied with the material conditions around her, such as the couch. She was very rigid about the schedule for sessions and became aggressive if any changes were made. On one occasion I was surprised to find myself twisted in my chair, trying very hard to follow her words because she was speaking so softly. It was only after I noticed this that I realized that she was exercising control to such a degree that I was unable to think analytically.

In the second phase she spoke almost as if she was talking to herself. Later she exhibited the same anxieties about material objects as in the first phase, but in relation to me, saying how nice I was, or how punctual. But I noticed that she was now using her talking as an evacuation so as to avoid contact with me, pushing me away.

In the third phase she began to consider me as a person. This phase was tinged with deep doubt and anxiety; she said she was now able to glimpse another world although she couldn't reach it. She was able at this stage to refer to the importance of analysis in her life.

I am going to describe yesterday's session –

Bion: Before we hear about this session, there is a question I would like to ask. I get the impression that the patient knew you would have to twist round in your chair to hear what she said. Did you feel that she knew you could not hear what she said and that you would have to move your bodily position?

P: I don't think she was consciously aware that she was forcing me to twist in the chair; I only felt it and observed it in myself.

B: If you were only a piece of furniture, a piece of wood, then there would be no question of making you feel anything. But if she

is aware that you are a human being, then she is also aware that you have to listen in order to hear what she is saying. So if she speaks very softly, you will have to do something about hearing what she says. This would certainly fit in with what we have already heard, namely that she is not really aware of you as a human being. But in so far as she *is* aware of that, she will also be aware that she is doing cruel things to you.

Let us hear more now about what happened in yesterday's session. We have heard the historical part: now we expect to get a much closer view.

P: She came into the room, handed me a cheque and said, "Today I am very worried because I put the wrong date on the first cheque I wrote. I'm disturbed." Then she went on to describe how she was nursing her two children who have 'flu. (I was surprised to find that while she was talking I was looking at the cheque and noticed that she had made it out for too large an amount.) She said she felt very happy to be able to look after her children; she had formerly had a maid with whom she used to leave them. I said, "Your disturbance can be seen in the cheque you wrote. You are expressing not your worries about your children, but your maternal feelings, the aspects of being a woman, of your sexuality." She agreed, but said I should also notice that as well as looking after her children she is now able to talk about sexuality to me. She drew my attention to the fact that she is now able to wear dresses whereas she used always to wear trousers.

B: It seems to me that in what you have described as the first phase, the patient didn't really know that you were a live person, or was being cruel to a live person – and to herself to some extent; if you cannot hear what she says, then you cannot give her any interpretations and she cannot get any treatment. However, something happens during this time which makes possible a second phase; both she and you have changed. Similarly with this second phase; something must have happened to make possible a third phase. If she has developed or grown, then she may have grown past the stage of wanting to be cruel to a 'thing', and she can feel indebted to you because you have put up with phases one and two.

It is difficult to know why this kind of psychoanalytic conversation should actually relieve a real mental pain and produce a real cure of a real mental pain. Analysts talk and argue about Kleinian theory, Freudian theory, Abrahamian theory and so on, as if they

had forgotten that behind all these theories there are people who are actually suffering. It is almost like a surgeon regarding an operation as a bit of carpentry carried out on a living body. You would soon see the point if a dentist drilled your teeth and regarded it simply as a technical accomplishment as if he had forgotten that those teeth belonged to a real person.

It is easy to get involved in arguments about technical questions as to who knows the most theories, or the best theories, and to forget altogether that we are concerned with *people.* Paradoxically, we are so close to the suffering, so involved with giving the correct interpretation, carrying out the correct mental operation, and patients are so concerned with how painful the correct mental procedure is, that it is a surprise to find as they progress that they are different; they are what we have to call, 'better', 'healthier', 'more cured'.

This patient discovers that all her past sufferings, anxieties, troubles, lead to a situation where she has a family of her own. It can be a surprise to find that it is quite nice to have children of her own. She may not feel that she remembers how she got there, but she can feel that she owes a debt to you. The problem that now arises is, how is she to express her feelings of gratitude to you? On the face of it she can fall back on the idea of money as a method of settling that debt. But what, if any, payment are you to expect if you are a good analyst? What coin are you to be paid in? There is a saying: virtue is its own reward. The reward for being virtuous is being virtuous; the reward for being a good analyst is being a good analyst; the reward for being a good father or mother is simply being a good father or mother.

22

Presenter: The patient usually arrives a little late, lies on the couch and immediately starts to talk. Yesterday he arrived ten minutes late and paused for about a minute before speaking. He said that while he was silent he was thinking about your lectures. He had considered attending those meetings but was afraid he would meet his former analyst (with whom he had been for eight years) and would not know what to say to him. He said, "It's funny – I remember things people tell me; I remember things about those people; and yet I don't remember the people themselves." He has been in analysis with me for six months, two months of which he spent in Europe. He said that while in Europe he sometimes remembered what I had said to him but never remembered me. He said this also applied to his memory of his father; he remembered his father's words but never his father.

While he was saying this I recalled that he had a habit of using quotations. My interpretation was, "You use words as if they were something that can be kept in a cupboard and which are at your disposal, but you leave people aside." He seemed to agree with my observation. He said that although he is 'intelligent, sensitive and shrewd', he is unable to retain the things he learns. As a result he feels ill at ease even when among friends. He thinks that is why he doesn't enjoy any serious conversation.

Bion: What strikes me about this is that he thinks he knows 'why'. People very often say, "Because . . . because . . ."; then while you are waiting to hear the cause, they don't tell you. This patient tells you the cause, but we don't know that he really knows what it is. If he knows the cause, why bother to tell you? The reason why he tells you is in fact that he does not know. I think he is frightened of you and of what you will find out. In physical medicine this fear can be so great

that someone who thinks he has cancer won't even go to see a doctor. When a patient comes to see an analyst, he hopes that the analyst will say there's nothing the matter. At the same time he is afraid that that isn't true, and also that the analyst will say, "Let's find out."

P: He refers to himself as a 'homosexual' so as to shield himself from any examination of what leads him to consider himself thus.

B: These words are so commonly used that they lose their meaning. I think one has to consider what language the patient is talking; it can sound just like a psychiatrist or a doctor – but it isn't.

P: He told me that on his return from Europe he had accepted an invitation from a girl-friend to spend the week-end at the coast. But since her parents would be there and he would have to converse seriously with them, he didn't go. He preferred to stay in the city with men friends and sit and chat with them. He says he enjoys chatting with men friends because it gives him a chance to feel very witty. The conversations are not serious but require his astuteness and wit.

Ever since childhood he has been surprised by the anxiety he feels when night comes because in fact he enjoys night-time. When he was an adolescent he went out with friends at night because he was afraid to stay at home. He has to go out every night to meet friends, and after these exchanges of witticisms he ends up by choosing a male sexual partner. Although he is not very explicit about it, he implies that he takes an active part in the relationship.

B: It seems to me that he can't stand the fact that you can observe him in daylight. He would like to be able to cover himself in darkness in the way that he can at night-time. If it is daylight and he is in a conscious state of mind, he is uncomfortable – he has a pain which he calls 'anxiety'. It would be much nicer if it were night-time and he could be hidden so that you couldn't see him. But he is afraid that you may be able to see him *and* keep on thinking whether it is day-time or night-time. So he takes refuge in staying awake at night. And while *you* can see men *and* women, he can only see half the human race – that half which looks like him.

P: Two things you say remind me that as a result of an attack of polio the patient limps. One is your mention of night as a refuge; the other is your reference to his only being able to see half the human race. Perhaps he feels only half a man and wants to hide his limp.

B: The difficulty can also be that the unmarried man is only half a human being. One can say that biologically the human unit is a

couple; it takes two human beings to make one. It is simpler if this patient can feel that he is complete because he doesn't want to have to find a mate. In fact he doesn't even like having to find an analyst; although he would like your help, it would be much nicer if you could send him your words but stay away yourself. This incomplete person is having the unpleasant experience of being all alone with himself and with you. If you left him, or he left you, he would have to get another analyst straight away. But he is frightened of a successful analysis, of what he might see if you opened his eyes or his ears, or any of his senses. And he is frightened of an unsuccessful analysis; he's not sure that he wants to remember the past, and he doesn't want to 'remember' the future either.

P: He is an art dealer and has a partner in his business, but would prefer to work just for himself. But he is afraid to do this. He lives with his mother, grandmother, sister and brother. He would like to set up home on his own but cannot.

B: He is not 'at home' with himself. But whether he likes it or not he has to be 'married' to himself for as long as he lives. He objects to being the kind of animal that has to have a mate, but while he may not like being with his analyst, he likes it less still being alone with himself. So since he has to have a mate, the only thing he can choose is another human being – and all human beings are so much alike; they are all imperfect creatures. So then there are *two* imperfect beings and the problem is whether these two halves make one whole or not. Will these two halves fit together? If they are both women, or both men, they don't fit.

23

Presenter: The patient came in looking very tense. She lay on the couch and remained silent. I asked her if she wanted to speak about the subject of payment which she had mentioned in the previous session. She got up from the couch, sat on it, opened her purse and took out an appointment book. She said she didn't think she would be able to pay me until the beginning of next month. I had the impression that she wanted to establish some kind of link, a complicity.

Bion: We can all now say what we would do if we had an experience of the kind that has been sketched out for us. It can't take the place of what the analyst already knows, but we can give our imaginations an airing. I don't want to appear to interfere with what you are talking about because I could call that 'sacred'. What I would do if I had such a patient is more a matter of my peculiar mentality than of the actual analysis. The way that I do analysis is of no importance to anybody excepting myself, but it may give you some idea of how *you* do analysis, and that *is* important.

I don't think I would say anything about the previous reference to payment. But after a time, and if I thought the patient could understand, I would say, "I can understand now what you meant about the difficulty in paying. You are mentally constipated, so you are not able to give me any free associations – you can't give me any information and I can't give you any interpretation. So we can see how difficult this question is: how are you to pay me, and how am I to pay you? There are two people here, but this silence shows that neither of us can pay." If I give that interpretation, then I have the chance of seeing from the patient's reaction whether it seems to be the right one, or whether I have made a mistake.

We know now what in fact you did say to her in the actual situation. So we can go on from there.

P: I told her that I didn't know for whose benefit she was explaining in such detail why she was unable to pay. She became very irritated and said, "Well, you are quite right; next time I'll pay you. As a matter of fact, if I haven't the money for more sessions I can always give up coming here." Then she lay down again and lapsed into silence.

B: Did she say she was irritated, or was it an observation of yours?

P: It was my observation. She is a dancer and uses her body very expressively.

B: That is the kind of thing that makes the analyst's position quite different from any amount of theory. You can use *all* your senses in the analytic session – conscious or unconscious – so that you have a very great deal of information.

Why does this patient not know that you are there to help? And if she doesn't know it, what has she come for? Why is she irritated, annoyed? After all, you have only told her something in order to help her.

P: She remained silent for some time. After a while I felt I could ask, "How can I help you?" She said, "No, you can't help me." I said, "But isn't this a contradiction? You say I can't help you, but you are here." She said, "Well, to avoid the contradiction I had better leave." She sat up, arranged her hair, and left the room with an air of offended dignity.

B: Well, what about that? If she feels disposed to translate her feelings into action and walk out of the room, it might be because *she* can't help *you.* There is nothing she can do for you: you aren't her baby or her husband or her son – or even her patient. However, she has actually created another difficulty because she has gone straight from the impulse of annoyance to action. And if she wants more analysis she will have to come back again. That is much more difficult than it would have been if she had not walked out. You can't do anything about that; you can't bring her back or tell her to come back because that gets close to breaking the law – you aren't allowed to imprison the patient. If you said, "Here, come back!", she could bring an action for damages on the grounds that you weren't

allowing her to be free. She has to learn the hard way, namely that if she translates her impulse into action without thinking, then she has to do more thinking to get back again. Or she will have to find another analyst – which is just as bad.

This can all be very disagreeable for the analyst because none of us likes losing patients; we always wonder what we have done wrong. It is quite useful to know what we have done wrong, but it is also just as well to remember that in this world accidents happen and ordinary human beings make mistakes. We aren't obliged to be God; we aren't obliged to be what we can't be. It is not our privilege to be free of mistakes; it doesn't matter how old or how experienced you are – you will always be making mistakes.

What happened next?

P: She came again the next day.

B: We are always having to stop the story when it is getting very interesting.

24

Presenter: The patient, a woman of twenty-four, has been coming to me for nine sessions. Sometimes she sits on a chair; sometimes she lies on the couch; and sometimes she changes from one to the other during the session. In the session I am reporting she chose to sit on the chair. She said, "I would like you to explain what you said yesterday about my being unable to cope with my feeling of anger." She fell silent, waiting for me to reply.

Bion: I would feel that I had explained it to the best of my ability. If the patient didn't understand what I said yesterday, what is the good of my saying it again today? One says it at the time when it is possible for the patient to know what one is talking about; the next day is a different day, a different situation. Is there any point in acceding to that request? On the other hand, is it a good thing for you to make no reply?

P: I had the impression that she was talking about feeling angry, but I couldn't see or feel any signs of anger while she was with me. I think she wants to talk about the past, while I want to talk about the present. She wants to build a wall around herself with rational words and remain inside that wall with her own feelings. I am somewhat anxious because I cannot put my finger on what she is actually feeling, and I haven't enough material to form an opinion.

B: You are not obliged to talk if you feel you haven't anything to say. Only *you* can know when you have enough evidence to give an interpretation.

P: I felt constrained by her behaviour to understand her feeling. This worried me.

B: This is typical of the way in which pressure can be put upon you by the patient: a demand for premature or precocious reassurance. But you have to be able to resist these demands.

M: I wonder why we feel compelled to give interpretations. If we have only been seeing a patient for a short time – as with this patient – we cannot give a profound interpretation.

B: It is usually because we are afraid of losing the patient. At the beginning of an analyst's career he is afraid that supervisors or training committees will count it against him if he loses patients. I think that is nonsense. If I were on a training committee – as I have been – I would consider that those patients had certainly taught the analyst something about what it feels like to lose a patient.

With a new patient it is of course useful to fall back on a certain amount of psychoanalytic theory when there is very little else to go on; it is useful for about three sessions. Giving interpretations after that without the necessary information encourages the patient to think that the analyst doesn't need evidence.

P: The patient said she felt very sleepy and relaxed as if after massage. She then found a comfortable position in the chair and fell asleep. I thought she might sleep until the end of the session and I would then have to wake her.

B: I have known a patient come forty-five minutes late for a fifty-minute session. He lies on the couch and says one or two sentences; I get up and say, "We've finished." "That", says the patient, "was a very short session." I suspect that the patient is not aware that time passes. If a patient is wealthy enough he can use the time however he wishes; as well as plenty of money, he thinks he has plenty of time. But how does he know that? We know that we can die at any time – even before birth. So why does this patient, at twenty-four, think that she has plenty of time, and spends it sleeping?

There is another question: why does this patient feel safe enough with you to go to sleep? If she were my patient I would think, "She doesn't know who I am; she has only seen me nine times; why does she think it safe to go to sleep with a stranger like myself?" Either she is desperately short of sleep, or she has a completely mistaken idea of the safety of going to sleep in the presence of a stranger. One is bound to wonder, what is this sleep? Is it a form of catalepsy? . . .

25

Presenter: The patient is thirty-two years old, a paediatrician, and comes from the north of Brazil. His father is violent; his mother was sickly and died when he was seven. His is a big family. As is usual in the north, one of the children was chosen to study for the priesthood, and he was that one. He left the church school in a state of revolt, was able to pay to study medicine, and became a paediatrician. While he was still living in the north he made three suicide attempts: twice by poison and once by shooting. He came here two years ago, got married, and has a baby daughter.

He first came to me three days before my vacation was due to begin, having already cancelled an arranged consultation. I had the impression that he was afraid of coming, and during the interview I understood why. He told me that when he was a little boy he returned home after a vacation and found that his mother had died. As I was due to go on vacation I think he was afraid of establishing contact with me and then being left alone. He wanted to be quite sure which day I would be back and when I would be able to see him again.

Bion: Don't you think it is very significant that although he has all the drugs of a pharmacopoeia at his disposal, he can't poison himself properly? When he has a gun, he can't even shoot himself. So he's a bungler. What reason would he have for supposing he would be any good at anything? If there is something that *anybody* ought to be able to do, it is to kill themselves – there isn't even any opposition – there is nothing between him and the person he wants to murder. So if this patient can't even murder himself, what do you think he *could* do?

P: What he can do is to blackmail.

B: One wonders if he would be any good at that either. On what grounds does he think that he can bring up a family? Why does he

think he can support a family? I am not suggesting that you can say any of these things to the patient, but I think we can consider them here. Do you consider that such a person would make a good, capable, potent husband? These questions raise a surprising problem: somehow he has persuaded somebody that he would make a capable paediatrician.

P: Perhaps in the same way as someone thought he would make a good priest, or as someone has persuaded him to undergo psychoanalytic treatment.

B: Does he always do what he is told? As a boy he may not have been in a position to refuse to go to school, but he set himself up against the authorities in his revolt against entering the church. Although he could be qualified as a priest, he knew he couldn't *be* one.

P: He apparently acquiesces in what is asked of him, but internally he is full of hate for his family, for me, for everyone including himself.

B: But he is still unable to kill himself. Even if he couldn't kill his father and mother, one would still think that, hating himself, he could kill himself – but he couldn't.

P: He said, "Nevertheless, I need you. I would like to be resting inside you. But I am afraid someone would come inside me." When I pointed out that he wanted to identify with me, he became frightened and said, "I love you."

B: I wonder why he thinks so. He has talked about two fundamental things: hate and love. All other feelings are really variations of love and hate; it is easy to learn the words; if you can read, you can find them in any dictionary. Do you think this man can either love or hate? I dare say he can make the right noises – "I love you", or, "I hate you", but do they mean anything? If he is such a bad chemist and such a bad shot that he can't murder anybody, why does he think he could love people?

M: Why did he want to see an analyst?

P: He was afraid of what effect his behaviour might have on his wife and child. He wanted to be able to take care of them and was afraid of becoming incapable of working. He was also afraid of killing himself and thereby leaving his wife and child alone.

B: So what do you think he meant when he said he loved you?

P: I don't know, but I felt touched by it.

B: The question of how you feel has to be settled by you in your own analysis. The problem in the analytic session is: what does the patient mean? It may be true that you are touched, but by what? I might have been touched had I been there, but I wasn't, and I am not. But you aren't reading a story, and I can perfectly well understand that you were touched. To you it is a *practical* experience; to us it is a theoretical discussion. . . .

26

Presenter: The patient sat on the couch and said in a strong voice, "I've asked myself why I'm here today. There's a soccer game this afternoon – Brazil are playing. I enjoy soccer so much I'm sorry to miss it. I was sure that I was going to get awfully bored here. I've been thinking how bored I would be ever since I put the key in the car to come here. And I'm still asking myself why I came." I said, "I feel it is very difficult for you to admit that you do something because you enjoy it. You arrived here feeling certain that you would be bored. It seems to me that behaving like this makes you feel happy. Perhaps you are being masochistic."

Bion: The patient says he 'asked himself', but he doesn't say what he himself answered. Perhaps 'he' and 'himself' are playing another game which is also very pleasurable – a game in which he is cruel to himself and is also cruelly treated. But neither of the two people in the room can go to the football match, so both of them are cruelly treated.

P: He said, "I don't understand when you talk about things like masochism. I'm getting bored again. I've been bored ever since I woke up this morning, and I'm so bored now I feel like crying." His tone of voice was one of a mixture of anger and sadness. He went on, "There's a story about a woman that I can't get out of my mind. Fortunately she is so unbearable that I can't fall in love with her."

B: What do you think the patient understands when he is with you? Brazilian? Portuguese? Football?

P: Although he says he doesn't understand me, I have the impression that he does. I agree with your reference to a cruel game – I think that is what he was feeling.

B: Verbal language is very difficult to use for this purpose. I need some way in which I could say, 'understanding + absolute'. I mean by that, understanding, both positive and negative. What is the patient *absolutely* understanding? He is understanding psychoanalysis, but he is not understanding football – he hasn't gone to it. Having chosen to come to analysis – and also chosen not to go to football – he is able to observe two people in the room; he has a chance of seeing the game that is being played by the analyst and himself. Similarly, when you choose to give an interpretation, you are choosing what interpretation *not* to give. I could say that here in this room I am choosing not to hear the traffic. It is partly done by shutting the windows, but it is also done by shutting my mind to those noises. I am also choosing to close my eyes to things I can see in order to look at something else. There is always this problem: what to listen to, and what to be deaf and blind to.

I suggest that this patient is watching you and himself playing the game of psychoanalysis. All games are a mixture, partly fun and partly serious. But this patient is talking as if having an analysis is supposed to be something you don't enjoy. How does he then choose to come at all? Why has he not gone to the football match? Is he afraid that that international match wouldn't be fun?

You have to talk to this particular patient in a way which he can understand. Therefore it is necessary to be careful to choose words that are as simple and unmistakable as possible. I think you have to be careful about words like 'paranoid', 'schizoid', 'masochistic', 'sadistic', even though they may be commonly used and your patient may be an educated man.

M: Do you think the patient is trying to control the analyst?

B: Patients often do. There is nothing surprising or particularly wrong about it, but they would be frightened if they succeeded. I think this patient must be making progress: he puts up with the frustration of not watching a game – probably quite an exciting one, a nice way to spend an afternoon – and chooses to spend it doing analysis.

27

Presenter: The patient, a woman of twenty-four, was sent to me for analysis two years ago by a psychiatrist after a depressive breakdown for which she had received drugs. She had almost finished a course in psychology and was preparing to be married. She said that when she was twelve years old she underwent psychotherapy but no progress was possible because she sat and wept all the time. In the session I am reporting she was silent for forty minutes, wept all the time, and was apparently only aware of what I said for the last ten minutes.

Bion: She fears that the conversation, the verbal intercourse, between you and herself is going to be interrupted by a twelve-year-old who can drown it in tears. She is also afraid that intercourse between her and her potential husband will be interrupted by a twelve-year-old – or perhaps even by a one-year-old, or two-year-old.

What would I say to her? If I say, "You are feeling depressed", she can compare that with what she *knows* she is feeling. The advantage of that kind of interpretation is that I am talking about what is happening *now,* not about something that happened twelve years ago. One could say, "You are afraid that if you are depressed I will have nothing more to do with you. You are afraid that I will not go on with the analytical marriage." She, who knows most about the whole matter, can then feel whether I am right or wrong, and can help to keep me on the right track; she has a chance of knowing that I am talking about her self; and I have a chance of being able to judge what her reaction is to what I have said. The analyst and analysand can know what is going on in the consulting room, but neither of them can really know what happened twelve years ago, or what happened in the psychiatric hospital; that depends on memory which is very deceptive. It is therefore useful to dismiss both one's memories and one's desires so

that the present is unobscured. It is a great advantage for the analyst to feel that he does not have to talk about anything for which he has no evidence at the time.

P: Although she remains unchanged during the sessions, her extra-analytic life has developed; she finished her course, got married, and is doing well in a job.

B: In this psychoanalytic intercourse there is no way for the patient to know what kind of thing is born as a result. The anxiety is that it will be somebody who cries for forty minutes without stopping, and the analyst or husband will say, "I can't stand this any more – I'm off. You can keep the baby – I'm going." If you were writing a novel, the story could be: A and B meet; they love each other; they marry; they give birth to a child, C; C cries so much that the marriage breaks up.

28

Presenter: The patient has been in analysis with me for almost five years. This session took place four months ago. He started by asking if I had read a certain psychoanalytic book. He said, "It's a very good book and I noted several interesting things. It's very good indeed, but I haven't read it all because there are parts I'm not interested in. There is a part which described a duel – this is very interesting indeed because last Saturday I almost didn't go out – I was so tired I had to rest. Do you understand? I had to rest." I said, "You started on one idea, interrupted it, and then went on telling me about something else." He said, "Well, all right. Because I only read the part that interested me – because I noticed that – and because I rested on Saturday, I felt it was important." I said, "I think we are having a duel here too." He said, "Yes, but it's very difficult because what is happening is as if there were several situations which are superimposed." I replied, "You feel that if you don't try to tell me what is happening inside you, you will become confused." After a short silence he said, "When you speak I feel as if you had left a mark, like Z does." (Z is a character who wears a black mask, rides a horse and leaves his mark, Z.) I said, "He is a man who fights injustice." The patient laughed. "He cuts the braces of the sergeant's trousers and leaves the enemy with no clothes. That is why you make me feel irritated." I reminded him, "But the person he attacks is also a friend of his." The patient laughed again and said, "Oh yes, I quite agree – the sergeant is a fool." I said, "For you a friend is a fool – perhaps that is why you don't show friendly feelings towards me here." Then he fell silent.

Bion: If the patient says, in effect, that he is going to pick and choose what to listen to, one could say, "Well, I hope you will be able to choose the right things. I can see that I may be telling you some

things that you don't want to learn or to hear or to see. I can't do anything about that – go ahead by all means." I have sometimes said to patients, "If what you say is right, then I am the wrong person to come to. You hate being with me here; you hate what I say to you; you don't want to hear it. That is no problem because, as you know, there are plenty of other analysts. The door isn't locked, so you can walk out if you like." We are trying to show patients something we think would be good for them to know. So whatever they say, we should not lose sight of that fact; we are there to help. We don't agree with patients that we are there to cause trouble or to make things difficult for them. They are free to think what they like, but we are also free to be what we want to be. This patient seems to want to force you to be the sort of person that would suit *him.* You may want to be helpful, but there is a great difference between being helpful because you want to be, and being helpful because you are forced to be.

M: I am not sure that the job of the analyst is to help the patient.

B: The language is so ambiguous; so many different things are understood by 'help'. The oracle at Delphi was supposed to have carved into the stone, "Know thyself". So the idea that it is useful and helpful to 'know thyself' is not new. In that sense we are trying to say, "I will help you to know yourself. If you tell me something, I will tell it back again to you in a way in which you may be able to see yourself. I am trying to be a mirror which doesn't tell you who I am – that is of no importance whatsoever – but who *you* are. The only thing I can do to help you is to reflect back to you who you are, so that you can see in what I say to you an image of yourself. If you don't want to know what you look like, I don't mind – you need not look to me to reflect you; you can find a different mirror." We would like, if we could, not to be too turbulent a mirror, because if we can remain steady, then the patient can get a clearer image of who he is. If we change too much, then it becomes a distorting image.

An actor has learnt how to put on make-up and the clothes of different characters. If he comes to you for analysis, he can see the image in you of any particular character he chooses to assume. But when you start analysing such a person, you take off those clothes and he feels naked. This patient has shown that you make him feel naked. He is in effect saying, "I don't want you to take off my mental clothes." In fact he is asking you to make a deal with him: he will show you only what he wants to show you if you will promise only

to see what he wants you to see. In a way it is one of the weaknesses of psychoanalysis that analysands can only get the kind of analysis they deserve. We can't force them to learn.

This patient seems to be making a condition: he will come to you for analysis *if* he can get only the analysis he wants. It is as well to bear in mind that the only 'cure' he will get is *that* kind.

BION IN NEW YORK AND SÃO PAULO

1977/1978

Bion in New York and São Paulo was first published in 1980 by the Roland Harris Educational Trust & Clunie Press, Strath Tay.

Bion in New York and São Paulo

PREFACE

Wilfred Bion died in Oxford on 8 November 1979 less than a week after he was diagnosed as suffering from myeloid leukaemia. The content of this book was approved by him in 1978.

The two series of discussions form an illuminating contrast: The 1978 South American visit was Bion's third to São Paulo and fourth to Brazil; his method of presenting his subject was, therefore, familiar to those taking part. The visit to New York in 1977 was his first.

It must be admitted that for those looking for cut-and-dried 'answers' Bion's method was inexplicable, frustrating and aggravating. Here was a man, thoroughly conversant with his subject, exceptionally articulate and therefore well able to supply questioners with what they wanted to hear – and he knew it. But he was steadfast in his respect for the truth and would not be persuaded against his better judgement to follow a course in which he could not respect himself. He believed that "*La réponse est le malheur de la question*"; both in his professional and private life problems stimulated in him thought and discussion – never answers. His replies – more correctly, counter-contributions – were, in spite of their apparent irrelevance, an extension of the questions. His point of view is best illustrated in his own words: "I don't know the answers to these questions – I wouldn't tell you if I did. I think it is important to find out for yourselves"

"I try to give you a chance to fill the gap left by me"; "I don't think that my explanation matters. What I would draw attention to is the *nature* of the problem".

"When I feel a pressure – I'd better get prepared in case you ask

me some questions – I say, 'To hell with it, I'm not going to look up this stuff in Freud or anywhere else, or even in my past statement – I'll put up with it'. But of course I am asking you to put up with it too".

Francesca Bion

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I thank all who participated in these discussions with their objections and agreements. Many who read this book will feel that my replies are inadequate and incomplete. That they are inadequate I must admit; that they are incomplete I regard as a virtue especially if it stimulates the reader to complete the answers. I wish the reader as much enjoyment as I had in speaking; if it sends him to sleep may I wish him "Sweet Dreams and a profitable awakening".

W.R.B.

NEW YORK
1977

INTRODUCTION

These talks, given in April 1977 under the auspices of the Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research (I.P.T.A.R.), took place on five consecutive evenings. There were two groups of participants; one attended talks One, Three and Five; the other, Two and Four. Although some roughnesses and repetitions, inevitable in impromptu expression, have been deleted it is hoped that the printed record is not misleading. A few passages have been added subsequently; these are marked { }.

Q = question

O = observation

1

Bion: Well, here we are.

But where is 'here'? I remember a time when I was at an address – some seventy years ago – which I called "Newbury House, Hadham Road, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, England, Europe. Another small boy said to me, "You have left out 'The World'". So I put that in too. Since then I have been told by the astronomers that we are part and parcel of a nebular universe, a spiral nebula to which our solar system belongs. Astronomers can get away with a remark like this; nobody complains that they are always 'inventing' new discoveries. But, as Freud pointed out, this is not the case with doctors or psychoanalysts. People say, "These doctors are always inventing new diseases; then they treat them. It becomes a vested interest". But nobody says "You astronomers invent a new universe and want another telescope". I suppose it is because we feel it doesn't matter very much what the Universe is.

I want now to narrow down the view, cutting out the various elements we regard as irrelevant. As analysts we look at what we call the character or personality. This peculiar view – I won't say Freud started it, but he gave it a considerable push – turns out to be a vast universe of its own kind. We forget that the dimension which Freud introduced into this scrutiny has caused a lot of trouble. We fail to notice it because we are in the storm centre, unaware of the 'centre' of which we are a part. But it is that disturbance with which we are concerned.

What does it look like to us? When we go to our offices tomorrow what do we expect to see? What are we going to look at? What is our interpretation, our diagnosis? What is our interpretation of the facts which our senses make available?

We assume that there is a mind, a personality. What does it look like? What does it smell like? Does it present itself to our touch, our feelings? Do we get any tactile impression? We know that so far we do not; so far we cannot say, "I walk into this room blindfold and I can feel a psychosis hitting up against my mind". What then is making contact? Is there any way of verbalizing this? Is there any way of communicating this thing to each other? Hypothetically, yes. Hypothetically we can write papers, we can write books about it. But what *do* we contact tomorrow? Can we say from what we contact, "I have been here before; I have had this sensation before now"? If so, what sensation?

Expanding our view again, taking the entire universe – I have been here before. Where? According to the astronomers this spiral nebula, of which our solar system is a part, is itself rotating; it is a long way from one side to the other and a long time, from our point of view, before we are at the same spot again – something like twice ten to the power of eight million light years – so far indeed that if we look towards the galactic centre there is nothing to see excepting the remnants of the Crab Nebula which is still in process of exploding. To us it looks immense because we are such ephemeral creatures.

Not forgetting that, but using it as a background, narrow down the view again and look at it through this microscopic, psychoanalytic view. We need to have some idea what we 'see', what we make contact with. It would be useful if we could feel there was something familiar about it and say, "I have seen this before", or "I have had this experience before".

To return to my own private life: When I was small I used to be regarded by grown-ups as a very odd child who was always asking questions. I was made to recite a poem:[1]

> "I keep six honest serving-men
> They taught me all I knew;
> Their names are What and Why and When
> And How and Where and Who.
> I send them over land and sea,
> I send them east and west;
> But after they have worked for me,
> I give them all a rest."

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[1]Rudyard Kipling, 'The Elephant's Child', *Just So Verses*.

It was considered to be extraordinarily amusing that I had to recite this piece of verse. I could not see the joke myself. I was told I was just like the Elephant's Child who asked these questions – and like a fool I asked another one. I said, "Who was the Elephant's Child's father?" That was not popular; it was not amusing. But I was not making a joke. I decided I had better be careful not to ask too many questions; it took me a long time to dare to start asking questions again. The person who made it easier for me was John Rickman who was the first psychoanalyst I ever met. I am still at it – I don't think it is any more popular now than it ever was.

To return to this simple poem of Kipling's – "I give them all a rest". When we are in the office with a patient we have to dare to rest. It is difficult to see what is at all frightening about that, but it is. It is difficult to remain quiet and let the patient have a chance to say whatever he or she has to say. It is frightening for the patient – and the patient hates it.

We are under constant pressure to say something, to admit that we are doctors or psychoanalysts or social workers; to supply some box into which we can be put complete with a label. So the patient tries to diagnose the analyst, and the analyst hopes that somehow he will have a chance to "see a pattern emerge". I use that phrase deliberately; Freud was most impressed by Charcot's use of it.[1]

We have to focus our attention on the individual. It is no good talking about the astronomical universe; it is no good talking about the cosmos. But to suggest that we are people with a prejudice in favour of having respect for the individual is a dangerous thing to do because it will not be tolerated easily by the group, the crowd, the nation or the race. It is as well to be clear about this: We are involved in a philosophical prejudice in favour of a person, in favour of the uniqueness of the human individual. There will be an emotional pressure against each single one of us who dares to attach importance to an individual and who dares to be an individual himself. We may long to say, "I'm American", or British or Freudian or Jungian or Kleinian – any label which is 'respectable'. But every psychoanalyst has to have the temerity, and the fortitude which goes with it, to insist on the right to be himself and to have his own opinion about this strange experience which he has when he is aware that there is

[1]S. Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1916–17).

another person in the room. Pressure against this is considerable; your senses tell you that it is your office; you are used to the windows here, the furniture there; there is every pressure to make you feel you are at home. It is difficult to resist that. I have suggested this: Discard your memory; discard the future tense of your desire; forget them both, both what you knew and what you want, to leave space for a new idea. A thought, an idea unclaimed, may be floating around the room searching for a home. Amongst these may be one of your own which seems to turn up from your insides, or one from outside yourself, namely, from the patient.

Here is a dismal story: the patient has been coming to you for the last five, ten years. If you were honest you would have to say that you are sick to death of the sight of that patient; and if the patient is honest he would have to say he is sick to death of hearing about psychoanalysis or seeing his analyst. It is not polite to talk in that way; nor is it helpful.

We should retain civilized and conventional politeness. It exceeds the limits of the necessary minimum conditions for psychoanalysis to resort to violence such as breaking furniture, though an analyst may tolerate such behaviour temporarily. A child – of whatever age – can be expected to behave reasonably politely. {Each analyst must be clear in his own mind what for him are the minimum conditions necessary (MCN) in which he and his patient can do the work.}

Let us widen our view, taking a biological vertex. So far the human animal has been extremely destructive; it hunts in groups, in herds, and has managed to kill opposition from other dangerous animals – even tigers and lions. {Analyst and analysand are alone in the same room. The MCN are that both behave in a conventionally civilized and polite manner. They are still dangerous animals, so we can see that the limitation proposed by psychoanalysis itself restricts their behaviour. We also indicate (and provoke, albeit unintentionally) primitive behaviour.

The psychoanalytic conversation is itself an experience of conflict between the phenomena to which attention is drawn and the MCN for the work. If this fact, often unobserved, were allowed for it would make it possible to understand why the analyst and the analysand are fatigued by the strain of a psychoanalysis.} Annoyance between analyst and analysand is likely. We can use technical terms like 'transference' and 'counter-transference', provided they illuminate rather

than obscure. But the thing itself doesn't go away because we have given it a name; whatever they are called, the feelings of the couple remain. Starting from the moment of birth we are always supposed to be learning to behave in a civilized way. At an early age we have already learnt not only *not* to be ourselves but also *who* to be; we have a well-established label, diagnosis, interpretation of who we are. But the *facts* continue to exist. What the patient says can be used by the analyst as a free association. {This may be mistaken by the analysand as a way of ignoring the facts which he has communicated. It is necessary for the analyst to be clear in his mind that this is not so.} In due course a pattern will emerge which can then in its turn be interpreted. As a by-product the patient can discover who he is. So few people think that it is important to be introduced to themselves, but the one partner the patient can never get rid of while that patient is alive is himself.

Q: How do you proceed in helping the patient to discover his true self?

B: It is difficult to borrow from a newly developed 'sense' – of self-awareness – to illuminate the fundamental and basic thing. I try to give myself a chance to absorb that basic thing. Our common senses tell us that there is another person in the room; the basic 'thing' – not the 'common sense' – is what I wish to make explicit. I cannot describe what a 'person' is, but I am sure there is such a thing, and I am sure it is not adequate to describe what presents itself to my eyes, my ears or even what could be recorded by a video-tape. It is too crude; there is something else in the room.

If you show a musician a sheet of music he can see the black marks on a white background but he behaves as if there is something beyond that. The painter sees a field of poppies – which everybody has seen – and paints a picture of them. You may see a reproduction of it – it doesn't mean a thing. If you walk into the Jeux de Paumes in Paris and see the painting itself, you think: "I never saw a field of poppies until now; *now* I know what it looks like" – it is an emotional experience, not a report on one. How does a great painter manage to use pigments and canvas to give countless people an idea of what a field of poppies looks like?

Shakespeare writes a simple piece of prose: "The raven himself is hoarse that croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan under my battlements". All the words are simple; "battlements" is the longest one

and doesn't take a moment to look up in the dictionary. But, "The raven is hoarse that croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan under my battlements" – that is something else. What else is it?

I am well aware that you are not going to see a Shakespeare or a Monet in your office; the person will be disguised as Mr or Mrs X of such-and-such address. Don't be taken in by that; don't be taken in by the fact that you think you have seen this patient before – you have not. What you have seen before doesn't matter. What does matter is what we, the analyst and the patient, have *not* seen before. Prince Andrei, in *War and Peace*, says on hearing a remark, "That is sooth, accept it – that is sooth, accept it". We likewise can feel, "Yes, that is true. That interpretation is right; that observation is correct". That is contact with the *thing itself*. Unfortunately it doesn't happen as often as we would like; the two personalities do not often meet. But they may meet closely enough to be aware that there is something more in the room than a computer can process.

The infant knows what it is to have raging emotions – things to which we give crude names, like fear, depression, love, hate – but it doesn't know what to call them; by the time it has mastered articulate speech it has forgotten what it feels like to be an infant. So we, who have reached this stage of being capable of articulate speech, have almost forgotten what it feels like to be human. We spend too many impressionable years in learning how to be just like everybody else – not how to be ourselves. Now we spend too many years in the intellectual stratosphere. But despite what we have learned, certain 'crude' feelings are still able to make themselves felt; if they can dare, the analytic couple can still feel love and hate.

The analyst is trying to help the patient to dare to be himself, to dare to have enough respect for his personality to be that person. The analytic experience, in spite of all the appearance of comfort – comfortable couch, comfortable chairs, warmth, good lighting – is in fact a stormy, emotional experience for the two people. If you are an officer in a battle you are supposed to be sane enough to be scared; but you are supposed also to be capable of thinking. It sounds ridiculous to say that people sitting in a comfortable room in full peace time have to be capable of anything – but they do. The analyst is supposed to remain articulate and capable of translating what he is aware of into a comprehensible communication. That means that he has to have a vocabulary which the patient may be able to understand if given a

chance to hear what the analyst has to say. It sounds absurdly simple – so simple that it is hard to believe how difficult it is.

The language we use is so debased that it is like a coin which has been so rubbed that it is impossible to distinguish its value. "I'm terribly frightened" says the patient. What about it? Terribly. Frightened. These words are commonplace. But I now become alert when I hear that word "terribly" because it is so worn. It's terrible weather; it's terrible this; it's terrible that; the word means nothing. {When the patient becomes aware of the analyst's attention he will find a more arcane way to say "terribly frightened" – perhaps even a 'psychoanalytic way'. The game of hide-and-seek will enter a new phase.}

Q: When psychoanalysis works I think it gives the patient a sense of conviction of what it is about. I feel our efforts should be directed towards finding what is lost, what is *not* stated.

B: What you say seems to come near to what Melanie Klein tried to say; it illuminated things so much that it revealed still greater vistas of darkness, unilluminated areas. In psychoanalysis we are always unveiling still further domains of ignorance, darkness, the Void. Melanie Klein said that patients have omnipotent phantasies, that they split off parts of the personality and project them into the breast. She meant what she said and I think that was correct – as far as it went. What I am not so sure about it that it is *only* an omnipotent phantasy. I have experienced the situation in which the patient can arouse in me feelings which have a simple explanation. You could say, "Anybody would know why the patient makes you feel like that; you need to have more analysis". That is true, but it is not the whole truth. I think that the patient does something to the analyst and the analyst does something to the patient; it is not just an omnipotent phantasy.

When a pattern emerges which the analyst wants to communicate to the analysand he has to use a formula that the analysand is capable of receiving. An expert diamond cutter can cut the facets in such a way that light which is reflected onto the diamond is thrown back again – with increased brilliance – by the same route. That is why the fine precious stone sparkles. {This model is itself an example of my attempt to make clear to you what I wish to illuminate. The analysand, by coming, gives the analyst an opportunity to observe his behaviour – including both what he says and does not say. Out of the totality of what the analyst is aware of he detects a pattern. When it is sufficiently clear to him he can decide whether he can convey it in

a language comprehensible to the analysand, augmented in a manner analogous to the model.} Thus the analyst can hope to reflect back the same illumination given him by the analysand, but with greater intensity.

Patients sometimes wonder why we are so uncommunicative; why, for example, we don't tell them whether we are married, or whether we have any children. We don't tell them these things for good reasons; they can get so filled with knowledge about the analyst that there is no room for the exercise of their own conjectures and, therefore, for the development of their own capacity to think. {An inherent difficulty in analysis is that any interpretation tells the patient something about the analyst. It would be no easier if the analyst deliberately concealed his true personality. All that he can do is to avoid or allow for that distortion.}

I can say to the patient, "You are feeling that I am – such-and-such"; that is not information about myself as the analyst. I hope that the patient will be able to recognise it as his own idea – hitherto unrecognized. It requires courage on the part of the patient because he is terrified of learning something about himself which he has never wanted to know and which he has spent his life not being aware of – probably from before birth – trying to learn what he *ought* to be.

Where does this 'ought' come from? Have we, as analysts, told them what they 'ought' to be? If, as we hope, we have not then this 'ought' must have come from somewhere else. *Immediately* it has come from the patient; where has it come from *mediately*? One hopes to be able to give the patient a chance of finding out.

Q: Is there any way of knowing if you are not kidding yourself?

B: {This question touches the profound problem of Truth. Through the ages anyone who has felt the urge to know the truth has rapidly found himself confronted by this question – can any human being validate what he thinks is true? Psychoanalysis cannot be practised without becoming aware of that problem; at every juncture of the analytic experience it could be expanded thus:

1. What is the analysand's behaviour?
2. What aspect of it enshrines the truth?
3. Have we observed his behaviour correctly?
4. In so far as we have observed it correctly what have we observed?

5. Knowing what we know now, is any human being who aspires to the truth engaged on more than a fool's errand? I doubt that any of us can escape this; {even apodictic 'knowledge' is vulnerable.}

To return to the problem of language: {Terms such as 'counter-transference' have suffered debasement through the popularization of psychoanalysis. It is probably no worse than the popularization of physical medicine and surgery which leads to applications of a home-made poultice to a cancerous sore.} One of the essential points about countertransference is that it is *unconscious*.[1] People talk about 'making use of' their counter-transference; they cannot make any use of it because they don't know what it is. There *is* such a thing as my emotional reaction to the patient; I can hope that through my awareness of the fact that I have human characteristics like prejudice and bigotry I may be more tolerant and allow the patient to feel if my interpretation is or is not correct. That is a transient experience. It is one reason for calling it 'transference'; it is a feeling or thought or idea you have on your way to somewhere else. When you are in the presence of something which you have learnt to call a transference can you feel more precisely what it is at the time? It depends on what the patient says to you being allowed to enter into you, allowed to bounce off, as it were, your inner being and get reflected out.

Q: Are you suggesting that it is not so much your reaction to the patient in terms of your interpretation – which is undoubtedly contaminated by your counter-transference – but rather the atmosphere in which the patient is provided with the opportunity to transfer and to explore being?

B: I think the patient ultimately has the chance of learning that. He may get the idea that there is something to be said for analysis and for the time and money spent on it. The time it takes cannot be measured by the months or years the patient was coming to your office; the after effects of that experience persist.

Q: Doesn't the language of psychoanalysis take one away from psychic reality? Since it is mostly sensuous imagery, and psychic reality is essentially non-sensuous, one has to be careful how one uses psychoanalytic thoughts for language.

B: The founder of University College, London, was a man who

[1][A point emphasised strongly by Hanna Segal (1977). *Ed.*]

had studied philosophy at Oxford. His summary of that experience was that the only thing he had ever learnt was dissimulation and lying. Indeed, one of the earliest achievements of articulate speech is just that; how to make a fool of other people – which often involves making a fool of oneself as well. So your question is a fundamental one – how is verbal communication, which has such a long history of use for purposes of deception, dissimulation and lying, to be reconstituted to further the progress to truth. It is a question which you have to answer for yourself; you have to find out what the vocabulary is that comes most naturally to you and which you can continue to use, and so restore some of its value for this particular purpose of helping people rather than sinking them.

Q: Do you work with families?

B: I prefer them not to get through my office door. I cannot of course guarantee to keep them out mentally. I consider I am trying to analyse the patient; what his family are doing to him I don't know and I can do nothing about them. I feel there is a lot of unexplored and unexhausted territory which can be investigated only analytically. If you think you can cope with the further experience that an entire family could bring I do not see why you should not do so; it is not my choice. I attach a great deal of importance to the experience that I am permitted to have if the patient will come to my office and stay there for fifty minutes. The moment the patient is out of my sight and hearing, the value of the experience falls off fast. Hearsay evidence is worth very little to me. I hear all sorts of things about myself, about my patients, which are to me not much more than a meaningless noise. "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". The chance you are given by exposure to the patient's personality is invaluable; it is difficult to know how to get fifty minutes worth out of it.

Q: Your work with groups suggests that within that matrix there are certain basic assumptions going on. Could you not conceive of a family situation as a group situation? Might there be some basic assumptions at work with all sorts of underlying archaic processes that are worth exploring too?

B: Yes, there are. Freud said it is important to analyse the Oedipal situation. What is the Oedipal situation? Who are the characters? Father, mother, child? Can you be sufficiently exposed to the change that occurs when a patient walks into your office to be able to

communicate first of all with yourself? To do this you have to forget, denude, your mind of what you know, so as to have yourself free to what is going on. Then as you watch the 'screen', can you see any pattern flicker into position? Who are the characters who are in search of an author? You will have to be the author; and when you have this play clear you could mention it to the patient – that would then be your interpretation. I have also described it as "thoughts in search of a thinker"; I have to be exposed to it on the off-chance that some stray thought might lodge itself in my mind – or if not mine, the patient's. It might then be verbalized.

If you find mathematics provides you with a more convenient language – I am still talking about your communication with yourself – then you might decide a triangle would represent it. But so many people have heard of 'the eternal triangle'; it has become a debased, meaningless phrase.

Again falling back on a model: The ancient Egyptians discovered that if you knot a piece of cord in the proportions of 2, 4 and 5 and join them up in a triangle, then you have a right angle and can build places like Thebes. Pythagoras – or so they say – discovered the Pythagorean theory. It is illuminating, a mental can-opener; it gives you a chance of opening your mind and, if you are lucky, finding inside a thought or two which might come in useful for an interpretation. Can you then verbalize it in such a way that the patient would understand your language? I am familiar with thinking I have discovered an interpretation, and have taken a long time giving it, only to be told by the patient, "I don't know what you are talking about".

People are educated to believe that they ought to behave in a civil manner, that personal remarks are impolite. It is difficult to realize that the patient often cannot stand hearing what we have to say; the analytic conversation with which we are familiar is not familiar to him. Although the words are in common use the meaning that they are to convey is not; the patient is being exposed to an experience which is usually nasty and which is also unknown.

Q: How does it differ from other situations in which one person is communicating with another, like that of a mother with her child or other didactic relationships?

B: What makes it unique is that there are two unique people in the room. The more respect one has for the individual the more obvious it is that there is no other 'you' and no other 'him' or 'her'.

On the other hand, there is something wrong with an analysis which doesn't remind both the analyst and analysand of real life. What is it about if it has no resemblance to the universe we live in – a universe of ideas and thoughts and feelings? If we can get near to verbalizing and describing what we want to convey, then the patient can recognize that we are talking about what is available here and now reminding him that similar situations exist elsewhere which are likely to occur over and over again. We are not talking about something which happens only in an office or only within the limits of what we call psychoanalysis, any more than one could say that a2 + b2 + 2ab is only an algebraic formula. It is of application; these proportions exist in different situations; situations where people want to build vast temples which stand up by themselves at right angles to the earth and to the foundations.

Q: I wondered why you said it was a "nasty" experience. You also said that the patient and the analyst can get bored; at another point you said that it was a very exciting experience. It is clear, listening to you, that you consider it a special and intimate experience.

B: I can take one of the examples you mention. I remember a patient who was so boring that I became fascinated by how he did it. How could this man converse with me in a way that was nearer to what I would call 'pure boredom' than anything I had ever experienced? That is why it is fascinating; your curiosity is stirred up.

Q: Did you figure it out?

B: I would like to be able to write a book on the hundred and one versions of boredom – if I had the skill or the time to do it. If you can stand the boredom of it you may be able, like the patient, to put up with it long enough for something to flicker into place, something which you could then translate into words. The patient keeps on talking about something which one could describe as a transference relationship, but the two things which might anchor it are missing; there is only the bit in between. It becomes a sort of 'pure' psychoanalysis; it is nothing but transference with nobody else in the room – and that is extraordinarily boring to hear. You recognize after a time that you are being told something by the patient, but never a fact within sight or hearing. You know nothing about the patient; you know nothing about the patient's private life. What interpretation are you to give? In a sense you could say it is an analogy, but a pure analogy; not the two things on either side, only the link in between. Translated

into biological terms: What is this? A breast? A penis? No baby? No mother? Only the thing in between? Is this 'pure' psychoanalysis; all sex, but not a relationship between two people? This peculiar situation is not simply a question of semantics, not a question of learning grammar.

This is an actual event which is taking place in front of you, a demonstration of what joins two people, but with neither person present – they are both missing. What then is the link? If we don't bother about the two people, what about this thing in between? If it is neither a breast nor a penis, could it possibly be a vagina? Could it be a non-object. It is possible for what we biologically call a 'woman' to have a sexual relationship with another person?

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Bion: "Well" . . . "I mean to say" . . . "You know" . . . I can go on like that for hours. It is the wreckage, the remnants of thought. Patients often want to tell you something, but all they have with which to do it are the remnants of articulate speech. So the first thing you are confronted with is the remains of a culture or civilization. We try to be as conscious, as wide awake, as logical as we know; to have all our wits, all our experience about us to do the work of psychoanalysis. But is that state of mind one which can make contact with a different state of mind?

Freud gave meaning to words like 'conscious' and 'unconscious', drawing attention to the fact that there is a state of mind which is different from what we usually call 'conscious'. I am not sure that he made a clear cut distinction between what he was talking about adjectivally – unconscious modes of procedure, unconscious modes of thought – and *the* unconscious as if there were such a thing. These concepts, these theories match up with what most people vaguely recognize, partly because we all think we know the language, but we know a debased language – a vague language.

I don't think this idea of *the* unconscious, or even the idea of unconscious thoughts or ideas, extends far enough. It is surprising how far Freud got with those theories and the extent to which he made his own work redundant. He opened up still further areas of experience which cannot be treated in the way in which we attempt to treat neuroses and those phenomena in which this idea of the unconscious and unconscious thoughts – the substantive and adjectival words – are indicated.

I draw attention to the existence of what seem to be primordial ideas and feelings which have *never been conscious*. They are different

from ideas which have been conscious at some time and have been repressed, or have been transformed into something which is unconscious. That realm which we often think of as being somewhat irrational is in fact rational – if seen from another vertex. If you have an experience about which you can do nothing you forget it – it is obvious common sense. If you have a tooth-ache and there is nobody to look after your teeth – forget it. If you have an ache in your mind, forget it. But psychoanalysis seems to indicate that that is not good enough because when this thing has been forgotten – as I think, correctly – it goes on leading an independent existence and then gives rise to symptoms and signs of its activity although we are not conscious of it, although we have 'forgotten' it. Does the same thing apply to something which has never at any time been conscious?

As I said before[1] patients sometimes behave as if they were in fact – not phantasy – splitting off parts of their personality and pushing them into my insides. Sometimes I wonder why I begin to feel angry or alarmed in a session; I am not able to dismiss the feeling that the patient is doing something to me, actually having an effect upon me. We can deal with this sort of patient by saying "Psychotic – incurable. It's time the analysis was terminated because this is beyond analytic capacity". We hope some psychiatric hospital will kindly take charge of the patient and lock him up safely. In that way these awkward patients cease to disturb our peace; we have them safely under lock and key; we have them mentally categorized in a mental box; they are psychotics, they are finished and done with – but the sufferer remains. To succumb to that impulse gradually erodes the psychoanalyst's integrity.

Suppose an intelligent, powerfully mentally equipped man and woman have biological sexual intercourse and bring together ova and spermatozoa which initiate cell division. According to the embryologists, cell divisions take place and at the 3 Somite stage optic and auditory pits are formed. In this period the cell division is going on in a watery fluid which is polluted. (I am taking as pure fluid extra-cellular fluid which seems to have the composition which sea water had before it became sea water. The extra-cellular fluid is the nearest thing you could possibly imagine to an absolute stage when

[1][See in Talk 1, where Bion mentions Melanie Klein and omnipotent phantasies. *Ed.*]

the world was surrounded with water before the water was polluted with earth products.) Changes in pressure in this watery medium are easily communicated. The amniotic fluid can be subjected to changes of pressure through uterine contractions for example; there may also be pressures extraneous to the mother – she can be shouted at, pushed about. If you put pressure on your eyeball – and if someone is so unkind as to do it suddenly and violently – you can be said to 'see stars'; you get an impression of light. But that is an anomalous response. {One day the remnants of that anomalous response can emerge with a force that disconcerts both patient and analyst. The analyst is told that the patient suffers from intense, bright colours or fortification patterns or, possibly, migrainous headaches.}

When do the auditory or optic pits become functional? When is there some kind of primordial sight or hearing? By the time there is an autonomic or sympathetic nervous system – a 'thalamic' brain – the embryo may be experiencing something which one day might be called 'hate' or 'fear'; {contemporaneously an impulse to fight or run away. The thalamus and limbic nuclei will one day be the origins of fear and aggression, dancing and combat. For convenience we can describe this briefly as 'sub-thalamic' behaviour.}

Suppose the foetus arrives at what the obstetricians call 'full term'. Does the foetus have to be born before it has a personality or a mind? Conversely, does man have a mind? I see no reason to doubt that the full-term foetus has a personality. It seems to me to be gratuitously nonsensical to suppose that the physical fact of birth is something which creates a personality which was not in existence before then. It is much more reasonable to suppose that this foetus, or even embryo, has a mind which one day could be described as highly intelligent. {We shall have to consider this point further if we have an emotional impulse to relegate one of our patients to a category of 'hopeless' or 'psychotic'. Before acting on such an impulse we need to ask ourselves whether 'hopeless' or 'psychotic' is a description which illuminates *our* state of mind rather than that of the patient.}

Q: What about the question of myelination of nerve endings, the idea that there can be some sort of neurological recording in an integrated centre in terms of registering information within the young person's mind?

B: {Is it possible that the hypochondriacal areas attempt to communicate with the cerebrum; that the autonomic nervous system

tries to communicate with the voluntary system; that the body tries to communicate with the mind – assuming that there is a mind?.} Physicians and surgeons interpret these pains: It is difficult to do. For example, a patient once said to me, "I've got water on the knee doctor". I palpated it and sure enough there seemed to be a bursitis. The patient was a charwoman who used to do a good deal of kneeling and it mattered to her that her knee was giving her trouble. She also complained about some difficulty in holding her water. She said, "When I cough I always pees a little". She gave a little cough and said, "There, I peed again then". I said, "As a matter of fact you have coughed quite a lot here haven't you?"

"Oh, that's nothing. I've always had this cough". At this point I had a vague idea that I had come across the lymphatic system in Grey's *Anatomy*; I said, "We'd like to have an X-ray of your chest". There it was. Foggy patches; obscurity. The path. lab. report on the knee fluid was 'tubercular'; the tubercle had tracked down from the lungs and turned up in the knee.

{That diagnosis was based on sophisticated medical theory. My 'vague idea' was a rational conjecture. Could there have been some direct mental link in the patient's mind between a sore knee and a cough reflex?} Is there mental 'stuff' distinct from the physical network of communication? The theories of Freud, Klein, Abraham and others presuppose that there is. I subscribe to that belief and the experience of psychoanalysis is to me convincing. It is, however, equally clear to me that this is a 'probability' and not a 'certainty'. An austere judgement would not concede 'certainty' to the lymphatic system; that is typical of the still unexplored means of communication, the myelinated fibres you have just mentioned, the neurological mechanism, the parasympathetic system, the system by which the body makes what it has to say noticeable up at the cranial end for which superiority is claimed, even a social superiority, to what goes on at our tail ends.

I suggest that there is something which can communicate itself from the full-term foetus, and possibly earlier than that, to the mind as we know it. Why should the symptom, the sign of some trouble or defect, not track its way through channels – about which we as yet know nothing – to appear in the area of articulate speech? In other words, the articulate speech betrays a symptom which then we attempt to analyse. Would it be possible to say that certain mental

articulate symptoms, if correctly interpreted, could lead a surgeon or physician directly to a physically disturbed organ.

In the optic chiasma so many channels are close to each other – the basal nuclei and the basal ganglia can be interrupted as they would be by surgical interference in a lobotomy. Similarly a tumour there betrays itself in a variety of manners. It might be possible to say, "The way this patient talks to me shows symptoms of a physical disorder which are as clear to me as are the meanings of a sign like pallor, signs of anaemia". Following psychoanalytic principles, it is clear to me that the analyst should be alert to the tracking of symptoms in both directions. {The problem is not a mind with one track, but a track which is one-way.} If certain symptoms can make themselves emerge on what we call 'conscious, rational levels of thought', then conscious, rational levels of thought should be able to be made operative at the point of origin of the 'dis-ease'. Is it possible to make an interpretation which also tracks its way back by the same path to the origin of the trouble? If so, then psychoanalysis may be able to have some effect on things which at present appear to be inaccessible to treatment.

Q: If infants or patients do not simply have a phantasy that they are splitting off parts of their personality and evacuating them into mother or analyst but are actually doing it, what do you see happening? What is it that they do?

B: I take refuge in the idea of the Grid in this way:– Things which are called material can be regarded as being outside our province because they are facts of physical make-up. But – and here I am entering into grounds which I am sure would be controversial, and rightly so – I would also now suppose that, besides these theoretically supposed imaginary beta- and alpha-elements, thought enters into a phase which I could call *primordial*. I could say that the primordial thought also betrays itself here – I am talking about *us* – but now I would call it a speculative imagination. This kind of thought has nothing to do with 'evidence' – it is speculation. I encourage people to indulge their speculative imagination; there is a lot to be said for it before it turns into something a scientist might call 'evidence'. The sort of things which float about in this area of speculative imagination are rationalizations, phantasies, probabilities – not facts.

This analytic activity upon which we are engaged does not seem at present to be supported by apodictic evidence, but I think we are justified in saying that probably psychoanalysis is some use, probably

the outcome of certain conversations which I have had together with somebody who is not me has been responsible for initiating further development. A diagnosis like 'psychotic' or 'borderline psychotic' does not allow room for elaboration, speculation, conjecture; it limits the possibilities of expansion. Analysis should not be so restricted that there is no room for development and growth. I can imagine – an imaginative conjecture – that the walls of the uterus might be so restricting that there is no alternative but for the mother to evacuate the creature which is inside, and for the creature which is inside to get out and make an adjustment from life in a watery fluid to life in a gaseous fluid. Then the parents likewise must develop – from husband and wife to father and mother – otherwise there will not be 'space' in which the neonate can develop.

Q: Coming back to the question of how you know about the possible projection from the patient into the analyst, whether it really happens, what about the way the analyst feels? The analyst, who usually feels comfortable, pleasant, suddenly in the middle of a session feels irrationally angry. Is that something the patient is doing to the analyst? Is that a counter-transference? Is that evoked?

B: What we *feel* is as near to fact as we are ever likely to get in this extraordinary occupation. While we are prepared to argue about the various ideas that we have, we are not prepared to argue about, "what it feels like to be me". I can compare what it feels like to be me with what somebody else *says* that I am feeling like. The patient knows much more about what it feels like to be him or her than any analyst. So it is important to work on the basis that the best colleague you are ever likely to have – besides yourself – is not an analyst or supervisor or parent, but the patient; that is the one person on whom you can rely with confidence to be in possession of the vital knowledge. Why he doesn't simply make use of it I don't know. The human being is an animal which is dependent on a mate. In analysis it is a temporary mate; when it comes to life itself one would prefer to find somebody not oneself with whom to go through the rest of one's living days. The biological unit is a couple.

O: You talk about the mother 'evacuating' the foetus, the patient 'evacuating' either into the mother or the analyst. Then you say that the patient can tell us whether or not our interpretation is correct. It would seem as if the feeling or material the patient has evacuated still remains very much with the patient so that he can either tell us

we are correct or incorrect, or whether it is rubbish. I am trying to understand what you mean by 'evacuation' in that sense.

B: I don't think you will ever understand that except in your office. There at least it is possible to have an opinion as to what it is. You can narrow down your view as if you changed your telescope for a microscope directing it in the area where you would be likely to find an answer to that question. I can easily indulge in speculative imagination and say I think the patient does evacuate something, but it is worse than useless if what I say is used as a substitute for the analyst's own observation.

Q: Reading your work, it is obvious that you choose your language extremely carefully. Re-phrasing the concept of evacuation and some other terms, what is lost from your idea if I say, "The patient who is not in touch with certain feelings, hasn't even got them articulated but experiences them at some level, is nevertheless very skilled in subtle ways at stimulating these feelings in another person"? Does that lose some of the meaning?

B: Looking at it in a highly intellectual way, one can make some use of Kant's idea: Intuition without concept is blind; concept without intuition is empty. Translating that into familiar language I could say that some patients are describing a fact intuitively when they say, "I am terrified", or "I am bothered by a stammer", and you hear no stammer at all – but the patient does. That intuition remains blind because he has not been able to match it with a concept. {Your version, your interpretation is the right one if it makes what you observe clear to your patient; to use *my* version would be incorrect.}

Q: You said we can make certain assumptions about the vestiges of the early impressions, both pre-natal and post-natal, but you spoke about a patient who was provoking anger in you. Could you give us a clinical example of how you would handle that – whether you relate it to the vestiges, whether you relate it to what you are feeling?

B: I doubt it, because what I would think of would be what I would like to believe I did.

Q: We could start with that – what would you like to believe you did? What would you tell the patient?

B: I would *try* to tell the patient what he had told me. The patient says, "I had a terrible dream last night in which I was having intercourse with my wife". I could say, "If that is what you were doing what are you telling me this for? What you did or what you dreamed

is a matter of no importance. You must be trying to tell me something which *is* of importance because I don't think you are coming here to waste your time and money sitting in my office. I suggest that this story of yours has a meaning which is not yet known to either of us". *That* unknown is what requires illumination.

The ordinary meaning doesn't cease to exist, but it is not important. This apparent statement of fact is actually a formulation of a question; it is a question disguised as a fact; it is covered up; it *sounds* like a fact. And when the patient says he "dreamed" it he is also claiming that it is a fact of the kind with which we are all familiar; it is socially acceptable; we are permitted to dream things like this; it is excused.

Q: In this hypothetical situation in which you tell the patient you don't know and he doesn't know, what would happen?

B: The answer to that is again, "I don't know".

Q: What would you tell him?

B: What I said I did; it was an expression of precisely what I mean. It may be a defective and inadequate and insufficient way of saying it, but I know of no other; and I think it is fair to assume that the patient knows no other way of saying it. If these thoughts are not in fact limited to the times when the person is asleep, if the patient has that same so-called 'dream' in broad daylight when he is wide awake, then somebody is liable to call it an hallucination or a delusion or a psychotic state. So there is a great deal to be said for saying "I dreamed it – it was only when I was off my guard".

After a time it becomes unmistakable that the way in which you talk to your patients seems to have an effect on them. Nobody can tell you that – you have to find it out for yourself. You have to be a practising analyst before you discover that it is worth your while talking to patients in the way that *you* talk to them – never mind whether it is sanctified by appearing in one of the Collected Works. That experience convinces you that it is worthwhile having some respect for your Self – for what you think and imagine and speculate. There is a curious kind of conviction about these occasions where what you say has an effect which is recognizably similar to your theories. A 'marriage' is taking place between you and you; a marriage between your thoughts and your feelings. The intuition which is blind and the concept when is empty can get together in a way which makes a complete mature thought.

Q: Earlier[1] you suggested that current theories of borderline states don't allow room to increase the patient's space. Could you explain that?

B: The status of what I am saying is speculative imagination; I have no supporting facts, but it seems to me to be worth labelling as 'probable': If the germ plasm is potentially perceptive, having derived from both these supposedly perceptive parents, then I can imagine that even in the womb that creature becomes aware of certain 'things' which are 'not self'. For example, I could suggest to you here, "Don't let's say a thing; let's shut the windows, make this place as silent as we can". What do we hear? If that could be carried out as an experiment then we could hear our heartbeat, the surge of blood in the arteries. It is possible that the foetus is aware of a primordial 'sight', of light, and can much dislike these impingements of experiences which seem to come from outer space – sensations of light, sensations of noise – and also from somewhere which may appear to be internal – the heartbeat, the blood rushing through the arteries. That might all be so intolerable that the foetus would – to use our conscious terminology – forget it, get rid of it, have nothing whatever to do with it. Then the infant is born; but this inheritance of great potential intelligence still survives. So the highly intelligent infant can learn the trick of behaving exactly and precisely in the way in which it is supposed to behave. To take a disastrous example: Leopold and Loeb decided to commit the perfect crime. In English law there used to be a touchstone called the M'Naghten Rules: Can the patient distinguish between right and wrong? Of course he can. You cannot expect highly intelligent people not to have learnt the trick of being able to know the difference between right and wrong. So there they are – on the first step towards conviction because they appear to be responsible people. I suspect that the experience of birth is too severe; what they did potentially, when they were embryos or foetuses, is no longer available to them. They do not have this fundamental feeling, knowledge of the difference between right and wrong. There has to be some ability to make a distinction between right and wrong, between real truth or compassion, and real evil – and that

[1]See mention of Grid earlier in this Talk.

is different from knowing what people *call* the difference between right and wrong.

Q: You have written about the assumption of a psychotic core in each individual. Is this somehow related to pre-birth experience, to intra-uterine experience?

B: I think the intra-uterine experience is one which we have got used to forgetting. We like to feel that we are born and become intelligent and rational human beings, that the 'state of mind' when we are awake and conscious is superior to the 'state of mind' when we are asleep. We have a prejudice against the other state of mind – that is to say, the one in which we are not. So we try to keep the caesura in good repair; to change it into more psychoanalytic terms, to keep our resistance in good working order to act as an impermeable membrane through which thoughts and feelings and ideas of which we have disapproved at one time cannot penetrate. At the same time the thoughts and feelings that we did know at some time still strive to break loose. I could put it like this: We are all bad analysts, but every bad analyst has a good analyst inside him struggling to break free – and we hate it. We say, "My God, I'm having a breakdown! Thanks to this frightful analyst of mine my defences have been weakened and now I'm going to turn into some sort of monster and shall get locked up or commit a murder. If I'm going to commit a murder I'll start on my analyst before someone starts on me." This seems to be a situation in which there is an attempt to break through into freedom; *and* an attempt to prevent anything of the kind from happening. None of us can be free from hatred of analysis and the analytic experience, whether it is engendered by our own knowledge and experience, or whether by the sort of thing which is said to us by a patient who wears his id outside, and his ego and superego tucked away inside – and who also behaves in a way which makes it clear that his is the proper state of mind.

O: I feel like a blind man led by a seeing dog. But is it that bad? No; I am not that blind and the dog cannot see that well. What I can see is that the foetus can feel something and can have certain sensations, perhaps even certain thoughts, because the nuclei of sensations, thinking and so on, are already there in a biological way. If you take a cell and touch it, then the cell contracts and defends itself by a secret war against the impression from outside. If a protoplasm can already defend itself that much, then certainly it is possible for the foetus

to feel and to have a certain defence. I am reminded of the work of Ferenczi who compared the foetus in the water with the biological development of life on earth. That is exactly what I think Dr Bion meant, but that was described already by Ferenczi.

B: My surgical chief, when I was a medical student, was Wilfred Trotter – who wrote, "The Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War". He drew attention to something which seems to exist. For example, take a group like this: We have a combined wisdom which is extraneous to the little that each one of us knows, but by analogy we are like individual cell bodies in the domain which is bordered by our skins. I think there is something by which this combined wisdom makes itself felt to a great number of people at the same time. We like to think that our ideas are our personal property, but unless we can make our contribution available to the rest of the group there is no chance of mobilizing the collective wisdom of the group which could lead to further progress and development.

There are certain highly intelligent people who cannot stand the perpetual bombardment of thoughts and feelings and ideas which come from all over the place, including from inside themselves. So they cancel their order for the newspapers; they withdraw their number from the telephone book; they draw the blinds and try as far as possible to achieve the kind of situation in which they are free from further impact. So the community loses the contribution that individual can make and the individual mentally dies – in the same way that certain cells in the body necrose. The body has the intelligence to resist an invasion of foreign bodies like bacteria – or even plants, cocchi – and mobilizes phagocytes to deal with these invading objects. Is it possible that we can organize ourselves into communities, institutions in order to defend ourselves against the invasion of ideas which come from outer space, and also from inner space? The individual is frightened of even permitting the existence of speculative imaginations of his own; he is afraid of what would happen if anybody else noticed those imaginative speculations and tried to get rid of him on the grounds of his being a disturbing influence. Freud[1] quotes a

[1]["I treated my discoveries as ordinary contributions to science and hoped they would be received in the same spirit. But the silence which my communications met with, the void which formed itself about me, the hints that were conveyed to me, gradually made me realize that assertions on the part played by sexuality in the aetiology of the neuroses cannot count upon meeting with the

drama by Hebbel about the sort of person who disturbs the sleep of the world and is hated accordingly; he came to the conclusion that he was one of them. When I was a psychiatrist in the British Army I was rash enough to suggest that the psychiatrists were administering drugs to their patients in order to have an undisturbed night.

O: It is still done.

B: I can well believe it – it has a great tradition, a great past and, I suspect, a very promising future.

Q: Aren't there certain interpretations which serve the same purpose?

B: Yes, exactly. Freud talks about a 'paramnesia' as being an invention which is intended to fill the space where a fact ought to be. But is one right to assume that a paramnesia is an activity which is peculiar only to patients and to pathological existence? I think psychoanalysis could be a way of blocking the gap of our ignorance about ourselves, although my impression is that it is more. We can produce a fine structure of theory in the hope that it will block up the hole for ever so that we shall never need to learn anything more about ourselves either as people or organizations.

Q: Would you elaborate on that? Most of us have built our professions round the extension of knowledge. Now you suggest that the methods we are using and our endeavours are to block our search for knowledge: I would like to know how.

B: I suggest that we cannot be sure that these theories, which are so convenient and which make us – both as individuals and as a group – feel better because they appear to make an inroad into this enormous area of ignorance, are therefore final. One would like to say, "Thus far and no further", but if one carries on this same procedure then one is back again in contact with this vast area of ignorance. With care we can learn the laws of chemistry and physics and feel that *now* we know how the physical world operates; *now* we know the truth. But in fact the area in which the sort of physics and chemistry which we can comprehend applies, is extremely limited. Astronomers have discovered what they call a 'black hole' to which

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same kind of treatment as other communications. I understood that from now onwards I was one of those who have 'disturbed the sleep of the world', as Hebbel says, and that I could not reckon upon objectivity and tolerance"(Freud, 1914d). This is a reference to Kandaules' words to Gyges in Hebbel's 1856 *Gyges und sein Ring*, Act V, Scene 1. *Ed.*]

the laws of physics and chemistry do not apply. Indeed, the way in which the universe works is beyond our comprehension. Why not? We are ephemeral creatures; our little earth circles round an ordinary sun at the relatively leisurely speed of twenty-two miles a second. No one can imagine the rate of circulation of a spiral nebula around its centre although it is given a comforting and convincingly scientific appearance by saying that the rate of circulation of this spiral nebula, of which our sun is a part, has a diameter of something like 2 × 108 million light years.[1]

Q: Are you then asking whether we are any more aware of scientific usefulness in terms of the state of man's knowledge of the mind? In other words, we are at the point of transition?

B: I am impressed by the short, precise and exact diagnosis which is summed up by saying "Homo sapiens". It is a self-inflicted decoration.

Q: Do you mean that we fill our lack of knowledge or uncertainty with a kind of codified meta-psychology?

B: I would say so.

Q: Theodore Reich used to tell us about what he called, "the courage not to understand". And, in spite of all the remarkably complex and meaningful theories that you yourself have developed in your writings, you are aware, and want us to be aware, of how limited our understanding is. If we can cope with that, and help our patients to cope with that, we are indeed accomplishing a great deal and that is a great part of psychoanalysis.

B: I think it also helps to scale down our expectations of what we think we can do. Over and over again we measure our failures against a standard which is inappropriately high.

Q: Are you also saying that we are made in such a way that by nature we hate freedom? When you say we have to hate analysis because we are confronted with the patient who wears his id on the outside and the ego and super-ego tucked away, that we can't stand to be confronted with that, and if we were wiser we would follow the lead of the id –

B: No, but I suggest that somebody here should, instead of writing a book called "The Interpretation of Dreams", write a book called "The Interpretation of Facts", translating them into dream

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[1]See also discussion in Talk 1.

language – not just as a perverse exercise, but in order to get a two-way traffic.

Q: Is thinking so painful to us because we do not have the courage to face the limits of what there is to be understood by it?

B: No, I think it is because 'thinking' is a new function of living matter. I do not want to suggest though that some plants have no minds, because we don't know what sort of mind a vegetable mind is – for example, Venus's Fly Trap (Muscipula).

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Bion: I want to stress an on-going question which seems to me to be of the greatest importance. By 'on-going question' I mean that it has no permanent answer; it is always open. It is a good thing for an analyst to ask himself from time to time why he is doing analysis and whether he means to be doing it tomorrow and the day after that and so on. One gets into a habit of taking it for granted that one has decided to be an analyst, to be one for life as if it were a closed question; whereas I think it is important that it should remain an open question. {In analytic practice the precise instance of the general question is afforded by the decision to continue or to stop an analysis.}

The emergence of this problem requires careful thought by the analyst as to how he is to broach it to the analysand; only he can tell what language to talk and how to formulate, "What do you come for?"; "What do you expect?"; "What do you think I am going to do?"

There are numerous answers: The patient has been advised to come; or recommended to you; or heard about you. It doesn't tell you a thing – it is a superficial reply. But there remains the open-ended question – why has this patient, who has come to you for three years, four years, five years, three weeks or three sessions, come again today? You may have an idea why he came to you yesterday, but that is not today. You can have a constantly changing opinion under the impact of the experience which goes on happening; therefore to treat it as if it were a closed subject does not leave room for development.

Q: Would you go as far as to ask the question, "What am I getting out of this analysis for me? – never mind an outsider".

B: Everybody goes that distance anyway. We don't like to admit it because it doesn't sound altogether respectable to say, for example, that I am here because I get something out of it; or I am an analyst because so far it has seemed to be rewarding. But basically one *has* to consider this. If you are practising medicine you may, like John Hunter, expose yourself to infection with disastrous results. In analysis how wise is one to expose oneself to this emotional experience? Am I going to have a breakdown as the result of the emotional force to which I am exposing myself by setting up as an analyst? Shall I be robust, healthy enough to be able to stand the strain?

Q: What about the other side of that? Is there anything curative for the doctor who helps the patient?

B: There is no chance of knowing that unless the doctor allows himself to be aware that he is concerned with what *he* gets out of it. He may have an urge to be helpful to his fellow men. In that case he does get something out of being a doctor and running the risk of catching the complaints. But he may not appreciate that that is a necessary component and is, therefore, subjected to that powerful emotional situation without having considered whether he wants to help anybody. This is putting it in extreme terms; it is never as clear-cut as that. In time something begins to impinge; you become aware of some dis-satisfaction; the dis-satisfaction accumulates and has no outlet.

O: For a number of years Kleinian theory was not acceptable to many circles in New York City. Now there is a lot of acceptance, but there is considerable conflict in psychoanalytic techniques; the more classical group adheres, or has until very recently, to a much stricter definition of the transference; they don't make the same kind of early interpretations; they are less in touch with psychic processes. I wondered if you would share with us some of your thoughts on these differences.

B: I have not been particularly aware of differing from any other analyst. I *have* been aware of not knowing as much about psychoanalysis as I would like; that is brought home to me both in talking with another analyst and comparing his ideas with mine, and also by my patients who constantly demonstrate that I don't know a great deal of the subject. But this is not in any way different from any other kind of human suffering; people learn that it is painful to continue to

live; they have anxieties of all kinds and they want some assistance. A great number of people go so far as to get married without considering what they mean to get out of it –

O: This goes for Kleinians as well as Freudians –

B: I think so – it is easy to say, "I'm married". You can get a licence, you can get the State to support you in this idea. In analysis you can call yourself, "a Kleinian" or, "a Freudian"; whether it means anything is another matter.

O: Your uncertainty is reflective of what we all feel many times. But in psychoanalytic literature we are often struck by the kind of certainty which is almost foreign to our personal experience; references to the breast, the penis, the penis inside the mother, and all the kinds of things that don't sound nearly as uncertain as you do right now.

B: You have to try to make clear what you are talking about. A definition which avoids being vague becomes dogmatic; it is a matter of judgement. If a patient says to me, "I don't know what you mean", I say, "If you assume that I don't mean what I say, the problem arises as to what I *do* mean". To answer the question by a further elaboration risks distortion of what I, as analyst, have said as clearly as I could.

O: There is something I am struggling to understand – your notion that the analyst empty himself of memory and desire. One way I do understand it is in terms of trying to make myself as receptive as possible to what the patient is trying to communicate to me, but in terms of the way I work it seems to me that my own memories and desires play an important part in my understanding of what my patients are saying to me. I feel that I am caught up in a paradox.

B: {In this respect I agree with you: It is to avoid the distortion of the effects of one's own past history that analysts are supposed to be analysed. In practice it means that one 'consciously' attempts to exclude one's memories, hence rid oneself of memory; for the same reason one needs 'consciously' to exclude desire. When we have not been analysed, or are tired, the obtrusion of memories and desires becomes a liability.} The more one is occupied with what one wants to happen and with what happened, or what one knows about the patient or psychoanalysis, the less space is left for uncertainty. If I become more and more dogmatic, and more and more sure that the patient said this, that or the other to me last time, I know I must be getting tired. When we are tired we find it difficult to be receptive. The actor has to learn to articulate so that he is audible at the beginning

and at the end of a performance: The analyst has to be receptive and sensitive at the end of the session as well as at the beginning.

It is easy to fall into the comfortable feeling that one knows a great deal about the subject and that the patient thinks so too; it is a contract which is made. I am reminded of a rhyme about two famous Oxford historians – Freeman and Stubbs:

Stubbs butters Freeman, Freeman butters Stubbs,
Each ladling butter from his respective tub.

O: I thought, as you were talking, that what matters to the patient is that his 'self' has to come to life, has to be augmented and expressed, so that by this emptying out of expectations and memories the analyst leaves room for the patient.

B: That is so. A patient may say, "I had a terrifying dream last night". This is said so quickly that it almost passes notice. "Terrifying" dreams, "terrifying" experiences – we hear it over and over again. But if you are sensitive you may begin to feel that there is something about it which is beyond just an ordinary statement. There are feelings which patients themselves slide over; they don't want to tell you how terrified they are and how unpleasant it is. If they do get to the point of admitting that, the chances are that they will say, "I was all right until I came to see you, but since then I have been terrified; I get frightened of almost anything I have to do". Of course you are not trying to frighten the patient; but you are trying to make him aware of the fact that he has that feeling of terror. A certain type of patient slides over many remarks inviting you not to pay attention to them and agreeing that they have made progress, are so much better. The next thing you hear is that the patient has committed suicide. The feelings have been of such intensity that while passing off the phrase, "I had a terrifying dream", he does not allow you or himself to know how appalling these feelings are.

What do you see when the patient comes into your room? Usually a mature individual, articulate and much like everybody else: The patient sees much the same. He has heard this psychoanalytic jargon anyway and has got used to the fact that it doesn't mean a thing. So he naturally assumes that the analyst does not mean what he says. But the analyst has to be aware that the patient *does* mean what he says, although he may say it very softly indeed. We should not allow ourselves to be too dominated by the noise that the patient makes – "When I was coming here today I saw an accident in the

street . . .". That is perfectly true, but the noisy way that spectacle can be described by the patient makes it difficult to hear these other noises which are not being made so clearly. {It is the 'forgotten' – 'unconscious', 'repressed' but nonetheless active experience which has been re-awoken by the immediate stimulus of the accident; at the same time the immediate experience has been reinforced by the 'forgotten' element.}

So – you have to have your senses wide open to all kinds of hidden characteristics. Most people don't see what is the matter with a colourless person, but a doctor ought to be able to see that this indicates an anaemic condition. There is something about the colourlessness of the patient which is more than ordinary everyday pallor. This applies equally to what the analyst sees and hears of the patient.

O: There is a difference in the Kleinian culture; maybe interpretations are more cryptic or more related to your own perception than hooking into what is happening from the patient. A certain orientation may put a slant on your interpretations.

B: Of course it does. That is one reason why I say it is necessary to denude oneself of memory and desire.

O: The Kleinians say that one uses one's own phantasy therapeutically – one's own counter-transference reaction, all of one's reactions to the patient, and some kind of unconscious communication between the patient and the analyst.

B: I am very happy that the Kleinians do that; if that is what they like doing that's fine by me. But it is no good to me.

Q: Could you tell us about yourself then – how you work?

B: I am doing so.

O: You mentioned to me recently that when you and Melanie Klein were involved together you made quite a strong condition that you were your own person when it came to thinking and reacting – that this was a very important condition in establishing relationship.

B: Yes; she said she was prepared to agree, to put up with it. I don't think this was particularly acceptable, because she wanted to make it clear that when she said the infant evacuates parts of its personality it doesn't want, and shoves them into another person, she meant just that. She did not want it supposed that that was not her opinion. There is the dilemma: She had to be dogmatic enough to say, "That is my opinion; it is an omnipotent phantasy". But I don't

feel that what I am exposed to in my office is just a phantasy of the patient's.

There can be millions of rational explanations; the patient can say things which are so exasperating that you get annoyed and angry. That could be said to be splitting-off their feelings of hostility and putting them into the analyst. But perhaps it is not so simple as that; perhaps something really takes place when two people are so closely associated as they are in a psychoanalytic experience. If these elements don't exist what is the good of doing psychoanalysis anyway? If we are simply conversing like anybody else, why call it a psychoanalysis? Why put up with years of sessions about nothing in particular? There must be some reality corresponding to this 'meaningless' term 'psychoanalysis'. It is just an invention; a verbal noise – but I think it has been invented because something exists which has to be given a name.

Q: On the one hand there is something steadfast about the description you are providing of yourself in working with the patient despite what you call an open and emptied mind. On the other hand there is a notion of some kind of change or growth that takes place in you along with the patient. Would you comment about that apparent contradiction? My other question is, can you see yourself learning about counter-transference reaction from your patients?

B: Taking your second question first: My understanding of the correct meaning of the term 'counter-transference' is that it is *unconscious*[1]; since it is unconscious, the analyst does not know what it is. So I have to put up with the fact; it is to be hoped that I am aware

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[1]See discussion of the language of transference and countertransference in Talk 1. [See also *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers*: ". . . many interpretations, and amongst them the most important, have to be made on the strength of the analyst's own emotional reactions. It is my belief that these reactions are dependent on the fact that the analyst in the group is at the receiving end of what Melanie Klein (1946) has called projective identification, and that this mechanism plays a very important role in groups. Now the experience of counter-transference appears to me to have quite a distinct quality that should enable the analyst to differentiate the occasion when he is the object of a projective identification from the occasion when he is not. The analyst feels he is being manipulated so as to be playing a part, no matter how difficult to recognize, in somebody else's phantasy – or he would do if it were not for what in recollection I can only call a temporary loss of insight, a sense of experiencing strong feelings and at the same time a belief that their existence is quite adequately justified by the objective situation without recourse to recondite explanation of their causation" (Volume IV, p. 213). *Ed.*]

that I have there elements about which I can do nothing unless I go to an analyst myself and get them dealt with. It is a question of making the best of a bad job. The bad job happens to be me. I cannot get thoroughly analysed – I don't think there is such a thing. It has to stop some day; after that I have to make the best I can of who I am.

In answer to your first question: Supposing we were really steadfast, one would wonder what was the matter with us. Time passes, we grow older, and if our ideas remain the same there must be something wrong. It is much more likely that we fail to notice the change that is taking place in us; the actual work that we do, whether it is organizing a shop, or being a doctor or surgeon or analyst, has an effect on us. It may not be at all clear what it is. When you were young, grown-ups said, "How you have grown!"; they stood you against the wall, marked the height, and there! There's proof that you had grown. But if the child is in fact 'growing up' we cannot stand that personality against the wall and mark its growth.

O: I had the impression from a seminar of Donald Meltzer's I once attended that Melanie Klein gave off interpretative remarks almost constantly, and that these were in the order of ruminations – she ruminated out loud.

B: I would not have called them ruminations, but I think that she did give a constant stream of interpretations. Latterly, I would have thought that they were too coloured by a wish to defend the accuracy of her theories, so that she lost sight of the fact that what she was supposed to be doing was interpreting the phenomenon with which she was presented.

Q: You have observed the patient; he is there in the room with you; you have some impression; you must make the decision to communicate it or keep it to yourself. How do you deal with that question?

B: I have to act 'on the spur of the moment' as we call it; you are spurred by the moment. You decide not to say what you think you observe, and the patient doesn't turn up again. Or you *do* say it and the patient thinks, "I'm not going to a person who tells me these alarmist stories; of course he wants me to come for an analysis; of course he has a vested interest in making money out of patients, and naturally he would tell me I need an analysis". So, on the spur of the moment you have to react. It would be surprising

indeed if you felt that your reaction did not leave a great deal to be desired.

Q: Is it always an obstruction if the analyst, in addition to having an impression, thinks conceptually about the ego state, the state of resistances, the degree of symbiosis or individuation that this patient is marching towards in terms of libido – and so on? Do you see these primarily as concepts that obscure and fool us into thinking that we know more than we do? Or are these working hypotheses ever of value?

B: I think they are quite useful for about three sessions – if you are lucky enough to see the patient on three successive occasions. You know nothing whatever about the patient and therefore have to formulate some sort of theoretical opinion – the theories in that instance taking the place of facts, because there are no facts. After that you hope not to allow your theoretical preoccupations to obscure the impressions to which you should be exposing yourself. This is not easy to do – there would be something seriously wrong with your patient if he couldn't make a fool of you. At the same time there is something seriously wrong with the analyst who cannot allow himself to be made a fool of; if you can tolerate it, if you can tolerate being angry, then you may learn something. Never mind about all these theories of what analysts *ought* to be; what we ought to be is a matter of no importance in the *practice* of psychoanalysis or in the practice of any part of real life. It does matter what we are.

O: I am disturbed about the issue concerning counter-transference. In the last fifteen or twenty years some of us have come to realize that what used to be something that one was to consider himself guilty for experiencing and acting out with a patient, is a human experience that occurs in the patient-therapist relationship related to the therapist's past. In *Second Thoughts* I noted that you referred to counter-transference a number of times as if you believe in it as a theoretical concept. What I want to get to now is process rather than theory. If I react strongly to a patient I may, after reflection, feel that I over-reacted and ask myself, "Who does this patient remind me of? I seem to be allergic to something in our relationship that is triggered in my being with her at this moment and I then intellectually, through memory and feeling and other associations, realize that in some way she does indeed remind me of my sister from an earlier period of my life".

Ordinarily I would then conclude that I have been experiencing a counter-transferential reaction and have displayed some evidence of this in my over-reaction – or what I now believe to have been an overreaction. What seemed to have been helpful to me I might – or might not – then share with my patient, depending on how appropriate I felt it to be. This I label my 'counter-transference', and perhaps might then use it more openly in the future in my work with this patient. You say this is an unconscious experience which, because it is unconscious as it occurs, is therefore unavailable and not particularly of value; in a sense you discard it. I am troubled by that.

B: I would say that while you are with the patient there is nothing you can do about it. But, thanks to what you have been saying, when you consider the matter afterwards you can decide – and this I do think is possible – that your reaction was something which would fall into the category of counter-transference.[1] In that way you have a chance of learning something about *you* – it is one of the 'fringe benefits' of being an analyst.

O: I am interested in your concept of the container which fits into some of the different views of counter-transference. The previous questioner was talking about the more classical view of counter-transference, something from our own past that we transfer onto the patient. I think the Kleinian view is that the patient induces in us certain reactions; good and bad aspects of the self are split off and projected into the analyst, and the analyst is thereby induced into feeling and behaving in certain ways. Many analysts are totally unaware of the kind of counter-transference the Kleinians talk

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[1][In Freud's original sense. Expressed in a letter to Jung, 7 June 1909 (in McGuire, 1974, pp. 230–232), in which he referred to the dangers for the analyst, and the patient, of countertransference impulses arising in the analyst as a result of being disturbed by what, inside himself, was evoked by unanalysed correspondences in his own mental life with elements of the patient's. In hinting at the potential usefulness of such feelings, if acknowledged and harnessed to the task, he showed the same genius with which he had salvaged his concept of transference from being a major obstruction to analysis into its being recognised fully as the medium for analytic change. "Such experiences, though painful, are necessary and hard to avoid. Without them we cannot really know life and what we are dealing with. . . . They help us to develop the thick skin we need and to dominate 'countertransference', which is after all a permanent problem for us; they teach us to displace our own affects to best advantage. They are a 'blessing in disguise'". *Ed.*]

about. Some of the newer concepts of counter-transference are useless. Instead of sitting there and suffering and getting angry with the patient it would be viewed as a way of actually boring the analyst, dehumanizing the analyst, deadening the analyst, keeping him at a distance. The reaction of the analyst can be used in a therapeutic way; in fact some of the modern thinkers in psychoanalysis feel that the counter-transference may be the most valuable thing in the analysis; they feel that the negative therapeutic reaction comes out of this kind of negative counter-transference more than any other factor in analysis.

B: If it doesn't come into analysis there is something wrong with analysis. We are extremely dangerous animals; of all the ferocious animals that inhabit this earth the human being has succeeded in killing off all rivals – except the virus. At the end of the First World War the 'flu epidemic killed off far more people than had been killed in the war. For all our wonderful destructiveness we are nothing like as efficient as the virus.

In the analytic session one is concerned with two dangerous and ferocious animals, one of whom – and possibly both – has at the same time a wish to be friendly and helpful to the other. Parents retain an impulse to continue to be helpful to their children even after they have sent them off to earn their own living. In the analytic situation we are not usually dealing with a blood relation but with a mind which is very like our own. I think one is under an obligation to remain civilized, but remaining civilized is not the same thing as being unaware of what human character is really like.

We are concerned with powerful impulses which are anything but civilized – murder, hate, love, rivalry. So we have to be sensitive and aware of the powerful emotional nature of the two objects in the same room at the same time – as well as this element which wants to be helpful. Even the hostile patient would like to be helpful to the analyst and turn the analysis into an everlasting one so that he doesn't have to find any more friends – he just sticks to the one in the office.

We are faced with a paradox; we are struggling both to retain such civilized capacity as we are capable of and at the same time to make evident the primitive and dangerous nature of the situation.

Q: If you were too civilized might you be destroyed by the patient?

B: Yes. Translating Kant's statement[1] into the kind of thing we are familiar with, the individual is intuitive but doesn't match it with any concepts. If Kleinian theory has anything to do with the real facts infants must be marvellous Kleinians because they know all about what it *feels* like, but they have no concepts, they cannot write any of these great books – their concepts are blind. Later on they have forgotten what it is like to feel terrified; they pick up these words but the words are empty – "I'm terrified". You have to notice that it is an empty phrase, it is a concept; it is only verbal; the intuition is missing. If we can draw attention to this fact then possibly the *concept* of terror and the *feeling* could be married. The analytic procedure is an attempt to introduce the patient to who he is, because whether he likes it or not that is a marriage which is going to last as long as he lives. When the patient talks about terror he really knows what he is talking about. It is useless for the analyst to talk about some psychoanalytic theory unless he can say, "*This* is it".}

O: You said every infant is a Kleinian: I wondered if it is also true to say that every Kleinian is an infant.

B: Yes, absolutely – but unfortunately grown-up, and they look exactly like adults. We all have this illusion that we are adults, we have reached the peak, and have nothing more to learn. That is why I suggest asking this question which is open-ended – Why am I doing analysis?

O: I want to offer an assertion and ask your opinion of it. I have come to the conclusion that one of the analytic myths that we tell our students is the *incognito* of the analyst. I think such a thing does not exist. I had a discussion some time ago with a colleague; I said, "Everyone knows that the patient is plugged into the analyst, but to the same extent the analyst is plugged into the patient". In other words, the patient knows as much about the analyst as the analyst knows about the patient. Of course the difference lies in what each of them does with it; the concepts of transference and counter-transference are gimmicks which help us to conceptualize something, but are no help beyond that.

B: {I am materially in agreement. I would not, however, describe transference and counter-transference as 'gimmicks' but concepts

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[1]See Talk 2: "Intuition without concept is blind; concept without intuition is empty".

formulating illuminating observations which Freud made. It is the reality behind those concepts with which we, who practise, have to work.[1]}

O: I have been thinking of your work, *Experiences in Groups*; I wondered if I saw happening right here in this room the dependence assumption. Everyone was saying, "Teach us; show us; you know; your thinking, your brilliance" –

B: Not to mention the pressure to believe one is equally brilliant oneself.

O: Yes, as well as the audience. But what happens in reaction to the frustration when the dependence assumption isn't gratified?

O: I wasn't sure whether you were answering questions or making interpretations.

B: They are all interpretations of impressions; an impression which I get, which I expose myself to and then translate into verbal terms. But in this respect I am dependent on my sensory apparatus and on my capacity to interpret what my senses tell me.

O: I also felt you were interpreting instead of answering our questions. I was wondering whether this is the way you actually function with a patient, using your own perceptions –

O: Like the use of yourself as the diamond that receives and reflects back (p. 243).

Q: Is your discussion about the embryo in fact a discussion of where we are?

B: Analogically one can say that psychoanalysis itself is at its birth, so we don't know much about it or this peculiar, unpredictable development – growing up. That can be unpleasant; even the analyst can feel, "I don't like being aware of this universe in which I live".

After the First World War everybody decided that the Western Powers had won and that now we were in for a very good time – all would be well. Santayana wrote that the Great War was not an aberration, from which we had now got back to normal happiness and good health, but that it was an hors d'oeuvre, which ushered in the *return* to the normal state of affairs – fighting, destruction, rivalry, hatred.

Q: You have often said there is so much about analysis that we don't understand; I have the same feeling. Would you tell us about

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[1][Added later. It is not clear what was Bion's spoken response at the time – if any. *Ed.*]

a current case in which you feel you don't know what is going on; what you are doing with it or thinking about it; how you are trying to understand it?

B: The patient said, "I had an awful dream; I dreamed I was swimming and I suddenly discovered that the stream was carrying me straight through a weir; I was going to get sucked in and destroyed. I tell you I never woke up so quick in my life." That is a curious statement. Ordinarily you would think that if you were swimming and found yourself in that situation you would get out of the stream. But it is peculiar to say that this is such a terrifying dream that "I tell you, I never woke up so quick in my life". It takes some sorting out because it is not the way in which I am used to talking, and it is not the way in which I am used to thinking either. The extraordinary thing is that this particular patient has always succeeded in earning a living and has been married and had a family. So there must be something which is right about it; there must be something about that way of thinking which I don't understand but which must be useful. I would like to know what it is. I have thought about that plenty of times – I am not much nearer to understanding it.

There are other situations which are similar. It is difficult to communicate to you the factual situation. The patient said – as near as I can reproduce it – "I'm awful. I got through these exams, but I don't know a thing about it – not a thing". That was about the end of the facts. The rest of the session was taken up in a conversation which would appear to be a link between the patient and myself because we were using ordinary words. But there was no idea of who the patient was, and no idea of who I was – only the link in between. That is a queer conversation; that is a conversation in which – putting it into mathematical terms – there are plus signs, minus signs, signs intending to mean division, division of X by Y, but no mention of what X and Y are or what the two sums are that are to be added or subtracted.

Q: Are you saying that you couldn't tell from the patient's conversation why he said these things to you?

B: I had no idea. First of all I would want to know what the language was – it's not mathematics. It appears to be American or English; it *appears* to be, but it isn't. I could say it is a matter of semantics; it is not. I could say this is a language in which a sentence is composed of conjunctions only. But this conversation does seem to have an

effect; the patient keeps on coming to the sessions and I continue to agree to see him. But how that is brought about I do not know.

I said to the patient, "You haven't yet told my why you come here."

"I haven't told you why I come here? I am doing nothing but" says the patient. I can only assume that the patient is correct; why it has passed me by I do not know.

Q: How does the patient react to learning from you that you haven't the foggiest notion why he is there despite his belief that he has made repeated efforts so to communicate? What does that do to the patient to learn that you are confused?

B: {If the patient had 'learned that I was confused' they would not have been listening to what I said. "I do not know" is not the same as "I am confused". I might be confused or angry or frightened, but those are private matters which I consider to be irrelevant. I do not mind the patient 'analysing' me, but in fact he has come to be analysed. It is important if *he* is confused or angry or frightened, and it is important that I should make him aware of that. It is wasting his time to tell him what my troubles might be – those are matters for myself and my analyst.}

Q: Do you think the patient doesn't want you to know what is going on?

B: I think the patient wants me to know and expects me to know. I am obtruding an irrelevancy if I behave as if I do not understand what he means as if I were irritated or bored. The trouble is that I am frightened of being ignorant of what is going on.

Q: To come back to the statement of the patient, "I got through the exam but I've no idea how". I take it from what you said that you didn't do anything with that statement; what followed was a senseless or not understood dialogue. Was it based on that statement? Or did you ignore the statement? Did the statement do anything to you?

B: I drew attention to the fact that the patient was not talking a language I understood; therefore I was not receiving the communication.

Q: You did not make an attempt to get what was behind that message?

B: Yes, I did, because it seemed to me to be a highly dangerous situation.

Q: And in a case like this you would not follow the traditional procedure of analysis and ask the patient for associations to it?

B: Yes, as soon as I am tired I do exactly that, I say, "Thank God for the accepted procedure".

Q: I would like to clarify what you said about the 'evidence' for the truth of an interpretation.

B: I am prepared to accept the theory which scientists put forward about this. It is what I call 'apodictic' proof, facts which are inescapable. They are forced upon you; something happens which forces you to accept it as the proof of the previous controversial matter. However, this is complicated by Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. If the physicists cannot say what a fact is, then this ignorance and the disappearance of certainty is liable to spread.

O: I had in mind the experience where there is a sudden evidence of the truth.

B: Yes, something convinces us that what has been said is illuminating.[1] But what that is a proof of is another matter. I don't think one can say that it has much to do with facts except facts about the human animal as it is now; there are certain experiences we have which carry conviction.

Q: In *Learning from Experience* you talk about thought disorder and about modifying an experience rather than thinking. Does that tie in with the description you gave of the patient who was talking on and on and you couldn't find the link?

B: The link, I am convinced, is not articulate speech; it is something else. Sooner or later someone who is exposed to the experience I have been talking about may be able to formulate this peculiar kind of 'umbilical cord' as a method of communication between the two people. I could say that this type of conversation is like a breast which might connect an infant with a thing which turns out to have a mother stuck on the other end of it, so the breast and the mouth come together. That is all very well as analogy, as a pictorial image of what is going on, but what is the 'thing' that is going on? If one could climb down the DNA helix to a point in infancy, perhaps one would be able to know. But if one climbs up and reaches the same point, only on a different level on the helix, what is it this time when there is no mouth, no breast, but this peculiar conversation which is

[1]See mention, in Talk 1, of Prince Andrei, *War and Peace.*

nevertheless effective? Since the patient is talking to me and using his language I ought to be able to be receptive to it; I ought to be capable of hearing this communication and of knowing that the patient has told me what they come for. As the patient says, why don't I know?

Q: Couldn't you be effective just by your presence, by being a container, or a battery charger?

B: Possibly. Why does one have to know? I feel pressure to know because I think it is dangerous not to. I may be in trouble if I cannot understand what the connection is between somebody or something not me and what I consider to be me.

O: Winnicott talks about the analytic situation which is similar to transitional objects where the omnipotent phantasy of the child is reinforced by the responsiveness of the mother. It is the responsiveness of the analyst trying to know what the patient wants, of the experience of somebody being tuned in to him, that is unique to the analytic situation for many patients.

B: This is a useful idea if you are old enough and intelligent enough to be able to talk English in that kind of way. If the patient is falling back on a method of awareness which was available when he was an embryo being communicated with through a watery medium, then it may be obvious to the patient *how* there is a contact – but not so to me. It is important to be aware that the relationship between the two things – the patient and myself – is only transitional, a transient experience. It is as well to consider that a word like 'transference' has shades of meaning which are applicable, like 'transience'; it is only temporary, the moment at which the two paths cross for a short space of time during which a method of communication is employed by the patient which I am able to receive but do not know how it is done. I would, however, like to be able to verbalize it; I would like to be able to put it into some language – painting, music or mathematics.

{The patient that I described as saying that he had got through an exam but did not know how, showed by his constant repetition of that state of mind that the important matter was not conveyed by the ordinary meaning of the words, but was conveyed by the monotonous reiteration. In short, I can only describe it as a 'musical' contribution. That 'music' eventually became clear to me and I was able to give him an interpretation of what it was that he was conveying.}

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Observation: I have been thinking about the opportunity I had with a patient who came back after seventeen years. I got a call; she asked me whether I remembered her – I really didn't, but I remembered the name. The thing I have been pondering is that this lady told me that for all these seventeen years she had been holding on to something I had said; it was a kind of magic. What interested me was that I don't think I ever said it; it doesn't sound like me at all. It was, "There is no law that you have to stand in line with his bullet". I may have talked about her relationship to her sadistic husband, that she had the right not to take the kind of sadism she was expected to, but it was the wording that interested me – I don't think it was mine. There was such gratitude and magic in this. She returned because she hoped I could again come forth with a phrase for this poor suffering soul. She had had an awful life. A child of hers had been killed by a fall in an elevator shaft – partly due to her husband's carelessness in leaving doors open in his own factory; and her older son died of a horrible cancer. The first time I saw her, her first words were, "I have a few little problems", and out came this horrendous account. It was Dr Bion's speaking about language as a communication which interested me; you don't often have a patient coming back and telling you what they think happened. Did I say it unconsciously? Did she hear something, or did she make this up? How does one know? Or doesn't it matter?

Bion: We all have to get used to an extraordinary thing; this queer conversation, which we call psychoanalysis, works – it is unbelievable, but it does. The result is that you give various interpretations which you may or may not remember. It is difficult to believe that you may nevertheless have sown an idea which has germinated and

given birth to still other ideas until the patient comes back and tells you ideas which she thinks – and probably quite rightly – she got from you.

But you don't recognize them because you haven't seen what has happened since you sowed that particular seed in her mind. If you had a son or daughter who went away for seventeen years you might be surprised at the physical resemblance that person had to yourself and take a moment or two before you realized that in fact it was your son or daughter – similarly with ideas. So I wouldn't in any case be particularly disturbed by the discovery that some idea sown during that previous contact has germinated and come out in the form she can recognize; after all, it has grown in her and not in you.

{What matters is that a patient establishes the psychoanalytic ritual of so many sessions a week, so many weeks a year and so on. The origin of the ritual may be difficult to trace; thus peculiarly distressing circumstances, about which nothing can be done, are a fruitful source of omnipotence, omniscience and omnificence. So, it is likely that this patient would want to believe that the analyst was a beneficent power which she could adore; this would require interpretation. The analyst could fall into the mistake of accepting the proffered omnipotence, or alternatively of ignoring the *fact* of the help she had given. Patients do not come back for nothing. The analyst has to establish what is relevant and what is not. This implies a standard of Truth. In practice truth can only truly be described as an aspiration which may be beyond the capacity of the human mind.}

Q: Could you elaborate on a distinction you made between 'good and bad' and 'good and evil'?

B: {The Nazi ability to organize the Nuremberg Rallies was 'good'; the use to which it was put is a matter of opinion. In my opinion it was 'evil'. It is important for the patient to know what is *his* opinion. To conceptualize the difference would require an ability to discriminate between the moral and the technical.}

Q: I have re-read your paper on *Memory and Desire*. In it you say the psychoanalyst should forget the patient has a past and a future in relationship to him. I don't think you mean that as concretely and specifically as it is stated in that paper. Could you elaborate further on that?

B: I have to use this new-fangled trick of human speech which is only a few thousand years old; I have to use words which are

extremely crude and exaggerated, black and white. As far as the meaning is concerned they are not only black and white; they are often so fuzzy it is hardly possible to make sense out of them. We try to pull this faculty in the direction of doing something for which it is not intended, namely, the investigation of the human mind. So we put forward these statements and hope that the individual reader will be able to turn them into sense of some practical kind.

Q: Could you give an example in clinical practice of how one can suspend memory in working with a patient? Is there a technical device for that?

B: When I feel a pressure – for example, "I'd better get prepared in case you ask me some questions" – I say, "To hell with it; I'm not going to look up this stuff in Freud or anywhere else, or even in my past statement – I'll put up with it". But of course I am asking you to put up with it too – an impromptu affair of this sort. With regard to your patient you could say, "Surely I ought to look up the notes on this case. Oughtn't I to have made some notes on what this patient said to me? What would happen if the patient ran me into court for malpractice on the grounds that I hadn't prepared notes, that I didn't even remember what I had said before?" I can well see that you would get an unfortunate experience out of trying to explain in a court of law that you had not in fact done it because you don't think it works very well. It is much easier to believe that you don't do it because it is so nice to be lazy, not to worry with these things, to enjoy life instead. It is, oddly enough, difficult *not* to do; I should be very surprised indeed if, towards the end of the day or week, anybody resisted the pressure to drag up some psychoanalytic theory rather than go on not having the faintest idea of what the patient is saying or doing. But tomorrow is not today; and if tomorrow is seventeen years later – as we have just heard – we may not even recognize the face of the patient or what the patient said, and feel guilty about being greeted as if we had done something helpful. Unfortunately we tend to feel that our ideas aren't worth preserving so we are liable to lose touch with them. The patient who returned after so many years may have discovered that what you had to say was a great deal more valuable than you realized.

Q: Does it matter whether I said it or not?

B: It is hard to say. We think it matters whether we analyse people or not; whether it *is* worth doing is a different matter. The spoken

word certainly seems to be powerful. Tacitus gives a description of the behaviour of the bards amongst the German tribes who used to recite to the tribe, and from its reaction they would tell whether it was safe to proceed to war or not. The function of the bard could be called diagnostic; the function of the leader can be to try his seductive songs of war or murder on his audience. But does this mean that it is of use for us to talk to other people about 'the self'? It would be of considerable use if we could mobilize a meeting on the scale of the Nuremberg Rallies; it seems to me that we have to assess this matter of the efficacy of human speech against the background of history so far.

Q: When the child or the patient evacuates does a vestige remain? I am thinking of the infant who cries – feeling unpleasure or hunger – evacuating into the mother. I cannot imagine that child losing that feeling of unpleasure.

B: Partly because the evacuation takes longer than is supposed. In other words, the child has to do what it 'thinks' is an evacuation – it has got rid of these nasty feelings and ideas. {The 'vestige' remains, but has a power like that of a wound which festers.}

I get the impression that even the person who has dealt with the problem in that way has a feeling that something has taken place which must be kept out. So, once you have got rid of the unpleasant feeling, idea, proto-idea, primordial idea, keep it out. It doesn't seem to be far from what Freud said, that the repressed has to be kept repressed, except that I would reinforce this now by saying, the 'evacuated' has to be kept evacuated; it has never been unconscious. Some different word from 'repressed' or 'suppressed' is required for elements in the mind which have never been conscious *at any time* – and that means they have never been unconscious either.

Q: Would the term 'non-conscious' do?

B: If you find the term 'non-conscious' serves your purpose I certainly think you should retain it in your vocabulary. I find it easier to consider the existence of thoughts without a thinker. It has been put rather differently by Pirandello as the title of a play: *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. But why stop at that? Why should it not be something which is even smaller, more fragmentary than that? It is a thought wandering around for some thinker to lodge itself in.

Q: You don't want old language, you would rather find things without connotations?

B: I have tried to use them in this way: There can be certain things which we would nowadays call thoughts or ideas but which are really physical. I am dubious about using terms like 'the adrenals' and 'the optic thalamus' when I am talking about the mind. I shall never know whether there is any such thing or not, but I think it is convenient to leave one or two boxes empty in case somebody is able to fill them up. Similarly with regard to these diagnoses which are floating around – leave them unattached till somebody pulls them down to marry them with their proper origin.

O: You used the word 'evacuation' first as a kind of synonym of projective identification; later it appeared to depart slightly from the meaning of that term. I wondered if you could draw a distinction between the two. To me it seems that evacuation is a much more radical process than projective identification.

B: It is more radical because it is more concrete. But as soon as one starts giving words a more concrete meaning they become even more distorted. Or you can leave it up in the stratosphere of intellectualization – 'projective identification'. Melanie Klein herself said it was a bad name – it is.

O: Hanna Segal said that you have explained it pretty well and applied it clinically more than anyone else.

B: It may be because of the advantage of being analysed by Melanie Klein and having the experience of being told, "You are doing it".

Q: What is the difference between identification and projective identification?

B: {'Identification' should be kept to mean what Freud said it meant. Similarly, 'projective identification' should be kept for occasions when the occasion itself – as observed by the analyst – seems to fit in with an interpretation which the analyst thinks is better expressed by Melanie Klein than it would be by words of his own.}

The foetus has no choice but to get born, and is forced out into harsh gaseous fluid instead of a nice watery fluid. And similarly we have no choice except to communicate our interpretations by virtue of the gas – air – which we use or abuse for phonation.

Q: Is water always better than gas?

B: Not always, because the foetus is clever enough to take a little of the watery fluid in the nasal channels. The result is that it is still able to breathe and to smell. Smell travels very well in a watery fluid;

it is a long-distance receptor. Fish can smell decaying matter from a distance of many miles.

Q: Do you think the foetus can smell in the womb?

B: Yes, but that is an imaginative conjecture; I have no evidence for which I could claim a scientist's validity.

Q: Obviously the question of language is a very difficult one. But if we are going to discourage the use of words hitherto familiar, but already empty of meaning, how are we to talk to each other.

B: I cannot see any alternative to disagreement and discussion amongst psychoanalysts who know what the problem is to which they want to draw attention.

O: I would like to germinate the idea of thought without a thinker.[1] I thought of Lewis Carroll, who dealt with this concept easily: The Cheshire Cat – the smile without the cat. Then I thought of Edward Lear – wonderful so-called 'nonsense' poetry, which might have more sense than any other poetry because it has its own unfilled language. I feel that Doctor Bion too wants to make this unfilled language, and I can sympathize. I have great doubts of how much can be used of the existing language and the habit of human thinking. I think a two-and-a-half or three-year old can be better analysed than an obsessive intellectual adult, who has every word defined and comes to analysis to learn about himself. I find that kind of very bright patient particularly hard to deal with. Are there people you deal with who still have a balanced enough mind to think new thoughts? What do you do with this idea of thoughts without thinkers?

B: If they were our thoughts we might be able to do something about them. But since I am trying to define the possibility of thoughts *without* a thinker, I am talking about things which are not within my capacity and which may not yet have found a lodgement in me.

{The importance of the last speaker's comments cannot be exaggerated. Her own example may save the child from the worst excesses of the modern 'Babel'; the child analyst's position is onerous and exciting.}

O: We have two polarities: At birth the possibility of germination and the possibility that we can have a baby; then we have all these

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[1][Francesca Bion reports that Bion felt at the time that this contribution to the discussion was 'right on the button', as he put it. *Ed.*]

images of catastrophe, war, storms and terror. This seems to be the implication you are making.

B: You can regard birth and death as being extremely important, but they are not diseases. Nevertheless there is such a thing as maternal mortality; there is such a thing as infant mortality; and there is such a thing as death for people who are old. The result is that these apparent conjunctions make people think that they are therefore synonymous. It is important that one should see a distinction. Of course that itself is a slanted view, a view that we should learn how to talk articulate speech. *Our* concern is with the interval between birth and death and the need to know how to use articulate speech in our work.

O: There is a phrase that I read in a paper by you about the psychotic and non-psychotic aspects of the personality that has intrigued me. I have never seen it used anywhere else and I don't think you explained it at great length in the paper; it was "the furniture of dreams".

B: {We 'furnish' dreams with what we remember as pictorial images. What they really are will have to be determined by practising analysts.} It is true; one is always leaving these loose ends for the simple reason that one knows so little and one's life is so limited. Even mental capacity fades too fast to be able to carry these things through. One hopes that some phrase of the kind you mention can turn out, in the hands of somebody else, to achieve a meaning which could be useful.

O: Almost like a thought in search of a thinker.

B: Yes. But where did you get that idea? You could try to label the owner, the originator, the creator, but I think you would soon find you could not. For all you know it may even be you; you can be the storm centre of your own storm.

You may be originating something without being aware of the fact. This survival from the past about possessions – my this, my that, my idea – seems to me to be nonsensical, although I can well understand why someone like Melanie Klein can be irritated if she finds that the ideas or theories she produced are debased and devalued. One would like to have some respect for the ideas and keep them in their original bright working order. To do that you may have to invent the language you have to speak while you are speaking it.

Q: And hope to be understood?

B: I think that is being a bit greedy. The luxury of hoping means that you have first of all to hope that you have not been talking nonsense and that there is somebody else who is able to make sense of it. In this respect we are almost like cell bodies ourselves; there could be an idea floating around without a lodging place, without having found an appropriate cell sufficiently distorted for it to lodge in.

O: Children in play therapy, finding something is painful, frequently feel it has something to do with the air. They may blow bubbles, make aeroplanes.

B: I suppose children's games are fun for a time, but then the children begin to quarrel or get bored – which I think is the same thing as getting frightened. What is frightening about a game of fathers and mothers with dolls? As analysts we begin to suspect that these games are not 'just games'.

The child goes off to the mother or father and says, "What shall I do now? I can't think of anything to do" – the game has become intolerable. Later on, when individuals are not playing fathers and mothers, but are actually being parents, they have forgotten the fun element and so this 'game' becomes so terrifying an occupation that they want to rush off to God or Devil or Psychoanalyst and say, "What game shall I play now?" What game are they to play if the thing which is not in fact a game at all, but which might have been both the real thing *and* fun, hasn't worked out?

The fact that people can say "this is not working out" means that there is some hope for it; perhaps something better is being found. But as long as people draw a well-patterned coverlet over the games they get on with underneath, they will dislike having the coverlet removed. I don't think we can be sure that people won't get so frightened that they say, "Let's have it all back again – it may be humbug, it may be lying, it may be deceit, but at least it is more comfortable than this factual world you are inviting us to face".

Q: What about the reality of *our* group at the moment? How is everyone reacting? What is happening here under the coverlet?

O: I don't feel all that terrible emotion some people are hinting at. I think Doctor Bion is extremely demanding of us and I find that very stimulating.

O: I feel a sense of dissatisfaction and restlessness.

O: I feel fascinated.

O: I think one of the feelings of uneasiness is connected with language. We are talking in the tradition of German/American/English. This afternoon I was reading a paper by a French analyst and this evening I was thinking how psychoanalytic theories must feel different in different languages. We, as Americans, do not have the investment in our words that French people have; we have a different way of talking to each other and of talking about the things we experience with our patients. I am wondering if a lot of the unease has to do with shifting into completely different gears. We are used to talking a kind of shorthand to each other and there is something about the proceedings here which is reminding us that we are talking shorthand.

O: I recall at the conference at Topeka in 1976 on Borderline Disorders the contrast between the way in which psychoanalysis was talked about by the European analysts and the American analysts. It seemed to me that American psychoanalysis is more akin to baseball than it is to European psychoanalysis.

O: Yes, we are not philosophic, poetical, historical; we are more technical. That is the way we are used to talking to each other.

O: That may be a fault.

B: It is possible that the genuine Americans still retain an experience of what it is like to live in a strange and dangerous world in which warmth and food are not obviously forthcoming unless you produce them. In that way you can have it forcibly brought home to you that even the matter of food is not to be taken for granted unless somebody does some work for it. Although you succeed in being so successful that living becomes comfortable – houses, central heating, electricity and so on – there can remain a rooted remnant of awareness of the fact that life is not really like that. It can look almost like a kind of schizophrenia: On the one hand you have a culture, a capacity for thought, which has lost and forgotten the primitive base; on the other hand there is this remnant, vestige of an awareness of the reality of things.

That seems to me to produce something which is as near to a synthesis as to become noticeable. You produce wonderful physicists, chemists, Nobel prize winners, but there remains that highly active vestige – roughness, violence.

In Europe it broke out; there had to be a 'Great War' to make

people aware of these thick layers of hypocrisy which are difficult to penetrate without a most painful birth process.

{This discussion here is the prototype of what American civilization might do to make the violence – of which we are all aware – redundant.}

Today there may be some quarrel going on between the 'thinking' done by the body and that done at the cranial end. There is some hope that in spite of the fact that we all have diaphragms they are not purely non-permeable membranes; we hope that they do move up and down and do in fact have a lot to do with continued life. So maybe there is something analogous to mental movement by which the two are mingled. The representative of a trade union suddenly discovers the charms of being the boss and becomes 'cultured' – but what culture is that? Does he then become completely divorced from these 'inferior, lower class' people who work with their hands? One hopes that the diaphragm will be more likely to mingle the two than to cut them in two halves that do not re-join. The situation requires more than a conjuror or his tricks. As analysts we try to elaborate a technique for ministering to a mind diseased, razing out the rooted trouble; it is an unpopular occupation. {Being analyst or analysand is hard; no one who is not robust need apply. It is not safe to be unaware of the danger.}

O: The term 'projective identification' implies the continuing contact between one and the other. Evacuation does not imply that.

B: Melanie Klein said that patients *think* they evacuate something: that they have the *phantasy* that they have got rid of this chunk of themselves into the breast or the mother, although it only sounds like words, the sort of thing you puff out of your mouth. If a chimpanzee shows its hostility by making a rude noise with its lips it can have an effect on the baby chimpanzee it is trying to silence. The question is, to what do you attach importance – the flatus, the gaseous flatus you evacuate through your lips, or the noise you make in doing so? When does cacophony turn into music? When do these rude noises which you make with the aid of instruments like bassoons and tubas – and even with your mouth – become beautiful music? Or wonderful ideas? When do rude noises masquerade as profound thoughts?

O: It sounds as if the distinction has something to do with the nature of the product. Projective identification always implied to me

a product that had more completeness, wholeness and structure than the fragments you talk about as 'bizarre objects'.

B: There is a great advantage in its having some material quality. You can say, "black man" or "white man": there you are: you don't have to do any further thinking; they have arrived completely coloured and correctly labelled. So why waste time going through all this fatigue and nonsense about thinking about him or her or it or them? Why not deal with it according to the colour which has so mercifully been provided so one can tell which is which without thinking?

O: The point is, how you feel about 'black'; how you feel about 'white'; and what kind of emotional reactions we have for the black and white. I will try at the same time that I attack you to defend you too. You are talking in general about no-man's land – which of course is true. We don't know what a thought is; we can describe it, but we don't *know* it. That is what you are doing all the time. But if we want to talk about what affect it has or what impact it has, to use it in a practical way, then we have to do it somewhat differently. From time to time I can grasp what you are saying; I think there could be an original idea. And then you talk on with almost dissociated ideas, making big jumps – what we are thinking, or what goes on in the universe or the atmosphere – and then I get lost. Until all of a sudden you make an excellent remark and something could come out of it – and then I get lost again.

O: That is what Doctor Bion attempts to do. I don't blame him for not being more clear because in essence nobody can be more clear about the things we discuss.

B: I agree with you. One of the few situations in which we can defend ourselves is when we can say that what we feel is a *fact*; I think it is about as near to a fact as we are likely to get. The patient can say, "I know for a fact what it feels like to be me, and to feel what I feel when I sit in this room with others or by myself. That I know; that I am satisfied is a fact. All the rest of it is theory – psychoanalytic theories, French theories, English theories, black theories, white theories, any colour you like to mention". It is awkward if a Newton says that 'white light' is really made up of a number of colours. There's an intellectualization for you!

Q: That bastardizes the feeling of black and white – it makes everything more complicated and confused?

B: Certainly. If you say that that black person, or that white person is in fact a human being, that really mucks up the whole thing; that means that somebody has to do some thinking. You are thrown back on this horrible occupation of thinking.

O: You haven't talked about the Grid.

B: As soon as I had got the Grid out of my system I could see how inadequate it is. {"He put in his thumb and pulled out a plum, And said 'What a good boy am I![1]'" But the satisfaction does not last for long. As a pictorial model I suggest the boy sucking his thumb, pulling it out of his mouth to examine it with admiration, but in time becoming dissatisfied. What I experience is that 'theme with variations'.}

Q: Is it not workable?

B: {It is for you to decide whether it is any use to *you*. If it is not, do not waste time on it. The same advice applies to any future Grid that I might formulate.}

Q: Is it hard?

B: Not for me – only a waste of time because it doesn't really correspond with the facts I am likely to meet.

Q: How does Melanie Klein's theory of envy as an inborn attribute help us to understand the earliest development of the infant?

B: It probably helps you thanks to the intervention of Elliott Jaques. Having read the book he said to Melanie, "You've got the title wrong – it ought to be 'Envy *and Gratitude*'" – *that* she had left out. That book is meaningless unless one also detects the gratitude.

Q: How is it helpful to think about this as a preconception, as something which is innate as opposed to something which is learned?

B: We can use beta-elements and alpha-elements in order to talk, or to provoke an argument, or a train of thought. But before I can translate these bodily sensations into an idea I have to retain some capacity to understand the language my body talks to me. I don't like it because it so often misinforms me. I dislike having things done to me which don't cause me any particular harm but which are appallingly painful. So I would like to get some assistance from the cerebral end of my body which would translate that into a language which was more useful, more comprehensible and more to the point. Assuming that I have to be prey to the body I was born

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[1]Nursery rhyme: *Little Jack Horner*.

with and to what it persists in telling me, before I can attempt to be articulate and to aspire to these heights of highly intelligent theories, I first have to go through all kinds of unpleasant stages. One of them is what I would call speculative imagination or speculative reason. Unfortunately one has to go through this stage when one is extremely vulnerable; someone may say, "What rubbish you talk! You have imagined it". True – or dreamed it in a lucky frame of mind. But if one then, under the provocation of being contradicted, says, "It is not just imagination; it is a fact", that is not accurate. The appropriate child of a speculative imagination or speculative reason is a *probability*. The mathematicians think they have formulated a theory of probability. That is not a fact; it is only probable. Somebody who knows some mathematics may be able, thanks to their analytic flair, to elaborate a mathematical theory of probability which is some use.

Q: There must be some use for this idea of inborn envy. How have you found it of use either in the understanding of the infant and the interaction with the mother, or in some way understanding what the patient is going through?

B: A patient to whom I had been giving a prolonged period of interpretations was furious, and burst out in expressions of violent envy and hostility whenever I said something which appeared to be a gratifying discovery about him. I said, "There is one person in this room, at any rate, who is really envious of you, and that is you. When I was rash enough to say that that was a very interesting observation you had made, there was at once a great burst of vituperation, both against me for saying such a thing, and against yourself for having said something which excited attention".

Q: How did the patient react to that?

B: After a time he began to become more tolerable and tolerant. This patient could only wear clothes of a certain colour – no departure from that particular optical wavelength. He had learned to tolerate some clothes enough for purposes of survival provided he stuck to the same clothes which he wore year after year.

Q: What makes that innate?

B: I don't know. I would be inclined to say that somebody's ovum and somebody's spermatozoa had got together and had an intercourse which produced an object which has these striking characteristics. By the time it succeeds in getting born – and hasn't so far at any rate committed murder – there is one person whom nobody

can save and that is the patient from himself. If he wants to murder anybody he is the one victim who is always available at any hour of day or night, and no analyst or parent can intervene between himself and his Self.

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Question: How do you use the term 'caesura'?

Bion: I would like to have an idea of what this area is which is being delimited when you say "caesura". I was saying just now that I think I can feel when I am in what I call a "capital city", and that I feel New York is one. I don't care what the map says, or what is said by any other place; that is not what I am talking about. I wouldn't like to try to say what a capital city is. So when you ask me about the caesura – and indeed any of these words we use – every one of us needs to be aware of this thing which is the *origin* of the sensation that there is something around. When I say there is something around which I would call a 'capital city', it is no good suggesting I should go and look up the words in a dictionary or a guide book. There is no guide book to the domain or area we are talking about. What then is the 'capital city' of this caesura? What is the core of that? I have been asked this question, but I am trying to put to you that I cannot really tell you because I don't know how it is to be verbalized. Perhaps between us all we might be able to find an approximation to it, some method of indicating the focal point, the focus of a conic section. But that is again only another model; people have tried to give it various names like 'spirit', 'soul', 'super-soul', 'id', 'ego'; they none of them get me very far.

O: Maybe a colloquial reference: 'where it's at', is as good as anything.

B: Yes. A phrase like that conveys something to me. This is what we are up against the whole time: How is this awareness to be communicated to somebody else? Where does this communication start, where is its origin, where or how is it initiated? Did the place initiate

the feeling that it is a capital city, or did the idea or some primordial thing, and a whole lot of those primordial things getting together, produce something for which the name 'capital city' had to be found? It is not the bricks and mortar, but the people in it; then it isn't the people in it, it's the souls inside them. This is the sort of issue you are up against in tomorrow's session.

Q: Is it primordial? If we find a realization which a capital city is it necessarily localized in individuals?

B: I don't think it is so at all. I think it is convenient if it obtrudes to a point where even we notice it. But that is not because I am blind and have only just seen the bricks and mortar. It is something else which obtrudes which makes me feel there is a pressure which I find hard to localize.

If you show a dog a photograph of a little boy it smells it, realizes it can't eat it and that's that. But put the same thing on a movie and project it onto a screen – then the dog gets excited. It is only a photograph but it is a moving photograph and that the dog begins to think has a meaning. We also; there are certain things which set up a vibration. Then we begin to notice something. So if we allow ourselves to be sufficiently sensitive for long enough then we shall begin to feel something impinging on us. We might ultimately find some way of communicating it.

Q: Is psychoanalysis a depth phenomenology?

B: There is a lot to be said for a phrase which was used by Melanie Klein to me; "Psychoanalysis is a meaningless term, but it is available". It is a word in search of a meaning; a thought waiting for a thinker; a concept waiting for a content.

O: It has had many contents.

B: Unfortunately that is true. There is no shortage of material available for mental nourishment, but what the unfortunate mind is stuffed full of we don't know. The amount of rubbish which is lying around for purposes of filling a space is enormous. Freud talks about amnesia as being something which fills a space when you have forgotten what belongs to it. That would be all right if I knew where the pathological ended and the genuine began. It is nice to think, "Ah, psychoanalysis is *it*; that's what we all need". Do we? Or is it more stuffing? Is it more noises to occupy an empty space? This point can only be decided by those of us who are engaged on that activity we call psychoanalysis for want of a better word.

Poets have found a method of communication: Milton invents a word, 'pandemonium'; Shakespeare strings together ordinary words in a way that starts things vibrating inside countless generations of people. Why? How is it done?

Q: Are you suggesting that not only do we need to invent the language but we need to be more poetic in writing about the things we discuss?

B: No. I think the central point is that you need to dare to be available to something you want to express; to dare to allow a thought without a thinker to lodge somewhere in the range of your capacity. It might be to make marks on paper; it might be to make marks on stone; or it might be the capacity to set electro-magnetic waves moving. In other words, a person writes a bassoon concerto; if somebody else is clever enough to be able to play the bassoon, and to translate various black marks on white paper into sound waves, then that communication spreads if there is anybody around prepared to listen. The artist is dependent on the off-chance that someone will listen or dare to turn himself into a receptor. The patient is dependent on the analyst being sensitive to the faint signals which he cannot make louder. But in turning ourselves into receptors we are taking a big risk. From what we know of the universe we live in some of the information may be most unwelcome; the sound or signal we receive may not be of the kind that we want to interpret, to diagnose, to try to pierce through to this 'thing' behind.

{A real poet is able to use language that is penetrating and durable. I would like to be able to use language that did the same.}

O: I am interested in the process of communication or dialogue, or lack of it, which goes on in this group. I have a feeling that maybe you want to make us continuously realize what it feels like when there is no communication between us and you. But whatever you say is always fascinating; I'm not sorry I came; it's nice to listen. I am simply hurt, insulted that you offer us dialogue and we don't have dialogue. You let us know – and I know that anyway – the shortcomings of language, the dangers of feeling concepts prematurely, the necessity to leave the characters wandering alone before we conceptualize, define. But nevertheless human language isn't that bad; you cannot think it is that bad – you write a lot and we all enjoy reading it. So you certainly know how to use language. Today someone

threw in the idea of 'caesura' – without aggression, without asking for a definition, just to play around with it. But you didn't react to it; you play around with the idea of why one cannot define anything. I wouldn't mind if you had come and said, "Let's have no dialogue; I'll just talk". That's fine too; I love to listen to you.

B: It is unfortunate that in the situation you describe, instead of being able to develop the possibility, my own personality obtruded. {If you are right the dialogue has been spoiled by me, and you are right to feel that it could be better done by somebody else.} I try to give you a chance to fill the gap left by me. Perhaps tomorrow in our sessions each one of us may be able to learn something which I have *not* been able to tell you.

O: It seems to me that what happens in this room is something which happens in our offices with equanimity with certain patients. We do not gratify their questions; we give them something they can use which is – as you were saying earlier – planting the seed for germination. I particularly appreciate that you are not so explicit because it gives me a chance to get in on my own thinking and my own development.

O: Everybody is interested but there is some strange wish to mystify things for which human language would be adequate.

O: I have a different feeling – although I have felt exasperated at times too by not being able to focus in the way I wished. The sense I am getting from Doctor Bion is that he is so aware of how concepts can be misused and concretized and become part of the luggage that gets in the way, that in justice he misreads his own concepts which many of us have found very useful. We might misuse them, true.

O: He doesn't suggest that you misuse them; he suggests you might put them to better use than he does.

O: Yes, but if we try to deal with any one concept, that concept is already no good.

O: It seems to me that Doctor Bion's purpose is to help us to think differently and that he doesn't feel that ordinary dialogue is useful.

O: If that is true then we shouldn't be asked to ask questions. Let's say we just sit here and listen to whatever Doctor Bion says – but don't ask any questions.

O: Then he won't be able to have his effect.

B: I plead that by my actual presence I am behaving as if I did think there was something to be said for dialogue and even for getting together – conversing if possible. But at the same time I don't want to mislead you into supposing that my characteristics, whatever they are, are therefore necessarily desirable. You may indeed have to overcome that particular hurdle in order to get to the real truth behind it. The central thing is this: In my experience there is a real truth behind this debate; although I have not got there myself, somebody else may. Plato's dialogues have provoked thought amongst people who weren't even in existence when he originally engaged in them.

O: In the last few days I have thought back to some splits that have come out and have been troubled over them – I have not been so stimulated in a very, very long time. Maybe we are just expressing the pain of being made to think.

B: There is a certain redeeming quality about it all; we can still retain a hope that somebody, sometime – perhaps now – will do better than our Selves. I know my limitations up to a point. There are plenty of opportunities for me to learn about all my faults and mistakes; they are uninteresting, and they are a nuisance. Nevertheless one hopes, somewhat optimistically, that in any given community there will be people who can do better. If you have a family of your own you hope that it at least will avoid most of the blunders the parents have made.

O: I am a bit mystified by something that I sense going on amongst the group. I don't understand everybody's readiness to agree that we are non-thinking people. As a group we have talked to each other about exciting ideas over tea, over meetings, before patient, after patients till midnight. We are not stultified, ironclad; I don't know what kind of model we are setting up to say we shouldn't be.

O: I would like to take it back to the beginning, to my question about the caesura. I think Doctor Bion answered my question very well. It was taken out of context; it was an idea that occurred to me after the discussion about intra-uterine existence and the problems of the foetus.[1] I was wondering what Doctor Bion meant by caesura in that context. I have no complaint about the way he answered this question. Perhaps now that we understand that this was good enough we can go on from there.

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[1]See Talk 2.

Q: Don't you think that many of us feel a great deal of frustration?

O: I don't like anybody to speak for me. I find Doctor Bion most inspiring and I think I understood some things. So I have no quarrel at all with the way he handled it.

B: My difficulty is that I have to borrow words from the past; but the past is finished, there's nothing we can do about it –

O: We can understand it –

B: But I have to use that vocabulary and unfortunately, as you rightly remark, we understand it. What I am trying to point out is something we *don't* understand. I am going to use this model, but I want to warn you that it is only a model and it is liable to obscure more than it illuminates. There is such a thing as the birth of an idea; I suggest that it is a most uncomfortable experience. Whether it is a group of people or an individual which is giving birth to an idea the pains which are associated with that experience are extremely upsetting and disturbing, and somebody will certainly try to put a stop to it; nobody likes pain. I think it would be rash to assume that this problem is only within this room. We feel that the individual is unique and deserves to be given a chance to blossom, to grow, to develop, and for there to be a space in which to do that – whether it is an individual person surrounded by a skin, or whether it is an idea which is much more difficult to recognize. I should be surprised – again falling back on anatomy and physiology – if the phagocytes do not collect and try to gobble up this new idea before it gets more troublesome, before it turns into a contagion or an infection. It may not be a pathological idea and its destruction could therefore be unfortunate. That seems to be the magnitude of the problem which faces each person here or in the office. We can consider and debate these matters; it would be a great pity if we didn't dare to do so. Physicists and chemists can draw this wonderful diagram of the DNA molecule but they have not defined the difference between the animate and the inanimate. *We* are sure that there is one. A table seems to be different from the things that we are. Defining it may be a matter of little importance but I am sure that there are feelings, embryonic ideas, primordial ideas which deserve to have a chance of development. I do not know whether they will turn out to be good or bad; somebody has to have the courage to say, "Even if the child I give birth to is a monster I'll risk it".

O: It would require a very strong person.

B: Yes, and there may be little willingness to admit the strength of such a person. It can be assumed that anybody can give birth to a child or to an idea – it's so easy. Then there's trouble when you find it isn't easy. I see no reason, for example, for believing that the psychoanalytic movement will not be stamped out at any time by government, an authority, something which has power behind it. But I don't see why we should therefore be intimidated and refrain from psychoanalysis.

O: I think we have many phagocytes in this city that are always, as you point out, gathering to make sure that a stillbirth occurs. It is difficult under those circumstances to produce an idea that is not only new but which will survive long enough to become threatening.

B: I talk about white blood cells, using this pictorial language – it is a verbal form of pictorial imagery. There are people who are impatient of the restraints of verbal communication and find other methods. Valéry said that it is assumed that the poet is a person who is undisciplined, disordered, goes into a rhapsodic state and emerges, wakes up with a poem complete in his mind as the outcome of an undisciplined, intoxicated – literally and metaphorically – state of mind. Valéry believed that, on the contrary, the poet is much nearer to an algebraic mathematician than to an intoxicated individual.

O: Coleridge would say, "Weave a circle round him thrice . . ."[1]

B: These issues are involved in seeing your patient tomorrow – the one that you haven't seen so far. Even if it is one you think you saw anatomically yesterday or last week or last year, it is not the one you see tomorrow.

O: Could you give us some hint as to how we could see that patient in a way we haven't seen him before; how to suspend any memory of having had contact with that patient. I have been attempting to do that and it is very difficult. The patient's name is in my appointment book so I can't eradicate it from my future unless I am going to do away with my appointment book.

B: It is indeed difficult to say how to denude one's mind of preconceptions, memories and desires which make such a noise that one cannot hear the patient speak – at least not the one that we need to hear speak. In my experience the noise of my past has so many echoes

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[1]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Kubla Khan.*

and reverberations that it is difficult to know whether I am really listening to the patient or being distracted by one of these ghosts of the past. I have had the experience of seeing a young adolescent and thinking to myself, "It's very queer; he hardly says anything, but he sits there with that silly grin on his face". I couldn't think that it reminded me of. The next morning when I was shaving I saw it in the mirror – that's why it was so familiar. This young man was supposed to be an adolescent; he wasn't supposed to be the analyst; he wasn't supposed to be teaching me anything. I was supposed to be analysing *him*. But in fact he had held a mirror in which I could see my face – but I didn't recognize it.

Q: What did it teach you about the adolescent?

B: It taught me that I had better try to forget these painfully acquired ideas about psychiatry, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy and the rest of the luggage which I was carting around with me; it interfered. If I had only been able to see at the time, I might have been able to make some contribution which was helpful.

Q: Like what?

B: I don't know – I never made it. I lost the patient at the first interview – and he was quite right.

Q: If you could speculate, if you had understood what you understood next day, what might you have done?

B: I can't say, because I cannot now draw upon the actual information which I might have been able to use at the time, had I been open to what was being made available by this patient. In other words, the analytic session is priceless; the potentiality of the analytic session – the direct emotional experience – is out of reach almost as far as value is concerned.

What other people are prepared to tell you about the patient is worthless compared with what the patient tells you – maybe verbally, maybe dramatically, maybe mimetically.

O: What you are saying then is that you capture the thing-in-itself by isolating it in the analytic session. But it seems to me to be very difficult to be able to capture the thing-in-itself if you don't have the necessary training.

B: That is one of the big difficulties. As Freud put it, you have to know where to look, where the apparition will appear – literally. I am not talking about a ghost; the thing that appears does appear.

You need to have your senses directed towards it. Then when you begin to feel something you might close in and focus on the point of irritation – using the term in the neurological sense of nerve irritation.

{J. M. Barrie led his audience to expect the appearance of Mary Rose at a stage entrance towards which the whole cast directed its gaze. By this means the actress was enabled to enter unobserved. With the raising of the lights came the illusion that a spirit – not a physical body – had been present.}

O: It seems to me that this 'baggage' we bring with us is akin to a character-honouring that prevents a kind of neuro-perception.

B: Yes, it is possible.

O: It can be baggage that interferes with communication, or it can be wisdom that facilitates it and magnifies the possibility of having an experience. You can't say that theory is baggage.

B: No, but it turns into baggage. My wife asked me. "What shall we take to New York?" –

O: You had very little luggage!

B: "The temperature is 80 today – yesterday it was 40. Which lot shall we take?" You see; it is as simple as that. But when it comes to a question of mental baggage, that really is a problem. I believe that on the whole the kind of psychoanalytic baggage I have collected is more of an asset than a liability; what is left by the time I have mobilized it seems to be more valuable than what I have discarded or what I have forgotten. But only time can tell; unfortunately it is unlikely that we shall live long enough to know the truth.

O: While with a patient my mind wandered briefly to a personal preoccupation. The patient said he felt disconnected. I don't think I had made a sound, but I know his feeling was related to my thinking about myself. I don't understand it.

B: The impression I get is that this is a fundamental, primordial characteristic. I don't think it is acquired through reading books or meeting people or having a lot of experience of life. Even the infant is aware of feelings of dependence *and* isolation. Grammatically there is no difficulty in describing it – "I was all alone in the room with so and- so". But we attach very little importance to those words. It is only on looking at it more closely, only if you bring to bear our psychoanalytic microscope, that it turns out that that commonplace phrase has a meaning that most people aren't aware of. I think you can be stirred to the depths by something which seems to be so

insignificant that it is hardly noticeable; it is probably lost in depths of knowledge so that this spark of insight gets swallowed up.

Q: Is there an association between your recommendation that one eschew memory and desire, and the notion of abstinence that Freud used as applied to the analyst?

B: I would have thought that they are fairly closely associated. Melanie Klein used to say she wasn't a 'Kleinian' analyst, she was just a psychoanalyst working along the same lines as Freud. But whether she liked it or not she was condemned to be a 'Kleinian'. So, with reference to your question, one would like to be able to acknowledge one's indebtedness without insulting the person from whom one says one has borrowed the idea.

O: The other similarity I thought I saw was in the recommendations that Freud makes in *The Interpretation of Dreams* of how one should approach the dream without preconceptions.

B: This is so; I don't think it is distorting what he said. We hope to quieten down our internal noises so as to hear what is being said. It is difficult to combine this with the use of knowledge or experience which other people have made available. It is the difference between actually living life and theorising about it.

O: When we live life we also feel that – I think Kant was right – we cannot know the thing-in-itself. There is always something in human perception which is already there. Children say, "We cannot crawl out of our bag". We try at least to crawl out as much as we can, but only if we keep in mind that we actually *cannot,* shall we get relatively as close as possible. One questioner sounded as if he would have taken you literally, not as a *façon de parler*, saying, "If I look at my appointment book I know the name, I know who the patient is". Of course one has memory; of course if I go from here to there I have a theory of laws of motion. One cannot do anything without an implied theory. We might want to talk metaphorically to give an intense feeling, or we might want to spell it out. But we shall be a little closer to knowing the thing-in-itself if we point out that we cannot know it.

B: One has to dare to go through various preliminary stages before one reaches even a theory. That is what I meant when I talked about daring to exercise your speculative imagination and your speculative reason; the place which one would like to occupy with facts is taken by probabilities – probability, using it in the sense I understand Kant to use it, as being something for which the facts are inadequate.

It might turn into a fact later; there might be enough evidence to justify saying, "I know if for a fact". But what we have to deal with are situations which are stimulated literally on the spur of the moment.

O: We all live by our theories whether we know it or spell it out or not. Most of us live by the theory that ghosts or poltergeists are not around. I am aware of that because I have a patient at present for whom it is absolutely natural to believe that poltergeists exist. She is a daughter of a poltergeist-layer, so she grew up with the attitude, "Daddy has a poltergeist today"; like, "Daddy has a new patient" – there will be money coming in. Her assumption is that if the curtain moves someone was here – no fright, nothing; just about the same theory as I expect this chair will not fly away. Maybe there are poltergeists; she might be right; it is a probability.

B: I can have theories about babies and even about what babies think, but babies don't have to have theories about it – they think. I can imagine – again indulging in speculative imagination – that at some point the baby begins to suspect that behind the food and the seat which carries it around there is an actual person. But there is no language for it; you have to wait before you call the thing "Mother" or "Father".

O: I always thought a baby called it an 'object'!

B: It probably did – if you could translate it back again into the original language.

Q: Why wouldn't the first experience of what is known be a 'being'? Psychic experience is non-sensuous – how could it be a 'thing'?

B: I can imagine noises of something rushing through my cranium, or thumps taking place somewhere inside; and I can imagine that I might be suspicious that some 'thing' had got inside me. The baby cannot make use of articulate speech so there is a big gap between the baby who knows the facts and we who know the language. One can identify oneself with the person who potentially is capable of articulate speech; one can also – or so it seems to me – retain some ghostly characteristics which know things unknown to me, but which are not verbalized. All that my body says is, "I've got a pain". It isn't very informative; it is not much more informative than somebody on the road using their horn – it doesn't tell you much. You cannot interpret that into movements of your feet and hands which will activate the clutch and brakes.

O: I would like you to say something about hate. You were talking about events prior to knowledge, on the way to being knowledge; I was confused because you said that events which are not yet knowledge are probable. And hate is something absolute.

B: {When I speak of 'absolute hate' I refer to one pole of love; there cannot be darkness without light.}

Q: In your article about the psychotic and non-psychotic parts of the personality you described the feeling of anxiety when your patient told you he was going to attack you. Could you describe that feeling? Is this a common occurrence?

B: It is quite common enough for me not to like it, and common enough for me to have automatic methods of being aware of it. I do manage to keep in good working order an established defensive system. From that point of view I automatically defend myself against feelings and experiences and people who start stirring up some disagreeable feeling. At the same time I am also trying to understand what is going on. So one is at war with oneself in this respect; one is at war with one's natural defences.

Q: When you described the feeling in this article you said it was following your interpretation that this patient tried to put into you the fear of the attack; that the patient then clenched his fist so that you could see the whites of the knuckles. Did your interpretation make him angry?

B: Certainly. It is one reason why we would be somewhat optimistic to suppose that the analyst and the analysand did anything which exempted them from hating psychoanalysis. We are perpetually, by our own activity, stirring up the hatred of this occupation in both people. But we mutilate our Selves if we become incapable of feelings of hate as well as feelings of love. The problem is how to avoid auto-mutilation and at the same time not to mutilate these tender, growing shoots of civilized conduct.

O: I think all analysts wonder whether the development of psychoanalysis this century is a good thing for the world or not. It is so painful.

B: Yes, it is.

Q: Could you elaborate on what you said about analysts hating themselves as analysts?

B: There is no shortage of enemies – external and internal. So on the whole one regards it as redundant to create some more. All

right – so far so good perhaps. But the next step is, when do we start defending ourselves and defending a position which we may not have decided is defensible – like standing up for psychoanalysis, maintaining the right to practise psychoanalysis before we have had a chance to make up our own minds in some really convincing way that we have supporting evidence for its value?

Q: How about defending the right to make up our own minds?

B: It's a nice idea; otherwise we would have to consider the possibility that our minds are made up for us by forces about which we know nothing. We do want to defend this idea; we do want to defend the occupation of trying to investigate our ability to make up our own minds.

O: I worked once with a psychotic patient who came to me when he was about thirty five; he had been in treatment since he was twenty. His greatest *idée fixe* was a sentence, "I am not homosexual" – and he wasn't. He could only work at night; in the daytime he couldn't be on the street. He worked in a kitchen in a nightclub and there he accumulated all the notes the waiters left around to make sure that he had not automatically written, "I am not homosexual". After many years he asked if he could bring me those notes – that was about fifteen years ago. He became better and started to have a normal life, worked during the day and started to talk to people. Altogether he became more alive and very circular in his phantasies. I suggested that maybe we could stop.

His other *idée fixe* was that he wanted to hold a woman in his arms; he wanted to be able to love a woman and be married. He said he knew he could grow, and he did indeed become better and better. I blamed myself for having almost given up on this man.

When he was in his fifties he met a woman in his office, a divorcée with two sons, and fell in love. I couldn't believe it. I kept thinking, "Why did I think this man couldn't do it?" He married her and although he had never attempted sex with either man or woman, after a few weeks he functioned and loved it. They were married at Easter and planned to go to Italy for the summer. When I came back from my summer vacation he didn't show up for his first session. I thought, "Ha, he is doing so well he is forgetting me – fine". The next session he didn't come. I called up his office. He had had a heart attack and died.

I wondered, did he work himself up to a way of life for which the frame, the machinery was absent? Does it matter that he died? He died with his widow surviving him, not like a homosexual, so maybe it was worthwhile. What was this whole story about? I don't know. Did he benefit from thirty five years of treatment.

Q: What you are saying is, did you kill him?

O: I wondered of course.

O: He did the growing and he did the dying.

Q: Did you think he would live for ever after you had cured him?

O: He was only fifty six when he died.

Q: Is it possible that he somehow linked love with death – when he blossomed in love he was closer to death?

O: The widow called me and said, "I know my husband saw you for a while before we got married". She added, "Fairy tales don't last long – it was a fairy tale, it was so beautiful".

B: I remember a primitive Maori discussing a matter of this kind; he said, "Is man a stone that he should live for ever?" If people embark on this rash venture as animate objects then they are going to die.

O: I came to that conclusion too.

O: Maybe this is connected with the hatred of being an analyst. Most people have a pretty good idea of what they do or don't do in their work; we can never know.

Q: Your question is, did you help him, or did you help him to death?

O: Yes.

O: You can never know – which makes it rough.

Q: What difference does it make since death is a part of life?

O: True. He had a few very happy months.

Q: Would it have been better for him to live to be seventy?

B: I find myself struck by the toughness of what we call 'conscience'. It has been remarked that "conscience makes cowards of us all".[1] So it does. It is one of the really vital bullies which is difficult to bring under any control. For one thing, it is *so* moral. Anybody who poses the free play of morality is by that very fact sinning. In certain

[1]["Thus conscience does make cowards of us all. . . ." – Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 1. *Ed.*]

religions people talk about 'original sin'; Freud talks about 'free-floating guilt'. It has a long history – long before anybody managed to attach an articulate label to it. So you can be reasonably sure that whether you are analysand or analyst you will be a prey to feelings of guilt and can even be set off on a career of crime detection. The individual can spend the whole of his life carrying out penitential exercises, devoting his attention to confessions of sins of one sort and another, and even committing crimes in order to have something to confess.

O: I guess I wanted to confess it.

B: It is a great sin for somebody to enjoy themselves. If he had a few months of happiness – and what is worse, sexual happiness – somebody would be sure to suffer for it; if nobody else, the analyst.

O: The confession helped – I have never told the story before.

Q: Would you say that the Catholic Church's doctrine of original sin is another way of people from past history talking about the burden of guilt that each of us is bound to assume, and that some of these people were just as wise as Freud in perceiving that?

B: The religious people generally have a long history of acquaintance with what is called the 'soul' or the 'spirit'. So it is not at all surprising that the remains of these various past histories are recorded in one form or another. Nor is it surprising that we find ourselves up against this same phenomenon, this same fact of guilt, either experiencing it in oneself or seeing it operating in somebody else.

Q: Would we be human without guilt?

Q: But do we have to have so much?

O: It seems to me that it is more intense than a hundred years ago. The destructiveness we see rampant today is the other side of guilt feelings in terms of aggressive impulses. I am indulging in speculative imagination and just wonder if in the year 2000 or 3000 – assuming there is a world at that time – the phase of the human being will follow the present trend, or whether there can be some kind of change.

B: Couldn't we be vulnerable to the accusation that not only do we continue to exist but we also have aspirations to live a life worth living – which is adding insult to injury! If indeed we are guilty of this aggressive act of actually being animate I don't know who or what we are opposing. I see no reason for believing that the universe in which

we find ourselves is friendly disposed. Locally, on our planet, animate objects exist. But the scientists, with their various space probes, have not yet discovered a sign of life anywhere else – although it is true that they have not even escaped from the solar system.

O: It is like the crime of being born human.

B: Or potentially 'civilized'.

Q: Why do I have such a depressed feeling now?

O: You remember Kurt Eissler's paper (1975) – he doesn't feel that the human animal will survive; man will destroy himself.

O: We shall become an extinct species.

O: It has happened before with many other species.

O: To revert to this stamping out of memory: I know what you mean, and I know you mean something good, but the danger is in taking it too literally. Physiological memory is the genes – they cannot be stamped out.

O: I took it as a metaphor.

O: Yes; but I think we should remember that the physiological memory is there; whether the original sin is there or not, whatever is there – the potential for joy too – we live by our physiological memory.

O: But when we are really absorbed in something we don't have memory.

B: I would like to invent a couple of words to get on with – 'genotypes' and 'genomenes'; meaning by the genomene the birth of a thing which appears, the counterpart of a phenomenon.

Q: A phenotype?

B: A phenotype and a phenomene as a counterpart to a gene.

Q: What does it mean?

B: I don't know – I invented it in the hope that something will come and nest in it; that some loose content which is floating around will find somewhere to lodge.

O: You invented this term in connection with memory and I am struggling to make a connection.

B: I suspect that there is some counterpart of the term 'birth of ideas'; that there is some reason to imagine that these painful experiences which we have are related to the process of giving birth to an idea – or "struggling to make a connection", which is an instance of thinking. An institution, a society of human beings may be unable to survive the birth pangs of an idea – it splits apart. We are undoubtedly

careless with our psychological midwifery. We seem to feel that the thing to do with a new-born idea is to give it a good hard smack.

O: If ideas are pro-order they have a good chance of being accepted. But if the idea announces that there isn't any order – only disorder – that's pretty horrible, even if it is true.

O: The way I understand memory is that it is always a partial aspect of an experience. Forgetting, tossing memory aside, is tossing aside a partial aspect of the experience, but if it is really taken up into the totality then the memory is a living component of the aspect of the larger totality of experience. So this business of genes doesn't enter into it.

O: Didn't Freud say that dreaming is, amongst other things, a way of remembering? Memory has many faces.

B: I would like to suggest that if anybody recognizes the remains, remnants of a culture floating up in the conversation in their office it would be a good thing to drop your shovels and get out your camel hair brushes, and deal with it very carefully so as to delineate the civilization of which it is a remnant, a survival which has become uncovered. I gave the example of the situation where you get nothing but conjunctions with nothing to join them to.[1] The idea which ought to be conjoined by what is floating up in your office is missing.

O: I am bothered by what you said about guilt – that guilt is a terrible thing. I think the terrible thing is psychopathy. Thanks to guilt, there is such a thing as conscience. Melanie Klein speaks of reparation for guilt; Winnicott, of the capacity for concern which comes from guilt. The great danger of what you refer to as 'lying' is that behind all misuse of language there is fundamental psychopathy.

O: You sound as if you are talking about Watergate.

O: No, I'm talking about life.

O: What about the notion of surplus repression in relation to surplus guilt? There is misplaced guilt, inappropriate guilt.

B: Guilt is such a nasty feeling; it hurts so much. And when something hurts you your tendency is to hurt it back again, scratch it out. If your skin starts irritating, scratch it even if you run the risk of producing weals, which are not much better than the original irritation. But somebody, sometime has to dare to investigate this horrible pain. What you are saying does involve the further investigation of

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[1]See discussion of Links in Talk 3.

the guilt; not saying it does not exist or is not painful, but going on looking at it. Then you might detect psychopathy. It does involve standing up to the guilt of which one is aware. The same thing happens with other emotions; it is no good talking about a brave man when he is avoiding being aware of the danger which he runs; he has to know it is a dangerous situation he is handling. What is known and felt to be dangerous, and is *still* kept in view, seems to me to be real bravery.

O: To be aware of the dangers of psychoanalysis and then to practise it.

B: And go on practising it.

O: It is either heroic or psychopathic!

O: I have always liked the statement of a wise analyst who said, "By the time you know why you got into the practice of psychoanalysis it is too late to get out".

SÃO PAULO
1978

TEN TALKS

INTRODUCTION

These talks, given in April 1978 under the auspices of the São Paulo Psychoanalytical Society, were the third of their kind and took place on consecutive evenings with a week-end break between numbers Five and Six. This is an edited version of spontaneous contributions made by Bion without written notes of any kind. I hope that, in spite of editing necessary for the printed word, I have preserved the essential freshness of his spoken communications.

Francesca Bion

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Bion: I am not going to talk about psychoanalysis because I assume that everybody here is familiar with the analytic experience. I am convinced that there is no substitute for actually undergoing analysis with an analyst. People are often misled by the fact that we talk in the way which is familiar in ordinary conversation, so that technical psychoanalytic terms like 'Oedipus complex', 'projective identification', 'identification', have almost become part of cultivated speech; it is not understood that it is essential to undergo a psychoanalytic experience. Those who think that they know all the psychoanalytic jargon believe that they can talk just like a psychoanalyst to a patient who comes for help. But 'just like' is not the same thing as 'psychoanalysis'; the result is a great proliferation of different kinds of psychoanalysis, usually 'new and improved' – using those words sarcastically.[1] That kind of treatment evokes a powerful, emotional situation and the so-called psychoanalyst reacts emotionally himself. The further immediate result is that psychoanalysis gradually gets a worse and worse reputation. If this process continues long enough psychoanalysis will not be able to survive. Thus we bear a heavy responsibility. I propose to talk about the problems with which the psychoanalyst has to deal when he is psychoanalysing. Freud was impressed by the motto of Paris – *Fluctuat nec murgitur* – which he translated roughly as "Storm-tossed but not submerged". The person who is a good imitation of a psychoanalyst *is* submerged by the storm he evokes. The more desirable state is a difficult one which I will try to describe like this: The analyst, if he has had a real analysis and

[1][A previously unpublished paper by Bion with the title 'New and Improved' is included in Volume XV. *Ed.*]

training by a real psychoanalytical institute, is a feeling person. So in this stormy turbulence he shares that emotional experience because he is a feeling person. He is also trained to think while amidst these stormy emotions.

Using war as an example: An officer is not supposed to be unaware of a terrifying and dangerous situation; he is nevertheless supposed to be able to go on thinking if he finds himself in a position in which panic, panic fear arises – let me remind you of the god Pan. But he is not supposed to run away. He is supposed, in spite of being in the midst of this emotional storm, to go on thinking clearly. In that way he forms a focus from which the more disciplined reaction will build up; the troops will not run away, but will begin to stand fast.

I use that model deliberately because the situation in the consulting room appears to be so different. It is usually a comfortable room and apparently there is nothing to be frightened of. Yet patients can get up and leave the room and never come back again. The analyst is not supposed to find himself a prey to emotions which cause *him* to leave the room; he is not supposed to be unaware of these powerful feelings, nor is he supposed to stop thinking clearly. Nor is he supposed to be overwhelmed by desires, including sexual ones. This situation is basic, it is fundamental, and although it appears in groups it also appears when there are only two people in the room. One could very nearly express it in biophysical terms, such as the chemical products of the adrenal bodies. When do these chemical reactions become functional in the embryo? When could the embryo be said to feel fear or aggression? I am aware that we cannot hazard a guess without being vulnerable to the accusation that we are simply indulging our imaginations. But I think it is most important that we *should* be able to do so. A patient who has no dreams is also likely to have no imagination; that becomes a significant symptom, a sign which we should recognize. Repeating this slightly differently and referring again to the group: Victor Hugo says, in *Les Légends des Siècles*, that the emotion shared by two opposing armies in war is terror. If you are a member of one army you know that you are terrified; but you imagine that the enemy are all brave and disciplined fighters. In World War I there occurred one Christmas Day a fraternization between the opposed armies. The reason why the troops could fraternize was that they all knew what it was like to be at war. The Staff were somewhat withdrawn from the actual combatant experience,

so they could see that, from a military point of view, to emerge from your trenches and greet the enemy was to give them important information about your numbers and your position. So the Command – on both sides – forbade any further fraternization at all. That experience never occurred again – either in the first World War or in the second; chivalry was killed.

In the shared emotional experience of the analysis the analyst is somewhat in the position of the officer who is obliged to think clearly. It sounds so simple – especially if you have never had an analysis.

I want to turn now to what we, as analysts, should observe in the analytic experience. What are the facts which we are supposed to observe? How do they come to us?

To consider this matter in an academic fashion – in the way in which we can when we are not practising analysis, but are discussing it here – I want to suggest that we do not in fact see or observe what we ordinarily think of as 'facts'.

At first the analyst is ignorant of what is happening; if we are honest we have to admit that we haven't the faintest idea of what is going on. But if we stay, if we don't run away, if we go on observing the patient, after a time, "a pattern will emerge".[1] That is possible when we are concerned with physically sensible facts – in short, all that our senses bring to us. The problem then is, what is our interpretation of the facts which our senses are making available to us? In other words, there has to be what we call an 'interpretation' of what our senses tell us. There is a great deal of what I would call 'evidence' which makes me think that there is such a thing as a mind.

Suppose this word 'mind' is not referring to a figment of the imagination, but to a peculiar kind of 'fact'. Cats and dogs appear to behave as if they have minds; I see no reason for supposing that there is any fundamental change when one of these animals learns the trick of walking on its two back legs, and later calls itself 'Homo Sapiens'. How does that fact – if it is a fact – come over to us who are observing the person? In addition to the evidence which our senses give us there is the evidence which is brought to us not by our sight, but by our *insight*. That is another 'fiction'. So I want to introduce – borrowing from Kant – the idea of *rational conjecture*. I want also to add to that *imaginative conjecture*.

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[1]Freud quoting Charcot.

When we are waiting for this pattern to emerge we should also be sensitive to our imaginative conjectures and our rational conjectures as a part of the pattern which will perhaps become clearer to a point where we could translate it into words which we would try to communicate to the patient.

Q: My question is in the form of a fable. A scientist had a little fish in an aquarium. One day the little fish jumped out of the aquarium and the scientist observed that it could survive for five minutes. The next day the little fish repeated the feat and was able to survive for ten minutes. A day came when the fish was able to survive outside the water altogether and accompanied the scientist to the cinema, the theatre, everywhere. One day there was a storm and when the scientist went outside into the street with the fish, it fell into a little puddle and drowned. The moral of this fable is: Learning new things, but forgetting what has been learned before, is highly dangerous. Using this model, what would be the implications, in the patient/analyst relationship, if the analyst, while delving into unknown situations, the 'unknowable', gets catastrophically lost and destroys a therapeutic situation?

B: When the patient comes to the consulting room which animal has come? The scientist? Or one of these little creatures we have just been hearing about? And to which are you going to talk? Most patients were familiar with a Kleinian experience when they were infants; but they couldn't tell anybody what that experience was because they had not learnt the language necessary to make interpretations, diagnoses, verbal communications. After many years they acquire a considerable vocabulary but by that time they have forgotten what they wanted to say,[1] so they are as far off from communicating with somebody else as they were when they were full-term foetuses or amphibians, or even leading fishy existences surrounded with amniotic fluid.

There are two people in the consulting room, both of whom are in a peculiar state of mind – the state of mind in which we are when we are awake with our senses about us. That state of mind is different from the one in which we are when we are asleep. We are also in a different state of mind when we move about in a gaseous fluid from

[1]Melanie Klein did not forget. She was able to say it, but by then what she said comes to us as unfamiliar and peculiar.

that in which we are when we exist in a watery medium. I expect you have all seen a new-born baby who can be put on a pot and its bottom seems to know what it is supposed to do. But I am told by psychiatrists that it cannot because its fibres are not myelinated. So I observe an impossible fact; that is the trouble with facts – they are all impossible. If you wrote the true story of your life between the time when you were born and the time now when you are here in this room, and if you were to say there were a lot of other people making a similar journey and that they came together in this room in São Paulo on April 3, 1978, nobody would believe it – everybody would know it was so impossible that it wouldn't be worth reading such rubbish. Similarly with the baby and its non-myelinated fibres – who or what told it what to do when it felt a pot under its bottom? Of course, the baby – to indulge in some more imagination – might decide that it wanted to keep its products to itself, and the individual with its fibres all myelinated would be upset because the baby was constipated. So how would you deal with this situation involving the well-trained, myelinated, scientific grown-up, and the non-myelinated, unscientific little animal which has just turned up?

I think we ought to consider whether what I have been talking about is worth discussing. What difference does it make if the patient had these pre-natal experiences? What does it matter if the patient has come as a grown, mature human being into the office and shows signs which we might be inclined to believe are terror and dread of a kind that could be described as 'sub-thalamic' fear? – in terms of the Grid, beta- and alpha-elements, physical facts. Is it any business of ours as psychoanalysts? Is there any point in being sensitive to facts which are indistinguishable from imaginative conjectures? If the patient is able to have anxiety which he expresses by saying, "Doctor, I am afraid I am going mad", and we think that something is breaking in, interfering and interrupting his process of ordinary articulate verbal thinking, can we say anything to that same articulate individual which would seep back through the same route by which it floated up, and express itself in articulate and apparently rational ideas?

Referring to the fable we have just heard: Which animal should we talk to? And what language do we talk? What language do you talk if your dog chases a cat up a tree? Do you talk Portuguese? Or French? Or English? And why do you think that animal understands? Why do you think the animal will stop chasing the cat up the tree? Could

we talk to this patient in some language which would be understood at the address to which we would want it to go? If this is something primitive such as in a state of panic fear – remembering again the god Pan, and the adrenals, and the autonomic and sympathetic telephonic communications – what language do we talk which would be understood by the adrenals and make them stop running away from the enemy or madly against him?

There are certain areas such as the caudate nucleus, the optic chiasmas, where the wires seem to cross. So perhaps if we can talk to the area which has the cerebral hemispheres at its disposal and information made available by the sympathetic and para-sympathetic fibres, the communication could travel in both directions – to the 'cerebral spheres' and to the 'origin'.

2

Bion: I continue where we left off, considering the problem of giving the patient an interpretation which is addressed to a particular aspect of his statement. We listen to the statement, but we also observe what we consider to be the personality. I don't know how we could satisfy a scientist who asked, "What is a personality?" It is not very satisfactory to look up the word in a dictionary.

I recall a patient who talked freely and easily; he said that he didn't have dreams and that he had no imagination. For month after month he came to every session, never failed, never had an illness, never caught cold. When he got onto the couch he seemed to have some difficulty about which I did not bother much because it appeared to be simply a question of adjusting his clothes and his comfort. But after about three months I began to think this was very peculiar.

He always lay in a slightly awkward position on the couch; he would lie flat and then raise his head as if he were struggling against some sort of opposition and trying to see his feet. He did that three or four times. I had no idea what he was doing or even how to tell myself what this peculiar movement was. He was so co-operative, so rational, and I was kept very well informed. He said that he only slept an hour or two each night and worked for about sixteen hours a day, seven days a week. There were no complaints when I took a break or at week-ends; no disturbance, no depression, whereas with other patients I am used to some kind of reaction to the fact that I am stopping.

I thought I would change my vertex because I could not see anything very much from where I was observing the patient. When I did that, it occurred to me that his precise and exact position on the couch could be comprehensible if he were lying on the edge of a precipice.

And then his posture began to look like a cataleptic attitude. Indeed, the whole analysis began to look like a compulsive ritual – the same hour, the same behaviour, no diversion from that position at all. The more I saw of him the more I thought that these were not ordinary communications and that my interpretations themselves fitted into the pattern. I wondered what kind of psychiatric diagnosis I could make. The nearest I could get to one was that the total situation in the consulting room was a *folie à deux*, and that I was just playing a part in this relationship. Then I began to look at and listen to the behaviour of both these people, one of whom was myself. I continued to observe and listen to that peculiar conversation. The 'free associations' and the interpretations fitted in beautifully. You could call it the marriage of two minds – but there was something wrong with it. You could not call it homosexual; you could not call it heterosexual. In fact you could not call it sexual at all – not if the word 'sex' means the kind of thing that it means in botany, or physiology, or what I call psychoanalysis.

I managed to effect some change, because as the pattern became clear to me I felt I could also make it clear to the patient. I found a number of formulations which made it comprehensible to the patient that I had parted from him. Then it appeared that this same relationship existed between him and somebody else. I interpreted that the deficiency had been made good by his being able to enlist the co-operation of some other member of the public with which he had social relationships. After some time a change occurred again; now he fell back into having the same sort of relationship with himself – so I interpreted that. But I wondered what this 'Self' was. What does it mean – him Self, her Self, my Self? I found it unsatisfactory to talk about his 'body' and his 'mind' because both those words have a large aura of meaning. The body is a thing that you take to your physician; the mind you don't bother with. Indeed, if one talked about his 'mind' it was like talking about some unsupportable fiction, like talking about God to an atheist. The patient listened to the noise I was making, but it was devoid of content.

I tried giving it a location; I talked about his 'feelings', and the sort of thing he did 'up here', in his head. It was clear that he did not understand what I meant – or thought it was just nonsense anyway. He didn't say that; he was polite – he simply ignored any

reference to 'up here' or 'down there'. So I fell back on still talking about his 'Self'. I said, "Now you are talking as if your Self was located in your spleen". Sometimes I could have said that it was located in his adrenals, but I didn't have to because he talked about people who 'ran away', or people who were 'very aggressive'. I was able to say, "This person who you say runs away, and this person you say is very aggressive, are the same person. I think they are your Self". This peculiar mobility became more and more pronounced; I had to go on chasing this Self around what seemed to be various anatomical areas.

It became evident that the Self was not within the limits of what I call the body. I had to extend my interpretations over an area which had different boundaries – indeed it had *no* boundaries. In order to express it at all I would have to borrow a term like 'infinity'. It reminded me of Milton's words which express it so well: "Won from the void and formless infinite". He speaks about being "long detained in that obscure sojourn"; about outer and inner darkness, middle darkness and "up to re-ascend though hard and rare". That is a good description of this patient, as if he had descended into what psychoanalysts call 'the unconscious' and remained there a long time – "though long detained in that obscure sojourn", "and up to re-ascend". But when he does re-ascend, instead of emerging into the realms of light, he finds himself blinded.

Melanie Klein gave me an interpretation which puzzled me for a long time. She said, "You feel mutilated, castrated, as you emerge from the womb". That sounded like pure nonsense to me. By that time I was also seeing a patient, so I thought I would try it out on him too. Between us there seemed to be some truth in it; it did seem as if getting born was a dangerous experience in which the mother, or the mother's genitalia mutilated the baby. Further experience over the years had made me feel that this is also true in the many re-births which could be said to take place between the time when we are born – in the obstetrical sense – and the time when we die. This includes the time when we emerge from one state of mind into another.

What about waking up? The state of mind in which we are now is one in which we have our senses – in the neurological sense – active. But we do not know what we do, and what we see, and where we go when we are in the state of mind in which we are when we are

asleep. People talk readily about having "had a dream last night"; it is difficult to point out to them that one would like to ask, "How did you know it was a dream?" The patient I have been talking about was quite right – he didn't dream. When, according to most of us, he was in bed and asleep he went to places and he saw things just as much as he did when he was awake. But dream? No. That is the sort of thing that is done by people who have dreams, who go to bed and go to sleep; but not to people like my patient. People like that don't get ill; they don't have dreams. However, such a person is also extremely intelligent; so he learns the kind of language that I talk and says, "I had a dream last night", and then tells me a story which I think sounds like a perfectly ordinary fact. When he said he had a dream, met so-and-so and was very annoyed with him, he had in fact done so. I knew because I heard the story from that same person of whom he had 'dreamed' who also came to me for analysis.

What language ought I to have talked to this patient? And what should I have said to him if I knew that language? It is clear that the language he was talking was extremely accurate; I could rely on his statements as easily as I could rely on his coming to the consulting room with such accuracy that I could correct my watch by the time of his arrival. There was no question of his being late – my watch might be fast or slow, but not he. I don't know what clock he was going by, but he was right. So in fact I cannot tell you anything about how to analyse that patient, but I hope you will be able to tell me something.

Q: What is the relationship between memory and intuition on the one hand, and your concept of thoughts without a thinker on the other?

B: To take the last point first: Let us imagine that when a number of people collect together like this, there are stray thoughts floating around trying to find a mind to settle in. Can we as individuals catch one of these wild thoughts without being too particular about what race or category it is, whether it is a memory or an intuition, and however strange or however savage or friendly it might be, give it a home and then allow it to escape from your mouth – in other words, give it birth. To put it in other terms, can we catch a germ of an idea and plant it where it can begin to develop until it is mature enough for it to be born? We do not have immediately to expel the wild thought or the germ of an idea until we think it would be viable if it were made public. When we make it public, then we can have a look at it and

decide whether to call it a memory, or an intuition, or a prediction, a prophetic statement, or even a diseased germ.[1]

If you were analysing a child you could say, "I see you have brought your baby" – it might be a doll or a piece of cloth. If the child says, "I haven't got a baby; I couldn't have a baby", then you might say, "Perhaps it hasn't been born yet". That would be the germ of an idea, or the germ of an unborn child, the child that hasn't happened yet.

Parents say, "Why can't you children play properly? what are you quarrelling and fighting about all the time?" But the children don't know what they are fighting about; they would have to be prophets to know. Similarly with the thought without a thinker, the thought which is looking for somebody in whom 'it could be thought about'; or, from the point of view of us as individuals, the wild thought which is in the air but which nobody has dared to think so far because we are afraid of being asked, "Why are you playing with that dirty idea? Why do you play with these nasty thoughts? You ought to be good – a nice girl, a nice boy, a nice psychoanalyst". It is difficult to stick to one's right to be a nasty psychoanalyst who has nasty thoughts and who is willing to give a home to still more nasty thoughts. I suggest that you do that with one of these wild thoughts whether it be called dirty, nasty, psychotic, banal or ordinary.

There is no shortage of abusive terms for the idea. You might even, in spite of everything, call it 'Narcissus'. It could admire itself in a mirror or pool of water. But "*Fluctuat nec murgitur*" – don't let the nice little Narcissus fall into the pool in which it is admiring its features, and get drowned. When you have one of these wild thoughts, or one of these germs of a wild idea, you need to have the courage to protect it from people who want to dispose of it or send it to a psychiatric hospital – for the best of reasons, of course. It is much better to shut up Solzhenitsyn where he would be properly looked after and cared for instead of running about wild. So, whether your child is called Narcissus or whether it is called Solzhenitsyn, you need to be able to look after it – or somebody else will look after it for you.

Has anybody else any wild thoughts?

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[1]It would be easier to detect and to think about the germ of a disease. I think the analyst has to exercise discrimination with regard to ideas that come to his mind.

Q: Using your illustration of the two fighting armies (who do not reveal anything known and therefore keep up the tension of the unknown) as a model of the psychoanalytic work, to what extent can psychoanalysis cause the 'disease', just as soldiers may become mad in war?

B: There is always a chance that the opposed armies, on the strength of the shared emotion of terror, will fraternize. As for the individual, I remember one of my men, a young fellow of about nineteen, who began to smile in an extremely irritating manner. The senior N.C.O. wanted to have him punished for a crime which was called 'dumb insolence'. That smile was peculiarly irritating in the sense that neurologists talk about the nerve which is irritated and also in the sense in which socially we talk about being annoyed. The question was, who had gone mad? Who was in-sane? Un-healthy? We, who kept on fighting? Or this boy who had had a psychotic breakdown? Was it a burst of common sense which had broken out in him, while the rest of us when on with our shared psychosis, our continuous, murderous marriage with the enemy? Lots of people were frightened of breaking out; in the air force crews were afraid that they only had to go on flying combatant missions long enough and they would get killed. It is dangerous enough flying around anyway; it is insane to fly about when people are firing guns at you. What were these fighting pilots afraid of? Becoming ill? Or becoming sane? So far we seem capable of having a mass psychosis in which we all agree to go about in disciplined and organized gangs of murderers, dedicated to the destruction of people who wear different clothes. Sometimes we don't even bother with the uniform if we can say, "I am black; he is white; therefore he is wrong". Or, "I am white and he is black and therefore he is wrong". The colour of the skin saves us the trouble of going inside that skin. And yet *we* are addicted to respecting the individual; we treat individuals as if they mattered. And in many ways we behave as if it is a good thing to help an individual to be one who has thoughts and ideas of his own. Unfortunately our dedication to that ideal seems to be slender; while we are dedicated to the rights of an individual to have thoughts or ideas of his own, before we know what has happened we have become 'Kleinians' or –

Interpreter: – I would like to know what 'Kleinian' means.

B: You are optimistic. Even Mrs Klein didn't know what it meant – she protested at being called a 'Kleinian'. But, as Betty Joseph told

her, "You are too late – you are Kleinian whether you like it or not". There was nothing she could do about it. So – although we aspire to respect the individual, bigotry rears its ugly head again. While I have the aspiration to respect individuals it does not surprise me at all to find that I am bigoted about something else.

Q: Why do certain patients try to keep things the way they are – they don't want to get cured, have no faith in getting better, prefer illness. What is it that makes them avoid getting better?

B: It depends who says it is, "better". As I have said before, when a quadruped got onto its hind legs and walked on two feet instead of four it started trouble. Not only does it have to be a very capable athlete to be able to balance on two feet instead of four; imagine the difficulty when our nervous system developed cerebral spheres, when our body, which was a happy dinosaur, suddenly started turning into a mammal and then the poor mammal started growing a mind. That is where we are now. We seem to have minds; then our minds have brain children which are a nuisance. So it is not surprising that we hate thinking and anything that makes us think.

It is clear that we should think properly, but where do we do our thinking? Up in our heads? Or down on our two feet that have to walk around? Or in our genitalia? Or our diaphragm? Or some part of our hypochondria? We don't like hypochondriacs; but suppose we have to do our thinking with the co-operation of our hypochondria. Sometimes it seems as if we have to do our thinking with something which is very thin, like a diaphragm. Being balanced on the knife edge of a diaphragm is even more difficult than lying on the thin edge of a precipice – or even a couch. You are liable to fall onto the floor – or to fall on the other side and be quite comfortable. Some people prefer the knife edge – they are frightened of being well off, they are frightened of being comfortable. We might say, "And down to descend to that obscure sojourn and be long detained there in middle and outer darkness".

This is the problem: Thinking is a development which is very unwelcome; unwelcome because it might make us more comfortable; unwelcome because it might make us more uncomfortable. It is difficult to know what to do with the capacity to think.

3

Bion: Before I start airing some more views perhaps you would like to raise any topics which you think need to have further exploration.

Q: How can an observer say that another person is thinking thoughts or not thinking thoughts?

Q: You described how you changed your vertex the better to understand what was happening with a patient. I would like you to talk more about this.

Q: The object of life is to get closer to the truth. How far would you consider madness the only way to get closer to reality?

Q: I would like you to say more about rational conjectures and imaginative conjectures.

Q: I would like you to speak about the specific communication within an analysis. Also, the difference between psychoanalytic conversation and other kinds of talk.

B: First, I will try to approach this profound question of getting to know the truth. To take a simple example: An infant sees something that it wants and discovers that it is out of reach. So it starts to crawl towards it. In this way it is reacting in a complex fashion. It is difficult to say of what it is thinking because the infant may not have learnt how to use its own methods of communication. As far as crawling to the object is concerned it discovers that it is very hard work. I don't know how it learns to use its 'voluntary musculature' as we call it; it is already a complex activity. It involves the use of the eyes; it involves the activation of an ambition to reach whatever it is that is out of reach. To answer the question – How do we know the infant is thinking thoughts? – we have to resort to imaginative conjecture. We cannot ask the child, and there is no way of thinking about what it is thinking about. But if the baby starts crawling towards the fire

because the flames look so pretty, then the imaginative conjecture can become a rational conjecture – you still don't know what it is trying to do, but you can think it may be going to take hold of a pretty piece of fire. So the observer – the mother, father or nurse – begins to feel a certain degree of alarm and gets ready to stop the child from putting its hand on the coals of fire. As the child makes further elements of an approach towards the fire the observer translates his rational conjectures into something like probabilities and prepares to make muscular movements to get between the baby and the fire. In the meantime the baby may have become tired, cannot be supported by its four limbs and bumps its head. So the ground hurts it. I don't know how it is done, but the baby resorts to its vocal chords and lets out a yell. What is the interpretation of that yell? It seems to be as undifferentiated as, say, a motor horn. When you are walking, or driving in a car, you have to translate that motor horn; you have to decide what the address is to which it is being directed and then make up your mind whether you will do anything about it or not. Getting back to the baby, I don't think the mother would have to go through a long and obscure series of thoughts; if she were capable of being concerned for the child she would pick it up and soothe it because it was hurt. It will be a black day for babies if mothers have to have a psychoanalysis before they can pick up their babies and kiss them. Perhaps we shall come to that one of these days, but in the meantime I hope we shall be wild and natural enough to go straight to the point.

A lot can happen between the time when the baby is learning to crawl and the time when the baby is driving a motor car and listening to, or interpreting, or sounding its horn. This raises another series of questions: How old is the baby when it learns to cry? How old is the grown-up who is driving the car? It is an important question because the ability to drive a car is a technical accomplishment; it is more easily achieved and can develop faster than its wisdom. Conversely, a baby could be wiser than a grown-up, especially a grown-up who is so technically equipped that he would have to go through all these analytic processes before deciding to intervene between the baby and the fire. But are the tests adequate to answer the problem of whether a person is wise enough to be allowed to drive a car? Tragic accidents occur because a child is athletically able to ride a bicycle; it can do so as soon as it gets a chance of escaping from parental prohibitions. But the child hasn't enough wisdom to know that that little bicycle ride

may change its life completely, either because it gets knocked down and badly injured, or, more tragically, it is killed. How is the parent to make available to the child that degree of wisdom he or she has acquired?

Q: This is a story, used as an analogy, of an expedition to the Amazon jungle in which a group of people got lost. One of them was so frightened that he shot a mortar into some trees. Consequently enormous pieces of wood came clattering down and killed some of the group. Nevertheless this accident also opened up a hole in the dense vegetation so that it was possible to use it to send up a smoke signal for help. The analogy I want to make is with the opening up of new ways through a careless act of destruction; and with the risk of using thinking to propagate non-thinking.

B: Nowadays not only the vegetable world but the animal world also is getting too crowded. To clear a space we could employ a very effective but somewhat indiscriminate method of clearance, one not much more discriminating than the baby's yell or the motorist's horn, but much more powerful – an atomic bomb; or a 'new and improved' atomic bomb, a neutron bomb. That would clear quite a space for other forms of life. In this way the human animal is now able to get rid of itself and make room for some improved form of life, maybe something which is impervious to what to us are lethal rays.[1]

B: Somebody has let loose a verbal bomb! So far it has only started us thinking which we hope is less lethal than the neutron bomb. So possibly the intervention of the delaying action of thought between the impulse and its immediate action may produce enough time for second thoughts. Otherwise first thoughts will be enough. In the Apocrypha – Ecclesiasticus – there is a saying, "Wisdom cometh to the learned man through opportunity for leisure". But the person has to be learned first and then has to have leisure enough to enable him to become wise. The problem is that learned men can produce and perfect a neutron bomb possibly faster than we can provide the leisure to think. It is so often a matter of acting first and repenting at leisure.

Q: I would like to suggest a model. A geologist went out with his dog in search of rocks. He tried to rid himself of the memory of

[1]There followed a discussion about the Portuguese translation of 'impervious'.

past things in order to grasp new knowledge. But he lost his way and became very hungry. He finally killed his dog and ate it. Afterwards, seeing the scattered bones on the ground, he started to lament, "What a pity my dog isn't here to eat all these bones." The moral is one of St. Augustine's sayings; "In order to cultivate the spirit and reason it is necessary first of all to cultivate one's bodily needs". This model refers to events that occur between a patient and his analyst; what is this catastrophic situation between the geologist and his dog in their expedition to explore the unknown?

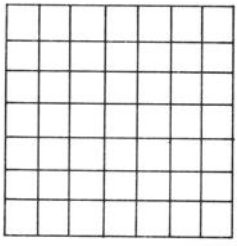
B: St. Augustine had good reason to know that the great Roman Empire had gone. The only things that were left were the bones of the martyrs. He proposed in the place of the destroyed Roman Empire to erect the City of God. Today we can have an idea of what point in this story we have reached. We can hear this imaginative conjecture – the fable – and compare it with where we have got to in that story. The fable could be said to have turned into history, and the history is a pageant in which we are now ourselves taking part.

I would like now to say more in answer to the question about the vertex. I borrow the word from mathematics, but there is a difficulty about borrowing these words to use them for a different purpose from that for which they were created. I do so not because I want to make things more difficult, but because the existing meaning of the word tends to create a difficulty when it is being used in a new way and in a new context. There is nothing new about that difficulty.

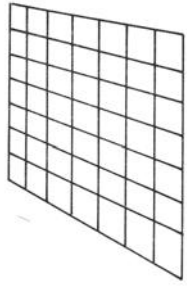
For example, Euclid elaborated geometry. It was useful and has lasted for over two thousand years. But Euclidean geometry runs into difficulties when it comes to the question of parallel lines. If you could walk between those two lines you might gradually come to the end, and by that time they would be wide apart. If you turned round and looked back to where you had come from you would find that the parallel lines had come together behind you. This is similar to what happens if you live long enough; the problems which have been solved become unsolved because you have changed; therefore all the relationships that you had have changed. The relationship between you and your home is different at the age of one from that at the age of two or three. I am not talking about A or B, but the *relationship between* A and B, the part in between, the umbilical cord, whatever takes the place of the umbilical cord, whatever it is that connects you with your parents and your parents' parents, and with all the other

objects with which you have a relationship. If Euclid could return today he might want to know what algebraic projective geometry is. He would have difficulty with it because there would be no lines or circles or other pictorial images. But can one say that algebraic geometry is superior to Euclidean geometry? There is no real conflict; algebraic geometry was *implicit* in Euclidean geometry, and what was implicit has now been made *explicit*. So Euclid might in time begin to recognize his brain children.

It might be helpful if we were sufficiently flexible to change our vertex so that we could look at ourselves. Cortez, according to Keats,[1] could stand, "silent upon a peak in Darien", with, "a wild surmise" – a wild thought – an imaginative conjecture, and see the world that he had discovered and what it looks like today – that is assuming that Cortez was sufficiently flexible. Can we do anything to keep our mental muscles in good working? For this purpose it would be useful to have a grid which we could mentally climb around. If we could turn the Grid then the distances between the lines would become very fine – the Grid can be turned into a Grating.



Grid



Grating

Putting it in another way: Newton's description of optics can be considered in terms of wave lengths; the distance between the climax of one wave and the next is quite large. But by changing your vertex you can make it much smaller; you can measure the distance between ultra-violet and infra-red with some very fine gradations, in terms of angstrom units. We use certain words, like 'love' and 'hate', in a crude way; each can be split into intermediate gradations. For example, the baby might love bright colours and food that tasted nice. Still in the 'love' category as it were, adult love can become passionate love, and the passionate love can become 'spiritual' love. As analysts we can

[1]John Keats, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*.

see all this in any relationship between the patient's Self and our Self. What about this bit in between? What about what we call an 'analogy'? In the analogy the two anchors don't matter very much, but the bit in between does matter. I think that is what Freud is driving at when he talks about the 'transference'; he means the bit in between the patient's Self and the analyst's Self.

The transference is transient, it is temporary; it is not the same at the end of a session as it is at the beginning. The beginning and the end of the session is a crude division. We need to be able to look at it through a Grating in which the divisions are not fifty-five minutes or ten minutes or ten seconds. When it is a question of drawing attention to the relationship between the analyst and the analysand we have to judge the *speed* of the change because some patients have a lot of difficulty in judging time and distance. A patient may come ten minutes late, wants to leave five minutes early, looks at his watch and says, "I must go – that was a very short session!" He is surprised; he doesn't know what has happened to that session – why is it so short? Or the patient doesn't bother about thinking which slows up things so much between the impulse and the action, has the impulse to leave and goes without thinking; it is much quicker. I have had the experience in which I was in Los Angeles and the patient wanted to come and see me, but he found he was in London because he went from Los Angeles to London without wasting time in thinking first – went straight from the impulse to the action.

We are concerned with having respect for thinking, how to think clearly and how to pass it on. We not only have to learn to think in such a way that we understand what we are thinking about, but we have to translate it into some form which our analysands or others will be able to understand. This is something that artists seem to be able to do; if we read of Shakespeare's case histories which we call a 'play' it still reminds us of real people. How many psychoanalytical papers remind of real people? Beethoven could write marks on a piece of paper which some people can translate into musical sounds that make us feel we know what he meant. Leonardo could 'draw a line round' what he saw so that *we* can still see what he thought a human being looked like; Giotto let us see what he thought God looked like. What form of artists can we be, and what work of art can we produce so that some of our offspring will be able to understand what we want to transmit?

4

Bion: We who occupy a certain position in the story of the development of the human culture can know a little about the history of where we have come from so far and, if we look back on our road, the route we have followed. But it is difficult to know what words to use when we want to talk about the 'road' or the 'route' which psychoanalysts are trying to follow. There are so many histories – of religion, mathematics, economics, civilization – but how would you write the history of psychoanalysis? Where would you start it? Which is the origin from which it springs? How have we got from there to here? It is hard to see – to fall back on a sort of psychoanalytically oriented genealogical history – who are our ancestors and what way our offspring are going. If we talk about genetic history we could suppose that the process followed Mendelian laws: A distinction was made between what were supposed to be the laws of inheritance, which followed Mendelian laws, and other things which were considered to be acquired characteristics, transmissible. But Mendelian laws don't help us much in considering the question of the inheritance of psychoanalytic development.

It is convenient to talk about the "British Psychoanalytical Society", the "French Psychoanalytic Society", the "Brazilian", and so on; at first sight it would appear that that probably followed Mendelian laws. But when we think that we are discussing the mind or the personality or the character, then it becomes difficult to say what laws that inheritance follows. We could say: who has inherited Freud's ideas? Obviously Mendelian inheritance would be useful – Freud's children and Freud's grandchildren. But suppose we think that people who had no blood relationship with Freud had something to do

with this story; how do they come to have psychoanalytic ideas? Who or what are these people, and where do they come in the story?

Last time I mentioned that Euclid might not be able to recognize the statements and formulations of algebraic projective geometry. If Freud came back today would be understand what we are talking about? Would he recognize what we say is psychoanalysis? Or would he say, "These aren't my children; these are bastards"? He might have to readjust his views about his progeny – all these theories and ideas which have sprouted up. In fact, the trouble started when Freud was still alive. He and Jung and Stekel got together and admitted that Freud was the only one who was entitled to consider that what he had said was psychoanalysis *was* psychoanalysis. It was agreed that Jung would call his school 'analytical psychology', and Stekel would call his 'individual psychology'. So they were split up; what had started as one became three. Now each of the three has split up into many more – poly-psychological. So we could say that we have lost track of the psychoanalytic line of inheritance. Yet we feel that we would like to say, "This is the Way; this is the Way from which we must not diverge too much. We should remain free to have our own ideas and opinions, but not too far from the Way."

The Way played a big part in the history of human civilization long before anybody had heard or thought of what Freud called psychoanalysis. A Chinese monk wrote about The Tao, The Way. Biologists think we have diverted, that we are a branch of the Simian inheritance. So even by making mistakes we are sometimes right.

I wonder if it is within the rules of psychoanalysis to be able to laugh at ourselves? Is it according to the rules of psychoanalysis that we should be amused and find things funny? Is it permissible to enjoy a psychoanalytic meeting? I suggest that, having broken through in this revolutionary matter of being amused in the sacred progress of psychoanalysis, we might as well continue to see where that more joyous state of mind might take us.

Q: These discussions have usually focussed or the catastrophic aspects of destructiveness. I would like to suggest another side – something lighter and happier. I submit some clinical material which I gathered during supervision of a case with an eight year old boy.

He begins a session by making a plasticine ball and then suggests a game of football between a boy and a girl. He soon leaves this game

and picks up a box of coloured pencils, empties it and brings it up to his eyes, giving the impression that he is looking at his analyst through binoculars. The analyst says that when he uses the box in that way he is able to see her even when she is far away, for example, when he looks at her at the club on Sundays. The boy asks her what time it is and puts the box on the table saying that it is a tunnel. He puts his hand through it and, picking up the plasticine ball and a doll, he adds, "this is a machine that changes things. When I put a doll inside it a girl comes out".

The analyst says, "It is like a mother into whom a father goes and a baby comes out". After hearing this interpretation the boy continues to play more enthusiastically with his 'tunnel of transformation' saying, "A cup goes in, a doll comes out; a doll goes in, a cup comes out". The analyst then repeats the interpretation she gave him before. I want to call attention to this 'tunnel of transformation' that this child uses with such enthusiasm and happiness during a session, discovering something new without the need of destructiveness. I have noticed that we refer to a fear of the disappearance of psychoanalysis. Does this fear lead us into a protective attitude towards psychoanalysis? Or does it cause us to leave psychoanalysis unprotected by an overprotectiveness, contributing unknowingly to its disappearance by suffocating it?

B: That is a striking example. I wonder if others are as impressed as I am, before I take up the train of thought it arouses in me.

Q. In Rio de Janeiro there are two Psychoanalytical Societies and two Group Societies. Analysts belonging to the Psychoanalytical Society usually also belong to the Group Society; the same people belonging to one society belong to the other. So that the problems that befall the Psychoanalytical Society are basically the same as those of the Group Society. For example, in both societies the subject concerning the admittance of non-medical students is discussed. The degree of passionate involvement in these discussions reaches an almost violent level when the discussion takes place in a psychoanalytic society meeting. When this same problem is discussed in the Group Society with the same people present, the same level of destructiveness is not reached. I repeat; the members are the same in one society as they are in the other.

B: One of the advantages of a group of people – for example, this meeting itself – is that you can often see something spread out

amongst all of us which in the individual psychoanalysis one sees in a more precise way. Freud himself seemed to be disconcerted when the first International Congress was held; he thought they could all get together. Instead of that it appeared that they all fell out with each other. So instead of leading to a union of views, it led to a great diversity of views.

The story of the Tower of Babel crops up again and again. It seems that when people unite to storm the citadel of the human mind they fall apart in a primitive way; they join in order to run away from something or to fight something. That seems to me to be a spread out example, as if the body politic were developing a kind of adrenal activity. In a physical human body one could say that the human embryo was beginning to bud off the adrenals which sooner or later would begin to produce adrenalin. But so does the human group; whatever scientific products they produce, they also seem to produce a great deal of adrenalin. So you can detect a primitive, emotional reaction. The individual human being, according to genetic theory, seems to be produced by the fusion of gametes which are derived both from the man and the woman. But since the individual has a father *and* a mother it is not surprising that it has characteristics which are both male and female.

Rio, I gather, has two societies; that when the people get together in one of them they behave in a somewhat masculine or aggressive manner; when the same people get together in another society they behave in a passive manner.

Are there male and female societies? They are composed of the same people, so it is no good asking the obstetricians. I think we would have to ask psychoanalysts – in fact, ourselves.

Now I want to draw attention to something which I constantly come across – psychoanalytic pessimism. Milton, when he was not yet twenty years old, protested against what he called being "sunk in an oedipean gloom". I sometimes think that analysts are sunk in this same oedipean gloom; so much so that they are often taken by surprise when they discover that there is such a thing as mental pain. One feels that they have only learnt that there is a *theory* that there is mental pain but that they don't believe it exists, or that psychoanalysis is a method of treating it. So when a patient gets 'better' they are surprised; they don't believe it has anything to do with the work they are doing. The clinical example about the child is important because

it is a reminder that patients do become happier and more able to be creative or constructive, and change from being primitively dominated by flight and fighting. After all, embryos develop; they don't only have adrenal glands. Other portions of the anatomy develop in the embryo itself, and life, with any luck, does not stop short at birth. The full-term foetus continues to grow after birth, so although it may start by running away from or fighting its brother or sister it also begins to grow out of that stage. The psychoanalytic procedure does a great deal to help that development to take place, just as much as the work of paediatricians helps to keep babies and children healthy so that they can go on developing. Psychoanalysis helps the spirit, or soul, or super-soul, or ego, or id, or superego – whatever name you want to give it – to continue. Plato describes in the *Theaetetus* how Socrates says that he is a kind of mental midwife. I don't see why we should not claim mental development, mental ancestors, one of them being Socrates himself. If that is so, we too could say we are a modern version of mental midwives; we help the soul or psyche to be born, and even help it to continue to develop *after* it is born. We should not consider ourselves to be simply historians of the past grandeurs of psychoanalysis. We are not dead yet and there is no necessity to spend our time attending our own funeral service. I don't find it interesting to be perpetually celebrating the obsequies of psychoanalysis; I like also to be attending one of its many re-births.

While we do not want to forget our famous men let us by all means praise famous men and women of our own time, our mothers as well as our fathers, because even our mothers had something to do with begetting us, so they might as well be given a passing reference sometimes. I hope that the masculine society in Rio will occasionally say "How do you do?" to the more passive society – even if they are the same people.

Q. I would like to present for your consideration the observations made by the physicist, Werner Heisenberg, and by a psychoanalyst, Luis Chiozza.

Heisenberg asserted that it is impossible to calculate the trajectory of an electron because there is no such trajectory and that in the description of these phenomena it is impossible to separate the observer from the rest of nature, impossible to make a scientific observation when the interaction between observer and observed is ignored. This he called The Uncertainty Principle.

Luis Chiozza, an Argentinian training analyst, basing himself on Freud's writings about the sexual theory, "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes" (1915c), concludes that every psychic process constitutes a somatic matrix for qualitatively differentiated impulses. At the same time these impulses are unconscious, particular fantasies which he calls "specific fantasy".

Curious contributions to human thought! On the one hand we have a physicist – who deals with objective, rational and precise mechanisms – describing an Uncertainty Principle; on the other hand a psychoanalyst – who deals with subjective, irrational and imprecise resources – describing the Specific Fantasy.

B: A lot of people attach importance to what we call the 'truth'. Some of them are painters; some musicians; others mathematicians; some are psychoanalysts. I don't know what Freud meant by 'scientific method', but it seems to me that the basic idea is to bring truth to bear. I am not surprised that we think that some people are important painters; there is something about their work which makes us feel that they are not trying to make fools of us all; they are trying to show us the truth. The same is true of some sculptors who make structures which trap the light, sometimes with a piece of projecting material, sometimes with a hole which goes right through. If we look at the light which has been trapped then we may be able to see the truth which the sculptor is trying to show us. Mathematicians formulate projective algebraic formulae; they are not trying to make life more difficult; they are talking the simplest, most precise language they know. If we take the trouble to listen to what they are saying then we might learn something.

Psychoanalysts think that what we are trying to observe is disturbed by who we are. Judges in the law courts, trying to find out who is guilty, have also discovered that there are difficulties about answering the simple question – guilty or not guilty? Heisenberg has stated clearly his Uncertainty Principle, but in his search for the truth he discovered not only the Uncertainty Principle but the possibility that there is such a thing as uncertainty. But uncertainty has no colour, no smell; it is not palpable, but it exists. And in the course of this journey which the human race makes in its attempt to reach the truth we discover that we observers disturb the thing we are observing.

Even the most advanced human thinkers are only at an embryonic stage. We have only just started thinking; we do not even know the

rules of thought; we do not know what to do with this newly acquired capacity for thinking.

Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle is an important stage in the journey; it is deplorable that any section of mankind should be *certain*. If there is anything which is certain it is that certainty is wrong.

5

Bion: I have been explaining to the translator that I find it quite bad enough trying to translate what I want to say into English; I am therefore very thankful that I don't have to try to translate it into any other language. I would ask you to be indulgent to both of us. I don't think it is our fault – it is inherent in the difficulty of the matter I want to introduce.

For that reason I think that this subject will probably take at least four or five evenings to introduce. What I say will either seem to be incomprehensible, or so obvious that it is hardly worth saying. Whether it appears to be obscure or whether it appears to be obvious, in either case it will give you a misleading impression.

I will start by reminding you of what Melanie Klein says about projective identification and the depressive and paranoid-schizoid positions. The infant or very young child thinks it can split off nasty feelings and ideas, that is, anything which is unpleasant. According to her, the child has an *omnipotent phantasy* that it can split off these unpleasant thoughts or ideas and then evacuate them in the way that it can evacuate urine and faeces. She was referring to something she believed to be applicable *after birth*.

What I am going to say cannot aspire to the status of what is ordinarily called 'scientific thought'; the most that I can claim is that it is imaginative conjecture. The central point of this guess is that even before birth the foetus – I don't know how close to being a full-term foetus, or whether it could apply to the embryo from an early stage – becomes sensitive to what could be called 'happenings', events like the sense of the pulsation of its blood, physical pressure of a kind that can be communicated through a watery fluid such as amniotic fluid or even extra-cellular fluid. (When I refer to extracellular fluid I am

talking about a fluid which is as near as possible to something which is not polluted at all. The amniotic fluid is already polluted by meconium.) I can conceive of situations in which pressure is transmitted through the amniotic fluid and can therefore possibly stimulate the optic and auditory pits. Here I am guessing that even as embryo of three or four somites has something which will one day become what we call 'sensations'. I do not know what they are to be called – if they exist at all – in the intra-uterine period. Intra-uterine photography has shown the foetus with its arm raised as if to protect itself against a bright light. I don't know what that bright light would be unless it is the kind of light that one sees with changes of pressure on one's eyeball. The foetus can also be seen in these photographs sucking its thumb – indeed a child can actually be born with its thumb in its mouth. Both these bits of evidence seem to me to excuse rational conjectures. I certainly would not expect any scientific worker who is familiar with the discipline and the rigors of scientific thought to agree, but as psychoanalysts I think we have to fall back on such imaginative and rational conjectures. The whole of our subject could be attacked on the grounds that it is unscientific and cannot be supported by any scientific evidence. The most that could be claimed for it is that it is 'probable'.

I am supposing that the gametes of intelligent parents would be likely to fuse to produce what could be called an intelligent person I see no reason why a full-term foetus should not also be regarded as a potentially intelligent grown-up.

All of this is what I call a rational conjecture: I don't think it is possible to claim any more for it than that, otherwise it is distorting, devaluating the standards of scientific work. I can imagine that even the embryo could much dislike the feeling of blood pulsating through its system. Similarly, that it might dislike the effects of the early stages of production of adrenalin or other developing function. The more potentially sensitive or intelligent, the more it would be likely to be what could later be called 'aware of' these sensations, dislike them and therefore get rid of them. I think that what takes place at this stage is analogous to an omnipotent phantasy or scepticism; it is what will later be called a 'fact'. The foetus may take a wrong turning in development, become incapable of having 'feelings' or 'ideas' and so be born lacking important elements of its equipment. However, the post-natal creature still retains its potential for intelligent activity.

Amongst these activities which are retained is a capacity for imitation, mimesis, so that the 'intelligent' (as distinct from 'wise') baby or child is able to imitate fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters; it is 'well-adjusted'. Later, if the person is unfortunate enough to get into a court of law – as was the case with Loeb and Leopold – he could be judged according to what in England were known as the M'Naghten Rules: Does the accused know the difference between right and wrong? The kind of personality to which I am drawing attention – which could now be called by a psychiatrist a 'psychotic' – *does* know the difference between what is called right and wrong. Of course Loeb and Leopold knew that all these ordinary people call murder 'wrong'. So of course they knew that it was 'wrong' to commit what they called 'the perfect crime' and stuff the body of the murdered child into a drain – a scientific procedure which is not, by a sane person, called 'research'. So the barrister for the prosecution can justly argue that these people know the difference between right and wrong and are therefore guilty of the crime.

I mention this story to draw attention to the peculiar and frightening situation in which the very intelligent person is not capable of being wise. There are certain diseases in which there seems to be a defect in the domain of neurotransmitters. For a long time there were difficulties because there was something anomalous about the research findings. Although the administration of Leva Dopa seemed to have a curative effect on Parkinsonism, it was recently discovered that what is apparently a *lack* of dopamine is not so at all – the total amount of dopamine remains unaltered. Therefore it is puzzling to know why there appears to be a shortage. It now looks possible that the truth lies in the abnormal concentration of dopamine *receptors* in certain parts of the nervous system. We analysts are faced with a similar paradox. Why is a person, who is apparently highly intelligent, lacking in wisdom? You would think such a person would naturally go on to be wise as well. Consider your own analytic experience. Have you ever come across people who you feel must be extremely intelligent in order to be so stupid. It sounds like a clever paradox to say, "There is no fool like a stupid fool; and there is no stupid fool like an intelligent one".[1] Why is it that so many highly intelligent people

[1] "The wisest fool in Christendom" – remark attributed to Henry IV of France about James I of England.

seem to be incapable of being wise? What has happened to the intelligence? Is it, like trees that hide the wood, too thick to perceive the wisdom that lies beyond the cleverness?

Q: What could you tell us about Freud's formulation that an analyst should go back to analysis every five years? Can this be connected with intelligence or wisdom, or with pollution? – in its more modern sense, the great problem of mankind, what to do with our own garbage.

B: Let me repeat the quotation from Ecclesiasticus – "Wisdom cometh to the learned man through opportunity for leisure" (p. 332). A man or woman has to be capable of being learned and can then potentially be wise. We can learn a lot through the experience of having an analysis; when we stop we can also be said to have an opportunity for leisure. To come back to analysis might be an opportunity for clarifying the way to use knowledge. In that way we could become wiser and even have some opportunity for comparing what we thought we knew a few months or years back with what we know now. Have you tried reading some of the classics to which you were introduced when you were at school? They would appear to remain the same because they are there in print; but do the words, which are the same as the ones you studied at school, have any more meaning? I suggest the following: Be silent, and as quickly as possible write down what you can observe, either with all your senses about you – that is to say, with your eyes open – or with your eyes shut. Do the same thing again in half an hour, or two hours, or one day, or one week – whatever interval you like – then see if the lists are the same and if the order in which you have written these matters is the same or different. In that way you can compare what you were capable of observing some time ago with what you are capable of observing now. Could you say you were more, or less observant? Could you have any idea about whether you were wiser or not? If you had an idea that you were more observant, but had no idea whether you were wiser, then what is the difference between intelligent observation and wisdom? I am not saying, "Look it up in the dictionary", but I *am* saying, "Look it up in your mind".

Q: You have spoken of rational conjectures about the life of the foetus inside the womb. Would you tell us about one of your clinical experiences?

B: It is useful to me, as a model, if I am shown a photograph of a

foetus with its thumb in its mouth; or a foetus that raises its arm as if protecting its eyes. The same thing applies to these conjectures. I find foresight and prudence useful, but I am not a prophet, I am not a seer and I have to make do with rational conjectures. The insightful person or prophet or poet might be able to have much more convincing evidence for behaving with prudence or with foresight. But I have to fall back on these rational and imaginative conjectures. I don't think much of them, but they are the best I have.

Similarly in analysis: While I am trying to understand what the analysand is telling me, I have to guess, I have to conjecture until the patient can give me some more convincing evidence; then I may be able to feel reasonably sure of my interpretation.

Q: A writer said, "Life is a product of the conjunction of chemical reactions in intense and continuous movement". In reality we are never the same as we were in the immediately preceding moment. How do you see the temporal nature of the existential being, considering this process of continuous change?

B: Where do the maggots come from in a heap of dead and decaying stuff? How does this heap produce something which is alive and could be called a kind of animal? How would you define the difference between a chair, which seems to be made up of dead matter, and myself who am capable of walking about? What is your definition of the difference between 'dead' objects and 'live' ones? I have never seen any scientific definition of that. A dog would be uninterested in a photograph of another dog; it might smell it, but would show no further interest. But if I show a series of photographs on a screen that dog becomes excited and interested and may want to chase or fight the other dog. Why does it think that a photograph of a dog is uninteresting, but a series of photographs which give the illusion of movement is interesting? We are not in a much better position. In the investigation of life there are more and more elaborate descriptions of the DNA molecule, but we are no nearer, so far as I know, to life. I suggest that you should ask these questions again next time; I might have become wiser by then. At present I cannot answer them. I don't think there is anything wrong with the questions, but there is a great deal wrong with the answers.

Q: I would like to change the vertex and tell you a story about a psychoanalyst who died and went to Heaven. When he got there he met Saint Peter and showed him his Curriculum Vitae. Saint Peter

said he didn't like it. The analyst argued that he had been a good analyst, that he had treated neurotics and psychotics, written books and delivered lectures. Saint Peter said, "You were only looking for promotions and a way to gain access to power. There is no charity or humanity in that. Your fees, too, were quite high". Saint Peter then asked him if he could remember if he had at any time been charitable towards someone. The analyst thought and thought and finally remembered having done a charitable deed. "Oh. I once gave $20.00 to the poor!" Saint Peter then called his assistant Joshua and said, "Give this man $20.00 and show him the way to Hell". The moral of this fable is, "Love is paid with love; money is paid with money". Where, among us psychoanalysts and psychotherapists, does our humanity lie?

B: I don't know. I am afraid that if by some accident – which I think is very unlikely – I got sent to Heaven, there would be masses and masses of sheep, steers, birds, birds that never hatched out of their eggs, all giving evidence that they had been eaten by me. "Dr Bion, you are at the wrong address. Go back to Hell and get eaten yourself". I do not look forward to an eternity of bliss; enough is enough. In the words of a popular song, "It's love that makes the world go round". A realist looks for sources of energy.

6

Bion: In most scientific disciplines there are material objects to observe, but in the kind of work that we do the problems of observation are different. Even the word 'observation' has to be used by us in a peculiar manner because there is nothing to 'observe' in the way that we observe physical objects. Heisenberg's introduction of the Uncertainty Principle made it clear that even the observation of physical objects is not so simple as it may appear; those difficulties are inescapable when we observe what we call the 'mind'. Nevertheless, we have to observe before we theorize.

Francis Bacon described the possibility of approaching scientific work from above as if one was considering the general principle first and then arguing the existence of supporting evidence. The alternative is to observe the material evidence and then to deduce the general principle from the totality of the observations made. That, he said, is the correct approach. When we have to observe something which has no shape, smell, colour or sound, the problem of evidence – the counterpart of evidence of physical objects – is acute. And yet I do not think it is possible to be engaged on analytic work for long without being convinced that there is a mind. You can observe an animal which is not verbally articulate and yet be convinced that it is thinking. The same thing applies to very young children or even a newly born baby. I was asked yesterday what the clinical evidence was. There cannot be clinical evidence because nobody has analysed a foetus. But it is ridiculous to suppose that a new-born baby has no mind, or that a child of five has a mind but had no mind before infancy or before birth.

In carrying out an analytic investigation we should be aware of the fact that what Melanie Klein described as 'projective identification'

takes place even before birth – that is supposing that an embryo can be aware of primordial sensations. If we all became as silent as possible and then noted what we heard in the perfectly silent group, that would give some idea of what the embryo might be aware of. Here again, I have to borrow words from one state of mind and apply them to events in an entirely different state of mind. I find it difficult not to believe in Freud's theory of dreams, but the person who is awake and conscious knows what he saw or heard or experienced in a different state of mind, the state of mind when he was asleep. The person who is awake will believe that he is speaking the truth when he says he had a dream last night. How does he know he had a dream last night? The statement is made by a person who is wide awake; it is a theory of a person who is wide awake about a person who is in the state of mind that he is in when he is asleep.

When we observe a physically mature person is there any evidence of a survival of a different state of mind? Embryologists tell us that there are signs of the survival in the child or grown-up of a branchial cleft. But mature beings don't have branchial clefts; fishes do. A surgeon will say that there is a tumour in the coccyx, the vestigial tail. If that is so, is it not possible that in what we call the 'mind' there are also survivals? And that in certain states of mind these survivals could become apparent if we look in the right 'place'?

I suggest that when we are observing a physically mature person, in no way physically defective, it is possible to be sensitive to behaviour which is somehow peculiar, which does not fit in with what we would consider to be a healthy, normal mind.

I think there is a certain confusion in Freud's ideas of conscious and unconscious. Sometimes he talks about something that is conscious or unconscious; sometimes about a thing that is *in the* conscious – and that is a different idea. The situation I am discussing is one in which the idea of conscious and unconscious is not very illuminating; even the idea of *the* unconscious would be easier to discuss if one thought of it as a thing or place into which you could put something. If, as I suggested before, the embryo tries to rid itself of unpleasant or unwelcome primordial sensations, it could have 'ideas' or 'feelings' that had *never at any time been conscious*. The nearest I can get to describing it is that these 'ideas' or 'feelings' were 'available' or 'not available'; they have become out of reach of their origin. So when you are dealing with a grown person you will have to distinguish

between something that is conscious or unconscious, and something that is *inaccessible*.

What about these dreams? When the patient says he had a dream last night, why does he say so? If he is correct, then the theories of accepted classical psychoanalysis are applicable. However, suppose the patient says that he has no imagination, no dreams. What about that? We may have to consider the possibility that his dreams, his imaginations are not accessible or that he is communicating 'facts'. The patient may take up some athletic activity like wrestling, dancing, gymnastics, eurythmics. But the athletic activity can be a survival of primitive elements of the mind. To fall back on anatomical descriptions, one could say it is a function of the limbic nuclei or other aspects of the basal nuclei. Behaviour which appears to be irrational, or neurotic or hypochondriac is much more comprehensible if we think of it as a state in which the unconscious is where the conscious ought to be. Similarly behaviour called 'neurotic' or 'psychotic' can be based on 'facts' unobserved by us. Segal described a patient who talked about a violinist, saying that any fool could see that he was masturbating. The rest of us would think he was playing the violin – not so that patient.

The behaviour of certain patients – a smile for instance – is misleadingly similar to that of neurotics, hypochondriacs, or even a baby who is thought to be smiling because it has 'wind'. The expression on the faces of a piece of Etruscan funeral sculpture is sometimes called an 'archaic smile'; it appears to mean the same as a smile on any ordinary countenance, but it is not. I have known a man treated as a criminal for what in the army was called 'dumb insolence'; it is a mistaken interpretation. A psychiatrist would call it a symptom of schizophrenia, but I am not sure that that interpretation is good enough as far as psychoanalysts are concerned. We have to observe what the patient says to us, the flow of blood in his cheeks, or the lack of blood in his cheeks, or the movement of his muscles. Sometimes we can see peculiar movements in the voluntary musculature; sometimes there can be movement of involuntary muscle.

Although these movements of involuntary muscle can be betrayed on the X-ray screen if the patient has a barium meal, this kind of apparatus is not available in a psychoanalytic consultation; we have to learn a new way to observe.

Q: What are the causes of the inhibition of adequate thinking? Laziness? Search for ease? Or emotion?

B: There can be all those causes, but I am not sure that it is illuminating to consider the obstacles alone. However you want to express something in yourself – as a composer of music, or as a sculptor or a writer – all these approaches are difficult, partly because so many of the earliest years are spent in trying to get rid of who you are. As you say, there is an inhibition, an obstruction. A child tries to be good, tries to be who or what he thinks his father or mother wants him to be; a great deal of time is spent in trying to be *not* himself or herself. It is therefore hard to change to wanting to express who you are; it is like changing the direction of your thought. A sculptor can try to tell people, who are not him or her self, something they have not noticed hitherto by making a trap for light. Having made such a trap there has to be somebody who wants to look at it, but that person is more used to looking at the piece of stone than at the shape of the light. Similarly, a painter can depict something with his pigments on canvas; those pigments and that flat surface can trap light. So you can see a portrait painted by Picasso and fail to see what is drawn or painted on the canvas. You can say, "It doesn't look like any human face that I see". Nor does a sculpture by Rodin look like a statue such as the David by Michelangelo, or the Hermes portrayed by Praxiteles; they were portraying something in a different way. A writer may use words in a way which is not the same as the as the way in which they have so far been used. James Joyce said you ought to spend your life in reading *Finnegan's Wake*, and then you might understand what he means. The shape which is expressed by his words is different from the shape which is expressed by the words of, say, Shakespeare or Milton: artists have a way of expressing themselves which changes painting or sculpture or writing into something new.

Perhaps Shakespeare himself couldn't understand one of his own plays performed today. Or if Freud were able to come back he wouldn't understand psychoanalysis. These people do something to the human mind which means that it is never the same again. So the question is not so much what the inhibitions are, but what the person wants to pass on. What he does *not* want to pass on, what he wants to *in*hibit, is only a part of what he is trying to exhibit.

Q: I would like you to explain how you perceive the so-called psychosomatic illnesses.

B: I don't think that my explanation matters. What I would draw attention to is the *nature* of the problem. For example:

This (the palm of the hand) is a representation of the psychosomatic illness. Now watch: This (the back of the hand) is the soma-psychotic illness. It is the same hand; it is the same complaint. Looked at from one side it is psychosomatic; come round to the other side and you will see the soma-psychotic. Putting it into other words, if you don't feel satisfied at seeing a psychosomatic illness, change your vertex and look at it from the other side. The same thing with the inhibition: Look at it from one side and it says "No"; look at it from the other side and it says "Yes".

Q: I would like you to clarify certain attacks made by the patient on the analyst by the use of strong suicidal emotions.

B: The patient may be capable of arousing powerful feelings in the analyst. He can make me afraid that he will commit suicide; or he can make me feel love or hate. My ability to think clearly can easily be destroyed by a patient who plays on my emotions. While the analyst can say things which play on the patient, the patient can equally play on the analyst.

The problem for the analyst, or any other doctor, is how to help somebody who can stop him from thinking clearly. He can try to make it easier for the patient to think clearly; but the patient may not want to make it easier for the analyst to think clearly. A terrorist can terrify two people who want to discuss a problem – so the terrorist wins. The minimum conditions for discussion are destroyed because terror is not a state of mind which is conducive to clear thinking. The terrorist is able to mobilize fundamental and powerful feelings, feelings which are often expressed in a sophisticated manner as fighting or running away. But neither the activity of fighting nor the activity of running away is easily harmonized with thinking clearly. Terrorism is the weapon, the prerogative of the mentally deficient.

7

Bion: I have suggested that the potentially intelligent foetus resorts to a mechanism analogous to what Melanie Klein describes postnatally as 'projective identification'. These primordial germs of thought and feeling become inaccessible – that is to say, out of reach and control of what will later be the character or personality. That state of mind, as soon as the embryo or foetus can be said to have a mind, is different from that of the infant who displays thought and behaviour to which these concepts of conscious and unconscious are applicable. The infant or child who shows unconscious mechanisms and who behaves as if it had an unconscious does seem to experience some kind of caesura, which Rank called the 'birth trauma'. In other words, there is a continuity between the full-term foetus and the infant although the continuity is both maintained and broken by what appears to be a synapse, or diaphragm, or screen, so that the primordial thought of the foetus is projected onto this caesura and is reflected back from the infant to its primordial levels of thought and feeling. There is a contact through this permeable membrane in both directions; the caesura is a transparent mirror. The infant or child can experience feelings which seep up from the unconscious and which can similarly be affected in the opposite direction. That is to say, the thought of the infant or child can affect these primitive levels of behaviour. This is different from the state of affairs which exists in the embryonic growth of what we would later expect to be its mind. The separation of these two powers of thought is much more nearly complete, but a puzzling situation is produced because it does not *appear* to be like that. This same genetically gifted creature is able to start, *as if after birth*, to learn how to behave exactly like everybody else. At first one would suppose

that this organism is highly intelligent, can learn easily and is able to compete successfully with its brothers and sisters. It is therefore something of a surprise when at one of the periods of emotional turmoil such as adolescence, or latency which is another period of turbulence marked by apparent calm, peculiar kinds of behaviour start appearing. The child suddenly seems to be incapable of understanding or behaving in a common sense way; he behaves as if he had no common sense at all.

Conversely, when one expects bizarre behaviour he behaves in a logical way. I mentioned an example of this when I quoted the case of the patient who said that anybody knows that the violinist is masturbating in public.[1] In analysis it would be a long time before you were able to show a musician, or a patient who could play the violin, that he was using statements about playing the violin as a method of expressing unconscious, masturbatory desires. Thus, on the one hand there is the neurotic to whom it is difficult to demonstrate the existence of unconscious impulses, masturbatory activities and so on; on the other hand, the intelligent person who seems to be unable to appreciate beautiful violin playing, but has no difficulty whatsoever in seeing that the violinist is masturbating.

I think that there is some connection between this latter kind of personality – whom I will call, for convenience, 'psychotic' – and the one that I call 'neurotic'; between the psychotic mental activity and rational or socially acceptable behaviour. It seems to be accepted that the neurotic's ordinary, social, commonsense thinking has a psychotic base. This is what I think Melanie Klein means when she refers to the depressive position and the paranoid schizoid position; she is referring to levels of thinking and feeling which in isolation would be called 'psychotic'. She argues that the neurotic individual cannot be considered to be analysed until these psychotic elements have been displayed.

It is convenient to consider the psychotic patient as also being divisible, as being an 'insane' psychotic in contrast with a 'sane' psychotic. I am using the terms 'sane' and 'insane' with an emphasis on the Latin origins – 'healthy' and 'unhealthy'. The sane psychotic has vestiges of rational, conscious behaviour; something can be done to develop them.

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[1]See reference to Hanna Segal in Talk 6.

The insane psychotic, on the other hand, finds his way into a psychiatric hospital and usually deteriorates there. What are you dealing with when somebody comes to your consulting room and wants an analysis? Is there any way in which you could formulate to yourself what category of person you think you are dealing with? It is not only an academic point because on the answer to that question depends whether you want to see the patient or not. That is something you have to decide almost at once. Indeed, one can say that you have to decide in haste and repent at leisure.

You may get a clue if you consider the caesura as a mental diaphragm. When you see your patient, how easily can you mentally change your position, your vertex, so that you can almost see both sides? If you feel disposed to analyse an asthmatic patient you will very soon find yourself in the kind of trouble that I can describe from an actual experience.

The patient is admitted to a medical ward as a case of asthma. The analyst sees the patient there, possibly in a ward with screens drawn round the bed, or possibly in a small sub-ward in which the analyst and patient are alone together. Within two or three sessions the patient's asthma gets worse. So far so good; nobody minds that because they think that asthmatic patients tend to have these relapses. But further progress in the analysis releases the patient's capacity for mobilizing the opinion of the ward. And the analyst finds his appearance is the signal for marked disapproval from all the inhabitants of the ward. It becomes clear that their sympathies are in support of the poor patient who is being so foolishly and unkindly talked to by the analyst. The patient, who may have been regarded as a bit of a nuisance, is now more generally regarded as a person of charm and intelligence. There is only one real defect – his addiction to psychoanalysis.

People cannot understand why such a nice man, such a gifted man, has that peculiar habit of going to see an analyst. In the course of the analytic sessions the patient can let drop an increasing number of unpleasing comments. He says that while he is determined to go on with the analysis, so-and-so, who is a very intelligent women, cannot think why he is so foolish as to go to that horrible doctor who clearly has no qualifications and is a stupid, unscrupulous money-maker.

He talks more and more of his unfortunate experience of having

to put up with these hostile comments about his analyst whom he so much admires. Further progress in the analysis leads to a situation in which the patient who has never experienced frustration, who has never had any fears of insanity and who has never been physically ill, now begins to catch colds, now begins to be afraid that he is going mad, begins to be unpopular, even has the impulse – which he has never had before – to commit suicide.

The state I have just described is remarkably reminiscent of that in which these primordial ailments are inaccessible, have never been conscious, because they have been got rid of *at source*. At a much later age these things which have been inaccessible, which have never been unconscious, which have never been conscious, now become both. The fear of suicide ceases to be a fear; it comes much nearer to a reality, making the threat of suicide dangerous. The patient will resist discussion of the impulse to commit suicide; he will mention it, but does not want to talk any more about it, If the analyst persists then be becomes responsible for putting thoughts of suicide into the patient's mind.

I think it is a good thing, before you see such a patient, to arrange your room so that you could interpose between a sudden impulse of that kind and the action which he can take quickly and suddenly. There is no real intervening phase between the expressed impulse or fear and its translation into action. Thus the stage is set for instantaneous catastrophe. It is not much good hospitalizing such a patient; there is no alternative to going on with the analysis – or none that I know of. This patient has never had the experience – which most people have had – of being afraid of insanity, afraid of masturbation, afraid of sex, fundamentally afraid that he is going mad or will go mad one day. So he comes to this fear without any of the preliminary experience of fear of it. It is, therefore, a tremendous shock to feel afraid of going mad *and* to feel that he is quite right – that in fact he has already gone mad. It is almost like throwing yourself out of the window and finding in mid-air that you have committed suicide; it is too late.

Q: Would you say something more about the 'psychoanalytic calendar', the way in which one can date an occurrence between the patient and his analyst?

B: I think the question is related to this matter of 'vertex'; something which is not clear can become clear if you move off to one side

or the other. For example, you can ask yourself what a problem would look like if you were an Elizabethan, or if you were one of the early settlers in South America. It can often give you a clue as to the nature of that problem when discussion seems to be at an end and further inspection from one standpoint yields no further result.[1]

The same thing can be done by changing, not so much your geographical position, but your position in time. You can look at the matter as if you were using the second hand of a watch. If you were timing an Olympic runner over a distance of a hundred yards you would have to use a watch which recorded split seconds; if it was a marathon run then the watch would have to be a different one. If you were discussing verbal communication the scale would probably have to be tens of thousands of years; if you were discussing the length of time that human life itself has existed on the earth you would have to use a time scale of hundreds of thousands of years. If you were considering where this building would be by the time the spiral nebula of which we are part had rotated enough to carry us to the opposite side of the nebula, then you would have to measure that in terms of cosmic time, in terms of 108 million light years. It is useful to accustom oneself to these imaginative vertices of thought. If we are discussing civilized thought or behaviour we have to consider a time scale measuring the distance between the height of Egyptian civilization and the present day; if an archaeologist is excavating the remains of Mohenjo Daro he has to find some method by which he can place it in the calendar of human history. But supposing you have before you a patient who is a civilized, educated human being and something appears or is uncovered which is curiously anomalous – such as a statement that anybody knows that a violinist is masturbating. How do you date that fragment?

I had the experience in war of discussing with two or three of my friends the feeling that we did not want to go on fighting, that warfare seemed to be ridiculous and stupid. That discussion was extraordinarily similar to another which is clearly described in the *Bhagavad Gita* where Arjuna argues with Krishna and says, "These opponents include many of my best friends, many people whom I admire, who

[1]In the *Mahabharata*, 'dates' are virtually ignored. In psychoanalysis we talk about the past or the future. What the evidence is for such spontaneous dating is not yet clear.

are relatives of mine"; he throws down his weapons and says, "I will not fight".

Many of today's problems expressed by our patients can be recognized as having been problems from the beginnings of recorded time. It is useful, therefore, to have at your disposal your own particular framework, your own psychological architectonic, so that if you are trying to portray the mind with which you are in contact you can date various parts of it according to an already prepared scheme, a grid of your own construction. The Grid which I drew up needs to be improved by you for your own use; it is merely an indication of the kind of thing which might be an aid. The time dimension, which can be measured by watches or clocks or calendars, is only one co-ordinate enabling you to place a finding in space. If you use a large scale then psychoanalysis occupies only a very small part up to the present; it is only a recent off-shoot of the capacity for thought. But the capacity for thinking is itself only a recent bi-product of the development of what we are used to considering as human life. And that in turn is only a relatively recent phenomenon in terms of the development of live objects – plants and viruses as well as animals.

Q: In the sixteenth century Tomé de Souza decreed that for every person eaten by cannibal-Indians an Indian would be shot from a cannon. Thus the whole of the cannibal-Indian culture was destroyed along with cannibalism. What happens to the patient if his destructiveness is 'killed' by the analytic work?

B: The human animal must in fact be extremely destructive because we still exist, we have been able to destroy all our foes such as the animals which might want to eat us. We are still at it; we are still trying to destroy spirochetes, gonococci – minute creatures. But we are also dependent on our fellows. How are we to adjust to 'civilized' life, namely, being part of a civil community? We have to become adjusted to a herd existence, but while there is an impulse to live co-operatively with our fellow animals, at the same time there is an impulse to band together to wage war against another collection of people. There is an impulse to say, "*This* animal looks the same and has the same smell as I have, so I'll get together with it. *That* animal, on the other hand, has a different colour and a different smell – let's kill it". Terms like 'The United Kingdom', 'The United States', and now 'The United Nations', are premature and precocious.

Just how united we are we can see by having a close-up look at these various united states; we usually find that they show every sign of disintegrating. What are we to make of this paradoxical development? For how long could we say that there is a state of unification in the journey from barbarism to decay? For how long could we say that any society of people is civilized between the time when it is barbarian and the time when it is in decay? Sometimes it looks as if a nation goes from barbarism to decay with virtually no phase of civilization between. Of course it does depend on how you define 'civilized behaviour'. In some respects we attach great importance to works of art if a society produces the kind of grave furniture found in the tomb of Tutankhamun. I read recently of a woman who was buried, in accordance with her wishes, seated at the wheel of her Ferrari motor car. What a fascinating archaeological discovery that will be! How should we date the artistic achievements of *that* civilization?

8

Bion: Hitherto we have been discussing matters for which I think there is very little, if any, scientific evidence. A hostile critic could easily say, "This is all pure imagination". I would say, "Yes but I think it is time that 'pure imagination' was recognized as having a place in scientific work. If that is considered to be exclusive we had better reconsider a great deal of what passes for scientific work so that we may be quite sure that some of these extremely prestigious papers could not be classified more adequately as 'science fiction' than as scientific work – in the sense of formulations of the truth to which they are pretending to aspire".

I think it is fair to assume that when a patient comes to us he sincerely means to speak the truth, but he may be unaware of the great difficulties involved. However, *we* should be aware of those difficulties and should not claim a higher status for our theories than is justified by a critical appreciation. Otherwise we could find ourselves trying to defend the indefensible.

To turn now from imaginative conjectures and rational conjectures to something for which I would claim rather more credibility. The language and theories of psychoanalysis are swept more and more into the domains of social discussion. I remember, when I was first at medical school, one used to hear socially about Father Figures, Oedipus Situations and the rest of what I can only call Freud's tomb furniture dug out of Freud's works. It sounded plausible and even learned. Today I think it has become still more widespread. We are all familiar with psychoanalysis which is much 'improved' but which is in fact based on an inadequate understanding of psychoanalytic theories. I think the instincts of psychoanalytic societies are right when so much emphasis is placed on individual psychoanalysis.

I want to draw your attention to a peculiar and doubtful situation which no single analyst can fully investigate – one doesn't live long enough. But if all of us are sensitive to it then between us we may be able to make some progress in this 'obscure domain'.

The patient lies down on the couch and starts off without the slightest hesitation by saying he had a dream last night. I don't want to give the impression that I think he is lying, or that I don't believe him; at the same time I would not assume that that statement is a true one. I would be alert to the possibility that what I am being told is not correctly described by the patient as 'a dream', however sincere he is. Is there any way in which one can be sensitive to the possibility that one is not listening to a dream? Are there any 'facts' in the actual practice of psychoanalysis which make one wonder what one is listening to?

While the patient is telling me his dream I find myself wondering why he should take the trouble to dream it. The account is so literal; it doesn't sound like an imagination; it sounds as if it might easily have happened. That is a subjective criterion; it depends on the feeling that, having listened to a great number of dreams, there is a difference in them which is not simply due to the fact that we are all different individuals and that therefore no two dreams are likely to be the same or even similar. My suspicious are aroused if the dream is recounted without any hesitation, no groping for recollections, great detail and a similarity to an ordinary story. One of my earliest experiences of this was with a patient who started telling me a dream at the beginning of the session and went on and on. I began to feel, "I wish he would get on with it – I shan't have any time to interpret this". The patient may have been trying to deny me time for an interpretation but I did not think so. I contained my impatience and went on listening. And he *did* go on to the end of the session. Finally I had to say, "Well, we'll have to leave that for the present". I think the patient was a bit suspicious that I had not listened to the entire account and surprised when I said it was time to stop and hadn't given him any interpretation at all.

At the next session he said, "You didn't give me any interpretation".

I said, "Perhaps if you go on with the dream we may have time for interpretation today, or perhaps next time". He said he couldn't. But I was prepared to believe that he could go on with that 'dream'; I felt that he had been disconcerted by my invitation to continue. However,

he then went on with free associations as any person who was having an analysis might do. But I did not feel that he was wide awake or that he was continuing with conscious communications. I could put it this way: I thought he was continuing in a different state of mind; a state of mind in which a person is when they are what we call 'awake'; the state of mind in which people are when they are aware that it is daylight. Conversely, the alleged dream is a reminiscence of the state of mind of a person when asleep and probably when it is dark. (Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote, "I wake and feel the fell of dark". "The fell of dark" is a term, somewhat ambiguously used, with an uncommon meaning of 'fell', that is, 'pelt' or 'fur'. So the quotation also means, 'I wake and feel darkness as if it were an animal skin'.)

It sounds as if the patient had a dream last night and it would be reasonable to interpret it according to what one knows about dreams. But the dream that the patient is reporting is different. It has something about it that makes me feel that if I had had that dream then I could feel it in the way I could feel a fur coat.

I don't pay a great deal of attention to the fact that when the patient says he had that dream and recounts it he is awake and apparently in the state of mind in which people call the nocturnal experience 'a dream'. I cannot say that he is hallucinated or deluded; it would be much more satisfactory if I could but I don't want to give you any idea of certainty about it. I would leave you sensitive to events of this peculiar nature so that when they occur in your consulting room you can make your own contribution to what it is that is happening.

I have referred elsewhere to a statement made by Blanchot – "*La réponse est le malheur de la question*" – which might be translated, "The answer is the misfortune or disease of curiosity". In other words, nothing kills curiosity so thoroughly as the answer. A patient who keeps on saying, every time you give an interpretation, "Yes I know, yes I know, yes I know", or "I don't know what you mean", kills further curiosity. You cannot continue to research into that matter; the patient already knows all the answers; or, alternatively, he doesn't understand any answer you give. He equally doesn't know any answer that *he* would give, so both people are in the same unfortunate position. He cannot be analysed; I cannot analyse. To borrow Milton's phrase, "Wisdom at one entrance quite shut out". That sort of behaviour on the part of the patient makes it impossible for you to use your senses; it hurts to listen to it. It is similar to the situation

which arises with the patient who says he has no imagination; the patient who says he has a dream and tells you the sort of dream I have just described; the patient who fatigues and deafens your ears so that you cannot listen to what he says. If I try to summarize that situation I could say that the patient is disturbed, or a borderline psychotic. I would have told you precisely nothing. To try to tell you something more positive I fall back on more imaginative conjecture. I suggest that this same patient is a very good practising psychoanalyst of the sort that detects all my weak points and knows exactly how to play on them. If he knows from what he can see or feel about me that there are certain sounds which I find difficult to tolerate – like "Yes I know", "I mean-to-say", "You know", "I don't understand what you mean" – then he can bombard me with those statements; he can inoculate me with that kind of verbal soporific. As in Hamlet, poison can be poured into the ear so that one's analytic capacity is destroyed. Such a patient, if successful, leaves you a worse analyst at the end of his treatment than you were when you first met. I do not mean that this is consciously deliberate – it is 'a gift'.

These discussions seem to be disjointed because in the practice of analysis the disjointed nature of the evidence is part of the difficulty. You may have bits of evidence which are scattered over the material of a period of some months or more and it is not easy to see that the bits are related to each other. It is particularly difficult because you cannot exclude the possibility that their connection may be in your own mind and not proper to the material.

I want to talk now about one of these instances of what I have called the patient's restlessness. He may talk of having taken up classical dancing, gymnastics, or there may be something more immediately noticeable, namely, his posture on the couch or his wish to change from the couch to the chair, or from one chair to another. It is often unobtrusive. Sometimes the patient may call attention to himself without appreciating the significance of the fact to which he is calling attention. He will laugh or make a joke of it, and may not like it when he finds that you take it seriously. The important point is the fact that the patient is beginning to want to make athletic rather than verbal communication. If, in the formulations which we use as free associations, the patient can give expression to the symptoms, the complaints of which he is aware, then perhaps it is possible that we can use the same channel of communication in the *opposite direction*.

Can we communicate something verbally to the patient so that he can transmit it through his central nervous system, through the ramifications of the autonomic and the sympathetic systems to the address to which we want it to go? If the patient is delivering his communication to you through a system which comes to the surface in a form which we recognize – asthma for example – is it possible to communicate with such a patient so that the interpretation goes through his lungs back to wherever the origin of the asthma lies? In physical medicine we could say we might hope to examine a patient physically and find where we thought the focus of infection lay. Could we find some method by which our interpretation found its way back to the point of origin of what we think is a mental system, like a symptom of anxiety or dread, or terror or panic fear. Frequently a seriously disturbed patient has spent his life in denying any expression to what he suspects is a serious disorder – the sort of thing we could call a psychosis or mania. It is too often forgotten that the seriously disturbed patient is being disturbed because he is aware of something serious, even if his analyst isn't, and does not want to be reminded of it. Analyst and analysand can be at one in wishing to deprecate the seriousness of 'mental pain' – hence a dangerous collusion.

The patient is likely to express his terrifying feelings and experiences in terms which are deceptively faint and unspectacular. So when you hear a patient jokingly refer to having taken up dancing or other physical activity could you find some method by which to communicate through that same system which has shown itself by this faint and hardly perceptible comment?

At the present time I think it is probably wiser to keep to the ordinary, conventional system of verbal communication, to give interpretations as accurately and as artistically as we can. I say 'artistically' because I don't think it is much good producing more and more psychoanalytic journals and papers to a point where we fatigue the eyes of readers. When a new Journal is announced do you feel that your "heart leaps up with joy"? Or do you feel disposed to cancel your subscription? If the latter then I suggest that you don't write any more articles like that yourself.

It is easy to say, but it is in fact difficult not to write the same tedious and inartistic language oneself. I don't in any way claim exemption from the complaint, but I do think that we ought to try to express ourselves so that it is a pleasure for the recipient to receive. Artists

can say disagreeable and frightening things; yet we may be prepared to listen to their music, read their books or look at their sculptures.

Q1. Is there any difference between a somatic and a hypochondriac delirium?

B: Yes, if you think so. What that difference is has to be determined by the validation of the psychoanalyst in the experience while it takes place.

Q2. What would be their clinical and psychodynamic aspects?

B: I should have thought that the 'somatic delirium' refers to the total soma; if it is 'hypochondriac' then I would be inclined to think that it is only related to that part of the soma which is below the chondria. A term like 'hypochondriac' has been so abused that it has come to mean that the person *is* hypochondriac and therefore there is nothing the matter with him. *If* he is hypochondriac, and that is a correct description, then one ought to pay serious attention to that localization.

In English we talk about a 'sweetheart'. {Translated as 'noivo'} No, I didn't say that Portuguese word; I said "a sweetheart". I think a Chinese could say, as a term of endearment, "my heart and liver", meaning a beloved girl-friend or boy-friend. Why these anatomical descriptions? Is it hypochondriac love or somatic love? Ought we to attach more importance to these statements? They are meant seriously by the people who use them. Unfortunately words like 'love' have become so debased that it is difficult for people who *do* love each other to know what language to use or what attention to pay to anybody who addresses them in such terms. Why is it that when somebody says "I love you" to you, you sometimes feel that it is a very important statement that has been made, but at other times you pay no more attention to it than you would to an advertisement for a brand of cereal? There must be something of which you are aware which makes you know that those same words have fundamentally and basically different values according to their context.

That is why in analysis it is so important to be aware of the context in which the words, whatever they are, are spoken.

I often feel that I have to listen to the patient for a long time and don't feel disposed to interrupt and break his train of thought, but if I say nothing because I want to listen, that fact itself can act as an interruption; the patient can say, "Doctor, have you gone to sleep?" The patient is familiar with the fact that people who apparently are listening and paying attention are in fact absent in mind.

A bore, a gifted bore, can leave you no choice except to be absent in mind and then say, "Doctor, are you asleep?" To which one is tempted to reply, "Well, if I'm not, why not?" It is a subtle form of cruelty to be able to be a bore and to demand full attention of the boredom. So instead of making that somewhat frivolous reply it might be better to consider the matter and to draw the patient's attention to the subtle pleasures of cruelty and the experience of being cruelly treated; it is a primitive and basic form of sexual love, and therefore something that requires attention.

9

Bion: We consider that the human individual behaves exactly as if it had some kind of will, or purpose, or government. In the study of the individual cell, individual person who has boundaries which are the same as the boundaries of his body, an attempt has been made to describe that body with names like 'hand', 'arm', 'head' and so on. But once the anatomists and physiologists look into the matter they tell us that they don't know what is meant by 'a hand' because they don't know where the hand starts and where it finishes. We could carry out violent investigations by cutting off a hand or a foot, but it is noticeable that the human cell or individual is never the same when these violent operations are carried out – and the change is striking indeed if you cut off the head. In fact the popular idea is that the dead person is very different from the live one.

That is a relatively simple problem, but anatomists know of 'ghost hands', 'ghosts' of such portions of the body that have been removed. We understand that there is an obvious explanation in the continued stimulation of the nerve endings which previously went to the missing organ. The psychoanalyst's problem is that he is told of pains which cannot be linked with physical structures; we call them 'mental pains'.

The problem exists in part because there is no adequate or satisfactory geography or map of the human mind. Perhaps that is because there is no such thing – it may be a figment of the imagination. But it does look as if the idea that the mind is in some way subject to the same limitations, the same boundaries as the body, can no longer be regarded as true. Through the use of the vocal cords the human creature can communicate with other individuals; the characteristics of one individual can be spread to other individuals.

It becomes clear that attempts to describe the mind – soul, supersoul, for example – are not adequate. Freud suggested the terms id, ego, superego. The Jesuits described an 'arbitrium' which has a function which betrays itself as arbitrating between one part of the mind and another. The problem is open-ended; the more we investigate it the more we have to revise existing theories.

Human individuals are also creatures which hunt in packs or herds and which have many of the characteristics of agglomeration – they form towns and cities. But so do insects like termites and ants who build up extraordinary structures and behave as if they were joined to each other. Fishes, whales, dolphins – they all have a method of communication, as well as those animals that have given up the water medium and have taken to the air. Flying birds seem to move and wheel together; at other times they form what looks like a pattern to us who are engaged on crawling about the surface of the earth. The pointed end of the pattern, a wedge shape, is occupied by a succession of individuals, constantly changing. How is that done? Is the leader giving orders to the entire flight? Or is the leader representing the direction in which the flight is to go? (I use this model to represent the problem of the mind; who or what decides the course the individual should take?) I think that there is a barrier, a caesura, between my kind of animal and that kind of animal, and between ourselves and ourselves. As far as we are concerned, because we are so close to the crowd of us it becomes difficult to see any pattern at all.

In my attempts to investigate the mind, character, personality or individual, I believe that it is possible to see a certain pattern that is not the same as the pattern of the physical body. Sometimes I can detect a curious state in which the individual is what I have to call 'highly intelligent'. I have to borrow these words from various disciplines for which they were invented, to use them from a different discipline – the discipline which is involved in investigating this mind which we suppose exists. I think I can detect people who are so intelligent, who know so much, that the knowledge is too thick to be able to discern the wisdom. It sounds like a paradox; they are too intelligent to be wise.[1] Such people seem to be able to become technically proficient. For example, I have spoken before of the person who can be a technically proficient violinist, but is incapable of

[1]See also Talk 5.

being a musician. So far the human animal has been very successful; its achievements are extraordinary. A quadruped learns to perform athletic feats like walking on two hind legs; it then goes on to increasingly complex technical activities – sexual activities, for example. The individual graduates from the simple discovery of pleasurable sensations on its own body to similar activities which are carried out by two individuals. Religiously trained people talk about two people becoming one, a process which you could call 'at-one-ment'. The more usual pronunciation in English is 'atonement'; the alphabetic letters are the same whether it is 'at-one-ment' or 'atonement'; they are put together in the same order, but they are not the same word. It has been said that 'at-one-ment' is my invention. I say it isn't. Who will be the arbiter?

Someone may ask, "What is the result of the examination? What have you found out after your mental dissection of the human mind?" I can only say that this same investigation, carried out by myself with the help of another self – which is usually the patient – seems to promote growth or development. Therefore the true investigation is a treatment as well as a cure. The discussion is not something dramatic, like capital punishment; a quick solution is always something drastic and apparently finite. A final solution appears to be quick; real solutions require time. The finite leaves no room for development; we are concerned with something which does require space for growth.

To illustrate some of the problems which face us all I take as a method of description a large scale operation – the plight of the 14th British Army which was defeated at Rangoon in 1942. The British in Singapore had previously detached two battle cruisers to support the garrison. Both those battleships, the latest weapons with which the Royal Navy was armed, were destroyed by Japanese dive bombers. The blow was a serious one; the 14th British Army was thrown back in disorder with hardly any arms, weapons or even boots to wear. And there it was besieged – the remnants – at Imphal. There was introduced as commander of the besieged forces a civilian who had joined the Territorial Cadets – a step which was strongly disapproved of by his fellow civilians. However, he liked that voluntary soldiering and became a regular army officer. He saw service in the desert and in the war against the German forces. Much to his annoyance and disgust he was withdrawn and sent to India where he was again withdrawn and sent to command the remnants of the British Army

in Imphal. It was not an enviable post to be put in command of the remnants of a dispirited, demoralized and defeated army.

But this civilian-turned-soldier told his fellow troops that if they were cut off from their base, if the enemy had surrounded Imphal – as indeed it had – so these remnants of the 14th Army could equally be said to have cut off the Japanese from Japan. It was only an idea of course, only an imaginative fiction. However, the character or spirit or soul infected this decayed and destroyed remnant of an army with health. The *idea*, the fiction that the 14th non-existent British Army had cut off the Japanese forces from Japan, started becoming a reality. The British could get no more equipment from Britain because Britain couldn't be bothered with what happened in faraway places like Burma. So they had to march; I don't know what they marched on – their bare feet were hardly enough. It is difficult to say they marched on their morale or on their spirit which had been produced by the injection of this amateur-turned-professional called General Slim.

The Japanese had discovered the secret British code so that they could read all the messages which the army commander communicated to his troops. General Slim, who had a habit of thinking, decided to go on using the same code. Through this code, which he knew the Japanese could now understand, he continued to transmit messages to his left flank. The Japanese naturally concentrated their troops against the left flank of what was a non-existent army – another figment of the imagination. When the Japanese had concentrated their troops against this non-existent left flank, the remnants of the 14th Army, now reinforced by the spirit of General Slim, broke through the weakened Japanese left flank and defeated the Japanese who had nothing to fight but the air. While they were busy fighting a figment of General Slim's imagination the real remnants of the 14th Army found themselves in Rangoon receiving the surrender of the Japanese commander.

What are we to say about this 'spirit', this 'soul' or 'mind'? That is what we are supposed to be dealing with. Does it exist, or does it not? Are we concerned with a figment of our imagination, or is there something behind these words?

I don't know the answers to these questions – I wouldn't tell you if I did. I think it is important to find out for yourselves. When you go to your consulting rooms tomorrow perhaps you will investigate

this matter, and perhaps between us we may ultimately find out what this thing is that had no shape or taste or colour, or anything that our senses can make us aware of. At the same time perhaps you will find out what it is that *you* use to get in touch with this other invisible self. It seems to me that it is real enough to leave room for the development of this 'thing' of which my senses give me no knowledge and for which I cannot find any language with which to communicate it to you.

Who or what breathes spirit into a collection of people and makes them develop? What shape will the Brazilian nation take? What shape could we see if we could see it in the way that we see the shape of a flight of birds? Our view is close up, microscopic, a small part of the whole; what is the real pattern?

Milton, by means of the 'Areopagitica',[1] tried to infuse his ideas into his countrymen; today we can see more of what his ideas were, what happened to them, what happened to his countrymen. Who or what will lead this collection to which we are too near to see and of which we are one 'cell'? The question could equally be posed about the individual who is a group of thoughts and feelings.

Are there too many Brazilians for us to be able to see the Brazilian nation? Perhaps somebody who can will write it down, or compose it musically, or paint it. Or form it into a conglomeration which, like an army, has a structure.

The past is mostly forgotten, the future we cannot see, but is there some seer who could detect the germs of the future? What is a psychoanalyst? What does he do? what has he become? The answer is the disease of, ultimately the destruction of, curiosity. But in the mean-time the question itself may provoke growth.

[1] *Areopagitica: A Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*. John Milton.

10

Bion: One of the questions which analysts have often not asked themselves is, "Do I want to be a psychoanalyst?" Men and women have problems that they think are going to be 'cured'; so they go to see an analyst to 'get cured'. The question of embracing the psychoanalytic profession is not considered. It is assumed that they *can* be analysts and that therefore they *want* to be. But it is an open-ended question worth constantly asking yourself. There are other versions of it: Do you want to be a particular person's analyst? Would you like to have another patient? Would you like to have another patient like the last one? You can consider which of the patients that you ever had are the ones with whom you have had the most rewarding experience. It can be something of a surprise to find which are the ones you find most rewarding and what sort of person *you* must be to like that kind of patient. That is another reason for regarding the question as open-ended; you do not *stop* learning something about yourself.

If your central nervous system is in tolerable working order then your senses give you a lot of information. After that what you think that information means is up to you. But that depends on whether you want to know the meaning; you may not. Similarly, there are patients who get a 'nice' sensation from the sound of your voice and possibly from the sound of their own. So analyst and analysand settle into a meaningless debate because it feels so 'nice'. The patient feels something which is analogous in physical terms to being stroked; the one mind has a caressing, soothing effect on the other and the mutually gratifying seduction goes on unobserved by either party – so much so that it is forgotten that the patient has come for help. The patient has forgotten it; the analyst has forgotten it; they are locked in a mutually gratifying experience. It may be a long time before the

patient becomes aware of discomfort. It is as if he had access to some soporific drug so that he cannot tell you where the pain is. Here again it is useful to change the vertex so that if you cannot see the pain from one position you may be able to see it from another.

Sometimes the story that is told you is comprehensible but not illuminating; it may then be useful to consider what is wrong with the story. Why does the patient think it is worthwhile spending time and money telling you that story? Why does he think that you might be interested to hear it? For example, a patient who has been going to the analyst for five or six years goes to a hospital for a physical examination, tells them something that the analyst has been analysing from the point of view of its being a hypochondriacal symptom, and is told that he has a terminal illness. The patient asks for an interview with the analyst or perhaps he asks the analyst to come to the hospital to see him there. The analyst comes into the ward and finds the patient undergoing some form of elaborate treatment for the complaint. The patient pours out a mass of abuse on the grounds that the analyst has been treating the illness as a hypochondriacal symptom.

"If", says the patient, "you knew your job, that symptom could have been treated properly long before it became a hopeless terminal case". As the analyst looks at all the apparatus there is no reason to doubt the truth of the statement that the patient's condition is hopeless; that would seem to be all there was to say about it. What is wrong with that story?

I will give you some idea of how my mind would work on this problem. I don't say it would suit anybody else, but it may help you to find the way that would suit you. If it is true that the patient is suffering from a terminal illness time is short; therefore the best use needs to be made of what is left. If I felt that I was going to die shortly I don't think I would want to waste my time telling a psychoanalyst what a fool he was – I think I would leave him to find that out for himself. So why, out of the small supply of time which is available, should the patient want to see me as the analyst? Either he is being extremely prodigal in the use of the time, or there is some other reason for wanting to see me. What other reason could there be? If the patient feels that I have simply been telling him a series of ridiculously untrue stories, he could hardly be wanting to hear more of the same. On the other hand, if, as is the case with this particular

patient, he has been told stupid and false stories for a long time, he may want to hear the truth. The story that it is a terminal illness is true but irrelevant. What matters is that the 'termination' – like the rest of his life – should be properly spent.

There are many ways of telling lies including the erection of picturesque but useless apparatus. The patient may want to see me because he feels that I have never told him lies; in this desperate situation he is anxious to hear the truth and to tell it – including the hate or love he *really* feels.

I have read a psychoanalytic paper in which the writer said that in cases where death was certain the analyst should give up making interpretations and resort to reassuring and comforting statements. I would not want to be told nice stories, whether they were psychoanalytical or religious or any other variety of pleasurable and gratifying seductions. I think that if I had never known the truth or wanted to hear the truth before, I would want to hear it in a serious situation.

It is questionable whether any patient ever comes to a psychoanalyst unless they feel the situation is desperate; it is usually a last resort when everything else has failed. So in spite of appearances to the contrary the whole weight of the experience when a patient comes to see an analyst suggests that the patient himself feels that he needs a powerful injection of truth even though he may not like it.

What is your assessment of the job of psychoanalyst? I have already suggested that it would not be much use being invited to tell various forms of agreeable lies; nor would I want to terrify anyone by telling him frightening stories about his possibly having a fatal disease. Although it may seem theoretical, or even philosophical, I find it easier to fall back on the feeling that I am called upon to make the person familiar with a particular aspect of truth. I know that is an unsatisfactory statement; Bacon summed it up in a famous essay: " 'What is truth' said jesting Pilate, and would not wait for an answer". But I think that most people know what I mean when I say it is safest to feel that one is falling back on as near as one can get to the truth. At least one becomes part of a distinguished company of scientists, painters, musicians and other artists; they are all attempting to display some aspect of the truth. I say 'all'; I mean all those who belong to the distinguished company. Imitation musicians, imitation painters and scientists there are in plenty. There is something unsatisfactory

about the imitation, and if it is unsatisfactory to oneself it doesn't require a great deal of imagination to suppose that it would be unsatisfactory to a patient who is in a desperate situation.

The truth. What does it look like? Who wants to be confronted with a *trompe l'oeil* representation of Paradise? Such confections are pardonable to an agent selling us our earthly home, but not for our eternal home – our Self. In every job the first stage is an imaginative conjecture. The engineer building a dam has to have an imaginative conjecture about where the dam would do the most good, or where it might do the most harm if it were badly built. Later, the imaginative conjecture might become a rational conjecture; the secondary plan might be more workable than the first. In analysis one's first guess as to what the patient wants could be replaced by something which could be drafted on a piece of paper. Ask yourself what these various stages are before you would be prepared to turn these conjectures into a picture in your own mind of what you think the effect would be if you said something to that particular patient.

I think that a revised Grid – not to take the place of the first one – would be useful for a practising analyst to be able to consider how 'a pattern emerges'.[1] I find it useful to consider that the stages are an imaginative conjecture, a rational conjecture, a pictorial image – the sort of thing you can see in dreams and even 'paint' in a verbal version of a pictorial image. That also might come into your grid as part of the progress from O – when you know nothing whatever about the patient – and one tenth or one hundredth of a second later when you begin to have an idea of who or what has entered your consulting room. A minute later the shadowy impression might become more solid, 'three-dimensional'. You can invent this grid for yourself – the one which seems to come closest to your actual experience in analysis. It could also be applied to a scientific paper or to a lecture. The criterion, whether it is true, should also apply, but this time to something which is more aesthetic, as if you were engaged on a work of art. A scientific paper should remind you of real people; it should not be so boring, so unaesthetic that it becomes a pain in your mind to read it. We have a difficult job; even the impromptus in the analysis, the interpretations that we give, would be all the better if they stood up to aesthetic criticism. I hope that does not sound too much like Satan

[1]See beginning of Talk 1 – reference to Freud quoting Charcot.

rebuking sin – I am well aware that my own interpretations, spoken or written, cannot pass these tests. But there is no reason why yours should not. You do not have to be limited by the limitations of your lecturers, teachers, analysts, parents. If you are, there is no room for growth.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME IX

January 1960
Watercolour painting by WRB

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Edited by Chris Mawson

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KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume IX): 978–1–78220–237–0

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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THE TAVISTOCK SEMINARS

1976–1979

The Tavistock Seminars, edited by Francesca Bion, was first published in 2005 by Karnac Books, London.

The Tavistock Seminars

BION SEMINARS AT THE TAVISTOCK CLINIC

During the summers of 1976, 1977 and 1978 we spent some weeks in Europe, dividing the time between London, Italy and France. In 1979 we visited London twice – in March and again in September on our return from almost twelve years in California.

While in London on those occasions, Bion was asked to hold seminars at the Tavistock Clinic – fourteen in all. Unfortunately the few surviving video recordings came to light only recently and are of variable quality. Nevertheless, these survivals give a clear picture of the areas of analysis that were of major, continuing importance to him during the last four years of his life.

Transferring the recorded word to the printed page is by no means a straightforward process, especially if the speaker expresses his thoughts extempore (as Bion always did). At the same time, it is necessary to aim to retain the style and personal characteristics of his written work. Any changes I have made are in accordance with this aim.

Francesca Bion
2005

Seminar 1

28 June 1976

[*This was the year of the record-breaking heatwave and drought. The videotape shows Bion wearing a short-sleeved, open-neck shirt rather than his usual long-sleeved shirt, bow-tie and jacket.*]

Bion: It took me a very long time to realize that the actual experience of being psychoanalysed was a traumatic one, and it takes a long while before one recovers from it. In physical medicine you usually have to go through a period of convalescence; you then hope that if you are fortunate you will reap some benefit from the violence that has been done to you physically. I was introduced to the kind of idea that violence is not done to you by psychoanalysis – that in the course of time you gradually got more and more cured. That doesn't seem to me to fit in at all; it was quite a long time before I began to feel that I knew where it was "at" and what sort of niche I occupied in this peculiar universe or domain that we call "psychoanalysis" – for want of a better word. But I can't say I have got very far with that particular line of thought. Part of the difficulty is that one has to borrow the terminology from all sorts of sciences, religions, aesthetic activities, in order to attempt to formulate a language of our own. There isn't a suitable language for this extraordinary domain, but I am convinced that there *is* such a domain, that there really is something which it is fair to call a mind, or character, or personality. The problem is having to use a debased currency, a language that has lost a great deal of its value and has therefore lost its cutting edge – in so far as one has to use it for a particular purpose.

Freud described the situation in which people suffer from an amnesia – a gap, a space where there ought to be some sort of memory – and then fill this gap with paramnesias. That's fine, and a very

profitable sort of idea it has been. But after a time when we get more and more accustomed to hearing about psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, the more we wonder whether there isn't another great gap – not amnesia – the vocabulary is so difficult we don't know what to call it. But anyway, when we are at a loss we invent something to fill the gap of our ignorance – this vast area of ignorance, of non-knowledge, in which we have to move. The more frightening the gap, the more terrifying it is to realize how utterly ignorant we are of even the most elementary and simplest requirements for survival, the more we are pressed from outside and inside to fill the gap. You can do that perfectly well – with art, with religion, you can multiply theory. You only have to ask yourself what you do individually in a situation where you feel completely lost; you are thankful to clutch hold of any system, anything whatever that is available on which to build a kind of structure. So from this point of view it seems to me that we could argue that the whole of psychoanalysis fills a long-felt want by being a vast Dionysiac system; since we don't know what is there, we invent these theories and build this glorious structure that has no foundation in fact – or the only fact in which it has any foundation is our complete ignorance, our lack of capacity.

However, we hope that it isn't completely unrelated to fact that psychoanalytic theories would remind you of real life at some point in the same way as a good novel or a good play would remind you of how human beings behave. Leonardo could draw things that remind you of what human beings look like. If you look at his drawings of hair and turbulent water in his Notebooks, there is an attempt to give an aesthetic representation of the sort of turmoil I have described.

Without wanting to forget all that – the fact of our ignorance and the fact that we have to try to make inroads into this universe in which we live by these various methods – scientific, religious, artistic – we can go on multiplying the number of approaches that we as individuals make, our own small contribution to scratching a little space into this great mass of material that we don't know.

I suppose it was permissible for biologists and others to talk about sex, but remember the furore that was created by Freud's suggestion that sex played a great part. The fact that he was able to do this also had the effect of making us see most of the development of psychoanalysis in terms of biological effect. Appropriate to that is the work of Mendel and his promulgation of the laws of inheritance.

Of course, it begs the question when we talk about "Mendelian inheritance", because it is tautological. However, I think a rather awkward situation arises when it comes to supposing that there is such a thing as a mind, that we all have a mind or soul or psyche, or whatever you want to call it. We have to talk like that because we haven't a proper vocabulary for it. As soon as we recognize that, there is some gap there that isn't in fact quite empty. The borrowing from biology begins to break down when it comes to the question of the mind and the transmission of ideas. In fact, we have to consider that in addition to this biological inheritance, this Mendelian myth of propagation, it becomes one that applies to the world of ideas in which characteristics are transmitted from one generation to the next, or to some subsequent generation. We could say that on the one hand there are the genotypes, the genetic inheritance, and on the other the phenotypes, the transmission of appearances. I used to be taught to believe that these acquired characteristics are not transmitted – the only characteristics that are transmitted are the Mendelian ones, the genetic ones genetically transmitted. I don't think this is good enough; I think there is something quite unmistakable about the way in which *ideas* are transmitted. The individual gives birth, so to speak, to some other individual who bears signs or symptoms of these phenomenes – I am inventing a word to describe these particles that continue to be passed on, so that you can imagine a situation in which there is an English nation affected by Shakespeare and then the characteristics become, as it were, somehow transmitted – not altogether in an obvious way that you would suppose, by books and so forth. I remember John Rickman telling me about his experience at York railway station when a soldier came up to him and said, "Sir, weren't you at Northfield?" Rickman said he was. "It was the most extraordinary experience I ever had – just like being at university", said the soldier. That man hadn't a hope of ever getting to university – as far as we know. His educational and financial background, his cultural background, were all against him. So it was probably the only chance he had had. I don't know why, out of all the people at Northfield, that idea was transmitted to that particular person and changed his outlook – it certainly sounded as if it had. Whatever may have happened to all the pampered darlings of my generation at Oxford and Cambridge, they could pass through university without having the faintest idea of what a university was. But one man,

who couldn't possibly know what a university was, almost certainly did. We are led to suppose that something happens to an individual, and then that "something" gets transmitted elsewhere; but the laws of Mendelian inheritance don't apply – some other laws do, such as phenotypes and phenomenes.

We can look at it very closely and in great detail, as in psychoanalysis. But I am not sure that the increased depth of observation that becomes possible when one is closely in contact with another person will tell us very much about this other form of transmission. Indeed, it is very difficult to know what effect an analysis has on the individual anyway. Some people certainly seem to be able to turn the experience to good account. But I think that in many cases it is purely ephemeral – there is apparently a "cure". We can use a term like "cure", but it has no lasting reality, no particular significance – in contrast with the basic, fundamental characteristics transmitted according to Mendelian laws. We could say, "That, Exhibit A, is a human being; that, Exhibit B, is a tiger, a cat, or a sheep." It would seem as if there are certain fundamental things that follow the laws of Mendelian inheritance. The other laws (if there are any) have to be discovered. It is possible that if you take a group of people – say, like those at Northfield – you might in the course of time be able to detect what sort of course is pursued there by an idea, by something that would seem to be a part of thinking. That is where people who observe groups may have a chance of seeing some of this form of inheritance.

To get back to the psychoanalytic view: it is quite useful to talk about "transference" and "countertransference". Or, as Winnicott puts it, the transitory object; it is in transition, in passage from goodness knows where to goodness knows what, from oblivion to amnesia – the tiny little bit in between that could be filled up by saying "transference relationship" and "countertransference", but I think it will have to be filled in with something else. Because the relationship of these little packets cannot be so easily determined, you may be able to see an idea zigzag its way through a group. I don't know where the idea comes from and I don't know where it goes to, but it may be observed *in passage*. This is where you get back to the practice of analysis and the practice of group observation.

Q: [*inaudible*]

Bion: Pain is a fact of existence – not so very different from pleasure. Indeed I think that one requires a terminology in which there are not specific words so much as concrescences; a number of feelings or ideas get collected together and could be put into some sort of order. You could regard pleasure and pain as different ends of the spectrum.

It is quite easy to see why we like to have a nice feeling and even to believe that it is possible to have a nice feeling by itself. I think it is rubbish; you have to suppose that either you have feelings or you don't. If you are not willing to pay the price of the inescapable fact of pain, then you get reduced to a situation in which you try to isolate yourself. Physically it is quite possible: you can draw the blinds, turn off the light, have the telephone cut off, stop reading the newspapers and keep yourself in a situation of complete isolation – *physically*. Mentally, I don't think it is quite so easy. For example, even if it were possible to go back into the womb, it is very doubtful to imagine that one would be completely isolated so long as one continued to live. The human foetus lives in a fluid environment, the amniotic fluid, and embryologists say that it has these auditory and optic pits. At what point do they become functional? There is no reason why they shouldn't become functional, even to the foetus, because a watery fluid does transmit pressure. I think that, at some point, the foetus can be so subjected to these changing pressures that long before it changes from a watery fluid to a gaseous one – the air, birth – it does its best to be rid of the whole lot.

I think it would be a complete distortion of Kleinian theory to suggest that even a foetus might resort to splitting off thoughts and ideas and phantasies, and evacuating them into the amniotic fluid. However, I don't see why we shouldn't indulge in these phantasies. Freud said, "I learned to restrain speculative tendencies and to follow the forgotten words of my master, Charcot, to look at the same things again and again until they themselves began to speak" (1914d, p. 22). I have great sympathy with that, but I think it is dangerous to imagine that we can do without these speculative adventures. Some sort of discipline is required.

It seems to me that if you consider what appears to be this curious progress from something like the fishy existence to the amphibian existence to the mammalian existence, there seem to be these archaic survivals. A surgeon will say, "I think there is a branchial

cleft tumour." It's a survival, an archaic part of the body that proliferates and becomes dangerous. There's a vestigial tail, and that begins to produce a tumour and requires an operation. It would be nice, so seductive, if the mind, this archaic survival, could be so easily detected – but it can't. We don't seem to be able to smell it, touch it, feel it or see it, and yet we are aware of it. Unfortunately we can only say that perhaps we are completely mistaken: we are being stimulated by something or other, and then we build up this elaborate system of paramnesias, these elaborate systems of theory, because it is so much quicker, so much nicer to be able to fall back on theory. If I am right about this, then I think we could say that as far as mental life is concerned, we are in our infancy, we simply don't know what development is likely to take place or whether the development will be terminated by our magnificent equipment of simian capacity – being able to produce nuclear fission and blow ourselves off the earth before we can develop much further.

Q: [*inaudible*]

Bion: Living in a watery medium, one of the foetus's long-distance probes is its sense of smell. Dogfish and mackerel can detect decaying matter at a considerable distance – in a watery medium. Transported to a gaseous medium, the individual carries a certain amount of the watery medium with it – mucous, saliva and so forth – and can therefore continue to smell things that are not completely desiccated; the watery medium that was once outside is now inside. Some people can be very sensitive to that; they don't congratulate themselves on their capacity to smell things that other people cannot, but complain bitterly of "nasal catarrh", talking exactly as if they feel afraid that they will be drowned by it. In short, this "catarrh" which could be an asset becomes a liability of which the individual is terrified.

I think this also applies to the eyes that show you things even if you are not in physical contact with them, and may indeed show you things that you don't like to see at all. . . . It is possible that we have hit on some measures by which we can develop our mental capacity. This is probably quite all right provided that it is more or less harmless. But suppose it becomes really penetrating; there is a mediaeval drawing of a person shoving his head through a sort of adamantine shell and is then able to observe the universe that lies outside. If astronomy actually enabled the individual to penetrate into space,

then there might easily be an objection to that – a violent objection against all these radio telescopes and so forth, a wish to destroy them all because they made life so uncomfortable – it is so much nicer to be blind and deaf.

What it means, then, is this: are we going to dismiss X by saying, "Oh, he's terribly hypochondriacal" – finish; we thank God we don't have to bother any further? Or should we listen to what he says? Should we expose ourselves to what this individual is trying to communicate?

Freud said that we should pay attention to dreams. That has quite a history – lots of people have said it before, but Freud carried it to very great lengths, suggesting that we should have real respect for what we see and hear and experience when we are off our guard as we are when we go to sleep. There are very few individuals who have any respect whatsoever for the continuation of those dreams when they are wide awake. They are not even likely to admit to having them, because they know that the rest of us will call them hallucinations or delusions – as we all know, the authorities in some places are at pains to shut people up where they can do little harm – inside mental institutions. It is another future that lies before psychoanalysis likewise: to disturb the authorities and help them to imprison the human mind to keep it in a harmless condition. In a way we feel that it is all very well for people like Picasso or Solzhenitsyn – they were great men, and it was reasonable for them to put up with that sort of thing. But it is awkward to think that we, with our ordinary capacities, might have to stand up against it to support the movement towards freedom of mind, the movement that might aid development and discover the rules of mental nutrition. How do you feed the mind in such a way that it can develop, not get poisoned?

This is fairly easily discernible when it comes to a question of the application of drugs of one sort or another – alcohol, soporifics and so forth. But it is not so easy to know what *ideas* are soporific, what *ideas* are poisonous, and whether we, as analysts, are not furthering these developments of methods by which thought would become impossible.

André Green drew my attention to this statement: "*La réponse est le malheur de la question*" ["The answer is the disease, the misfortune, of the question": Maurice Blanchot (1907–2003), *L'Entretien Infini*]. In other words, the answer is the thing that will put a stop to curiosity

better than anything. If anybody is at all curious, you can stuff an answer down their throat or into their ears and that will stop them doing any further thinking.

Q: [*inaudible*]

Bion: The impression I get about morality is that it is basic. I have been struck by the fact that making a faintly disapproving noise will cause an infant to shrink back as if something very terrible has happened. I don't get the feeling that there is any conscious idea of what the crime is; in fact, the nearest that I have got to Melanie Klein's statement of it is, "free-floating anxiety". It is an anxiety without any concept attached to it – so much so that I think the growing creature does its best to find a crime to fit the feeling. So there is no difficulty about rationalization, no difficulty about having rational feelings for regarding someone as a criminal or thinking of oneself as one. And if the worst comes to the worst, the person can always commit a crime to match the feeling, so that the morality will actually precipitate the crime as a kind of therapeutic attempt; the person concerned can feel, "Yes, I may feel guilty, but who wouldn't? Look what I have done." In reality, I think that someone can really commit a murder in order to be able to feel that at least his murderous feelings of guilt are rational. But all this usually means is that the so-called rational event is one that we are capable of understanding according to our logical rules. That is a matter of our human limitations – it has nothing to do with the universe in which we live. Another trouble is the sense of guilt that can be so enormous that the person concerned tries to get rid of it, tries to embrace a sort of theory or idea that is absolutely amoral.

Q: [*inaudible*]

Bion: Nearly everybody has been taught to bother about other people, to be concerned for them. That can also be one of these tricks learnt in the course of one's life – how to be *just like* a loving or affectionate person takes the place of *becoming* one. That is one of the solutions that put a stop to growth and development.

In analysis you have to be sensitive to the situation where the patient is talking very clearly, very comprehensibly, about his concerns for this or that cause or institution. In crude situations it is fairly easy to detect – yes, he is terribly concerned for the unfortunate people in – somewhere quite a long way away (there is no

danger of having to do anything). So you begin to be suspicious that he is being just like a concerned person, just like a doctor, just like an analyst – and so forth through the list. But at some point it can become clear to you that a change has taken place: the patient is, in fact, bothered by something he *can* do something about. Then it becomes important to be able to draw his attention to this: that while he is talking in the same way as yesterday, or last week or last year, it doesn't sound as if that is the case. Of course, you do not want to be flattering, but the patient is much more likely to believe that you are saying this to suggest some improvement.

Q: [*inaudible*]

Bion: When, in the course of the analytic experience, a change takes place, then you can say, "I think you are now feeling that you *are* the father (or the mother)." That might appear to be quite plausible for a person of about twenty or forty, but it may be more difficult to see that a child of six or seven is really a mother – only prevented from being one biologically because she isn't sexually mature. But later development of mature sex and real maternal feelings can be felt to be precocious, out of phase; the child then hates these maternal feelings: there is no chance of her becoming a mother – she just has to go on living another ten, twelve, fifteen years before she has babies. So by the time the really maternal person has a baby, she will have dropped the fancy of being maternal and has become sick to death of it. The human individual is a very defective creature. The snag is that there is nobody who can do anything about it except ourselves.

Q: [*inaudible*]

Bion: The individual has to live in his own body, and his body has to put up with having a mind living in it. So in a sense the analytic procedure, if effective, could bring these two into some sort of harmony with each other. I think it is fundamental that the person concerned should be able to be in good contact with himself – good contact in the sense of tolerant contact, but also in the sense of knowing just how horrible he thinks he is, or his feelings are, or what sort of person he is. There has to be some kind of tolerance between the two views that live together in the same body. It seems to me that that is a preliminary to being able to extend it outwards to a situation where, if you can tolerate yourself as a father or a mother, you might tolerate

a mate who is not you, who might be the other parent. It becomes easier to find the father or the mother for your children as well as your husband or wife.

As I say, I think the first aspect of this is getting into contact with yourself, because so many years are spent in which the individual is "morally" trying to be better, trying not to be a naughty boy or a naughty girl – you can hardly say, "I'm trying not to be a horrible foetus." So in spite of these attempts to evacuate, to give birth to, all one's horrible characteristics so that one remains the ideal person, it is in fact necessary to get to a point where you can tolerate living with yourself as a preliminary to where you can tolerate living with somebody else who will enable you to become complete, enable you to fulfil the biological function where the unit has to be a couple.

Q: [*inaudible*]

Bion: At Northfield, where we had a marvellous programme – a wonderful affair – you could see where everybody was at any hour of the day or night – provided you didn't go and have a look. I remember collecting some men who were on fatigues sweeping the wards; I said, "Come along, let's go and have a look." First of all, we went to the carpenters shop – that was closed. Then we went somewhere else – no, they were on fatigues, so that wasn't operative. There wasn't a single department in this marvellous programme that was in operation – not one.

The tendency is to cut out all these intermediate phases, get to the position of authority and then add the authority formed into a kind of hard shell; no idea can penetrate that authority, no idea can penetrate that shell formed around the personality, the group or the community. Nothing short of a revolution, nothing short of violence, will crack the shell and release the people within it. That is why I sometimes say that an institute is dead: it can always obey rules and procedures; it can be flexible, and the rules can be altered to accommodate to the growth within. But the institute is always composed of people – and there is the trouble: the shell can be so thick that they cannot develop inside it.

Seminar 2

4 July 1977

Bion: I find it extremely dull having questions answered that I haven't asked. So I think it would be preferable if I give you a rough idea of what I propose to say, and then if you will ask any questions you care to. I don't say that I shall answer them, but I can usually find a few more questions to ask you – a natural development, because most questions cause a whole lot more to occur. We never seem to get to the point of an answer unless we look back on it and think we have apparently gathered some kind of experience in the meantime.

I feel disposed to consider this kind of work from the point of view of the analyst: I mean by that the person who is theoretically responsible for the conversation. I am thinking of Freud's constant reference to Charcot's insistence on observation – that seems to me to be the absolute essence of it: observation. But what are we observing? Even the language we use is not adequate for the sort of difficult job that we do. We have to use the word, "observation", as a kind of metaphor, an approximation. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton talks of the situation in which he cannot fall back on his eyes because he is blind; he says he hopes he will be able to "see and tell of things invisible to mortal sight". We cannot hope for that, but somehow we do observe things that are very often not observed in the ordinary course of social intercourse. It would be useful if we could formulate in our own minds what it is that we are observing; it is a question which crops up all the time if we are doing this kind of work. Therefore, it needs to be kept in constant repair. How would you formulate it if you were trying to convey it to somebody else? What form of words would you use? It is curious that we do, in fact, resort to words; it is probably partly because the ability to talk articulate language is our most recent acquisition. But, of course, we are having to borrow words that have been used and

formulated for quite other purposes, when the kind of thing that we are wanting to use them for now wasn't even over the horizon.

Having become as clear as you can as to what in your own experience you are really observing – never mind the books or what you have been told or anything of that sort – and having agreed that what you are going to use is verbal articulate communication, then decide what words you propose to use and draw up your own individual vocabulary. The words we have to borrow are like coins worn so thin that we can't read the superscription on them; we don't know their denomination and we don't know their value. To change the metaphor: it is like a surgeon who has to sharpen his scalpels both before *and* during an operation.

If we cut down our vocabulary to a minimum, then I think there is some chance of finding our own way of using the words to which we are most accustomed. And there is also a chance that analysands will gradually learn how to speak the language we are speaking, whether it is English, French, Italian or whatever. If you go on using the same words with accuracy – *your* accuracy – the patient has a chance of understanding what the words mean. Take, for example, a word like "sex"; it is borrowed from biology and is used by us as if it really meant something. If we were simply dealing with anatomy and physiology, I think it would be possible to use that word fairly correctly. When it comes to using it in what one considers is a mental sphere – assuming that there is such a thing as a mind or a character or a personality – then it becomes quite a problem as to where a person "leaves off", what are his edges.

Freud speaks about the "impressive caesura of birth" [*Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety,* 1926d (1925)], and it is true; I find that people are tremendously impressed by that word [birth] and, curiously enough, also by the word "death". Both of them, of no importance whatever, are inevitable. There is really nothing to be said about them, but they are so impressive. For instance, you will hear something like this: "Will you come and look after these people in this particular ward of the hospital – they are terminal cancer patients." Terminal cancer: you only have to think about it to realize what a ridiculous phrase it is. How do they know it is terminal? Terminal of what? What is it the end point of? And in any case, we are not really concerned with funeral arrangements or something of that nature. What we are concerned with are living people, and if there is a job to be done for making the

lives of people in a particular ward bearable for such time as they have to live, then there is something to be done. That has nothing to do with "terminal cancer"; it has to do with making such life still to come, still left over, still "in the bank" so to speak, tolerable and available, and finding some method by which patients can be given a chance of getting onto that wavelength where you bother with what *can* be done and don't bother overmuch with what you can't do.

I sometimes think there is almost an occupational neurosis of analysts, because so much time is spent in finding out the various mistakes which are made – our faults, sins, crimes and so forth – that we forget it is a very unimportant part of the whole story. We no doubt want to know what we are bad at – it is quite useful to know that – but the really important thing to know is what part of it we are any good at. So even if you have a patient who is supposed to be in "terminal stages", what is he still good for? What would you do with geriatric patients?

At the other end of the scale, people say, "It's no good to psychoanalyse a child of two or three or five." I have even heard fantastic statements about not being able to do anything when "the fibres are not myelinated". The trouble with the myelinated fibres is that the person who has them is often so rigid, so structured, that you can't get another idea through their myelin. On the other hand, if you have a reasonably intelligent baby and quite early in the proceedings you put it on a potty, its non-myelinated bottom seems to know what to do and then proceeds to perform very adequately without any fuss or bother. Why that is, I don't know, but I think the infant must have a personality – and so must old people, however ill they may be, however convinced they are that they have reached their terminal position. If they have, there is no problem. But there *is* a problem in that little, tiny gap of whatever it is – days, weeks, months between that point and the point at which they no longer exist.

Once again, we have to get back to considering that we not only have an anatomy and physiology but also a mind. "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" – the question asked by Macbeth referring to Lady Macbeth sleepwalking. The answer would presumably have to be something like, "Well, not at the moment, but in four hundred years come along again and I'll tell you what we can do." Similarly today: "Come along again in four hundred years and we'll give you an idea." But in the meantime, each one of us lives this

very short, ephemeral existence in which we can possibly use this hypothetical "mind" I am talking about to contribute something to the general fund.

There does seem to be some kind of inheritance of ideas or character or personality. It is not very much good falling back on the ordinary, accepted rules of genetic inheritance; we have to reconsider whether these *acquired* characteristics are not, in fact, transmittable. Then comes this point of how we are to transmit them.

I would like to consider the patient you will see tomorrow. I have a great advantage because I know nothing whatsoever about it, so I am not so easily misled as you, who probably think that you saw or heard that patient today. But I suggest that while it has its advantages, it is also a bit of a nuisance because it stands in the way of the fact that the patient has gone on living and thinking and will not be the same patient tomorrow as today – or at the end of the session as at the beginning. This point is curiously difficult to grasp in the actual practice – and that is what I am trying to talk about here. I am not very interested in the theories of psychoanalysis or psychiatry or any other theories; the important point is what I call "the real thing", the practice of analysis, the practice of treatment, the practice of communication. The question which then arises is: how are you to speak to this patient, the one you have never seen before but are liable to think that you have because you saw him yesterday? The difficulty is this: when you are dealing with a mind or character, the boundaries are not so clearly marked as they appear to be when you are dealing with the anatomy or physiology.

To fall back again on established usage, we can talk about the past, about infancy: in infancy the patient felt such-and-such, had this-or-that trauma and it had this-or-that effect. That is very useful if you consider the patient as developing in a line: born–married–died, *hic iacet*, finished. But the patient you see tomorrow is not like that; you don't see somebody who is "born–married–died". It is very difficult indeed to see what goes on between the beginning of the session and the end of it. One reason for this is that the noise is so deafening, the information we are constantly bombarded with through our auditory apparatus is so deafening. You know so much about your history, so much about the patient's history, so much about psychoanalysis, medicine, physiology, music, painting and so on, that it is very

difficult to detect this "thing" that we are really observing – or wanting to observe. That is one reason why I think it is easier to "forget" what you know and "forget" what you want, get rid of your desires, anticipations and also your memories so that there will be a chance of hearing these very faint sounds that are buried in this mass of noise. I imagine that even a new-born infant has to do this: when it opens its eyes and is suddenly presented with masses of facts by its optic apparatus, then there has to be some sort of selection. This also applies to us from our angle.

Freud pointed out how important it is not to indulge your imagination, to stick to facts. I entirely agree with that – and am constantly contradicting it. I say to people in a supervision, "Look – when you are with a patient you have to be careful what you say. I am sure you ought to give the correct interpretations, but not here – here, I would like you to give your imagination a bit of exercise. So, say anything, however silly, idiotic, stupid, unjustified it is. Then, after you have said it, we'll get onto another point – 'what is the evidence?' – and so on. But in the meantime, cut out all of that and concentrate on what you imagine – speculative imagination, speculative reason." I know the objection to it: it is said that you can imagine anything you like, and certainly reasons are so common that they spring up like brambles. If you are hunting for the Sleeping Beauty of Truth, the difficulty is to cut your way through all these brambles. But I only have to say, "Give your imagination rein", to be reasonably sure there will be silence for the rest of the hour – nobody dares to speak, because everybody believes there is a psychiatrist knocking around the place waiting to tell them the correct interpretation, or to do the correct thing – which is probably to shut them up in a mental hospital or bring them under restraint in some way or another. The result is that their imaginations atrophy and become what I would call "sterile".

When you have forgotten all that you can about your patient – who will do his best to remind you – then you may have a chance of penetrating this impressive caesura of knowledge, facts, and a chance of hearing these very small things that are so difficult to hear or see. In other words – falling back on a rather metaphorical use of language – give yourself a chance to observe the growth of a germ of an idea. That germ may look very odd indeed until it has taken shape as an idea that can be articulated.

I would be very glad if my patient used any language he could mobilize – if I were qualified to understand that language. For example, if I say to the patient, "Where did you go last night and what did you see?", he may be very anxious to insist that he went to bed and went to sleep. [See also Seminar 6.] I say, "I don't mind what you did with your body. Where did you go and what did you see?" Presumably a person who is a very good artist would be able to say, "I'll show you", and would put a line on a piece of paper around that idea, and then he could show it to me. If the person was musically gifted, he could even make black marks on paper and call them "crochet rests" or notes on the stave of music. To me, they don't mean a thing, but I am assured by some people that they can read a score; and when they say that, they mean they can hear the noises. Incredible, isn't it? That is the sort of thing we have to deal with – facts which are incredible. That is the fascination of this job; if one can get through to a fact, it takes a lot of believing – no fiction can touch it.

As I say, it would be very much to my advantage if I could understand music, but the patient is restricted by having to talk to a person who has a limited command of articulate speech. So he has to do a lot of work to tell me what he knows – namely, where he was last night and what he saw.

Q: [*inaudible*]

Bion: From the point of view of the analyst, you have in front of you somebody whose anatomy and physiology can be quite important. You may think, "This patient looks ill", and if you think about it for a greater length of time you may be able to define in your own mind what you mean by "looking ill", what an "ill" person looks like. A good physician will say, "Ah, that patient has a cachectic flush", and then from that point he can interpret what that particular flush means. Physicians usually call these things "diagnoses", but in fact they are interpretations – interpretations of the information brought to them by their senses. What information is brought to your patients by *their* senses one doesn't know, but you can get an idea of what information is brought to you by *your* senses if those senses have a chance of seeing, hearing, smelling whatever it is that does present itself; and then you can try to transcend those senses to find their meaning, their origin.

Putting this very crudely: in an analytic situation there is the analyst, a patient and a third party who is watching – always. So there are three people anyhow; very often there are others, much more shadowy – relatives, husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, children. Those "objects" – I use the vague word deliberately – exert an influence. So I am aware of something I call "hearsay evidence", the evidence I hear said, and I rate that very low indeed. If I try to evaluate it, I could say that the evidence I get from my senses while the patient is with me is worth 99, and all the rest share the remaining 1 between them; it is of such a low order that it is hardly worth bothering with. I can hear all kinds of things the patient has heard about me, has been told or believes, but what I want to hear is something that is buried in all this noise.

Physicians and surgeons are quite used to considering the findings of the embryologists who think there are signs in the human body of vestiges of different kinds of life, like an amphibian stage. When it comes to the mind, I think it is something similar; what I want to notice, if possible, are the vestiges, the remnants that have succeeded in surviving in the mind of a particular person. Buried somewhere in all the noise that is brought to me by the senses of sight and hearing, and what the patient is saying, including masses and masses of theories of medicine, psychoanalysis, painting, music, there is a vestige of something that is still operative. So if the patient actually turns up and there are two people in the same room at the same time, then you have a chance of seeing what may be these very faint signs. And perhaps, after a time, they will begin to fall together and form a pattern, and the pattern itself will form in such a way that you may be able to translate the impression that you get into articulate speech. It is complicated because we would like at the same time to be able to say something the patient could understand – and that is very difficult. First of all, it is difficult to get clear what one understands oneself, because of having to fall back on a debased form of communication, so devalued that it is hard to sharpen up the words enough to give them some kind of meaning.

So while there are apparently only two bodies in the room, I think we have to go beyond that and detect this third – at least – detecting what *it* detects. The analyst is being analysed all the time by this third party. After a while, if you are fortunate, even the patient gets

this third party brought home to him enough for him to be aware of its existence.

Q: I would like you to expand on what you mean by "at least" a third party.

Bion: Freud says it is essential in an analysis to lay bare the Oedipal situation. There, he is falling back on a verbal transformation of a visual image of three parties. I don't think it is enough. People also talk about omniscience and omnipotence; when you do that, you have brought in still more parties. I don't think it is reasonable to give an interpretation unless you feel fairly convinced that *you*, at any rate, have evidence of the presence of this third party, and then fourth or fifth and so on.

Melanie Klein said that the infant splits up the object into fragments which are then evacuated; she described this as an "omnipotent phantasy". But there can be a situation in which the patient has got rid of, to the best of his ability, all the senses that are disagreeable or unpleasant. For my part, I feel that I have good reason to think that this process takes place even before birth; the patient could be said to have ideas of which he has *never been conscious*. Of course, that is hopelessly contradictory, but then I am having to use language when I'm awake – articulate language. I don't think that Freud, in talking about the interpretation of dreams, really considers the fact that the patient who has a dream had an experience in what I would consider a very different state of mind from that in which he is when he is awake. Therefore, the story that the patient tells you, consciously, is *his* version of what happened last night, but he doesn't really know. I think the theory of the conscious and unconscious – which is extremely useful and, like all these things, becomes a bit of a pest after a time because it gets in the way of being able to see other things that one doesn't know – stands in the way of one's own ignorance, so that there is very little chance of investigating this realm of ideas that have never been conscious and this state of mind that is not available when a person is talking to you with all his wits about him in broad daylight, and you are listening to him with all your wits about you. There is a difficulty in our being able to penetrate through to our own knowledge and experience of what is taking place, because of this kind of diaphragm, this caesura, we can't get past but which makes available impressions not usually available to us when we are fully

conscious and wide awake. That is another reason why I think there is a lot to be said for considering what I have previously called beta- and alpha-elements, but those are not psychological, because I keep them for something I don't know and never will know; I am assuming some kind of physical counterpart. But when it does become conscious, then I think it becomes a somewhat fanciful, theoretical construct – speculative imagination, speculative reasons.

Q: Is the germ of an idea rooted in the patient, in the analyst or in the relationship?

Bion: It is in the relationship, but I think it is very unsatisfactory to speak of it as the transference and countertransference because although they are useful theories they become obstructive. There is something that rapidly comes to exist when there are two people in the room – one of them wanting to be analysed and the other wanting to be an analyst. So the germ of an idea really belongs to both. Of course, it is tempting to say that even in physiological sex this should be true of the germination of a child. If the two people were two minds coming together – not just two physiological objects, male and female, having intercourse – then I think it is quite a different matter. Something different is born, literally and metaphorically, from what is born when it is just a question of two bodies coming together – a penis and a vagina. In the analysis, where there is not usually physical contact, something analogous to that takes place; ideas are born if they are given a chance. I have tried to tell people that no matter how difficult, how awkward, how obstructive your patient happens to be, there is one thing it is as well to realize, because as you realize it, it becomes more and more useful – that the best collaborator you are ever likely to get is not your supervisor, or your teacher, or whoever you go to for a second opinion, but your patient: you are going to get your real cooperation from this person who appears to be so hostile, so negative, so uncooperative. It is easy to be flooded with all this abuse and hostility, so much information that you cannot get beyond it. Conversely, particularly if you are tired, you get a rush of theories to the head; you reach a point where, while it sounds like articulate speech, it is in fact noise, jargon. It is not really fair to expect the patient to be able to unearth the meaning of the floods of psychoanalytic theories to which he is being subjected. It certainly is a collaboration between the two, and there is something fascinating

about the analytic intercourse; between the two of them, they do seem to give birth to an idea, and possibly, if you are used to it, you can turn it into an interpretation or a verbal construction of some sort. Patients get better and better at it until, if the pair are fortunate, the analysis becomes redundant, unnecessary, and they can part and go their own ways.

I haven't had the experience of analysing somebody who has become a composer, but I see no reason why a patient should not find that he is, in fact, capable of being a composer or a painter. Those are things that might come about if the person concerned allows his ideas to germinate in the way they would. Unfortunately it is much more difficult than it sounds; it is extraordinary how much one has an itch to want the patient to say it in his own words. But it may not be his method of communication anyway – he ought to be learning to draw or paint or compose music. That is what makes the actual practice of analysis difficult: you are trying to listen and observe, but you may be observing it in the wrong spot. If you do that, you don't observe where the germ is germinating in the patient because your mind is focused in the wrong direction.

Q: How would you recognize this process of the germination of an idea, the characteristics of it as distinct from the "noise" you are confronted with? Could you describe how you get a sense that that is happening?

Bion: I think it is similar to binocular vision; there is a point of focus at which the vision unites with one's own mind. How that appears from one's own conscious view of the situation is difficult to say. You can begin to feel, "I think I know what he means", and after a time it grows and grows, and you get more and more sure that you are right in thinking that you know what he means, and then you can give your interpretation. That is putting it, as near as I can, into verbal communication when one is quite conscious. Freud talks about being in a state of "relaxed attention". I certainly think that is right, but I think it also implies forgetting these various theories, preconceptions and hopes so that there will be a chance of the point of focus declaring itself.

In your practice you will find yourself under pressure. You say whatever you have to say, and then there is an entirely new situation.

You don't really know what is going on because it *is* an entirely new situation, things will not be the same. It is likely enough that the patient will say, "Why don't you *say* something?" Or if not the patient, the relatives – "Why don't you *do* something?" So you are always under pressure prematurely and precociously to produce your idea. Poor little thing! Pull it up by the roots and have a look at it – it hasn't got a chance. So you have to act as a sort of parent to the idea – protect it and give it a chance to grow in spite of these pressures; you have to be able to tolerate this state of ignorance. Coming towards the week-end break or some other break, you are under pressure to produce some sort of result. I say, "some sort of result", but what you are really hankering after is spectacular cure, something you could really notice, that could really be shown.

Q: How do you distinguish between there being a third person or voice present and other things that come into your mind? How do you sense whether it is a genuine third voice that you *and* the patient can hear?

Bion: I think the sign that it is not right is the sense of anxiety, of being out of step, the feeling that things are not quite coming together. Tolstoy speaks of Prince Andrei saying, "That is sooth, accept it – that is sooth, accept it". There is a certain point, or at least uncertain point, at which one feels that something has clicked. But most of the time you have to tolerate this feeling of being out of phase, or its *not* being right. It is difficult to do because the moments of illumination are extremely rare and very few. I console myself with the thought that after one has seen a patient for, say, five or six years, there may possibly have been three moments of illumination – and three is enough. I am talking about proper illumination, the real thing. There are stacks and stacks of rational explanations, rationally accepted; there is no difficulty about that at all. There are millions of what one might call "correct" interpretations, but the illuminating situations are the ones that really do the work. If the two of them can stand it, they may last long enough for that to take place.

Q: Is the real growth of the mind something that is outside transference and countertransference, where memory and desire are in abeyance and the new idea, illumination, takes place in spite of the change of those?

Bion: They are not always discernible in the direct relationship, but in the course of time they are. That is where there is such a thing as the inheritance of acquired characteristics. For example, nothing will quite undo the fact that Shakespeare existed. Even now very few people can read a Shakespeare play; we are dependent on expert actors to interpret the phrases, and then we can say we have "seen" *Twelfth Night*, or *Julius Caesar*, or *Macbeth*. In the USA, the BBC productions are spoken of very highly indeed; they say the actors are so wonderful. Seeing a production of a Shakespeare play is a stirring experience, but in reading one we ought to be cautious and not get too misled by the fact that we can read – that is not good enough. It is like saying that because we can see black and white marks on paper, we can therefore read music – we can't. So people who aspire to read a Shakespeare play ought to go into a certain amount of training for the purpose, and to have certain minimum conditions in which to read it.

Shakespeare wrote, "The raven himself is hoarse that croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan under my battlements" [*Macbeth*, I.v]. There is only one word that is at all long – battlements. Put the lot together and you get a phrase that does something to you today. Where that comes from, I don't know – I don't know what happens to these things. I am reminded of Milton's reference to Alpheus: "Return Alpheus, the dread voice is past . . ." [*Lycidas*] and so on. There he is using the simile of the river that goes underground and then bobs up again somewhere else. Where it comes up and what effect it may have, goodness knows. A wild phrase of that sort goes through the ages. In a sense we could say, "Well, most people in this country talk English, so it's a perfectly understandable explanation." Yes, I don't want to deny the perfectly simple, straightforward, obvious explanation. What *we* are concerned with are the other explanations – even wild ones – which may be nearer the truth. That would help to explain why this country could never be the same again after it had had a Shakespeare.

The point is much the same with regard to the individual. You are asked, "Who is that fellow?" You can't remember his name, nor can the person you are talking to. Then a bit later, or at another time, you find you know the name perfectly well. Ideas also track their course through the mind and the personality in this way and are very difficult to trace. These ideas that have never been conscious do seem to be floating around and do break through; they come up much

later when the embryo or foetus is actually a sophisticated person. So it is difficult to keep track of even one's own ideas. I am sure that everyone is familiar with the situation in which you are pursuing a certain train of thought and you get derailed, or "derouted", by some upheaval – you "lose your train of thought" because there is an emergence of some obstruction that prevents you from proceeding along the same line.

Q: You made the point about the idea arising between the pair. What about the group – such as the one here?

Bion: There are great advantages in a group. Compared with a narrative story all in a straight line from A to Z, a group is like having the entire alphabet spread out. In short, between the lot of us we ought to be able to mobilize or germinate an idea that would be difficult for any single individual to produce. For that reason there is a lot to be said for universities, institutions like this one, for example, although it is bound to be clumsy because we have to place them geographically – we have to say, "Meet at the Tavistock Centre", and in this way it is dependent on a geographical distribution. But the more widespread the actual members of a group can be, the greater the number of bases for thought there are. This is why I was so impressed when Rickman told me about the private soldier he met at York station who said that the experience at Northfield – the Northfield Experiment when Rickman and I were there – made him realize what a university was. I have often felt that that man, who had had no chance of education after the age of fourteen, knew what a university was, while I very much doubt whether I or many of my contemporaries at Oxford knew that, even when we left. You could get a swimming blue, a rugger blue, a third in classics, a first in Greats, and so on through the list, but all those are irrelevant compared with having learnt what a university is. We had plenty of mental nourishment – so much, indeed, that I think the main point escaped us.

Q: What exactly had he learnt that made him think he knew what a university was?

Bion: I would be tempted to think that he hadn't learnt anything if he thought he had learnt it exactly. One of the difficulties about mathematics is that it gives the illusion of having learnt something "exactly". I think the Intuitionists are right in suggesting that there is

a lot more to be learnt. It is surprising that a man as acute as Keynes, who produced a workable idea about economics that has lasted pretty well up to the present time, should have branched out on writing about the theory of probability. *We* ought to have a great deal more to say about probability than anybody. When we are dealing with speculative reasons and speculative imagination, our only justification is to say, "This is not an exact science, it is not exactly anything." We could say that that introduces a certainty, but in this particular area where there simply is not enough evidence to amount to a fact, we resort to probability – it is *probable* that such-and-such will happen – and we have to be content with that. We have to leave the certainties to other people, and when they have got tired of the certainties they will want to know a bit more about the probabilities.

Q: I am reminded of an experience I had for many years with a patient who is exceedingly accurate. He is very skilled with machines but not with people. Today he surprised me with the following: his wife went to the greengrocer and asked how many pounds of potatoes she should buy for a dinner party of twelve people. The patient was so annoyed with her for asking this question because in his opinion it could never be answered. When he left the room at the end of the session he said, "I don't understand – you say it was fifty minutes, but I'm sure it was only ten."

Bion: We have become used to the idea that time and space can be measured; there are various instruments for doing this, from a watch to the 200-inch telescope on Mount Wilson, to a radio telescope with a very great baseline. These mechanical aids are very useful for our everyday purposes; how much they apply to the realms we are bordering on when we start doing analysis, I don't know. Melanie Klein said to me one day, "Even with the most profound analysis, we can only scratch the surface." She was about right. It may appear to be dogmatic if we try to express ourselves as precisely as possible, but it is not dogmatism we are wanting to express; we are simply trying to use the language with as much exactitude as we can, because it is easier for someone else to understand what is meant if we are fairly constant with the use of words – or, as I put it before, if the individual can learn our vocabulary.

Q: I have been thinking that when an experience is over – such as that of the soldier from Northfield, or that of analysis – we are left

with an idea, an experience to reflect on in tranquillity, free from the "noise" you talk about. Perhaps the times when the analyst is absent during the analysis – week-ends, holidays – are very important too. I would like to hear what you think about that.

Bion: That is the most important thing about it – the actual germination of the idea. But I think this also applies *in* the analysis. People seem to talk frequently as if they thought that the human character or the actual person behaves logically and rationally, but when you look into the matter that really means the person behaves in a way comprehensible to the analyst – which is quite possible if they obey the laws of ordinary social intercourse, the laws of grammar, the laws of articulate speech. But the fact that something is comprehensible to a mere human being is no justification for believing that therefore the universe in which we exist obeys the laws of human grammar, reason or logic. We are, after all, ephemeral creatures living on an insignificant spot of earth that circles (according to the astronomers) round an ordinary star occupying a somewhat peripheral position in a particular nebula. So the idea that the universe obeys the laws in such a way that it becomes comprehensible to us is sheer nonsense; it seems to me to be an expression of omnipotence or omniscience. This is why it is so striking that the astronomers have now discovered black holes in which the ordinary laws of physics and chemistry don't apply; they have discovered two holes – two, to our knowledge, in the entire universe.

Seminar 3

5 July 1977

Q: You referred yesterday to three points of illumination in an analysis of five years. I would like to ask what the analyst was doing in the meantime; I take it that he had to say something. The problem seems to be how to foster and not prevent the moment of illumination arriving.

Bion: The simplest answer is, the analyst is analysing. But, of course, that is simply a general statement. When it comes to the details of it, it is a much more difficult question to answer. I remember being asked a long time ago, "Does the analyst ever do anything except talk?" I said, "Yes, he remains silent." I think there would be a lot to be said for scoring it in the same way that music is scored, where you have "rests" marked. You can even mark the rate at which it is to be played. In fact, each communication requires the appropriate amount of time, otherwise illumination cannot take place anyway.

Take a book that I found extremely illuminating – Matte Blanco's *The Unconscious as Infinite Sets* (1975). It is a tough book to read; in fact, when you first take a look at it you think, "I haven't got time to read this kind of thing", because it is perfectly obvious that either it is an outflowing of more and more theory, or it really has a meaning, in which case one has to spend a great deal of time reading it. To give people an idea of the time required for reading a particular book, it would be helpful to indicate, for example, "120 pages an hour", or, "9 pages an hour".

The illumination, as I have called it, is a very rare event, but it is built up in the time spent beforehand that extends far beyond the areas of any analytic experience. Some people know a good deal about life already, and then they are in a position to understand.

When I went into the army in the First World War, I struggled to learn drill and all that stuff, and I really thought I was a soldier by the time I had been gazetted as an officer. I discovered I didn't know the first thing about it, and the more I saw of action the more obvious it became to me that I knew very little about it indeed – and didn't at the end of it. I was jolly lucky to get out without having got killed through sheer ignorance.

So this whole matter of what goes on in the meantime requires a lot of discussion – much more than is possible here in three days. I hope to add a little more each time I talk to you. But by all means ask the question again; go on asking it. I am reminded of the quotation from Blanchot, told me by André Green: "*La réponse est le malheur de la question*" (which I translated, and he agreed with it, as "The answer is the disease, or misfortune, of the question"). [See also Seminar 1.] In other words, *that* is what kills curiosity. When you have the question answered, that's the end of your curiosity if it is allowed to happen too often. Unfortunately the whole of childhood is taken up by having questions answered – you learn quite early definitions like, "children should be seen and not heard", and are intelligent enough to learn early on to keep your mouth shut because of what you might get put into it if you open it.

Although it is easy to give a kind of mental answer like so many psychoanalytic interpretations, in fact it is much more difficult to say that there really does seem to be a sort of two-way traffic even with regard to thought. So the sort of mental nourishment to which one is subjected from an early age, and which one is very eager to lap up, then builds up a barricade against any sort of illumination whatever – unless, of course, you happen to be one of these pernicious creatures like me. I got a reputation even by the time I was eight as a joke because I was always asking so many questions; I had the answer pushed at me by what happened to the Elephant's Child who asked the crocodile questions [Rudyard Kipling, "The Elephant's Child"].

Q: I am wondering what you would do if an adult patient brought you some paintings rather than trying to use verbal communication to express his feelings.

Bion: I would certainly do my best to look at them and be told anything about them that the patient could possibly tell me. It is a form of communication, and one needs to be able to listen to all that one

is told, even when it happens to be a silent communication – even the "rests" should be listened to. When somebody has drawn a line around his communication, it is very useful to be able to look at it in such a way that one gathers from it what is meant. Let me exaggerate that: suppose you have a chance of looking at Leonardo's sketch of the Virgin Mary and the Infant John. An extremely gifted man is able "to see and tell of things invisible to mortal sight" [Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. III]. This happens over and over again with religious pictures you can see at any time when you go into the National Gallery; the painter has seen something with the utmost vividness and has been able to transform it into a communication with oil, pigment and canvas.

If you were to show a dog a picture of a rabbit, after he had sniffed at it and found he couldn't eat it, he wouldn't be in any way interested. But show a dog a movie of a rabbit, and then he will get really excited – he sees the thing moving and wants to chase it; he translates what he sees into action. I can't show my patients movies; I have to resort to verbal communication, sometimes a verbal counterpart of a pictorial image, as I have just done with regard to this idea of the dog chasing the movie of a rabbit. That is an attempt, verbally, to describe a visual scene; it is typical of the kind of transformation one has to make.

Considering our meeting here: there must be a great many thoughts that we cannot see or that may not be expressed. But as far as all of us are concerned, it is useful if we can imagine that we can keep our minds receptive. I am thinking particularly of these wild ideas and stray thoughts that I consider to be floating around the place in search of a thinker. But, of course, it means that we have to be prepared to be receptive to the thought or idea, whatever form it takes and however wild it may be. I am not advocating what used to be known as "wild analysis"; I hope to come to that point again sometime.

Valéry wrote: it is no good thinking that the poet is somebody who writes a poem in a night of delirium, a drunken stupor, a night of fever; the poet is the cold thinker, almost a mathematician, at the service of an affine dreamer ["*Ce n'est plus le délirant échevelé, celui qui écrit tout un poème dans une nuit de fièvre, c'est un froid savant, presque un algébriste, au service d'un rêveur affiné*" – Paul Ambroise Valéry (1871–1945)]. That is, this person, however cold, however much of the abstract thinker, has to be *at the service of* the dreamer.

Dreams do not obey the theories of Freud or anyone else. There are lots of them; there have been plenty of theories about dreams in the history of the human race. So we should not be too narrow-minded to a point at which we don't even admit the right of the dream to exist – dream in any sense of the word, literally or metaphorically. And if we want to be geometrical, then at least it should be an affine geometry – something that has an affinity with the dream.

When a patient. tells you that he doesn't dream, the really important question is, "Well, what *do* you do then?" He certainly does something, and if he says he slept soundly, it sounds very convincing, doesn't it? But how does he know he slept soundly? Who was awake? Or what was awake? Where did this idea of "sleeping soundly" come from? If it doesn't come from the patient, does it come from the analyst? After all, there are two people in the room in a psychoanalysis. Here we haven't two people; it is like having the whole of one person at all ages and at all times spread out in one room at one time.

I mention this particular point because I know that some people are interested in groups, but I wasn't thinking of that particularly; I was thinking of it as a way of considering a matter that puzzles me very much indeed. Where do these ideas come from when there are two people together in the room? There are plenty of theories about it – transference, countertransference – but I am not at all sure that the very usefulness of those theories hasn't indeed made them redundant, and that the whole subject can be opened up with far wider boundaries than would appear to be the case if one stuck religiously, dogmatically, in a bigoted frame of mind to the actual boundaries that are already laid down – supposedly by Freud, but not all. It is one of these situations that start as the possibility of freeing the mind of its chattels, but very rapidly become a shell, an exoskeleton. And then it is difficult for any sort of development to take place unless room has been left in the skeleton for the further development of the creature inside.

We are perpetually dealing with this difficulty. As we try to express or formulate our findings – as I am trying to do here – so we also excrete a kind of shell around them, a layer of knowledge that we can neither penetrate nor break out of. And very soon we get to the point of thinking, "Well, I don't want somebody to start arguing with me, because they may say something and I shall have to think again." It is much nicer to feel that we are establishing a kind of authority that

can't be questioned and then is an impenetrable shell inside which we lie snugly and simply deteriorate.

Q: I would like to ask a question concerning O. I can understand that we can never know the O but can only become O. What kind of experience is that for the analyst or for the patient at the moment of illumination?

Bion: I find it useful to suppose that there is something I don't know but would like to talk about; so I can represent it by an O, or a zero, or a nought, as a sort of place where something is, but that I am very unlikely ever to get to understanding. I can only go on from such knowledge as I have acquired and such capacity for gathering further knowledge that I have retained. To that extent, at any rate, I think one is a prisoner of the information one's senses bring – sense of touch, sight, hearing and so on. I don't think, though, that it is a good thing to suppose that there is nothing except what is open to our senses – that seems to me to verge on the ridiculous. I cannot imagine supposing that we, as human animals, have really reached the ultimate in knowledge or experience, or even development. It is possible that we have; it is possible that our simian ancestry is much too powerful for us, our simian capacity for learning tricks far exceeds our capacity for acquiring wisdom.

I would like to remind you of a quotation from Ecclesiasticus [38.24]: "Wisdom cometh to the learned man through opportunity for leisure." [Revised Standard (Ecumenical) Edition: "The wisdom of the scribe depends on the opportunity of leisure; and he who has little business may become wise."] I think the version in the New English Bible ["A scholar's wisdom comes of ample leisure; if a man is to be wise he must be relieved of other tasks"] is better; it makes it clearer. The person has to have undergone the discipline required for the acquiring of knowledge; *after* that, there is the possibility of wisdom. But even that is dependent on the opportunity for leisure. So there is everything to be said for making provision for leisure in which these wild ideas, these stupid ideas, these idiotic ideas can have a chance of germination, however much you may be persuaded that the result would be the birth of a monster. Most people are convinced that if they were to allow their minds to be free, they would say something really monstrous. It would be quite wrong to say, "No, no, that's not

possible; it's bound to be something *worse"*, because I don't think so. After all, the Nuremberg Rallies were very remarkable pieces of organization and achievement; there is no question whatsoever about their being highly intelligent people. Whether they were wise or not is another matter. I wonder if there is any other way of finding out except by opposing them – "Take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them" [*Hamlet*, III.i].

In the *Bhagavad Gita* there is a description of a debate between Krishna and Arjuna. Arjuna throws down his arms and says he will not fight; facing the enemy which includes many of his friends, many of the people he loves and admires, he is not going to fight them. Long before I even knew of the existence of the *Bhagavad Gita*, I remember having a debate with three of my friends before battle. The question was, should we or should we not fight? Should we go to our commanding officer and say we were quitting, it was against our consciences? Out of the four of us, I was the only survivor in that action; I never knew a battle in which out of any three people one was not dead at the end of the action. It is extraordinary to think that that was the sort of price that had to be paid if one really had to "take arms". Or to put it another way, when it is a matter of the extremely efficient organization of the Nuremberg Rallies and what seemed to be the incredibly inept organization of the British army, navy and air force, I haven't the slightest doubt of the superiority of the organization of the Nuremberg Rallies or of the Prussian Guard and so on. It seems to me to be a matter of the differentiation between good and evil. I wonder how that matter is ever to be settled unless opposition is taken.

The advantage of talking about a matter of this kind is that it is possible to imagine that one could track an idea through a community in the way that a good doctor can be aware of the ramifications of the lymphatic system in order to detect the spread of tubercular disease. In the same way it might be possible to track the course of an idea in a group to find out how thoughts or ideas spread through a community.

With regard to these wild ideas – if one dares to harbour them – after a time something happens to them and they can emerge in such a way that you can give them a name like "speculative imagination", or "speculative reason"; you can put a tag on the thing. Or

you can say that you feel "anxious" or "frightened" or "terrified" – a few simple words used as labels to tag on to a particular sensation or idea that you get.

Then again, you can comprehend it pictorially: "Return Alpheus, the dread voice is past that shrunk thy streams. . . ." [See Seminar 2.] Milton is describing the way in which the river flows underground and then bobs up again somewhere else; it becomes famous as being the same river that re-appears in extraordinarily different places.

Unfortunately we are educated so that we think we have read or been taught poems like "Lycidas". But once we think that, there is no chance of observing the astonishing performance of that Cambridge undergraduate who was able to put these thoughts and ideas that had emerged in him into such verbal form that we can even quote it now over three hundred years later. When you see today's patient tomorrow, who are you seeing? What are you in contact with? When or where or how was it born?

Q: Would you be prepared to say why a result of speculative reasoning or imagining sometimes seems to be ambiguous and sometimes confused?

Bion: It depends partly on the answer and partly on who or what hears it. There is always this problem of the formulation of the statement, however it is done – whether by a painting or a piece of music or by articulate speech. There is also the problem of the receptor and whether that receptor is sufficiently mature to be able to tolerate information that is brought. For example, "*Les espaces infinis m'effraie*" [Pascal, *Pensées*, iii.206: "*Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie*"]. That statement very clearly expressed the terrifying nature of being aware of astronomical space. Because of the limitations of our ability to see, we don't much mind about astronomical space at the present time. We *do* get a bit sensitive and restive if the space to which attention is drawn happens to be the space that we ourselves occupy; we are already in possession of it, and we don't want to be disturbed by the invasion of forces or thoughts from somewhere else – either the past, the future or the present. There is always this tendency to build up a defensive mechanism so that our own system of architectonics will remain intact and cannot be invaded. So a shell develops like the dinosaur's armour that becomes so heavy it can't walk. Its

armour appears to be a successful response against the stegosaurus, but between the two of them they end up by being extinct – unless, of course, we still have our mental dinosaurs.

To return to the problem of where ideas get to as they track their way, like Alpheus, unseen, unheard, unobserved: are we not sufficiently trained? Or haven't we the skill to invent a counterpart of the electron microscope and have to fall back on such senses and commonsense as we have because there is no apparatus? Even when we do have the apparatus that could make us more perceptive, once again we wrap the apparatus around ourselves. So when a patient goes for a consultation, the doctor says, "Right – X-ray please, electrocardiogram, blood count" and so forth, and off to the path lab they go. So we get to a stage in which the "answer" rests in the hands of a computer: shove in the test results and out pops the diagnosis. If that goes on long enough, with a bit of luck we shall not need minds at all; there will be no more trouble. "*La réponse est le malheur de la question*" – that's what will kill curiosity in the end. It is so harassing to hear, "Yes, I know. Yes, I know. Yes, I know" over and over and over again. It is a nervous tic, like "I mean to say" or "You know". It's not the unconscious; it's a sort of modern version of the unconscious, a kind of way of doing without an unconscious by having such an apparatus of mental bricks and mortar that you can build up this wall all the time – "Yes, I know", "You know", "I mean to say". You can go on like that for ever because you just don't have to think, And if you are the analyst trying to say something to the patient, you've got your work cut out.

Widening the view a bit: "The last man through bolt the Menin Gate" – there was no Menin Gate. Or, "Build the wall up with our English dead" – another way of putting it. So you can keep a good supply of dead thoughts and dead phrases for blocking the holes, for preserving one's small stock of knowledge undisturbed.

With regard to the work of the astronomers, suppose we are being affected now by waves set up by the explosion of the Crab Nebula in 1054. If that sort of thing is said, one day astronomers will become extremely unpopular people because they will upset and frighten us. At present it is only doctors, psychoanalysts and suchlike who upset people by saying, "I think you need an operation", or "I think you might try analysis".

Q: I am increasingly aware that although you invited us to entertain wild thoughts, the response of people in the room has been very tame in the way that questions are phrased.

Bion: It is very difficult to give expression to the wild idea. If people can possibly bear to have a wild idea and allow it to germinate, then they might be able to put it into a form that made it more communicable. In *Finnegan's Wake* Joyce says that you would have to spend your life reading it to acquire the language or the capacity to understand it. I don't think anybody is likely to do that. But then you get this curious effect: perhaps in another fifty years people will be able to read *Finnegan's Wake*; what has happened to the wild ideas that are triggered but not expressed, we cannot tell. But they *are* communicated and you do get this extraordinary effect that, if it were purely physical, could be expressed by the laws of Mendelian inheritance. But nobody that I know of has expressed the laws of the inheritance of acquired knowledge, and yet I think it takes place.

The advantage of the point you have mentioned is that in a group of this kind, maybe we could see the sort of thing that you describe, but also see the way in which an idea tracks through the community, and from that regard it as a sort of model that gives us some idea of how an idea tracks through the mind of the individual, using this very small community which is the totality of the thoughts, ideas and feelings that appear to be bounded by the physical integument of the body.

[*No more of this seminar recorded; approximately one hour missing.*]

Seminar 4

3 July 1978

Matti Harris: I don't think I need to introduce Doctor Bion to most of you here. We are immensely privileged and delighted that he is able to continue his series of talks he gives around this time every year, giving us the opportunity to share his on-going thinking and development – in so far as we are able. I think he would like me to emphasize again that he is utterly willing, and even eager, to be interrupted at any moment by any questions however "wild" they may be (as some people felt theirs were last time). Those of you who have had this experience will know that you will always get an unexpected answer which may seem extremely enigmatic, but afterwards may be very illuminating – and sometimes incredibly obvious.

Bion: The problem that seems to me to be extremely important and, I think, more important every day, is one of observation. I get so sick and tired of hearing about the various different schools of psychoanalysis and their great superiority to the other one – whichever it is. The possibility of arguing about their various merits is simply endless – as long as you don't anchor any of it to facts. I don't know of any scientific work that is not based on observation; it is a great comfort, because if you can base it on observation, then you have something to go on that is as near to fact as you are likely to get in this extraordinary subject.

If an individual finds that he cannot see, then the chances are that he will use a stick that he waves about, prods the ground, and seems to rely upon it to give him information. He learns how to use it and appears to be able to diagnose or interpret what he gets from striking other objects or feeling that the ground is soft or sandy.

What kind of stick or instrument do we use when we are concerned with what is supposed to be the human mind in order to supply us with facts we might be able to interpret? Psychoanalysis is alleged to be one of them. Of course I went through the considerable training courses both in the old Tavistock and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, learning more and more theories I understood one needed to know. But long after I had completed my training course and had begun to recover from that traumatic experience, I really thought I began to get an impression of what it was all about. I don't think I am yet satisfied as to what that impression was or how I gathered it – that is one reason why I would like to continue debating the matter here. You may be able to throw some light on the subject of what it is that we are observing.

Q: You used the word "mind" just now. In some of your books you prefer to use "personality". I am very interested in that distinction.

Bion: It isn't really a distinction; it is due to the fact that I don't know what to call the "thing". Sometimes I call it the "personality", sometimes the "character". Freud talked about an "ego", an "id", a "superego"; we hear of "soul", "supersoul", "spirit". The French have a word, "*sortilège*"; I don't know how to translate it, but it comes very close to it. "How to translate it?" That is the trouble. I have no doubt about its existence, but I cannot think of a suitable term, even falling back on such English as I know. I'm glad you asked the question because it goes straight to the root of the matter.

How are we to get anywhere whatever in the direction of what has so far been called a "scientific view"? Freud seemed to think that he was making a scientific approach to this question of human personality. There is a great build-up of psychoanalytic literature, and a great build-up of argumentation about these various theories. But the theories continue to be elaborated, and there continue to be people who think they have had an experience they would like to communicate. Melanie Klein was one of them; Abraham another; Jung, Stekel, and many more. But suppose someone thought that music might be a way of exploring – that is one human activity that plays a great part; philosophy is another; mathematics another.

I had occasion not so long ago to talk to some rather distressed parents and a very distressed teacher; the child in question could not learn mathematics. There didn't seem to be much the matter with the

child – quite intelligent, but an absolute b.f. when it came to mathematics. Very puzzling: "2 and 2 makes 4"; he could learn that by heart one day but had forgotten it the next. I asked the teacher, "You must be able to hear what he says about this." "Yes." "So, can you tell me what he says 2 and 2 *does* make? Obviously it doesn't make 4 – that is something he has picked up from you and his school. But even so, he cannot grasp what it means, and forgets it." It turned out that the teacher didn't know what 2 and 2 meant to the child, so I said, "You had better listen to this boy doing mathematics and find out what *his* mathematics are, and what 2 and 2 does add up to." Then one could fall back on a basic fund of knowledge; I have forgotten what it was like to be asked what 2 and 2 make, or to divide 10 by 5, and so on, but this small boy (from what they told me, obviously intelligent) made extremely acute remarks. So there couldn't be anything wrong with his senses – what he hears, what he sees. The information his senses bring him doesn't seem to have anything wrong with it, any more than one could say that if a blind man trips up and falls over, there is something wrong with his stick.

Some people have difficulty in learning how to play the piano. Someone told me that he simply couldn't make head or tail of it; he did his exercises and so forth, but didn't really get anywhere. But later, when he had children of his own, he found that thanks to the piano exercises he was a first-rate wrist-wrestler. So the muscular development had paid off; you could at last see a very good reason for those early years of music lessons.

Not long after this the very same person began to feel rather pleased he had learnt the piano because he got pleasure out of the musical sounds he was able to make. So there was some kind of expansion, development, going on in his mind/character/personality; this curious facility for playing the piano was conveying something to him that had now begun to have a meaning.

It is something like that I feel about this matter of psychoanalysis and characters and personalities – even groups of people. For example, take us here: why or how has such a diverse mass of people come together at the same time and in the same place? Of course, that can be very easily explained – so easily that it is completely fallacious, just one of these bits of knowledge that are a frightful nuisance. Indeed, I feel that most people reach an age where they have so much knowledge that they can't penetrate through to the wisdom – it's a new kind

of forest that you can't see for the trees: you can't see the wisdom for the knowledge. It is peculiarly harassing to listen to someone like that; it comes over in this way: "yes, I know", "yes, I know", "yes, I mean to say", "but you know . . .", "what I mean is . . .", and so on ad infinitum. Rather more harassing, because it appears to be slightly more meaningful, is the command of masses of psychoanalytic theory. The noise that those theories make is so great that you can hardly hear yourself think. I find it is then useful to be able to shut off one's awareness of what is going on so as to cut down the turmoil enough for some relevant fact to get through, something we could call "evidence" on which to base our judgement.

The great advantage of individual analysis is that you have the collaboration, if you are lucky, of the one person who really knows – the patient. I think it is fairly easy to see that it is likely that the patient knows what he feels, and knows what it feels like to have a particular feeling. For example, he is feeling "terrible", or "anxious". I don't find that very illuminating, but I feel the impulse to take it seriously because it seems to me that it is the sort of verbal formulation of what another person might say – he has a pain in his hand and "it hurts". If you are carrying out a physical examination, you say, "Where is this pain?" Or the patient shows you the place in his hand where it hurts, and you can continue your examination from there.

The kind of people I am talking about don't tell you "it hurts"; they say they are anxious or frightened. I am convinced that that is simply an approximation, an attempt to verbalize something not yet verbalized; that patient is suffering from pain.

Falling back on ordinary speech, as one has to, I have to say, "mental pain". I think it is a rotten expression, but it's the best I can do. It may get a bit clearer later on as to why I don't think it is good enough.

If the person in question is a painter, then he employs various shades of colour that are much more subtle. In fact, what he is doing is really exploiting light – and that is very near to becoming something that can be scientifically expressed in angstrom units and so forth. We are not so lucky as to have anything so precise – we have to put up with words like "anxious", "terrible", "frightened" or sometimes, "I had a terrible night last night. As a matter of fact we had a very good evening indeed." This last example is most effective because you are invited to pay no attention whatsoever to the fact that the patient said

he had a terrible feeling. But when the patient enters the consulting-room, I regard myself as fortunate because he is so cooperative as to have taken the trouble to get there and present himself, and I am lucky enough to have a chance to observe this person who is not me.

The communication, whether it is what I can see or hear, presents me with what I now think of as "mental debris" – all this stuff that has accumulated between the time of birth and that particular morning; the stuff learnt in school, from parents, from the senses. I am not sure about this matter of when we were "born": I have no idea when the optic and auditory pits become functional; I have never heard anyone offer suggestions about that, but clearly, at some stage, there is a development taking place that makes available to the embryo or foetus what one day we could call "sensations", feelings, thoughts, ideas. Whether it is pressure of the amniotic fluid on the optic pits, or waves that are produced, I don't know. But I can see that in this sense the debris I am talking about can be a very considerable collection.

I can watch the patient, see him lie right on the edge of the couch, and wonder why on earth he does that. Why not lie comfortably in the middle of it? Why doesn't he say anything? Or why does he say, "yes, I know, yes, I know", ad infinitum? Why does he say he has no imagination, has dreams, or has no dreams? – and so on and on . . . I have to observe *all* of it just on the off-chance that somewhere amongst all this debris there is a scrap of information that is important.

I'm sorry not to be more precise than that – all I can say is that I still feel the need to be aware of this debris, not to allow myself to miss the chance of getting information in the hope that in my sieve-like mind I will catch up here and there with a piece of knowledge that is quite useful. Doing this sort of work fairly continuously and for a long time, perhaps one gets a bit more sensitive to these bits of significant debris.

I find the prospect of the patient coming to me for ten years, fifteen years, twenty years, somewhat unappealing – especially when he seems to be perfectly satisfied with the experience and the life he is leading but that appear to me to be disastrous. And yet, so much of medical practice – not just psychoanalytic but all the practice intended to be helpful to the human being – seems to me to lack discrimination, as if we had no way of being selective and don't know what to select. Unfortunately I think it is true. I have a better idea now, on the whole,

of what I am likely to select, and I have a pretty good idea, too, since that is the case, that I long to be able to say, "Thus far and no further: what I don't know isn't knowledge", simply getting to a point where my defences, my resistance to any further information, will protect me from having to start thinking all over again. I try to resist that; one way is by regarding the patient I see at that session as an entirely new one. That is not so very wild, because time has passed and people get older; the patient you see today is *not* the same as the one you saw yesterday; nor is the one who started speaking a sentence still the same as the one who finishes it. It is a rather painful business; I find it very hard to resist falling back on what I already know about the patient, resisting having to think afresh, having to tackle the situation as if it is an entirely new one to which I have to bring a fresh mind.

To sum up: we are presented with the debris, the vestiges of what was once a patient and what still could be analogous to blowing on the dying embers of a fire so that some spark communicates itself to others; the fire is built up again, although it appeared to be nothing but dead ash. Can we look at all this debris and detect in it some little spark of life?

[*Tape recorder sounds faulty – section missing*]

Bion: Why does Newton engage on what I gather is a mathematical activity and start talking about life? And why does he similarly seem to encroach on what would appear to be a theological investigation? Why does Descartes find himself defending a theological position? The explanation he gives is quite simple: he does not like what happened to Galileo, and he doesn't want to get into the same difficulty. But his argument is not at all a good defence of that statement – in fact, it isn't a defence at all. It is quite clear that he is not intimidated by what has happened to Galileo. Over and over again there is this curious business of an inquiry, an investigation, followed by the link-up with what appears to be a theological theory or idea.

Freud talks about the future of an illusion [1927c; see *Cogitations*, Volume XI, pp. 345, 348, 349]. I think it is quite an interesting speculation, but I would feel a bit happier if I knew which illusion, what future it is that one is investigating. Unfortunately, nowadays the collection of debris is very much increased by that of psychoanalysis. I don't think we hear quite so much about father-figures, but quite enough to get on with. Somewhere hidden amongst all this debris

you can get a glimpse of actual suffering. It is rather difficult for analysts because we get almost hardened to human suffering – like doctors or surgeons who become so used to hearing about anxiety and so forth that they forget that it hurts. So we have to beware thinking that we are hearing about the real thing when what we are really hearing is the remnant of psychoanalysis. We cannot discard it on the grounds that it is simply a remnant (for the reasons I have already given). Therefore, we have to go through it all, whatever we are feeling like, on the off-chance that buried somewhere in this stuff is something that matters. And that brings me to the question I asked at the beginning – namely, what is this personality, mind or character?

If we could narrow it down and say what it is, then we might know what we are investigating and why we spend so much time and effort on this occupation. Of course, there are plenty of reasons that can be very easily arrived at, but I still feel there is a *real* reason, although there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that we tend to follow . . . [*break in recording*] under the impression that it is real illumination – cure, a good time coming, heaven, hell and so forth. So the seductive paths – what Shakespeare calls "the primrose way [that leads] to the everlasting bonfire" [*Macbeth*, III.iii] – are plenty, very effective and perpetually seducing us, or urging us in the wrong direction. The idea of "right direction" is curiously robust: the Chinese call it the Tao. Nearly all races of people at one time or another have stated that there is a Way, a correct path. So that is also worth further investigation when you get a view of it, perhaps in a patient who actually comes to you showing signs of thinking that there is some dread path from which he or she has strayed. Whether we can get this same idea from a group of people, or even a nation, I don't know. At the present time, people wonder why this country is in such difficulties. It seems to me that there are various, somewhat obvious explanations, such as if a country fights two Great Wars in succession, and is the only country to fight throughout both, then it is sure to have to pay for it in some way or other afterwards. [See also Seminar 8.] It is typical of the kind of question that plagues us; in fact, curiosity itself is a bit of a nuisance because it doesn't let us rest; it always leads to wanting to know more about something of which we know nothing.

Q: [*inaudible*]

Bion: When we are awake I don't think we really know much about the state of mind in which we are when asleep. As a psychoanalyst I have been taught a good deal about the interpretation of dreams. The only thing I am not quite clear about is, what was the dream? Because when I am told that the patient has had a dream, it is told me by a person who is in an "awake" state of mind [see also Seminar 3]. I sometimes ask patients, "Where were you last night? What did you see? Where did you go?" I don't accept the answer that they didn't go anywhere, they simply went to bed and went to sleep. But I still think they went somewhere and saw something. It is possible that if the patient says he had a dream, it is a sort of vestige that is sufficiently robust still to be apparently available when he is awake. I find it very difficult to believe that the story he tells me is the current version of where he went and what he saw when he was in that other state of mind, partly because I have felt increasingly that there are occasions on which there is evidence of this state of mind when he was asleep. For example, the patient who lies on the extreme edge of the couch tells me that he dreamt he was sitting on the mantelpiece – some narrow ledge on which it would be impossible to sit. So there are these curious survivals into a state of mind when the person is awake, of events that occurred when he was asleep. At other times the patient appears to be awake and fully aware of much the same kind of circumstances as those of which I am aware in the consulting-room. As he goes on talking – it may be for as much as a month or so – I begin to feel there is a pattern about his behaviour that shows he is not experiencing the kind of events that I am experiencing. There are lots of words like "hallucinations", "delusions" and so on; they are very inadequate formulations because the experience I appear to be witnessing is much more subtle – so much so, indeed, that I couldn't very well give you a description of it.

I have had occasion to say to a patient, "You say that your paper on so-and-so has been rejected. I gather from what you say that it is a good paper. Why are you bothering about it being rejected? Surely, if it is a good description of an actual experience, people would be interested to hear of it." Some descriptions of the way that human beings behave seem to gather quite a lot of interest. If I were offered the choice of seeing how Shakespeare thought that human beings

behave, or the chance of hearing a psychoanalyst's description of how a human being behaves, I think I would get a much better impression from Shakespeare. What he says reminds me of people; it makes me think that the sort of person he is talking about could possibly behave just like that. But most scientific papers don't throw me in that way; I don't look forward with a vast and vivid interest to the next edition of a learned journal, because I don't think it is going to remind me at all of how human beings behave or, indeed, of how I or other people I see for myself behave.

There is something about a patient coming into your consulting-room that makes you feel that behaviour is *about* something. The patient can say he doesn't want to come – he has come because he was sent. When he says he has just been sent, you can feel the untruth of that statement. It is not only the evidence of his actual physical, bodily presence – there is something else about it. Related to it is an experience you can have when the patient is said to be very idealistic, idealizes the analyst, and it is perfectly obvious that he does. But what is "perfectly obvious" is of no importance; what is important is what is behind that. If the patient finds that the universe he lives in isn't good enough and he has imaginatively to construct a better one, then what matters is *why* he has to construct a better one. Is it just sheer cussedness on his part? Or is there actually something wrong with the universe that we occupy? These are profound questions that have bothered the human race throughout history. When you get a little bit of history coming into your consulting-room trying to idealize you or some other person or analyst, the important thing about that is the force or drive leading to that idealization. The fact that it surfaces in the form of idealization may be a characteristic, but what really matters is "it" – the "reality". There is something about this part of the experience that could be called "real" – it produces a different feeling from "unreal".

I don't want to appear to be criticizing or running down my colleagues, but I have recently become more and more convinced that psychiatrists and psychoanalysts don't believe in mental suffering, and they don't believe in any treatment of it. In fact, they are living in a very precarious frame of mind, trying hard to believe in psychoanalysis – an awful effort and a continuous strain. Fundamentally they never get to the point of feeling that the person who comes to the

consulting-room is actually suffering and that there is an approach to it that is on the right lines. Even psychoanalysis may be close enough to be on the right track, to be worth pursuing further. But not, "yes, I know".

It is a very curious thing indeed for an analyst with many years' experience to discover that his patient actually suffers pain. It opens up the questions: What are the dimensions of mental pain? Where does it hurt? Is it internal or external? Internal object or external object? All this is learnt so easily by intelligent people; a technical facility, very easily acquired, tends to produce a barrier against the real thing.

The experience of reality can be very unpleasant because it always carries with it the recognition of one's ignorance. You pick up a little bit of knowledge and wonder why you couldn't see it before, and what you are seeing now. So anything that you learn immediately makes you aware of the enormous area of the unknown and the incapacity to learn it.

Deflection from the path of learning is very seductive. You are likely to be misled because you are so pleased to be misled, with the result that even if you have a satisfactory experience you can doubt its validity. You can be pretty sure in any case that you would reach some satisfactory conclusion – the song the sirens sing is still audible to most of us; we are always invited to go off on some side issue as THE solution of all our troubles.

We are used to the difficulty of thinking clearly – a very feeble ability. Anybody who has the wit to arouse strong feelings can destroy your capacity to think clearly: if a patient threatens you with physical violence – either to himself or to you – it is very difficult to go on thinking clearly while going through that experience. The classical exaggeration of this is in war, where the fear for your actual existence can be so powerfully aroused that you cannot think clearly. In this respect a *real* soldier is different from an amateur, somebody who has not had a professional training or is not engaged in what is his natural profession. There is a great difference between that kind of person and one who is simply a temporary soldier.

Q: [*inaudible*]

Bion: I have great sympathy with the philosopher's aim to think clearly, and with his objection to anything that might endanger that

capacity. But I also have a great respect for facts – even those I don't know.

With regard to objections to psychoanalysis or Mrs Klein's theories and so forth, I don't mind very much about people who don't believe in those theories. For one thing, I don't expect to hear them expressed adequately. Any formulation of a theory is really a crystallization of it; it doesn't leave room for mental growth or development – but it also provokes it.

An analyst should leave room for the growth of ideas that are being germinated in the analytic experience, even though the germ of an idea is going to displace him and his theories. I don't take the objections very seriously because Kleinian theories bear a great resemblance to sin: everybody is against them, but everybody practises them in secret. The secret of practice has a way of going on spreading, and if it is capable of development, so much the better as far as we are concerned.

I do sometimes wonder if the human race has reached the end of the road: its capacity for thinking clearly is just not adequate for the job that has to be done. If the astronomers are approximately correct in thinking they have discovered these black holes, for example, in which the laws (as we call them) of physics and chemistry may not be applicable, then the question is whether we are capable of finding any way of thinking or dealing with those situations.

Q: [*inaudible*] . . . the question of whether psychoanalysis can be killed, or a thought, once it has found a thinker, can be annihilated either in the individual or in the group.

Bion: I think the individual can be annihilated; I don't see any particular reason for excluding the possibility that the human race could blow itself off the face of the earth, anyway. Technical ability has now become good enough to be able to produce really effective bombs. But I don't see how the truth (whatever it is) is going to be annihilated; I don't think it much matters whether we can grasp the truth or not. The laws of chemistry etcetera seem to me to be not of much higher status than the laws of grammar or English speech – very useful for purposes of verbal communication – but to suppose that the universe itself obeys the laws of English grammar seems to be entirely futile. And yet we very often behave as if there really were these laws that are something more than symptoms of our logical capacity.

The position of the formalist mathematicians, the logicians, is challenged by the Intuitionists – although what they say is very difficult for most of us to understand at all. But although we cannot understand it, or they may be wrong, they can be right in one respect – namely, that a purely logical construction does not go far enough, nor does an ability to *make* logical constructions, because the truth that has to be grasped can be far beyond our capacity.

However, the disposal of the human race is not really a matter of much concern; what does concern us is the extent to which we can live what remains of our capacity to exist in a manner that might be worth living. The capacity to think has so very few prizes to offer, in contrast to material possessions, that it is hard to get people to realize that there might be something to be said for thinking as being both enjoyable and useful.

Seminar 5

4 July 1978

[*Only a limited part of this seminar was recorded.*]

Bion: That mobilization is something outside the group, the mobilization of the people who concentrate on the body, trying to keep the mind in its proper place. The development of the mind has been a frightful nuisance and has caused an awful lot of trouble. I think we are still frightened of it. That is why we [*inaudible*] . . . to what I call "wild thoughts", and anyone who will give a home to those thoughts flying around looking for a lodging, looking for a thinker to think them.

Q: [*inaudible*] . . . brought together two different concepts of yours – one, the beta-element, and the other the protomental apparatus. I don't quite see how they wed with one another [*inaudible*] . . . only for evacuation, and now you seem to be talking about them as manifesting themselves in somatic phenomena, habits and things of that sort.

Bion: I invented the term with the idea that it could be vacant, a space "to let", as it were, that could be borrowed for purposes of clarifying something or another. But there are things that do seem to me to suggest this combination between the body and the mind. Why do the old anatomists call part of the brain the "rhinencephalon"? Why a nose brain? Why is a patient always complaining of a rhinitis? Psychosomatic? Soma-psychotic? Take your choice. "Pure and eloquent blood spoke in her cheekes, and so distinctly wrought, that one might almost say, her body thought" [Donne, "The Second Anniversary"].

Some of the later developments of Confucius or his followers seem to suggest a sort of physical approach to what we regard as

mental symptoms, mental diseases, and the suggestion seems to be of an athletic form of activity, as if they thought an approach had been made to these very primitive levels of mind via the body. When you think of this tendency, I think you will find with your own patients that sooner or later they have taken up dancing or gymnastics or eurythmics because of this need and urge to sweep athletic capacity into something that is so heavily concentrated in the direction of thought like psychoanalysis. Of course, it is very often done as a substitute for psychoanalysis, but not necessarily so – it may be a useful auxiliary.

Q: Bearing in mind the example you gave about the boy who could learn that 2 and 2 make 4 without understanding it [see Seminar 4], and the theoretical knowledge one can amass with internalizing it, converting it into wisdom, do you think it is inevitable that we have to go through a process of adding it on before we can reject the debris that isn't required? Is there any way round that? Do you have to amass it all before you can reject it and clear yourself?

Bion: I haven't found any other way. Although I have plenty of reasons to be aware of the defects of the analytic approach, I can't think of anything better. The defects of psychoanalysis are bound to be painfully obvious both to the analyst and the analysand if you are at all sensitive to what is going on, but I don't know of any way of avoiding that. There is even danger in the educational system of supposing there is a way in which pain can be avoided. I don't think there is any way of teaching people mathematics or the piano or violin in such a way that the pupil does not think, "Right – when I've learnt this damn thing I will never do it again – I will never voluntarily submit myself to a musical or mathematical experience." That's hopeless; I would like the educational procedure to be of such a kind that a person might feel that he had learnt the violin because he would like to go on learning it. Otherwise, you get a position where the extremely gifted musician has a breakdown and concentrates on teaching the instrument rather than concert performances, fundamentally because of the rebellion against his own capacity – the better player he is, the more hostile he feels to a capacity that makes him spend all his life as a musician – or even a teacher. So I think there is everything to be said for not exaggerating what is in any case a painful procedure; learning anything new seems to be very painful.

Q: Could you say a bit more about people's rebellion against their capacities, talents, feeling that they become enslaved . . .

Bion: I think it happens over things that are quite fundamental. For example, a child who is potentially maternal or paternal can be very alive to the fact that its mother or father is not treating a younger sibling wisely, but is quite unable to do better; if it is left in charge of the younger child, it does the job very badly. A person like that has to put up with many years of frustration before he or she has the chance to be a parent, and by that time they can hate anything whatever to do with what we nowadays call "sex", because they regard sex as having landed them in this trouble when they have sons and daughters. That seems to be against the very capacity to be maternal or paternal; it militates against the solution of the problem and contributes to the difficulty that arises in the course of any attempt to harmonize one's personality – how to get all the various impulses to live in peaceful harmony within oneself. The job of looking after that internal family is too much for the child. That is one reason why I think child analysis can be so extremely creative and can release these capacities in such a way that they can be harmonized.

Q: What is it that makes it possible to differentiate between "me" and "not-me" experiences?

Bion: I don't know – and I am not at all satisfied with the attempt to talk about a soul, a personality, a supersoul, an id, an ego, a superego and so on. Those terms mean very, very little to me, and I find little that corresponds to them in my analytic experience. In the Society of Jesus, there is this idea of the "arbitrium": it is something that decides, has an executive function and represents the community of one's own interests or one's conflicting interests.

Cancer is one of these diseases that have a great appeal because of this quality of undifferentiated, undisciplined greed; there is only one way in which they agree, and that is to devour the body on which they are parasitic. But there are plenty of cancers that are not physical and that will in time become easier to detect in the sort of mind that is extremely skilful at mobilizing all its abilities concerned with "taking", in contrast to the sort of love that is "giving". The "taking" person will metaphorically bleed a group of all its life; that group will gradually succumb because of the presence of that person who takes the very life out of it.

Seminar 6

5 July 1978

Bion: The difficulty in practice is this matter of scrutinizing what I have called conversationally – I would hate it to become a technical term – the debris. Perhaps what I mean by that may become clearer as I go on talking about it.

When the analysand comes into the room, is it possible to see the total situation, as it were, having denuded oneself as far as possible of one's preconceptions so that there is a chance of being aware of any facts that need to be observed? Although I am concerned fundamentally with talking to the patient, I am also concerned with the fact that he has a body and a mind. That division – body and mind – is convenient for conversational purposes, but it is a distortion of the facts because he is not "a body and a mind": I find it useful to think of a person as "your Self". But I would also like to make it clearer what I mean by "your Self" when I am wanting to stress either the somatic or the mental qualities.

Take this instance of the patient who appears to be perfectly fit and healthy, comes in, gets onto the couch and lies down. After a time you begin to notice that he hardly seems to disturb the covers on the couch; when he gets up and goes out, you don't have to smooth the covers – there has been hardly any movement. As you go on observing, a pattern begins to emerge (as Freud put it, quoting Charcot) and you notice that the patient lies precisely in exactly the same place. There is nothing remarkable about that, but when he lies in exactly the same place day after day, week after week, year after year, then I think you begin to be suspicious that he might just as well be lying on the edge of a precipice; from the amount of movement that he makes, he is lying in exactly the way that he might appear physically if he was in a cataleptic state.

It takes quite a long time before you see a point like that; it builds up over a period, and then you gradually see that there is something peculiar about it. The next thing you notice is that he says he has no dreams. In response to the question, "Where were you last night and what did you see?" he says, "You mean I had a dream?" Then what comes out is remarkably like a fact that you are acquainted with. Then you begin to think: this man is lying somewhere between what I am used to thinking of as the conscious and the unconscious; I think he is right – he doesn't dream. He is also right when he says he has no imagination. Whether he is telling me facts or whether he is telling me dreams – so-called – they are the same thing, a kind of mental counterpart of a cataleptic state. No wonder he makes no progress at all; the interpretations I give are based on ideas that some elements are conscious and some unconscious.

I had much the same sort of experience with another patient who was totally unfamiliar with, and apparently had no experience of, frustration – never been conscious of it, never been aware of it and therefore had no experience of it in the analytic sessions, never by any chance telling me what I might regard as a fact. I have no material to interpret, so I have to make a shift. I have to find a vertex from which these things will look different. So I begin to wonder what is wrong with this story: day after day this sort of behaviour, and apparently no progress at all and no objection to making no progress. It occurs to me that many of the interpretations I give could come over to the patient as being entirely obvious, as if I were simply repeating back to the patient what he has told me; the patient says, "Yesterday I went out and did some shopping", and I say, "Yes, yesterday you went out and did some shopping." So the question is, in what way is this story queer?

From that point of view, I can gradually shift onto a vertex from which it becomes clearer what the shape of this thing is. For example (this is something reported to me, not my experience), a patient had come for analysis for many years and then was admitted to hospital with an incurable cancer in the terminal stages. He asked to see the analyst and then blasted him for having completely failed to realize the seriousness of the condition he had always been talking about. Why did he want to see the analyst? Simply to have a chance of getting off his chest how much he hated the analysis, how much he hated the analyst and what a shocking piece of work he had done?

There is something very queer about this story. If it is true – and I don't doubt it – that this patient was in the terminal stages, you would think he would be concerned about how to spend such remaining hours or days, possibly weeks, of life in a way that was worth while. Why, then, does he actually ask to see the analyst simply to blast him in that way?

I suggested that the analyst should draw attention to this fact, because it seemed to me that this patient had never really dared to express the anger and frustration he felt; the nearest he had got to achieving that sense of freedom was with the analyst. It was no good expressing it to any of the hospital staff because they were concerned with telling the patient reassuring stories about the state of affairs and suggesting various forms of chemotherapy and so forth. I think this patient was longing for a chance of telling the analyst what he really felt and having the analyst speak the truth back again. The patient might have liked to hear just a faint dose of truth for once in a way before he died – a kind of last fling. That is what I mean by changing the vertex so as to see what was wrong with that story.

The analyst tried it out and was surprised and relieved to find that the patient began to talk of other things, including his dislike of the apparatus surrounding him – the apparatus that was intended to preserve his life but that went a very long way to making him extremely uncomfortable for such hours of life as he had left, and from a mental point of view was completely unconvincing. Nobody wants to be turned into a sort of nerve/muscle preparation to be kept alive simply in order to see the muscles twitch – and that is very nearly what was happening. The philosophical view behind it is that people need to have their lives preserved by whatever artificial means are available regardless of whether or not they want to go on living.

The patient who didn't tell me any facts at all didn't seem to lead any life whatever but was always telling me about somebody else and never experiencing frustration; he didn't have to because as the analyst I *did* feel frustrated. The explanation is so obvious that one feels a bit suspicious about it. I think it is a situation in which the patient is projecting part of himself into me so that I experience frustration but he does not. Nobody knows where that patient is – not even the patient. From that point of view, one could locate the frustration in the consulting-room if it was just frustration felt by oneself. But the

location of the frustration was, in fact, faulty. Falling into it, having that experience and being the person who is made in various ways to feel frustrated while the patient is free of it is indeed a mysterious situation. One feels that there should really be some facts to support it – what are ordinarily called facts – but what *I* ordinarily call facts weren't there.

I know of no way of investigating this except analysis and having this kind of experience in which one can locate the presenting symptom. In this instance, it was my frustration. After I noticed this, and after I noticed that nothing ever happened to this patient, I realized that all these people he mentioned were parts of his Self. The only evidence I had was my own feelings, but the problem was, how does one communicate this to the patient?

I ultimately gave, with some misgivings, the interpretation: "I think you are making me feel frustrated instead of you, so that you don't have any feelings of frustration." His immediate response to that was a burst of anger and hostility. I said, "When I spoke to you just now, you were not aware that I had spoken to you; you reacted exactly as if you felt I had blown words into you that you did not want." In this way we did make quite a bit of progress: it became increasingly clear that the analytic situation was not simply a conversation between two human beings; that is what it would sound like, and anybody could be forgiven for thinking that was all it was, but it wasn't. This is not an infant or child; this is not an omnipotent phantasy of the kind described by Melanie Klein. I think her description of it ought to be retained because it is valid, but there has to be a distinction between that and the experience I am trying to describe. It is very difficult to describe it to anybody who hasn't actually experienced it, but quite unmistakable if you are participating in it.

I have learnt from this sort of thing that the evidence made available to you by any patient who actually turns up is far and away of greater consequence than anything you hear said – hearsay evidence, evidence the patient gives you about other people. When I have interpreted these facts – that so-and-so had written a letter, descriptions about the relationship of this patient with somebody else, but nothing whatever about the patient – that was really falling for it and treating hearsay evidence as being of real importance. I suppose it is of real importance with patients who are less disturbed, or with whose lesser

degree of disturbance one is dealing, but I do put it in a very, very low category of analytic evidence.

Q: Is it possible that the situation you describe could be part of the unwanted self – the patient can't stand it coming back at him? Could it happen in cases where the patient feels there is nowhere to put that part safely outside and will then get attacked inside?

Bion: I think that does happen, but with some patients we have first to go through this stage I am describing. There is a peculiar reaction: the patient feels worse, and quite a number of people are drawn into the story wanting to interfere because he is so much worse. That is all outside the consulting-room, and I have no way of seeing how it is done. But I am sure that much the same methods are used as those I can see for myself in the consulting-room. In so far as the patient really does begin to take it back into himself, I think his resentment of analysis, of the analyst's interpretations, of himself for participating, does very much increase, and at that point so do the dangers of suicide. The patient is not so likely to make a physical assault on you – although I wouldn't rule it out, especially where lethal weapons are available – but he can make a lethal attack on himself. You can be called up: "Your patient is extremely ill; he hasn't eaten any food for at least five or six days." So you get an outbreak of what we used to call "acting-out". I am not quite sure now what I would describe as acting-out, partly because of the lack of any descriptive system of mental space. I *can* fall back on this when I am aware of the feeling of frustration contrasted with the patient who had none; there I can locate it and say, "Here it is." But when it stops and I am pursued with phone calls, interruptions and so on from elsewhere, then I cannot locate the places where it hurts. There still isn't a place where it hurts; the patient is not discommoded by having no food – the ambulance service might be if he fell down in the street and was found to be suffering from malnutrition, but in fact that hadn't happened.

I found out that the patient, who had been unable to get any employment for a long time, had found a job in a place where food was available and he *was* taking nourishment. It is very difficult to see why or how it was that everybody in the immediate surroundings had suddenly become aware of his malnutrition at the one time when he was getting food. I certainly think that there is a stage at which the resumption of the patient's murderous feelings is a dangerous one in

the analysis, one in which he is likely to kill himself in one way or another. This particular patient was not killing himself, but I see no reason to exclude the possibility.

Q: Is the difficulty of shifting yourself from feeling that the usual things are not happening in the consulting-room, to being able to see that unusual things *are* happening, what you call "catastrophic change"?

Bion: I think it is – yes. I am not sure in what way to approach this. One point is the difficulty of observing a change in analysis. I would now attribute it to the fact that I had not learnt that in analysis space has to be left for growth or development. I have to borrow these terms like "space has to be left" from ordinary language. I don't know what mental space is; I don't know any way of describing it, although I have given a paper[1] in which I talked about breaking up, breaking down, breaking through, breaking in, breaking out – take your choice. We hear people picking on one of them and complaining that they are "breaking down" or "breaking up". But the change of direction suggested when they begin to feel that they are "breaking through" is different.

Recently I had occasion to draw the attention of one or two people with analytic experience to the fact that they are beginning to believe that there really is such a thing as mental hurt. It is difficult to believe because verbal communications are carried out in a debased and devalued currency so that words like "anxiety", "embarrassment" and so on have very little meaning. Nobody really believes that they mean anything, but in the consulting-room "embarrassment" means mental pain. Sometimes you have to distinguish between different meanings of the same word; one that is commonly abused in this way is "sex", another is "love". "I had a lovely time", the patient says. You have to make up your mind as to whether the intonation with which it is said means that he had an experience in which he gained an enormous amount, or that at last he had an outlet to give something to somebody else. I think it is rare to find an analyst who believes both in mental pain and in the possibility of cure in the sense

[1][A talk given to members of The Study Centre for Organizational Leadership and Authority (SCOLA), Los Angeles, on 9 December 1975. The transcription, from an unknown source, of the tape-recording of the talk proved unsuitable for publication. *Ed.*]

of some sort of genuine relief. Of course, the worst of it is that the word "cure" is virtually meaningless; if it has any meaning, it usually refers to something nice or pleasurable – not the ability to be aware of the universe in which one lives. The change I refer to is the kind of development that is not gradual nor something that takes place all at once, but rather jerkily. "I *see*", says the patient, and sometimes you feel that he does – he *has* seen something. It is quite different from "Yes, I know". When it is that degree of exaggeration, it is very easy to detect, but most of the time it isn't easy to detect nor is it easy to distinguish between these various intonations. A musician might be in a better position to do that, particularly a singer. I think any musician could probably get nearer to detecting these minute differences in tone. When I say "minute", I really do mean something very, very small.

This idea of the Grid: a classification to sort out one's own ideas about the kind of communications being made is pretty gross. You would have to reformulate the Grid to suit yourself in accordance with you own experience. It is just a kind of preliminary suggestion. If you could turn the Grid edgeways on, then it would become nearer to being a grating; the space between these various categories would get smaller and smaller and smaller. [See *Bion in New York and São Paulo* (Volume VIII, p. 334).] So if you could imagine looking at anxiety/fear in that way, then the space gets narrower and narrower, becomes just a chink, and what is a gross difference between anxiety and fear, becomes a very tiny difference. It is these minute differences we have to detect. And now the observation becomes a matter of having a very fine ear to hear, probably reinforced by what you see. Those are two extremely primitive developments in terms of optic pits and auditory pits in embryonic development.

Taking the embryologists' gross description that the human embryo goes through this fish stage of existence, the amphibious stage and so on, you can see what a change there would be in the relative power of the embryo's – observation? perception? – I don't know what to call it because these words have to be borrowed from ordinary conscious speech and ordinary waking life. But a sense of smell becomes a long-range perception; a primitive creature like a shark is able to smell food from a very long distance in a watery medium. What the embryo can hear and see also changes its character

altogether; I haven't the faintest idea what to call it, but one day that person might turn up as a patient who was perpetually showing signs of something happening in the consulting-room without any explanation whatsoever. This sort of thing:

A. Well, what can I do for you?

P. But, doctor, I came here to find that out.

A. Yes, but I mean, what are you complaining of?

P. I thought you would tell me; I thought you would know what I was complaining of.

It becomes very clear after about the third question that you are on the wrong tack; it is no good pursuing that conversation any further.

What was that patient there for? Obviously you cannot know because you weren't there, but it would be surprising if it doesn't happen in your own consulting-room with one patient or another.

To take another example: I noticed after a long time – it took an awfully long time before I did notice it – that the patient was extremely sensitive to smell. I could detect this fairly easily; he arrived with all the essences of Arabia, and it seemed to be obvious that the smell he could not stand would be the one his untreated sense of smell could detect. After a time, such a patient begins to react at very short range; he is able to tell when he enters the room what is left over from the previous patient.

These same points apply to this matter of change in the emotional situation in the analysis. It is difficult when there is so much uproar of the past, of what you have seen in the patient before, so much evidence that you cannot detect the tiny changes until they have reached a striking proportion where the patient who couldn't work has started work (he may not have told you) and you are allowed to gather that by the smallest of possible hints, such as that he had difficulty in getting postage stamps. It is left to you to find out that he needed these stamps for a job he is doing – not just like that, but after several hours of work you can see it all adding up.

Q: Would the subtle signs that something is happening be in any way connected with the patient's fear of an unreceptive, rigid or hostile object that would object as soon as it began to feel that things were moving?

Bion: It certainly plays a big part, because these patients are not only improved but are probably sensitive in a way that most people are not. The result is that they can become painfully aware of the reality or hostility and envy. Whether they are able to stand finding out what sort of universe they live in will depend on how robust they are. I use the word "universe" to mean anything from their private and immediate contacts to the society of which they are members.

I would like to say a bit more about that from a rather different approach – namely "vogue", meaning by that a very powerful force. It is not recognized as that because usually these fashions – subsidiaries of the same thing – are extremely ephemeral. But vogue is not; it is a very powerful characteristic, one that carries with it a pressure to conform to the prevalent fashion. It may sometimes be delayed: the fashions of today won't become general for, say, another year, and then they become commonplace. Psychoanalysis was all the fashion at one time; psychoanalytic terms were bandied about with the greatest of freedom by people who usually didn't know what they meant and wouldn't undergo the long discipline required to find out.

In the same way, you find that you can become a fashion yourself – you are under extreme pressure to act or behave as if you were a person of importance when you know perfectly well that you are not, and you know perfectly well that that fashion will change in a matter of hours, days or weeks. It is the vogue, and for the time being you are under its pressure. It then becomes clear that the honours are showered upon you in the hope that you will not emerge from deep under to the abuse levelled against you.

The group therapist should always be aware that from time to time, as the fashion goes around the group, *he* becomes the fashion, and his ideas or what he says are treated as if they are important. If you are not aware of that, you are liable to believe it yourself; the intensity of feeling can always be made to rise to a point at which you, the target, cease to be able to think clearly. The most obvious example of this is in war, where you hope to intimidate your enemy so much that he doesn't think clearly. It is not quite so dramatic or obvious in full peace-time, but it is nevertheless still there.

The big component in this is what I call vogue, the basic thing behind fashion, fashions in ideas. It is against that kind of pressure that the developing patient has to contend. Sometimes it becomes

important to draw the patient's attention to it and say, "I think you are getting into a great deal of trouble because somebody is beginning to think that you are improving." When people become accustomed to the fact that somebody is neurotic or psychotic, they don't like having to change their views, because the person is now not quite so easily disposed of. Even a group – say of psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, psychiatric workers and so on – can always be in trouble if it is not possible to dismiss it as being a whole lot of crackpots. I don't think society would love us any more if it should turn out that, in fact, there are things we can contribute that it might not be possible for others to do.

These changes do seem to occur in little jerks – hardly perceptible, but adding up to quite a lot.

Q: Would you say that each little jerk has to break through something that resisted it?

Bion: Yes, but it is very hard to know what that is. I am reminded of the fact that Picasso could paint on one side of a piece of glass in such a way that there appeared to be a different one on the other side. I saw an example of this in a child's drawing: the child had drawn a picture and told me it was a house and a tree. On the other side of the piece of paper was a meaningless scribble, but if I held that picture up to the light, then the meaningless scribble shone through the paper and the picture was quite different; it was somebody watering a plant.

As I said yesterday, it is interesting and important to know that a child cannot understand mathematics and why 2 and 4 make 4; but what one would like to know is, what *do* 2 and 2 make? In other words, look at the other side of this so-called resistance; look at the resistance in such a way that what is being resisted shines through it. When it is quite clear that it is analysis that is being resisted, what is shining through that?

From the example I gave of the patient dying of cancer in hospital, it seemed to me most unlikely that he would want to spend such few hours as he had left on just blasting somebody – unless, of course, he had never achieved the good fortune to be dying of a fatal complaint. So it isn't simply a matter of "changing the vertex"; it is also being able to see through the resistance or countertransference or whatever it is. All those terms are obviously very useful, but in many ways the

analytic theories have been good enough to render themselves redundant. One seems to have to go through that process in order to make them redundant, to put them out of date, to put oneself out of date.

Q: I wonder if, implicit in what you are saying about the impact of change, in addition to his own resistances the patient also had to contend with the resistance of the analyst who, it sounds from your argument, would also have to change.

Bion: I think so, certainly. I have given the example before of people who thought that projective algebraic geometry was incompatible with Euclidean geometry. There are certain respects in which these are different, but algebraic projective geometry is *implicit* in Euclidean geometry. Now, thanks to Descartes, what was implicit in Euclidean geometry has been made *explicit*. The same thing applies in this mutual situation: I usually have to point out to patients that they cannot come to me for analysis without – whether they like it or not – having to analyse me. They may not like that because they don't know what sort of rage I might get into if they hit on the right thing; it is difficult to believe that the analyst would not take it badly in the way a child is quite used to: "I can't understand why you are *so* naughty"; it is made clear that when you are playing with your little brother or sister you shouldn't bash him or her on the head, you shouldn't bash each other; you ought to be playing nicely together. And so ought the analyst and the analysand. But, in fact, it is a pretty rough game.

Q: Could you differentiate between these kinds of processes of change and their consequences, from simply becoming maladjusted, losing friends and alienating people?

Bion: No, I don't think that is at all easy, because it again involves this matter of direction. Mathematicians tried to deal with this by the introduction of vectors. Analytically we haven't discovered a way of dealing with it, so we don't know the direction. People choose to say that the world is in an awful mess today. Next step: it is due to this horrible psychoanalysis, all this damned nonsense about people's minds and personalities – *that* is what causes the trouble. It is very difficult to refute. But it would be useful if one could get any sort of clue as to how to assess direction, or in what way to presuppose a mental state in which one was travelling in some direction. The

astronomers have decided that the solar system lies on one of the edges of the spiral nebula. The fact that there is no bright spot available at the centre is apparently regarded as what you would expect, because you can't see through the debris of the nebula itself to its centre. But it is supposed that beyond that, at a distance of 10^8 million light-years, lies the other side of the centre of ourselves. The scale of ephemeral creatures like ourselves is very hard to determine, very hard to see what direction is being taken by us. Indeed, with recent developments one could say that the human race itself is at the end of the road at a point where it is displaced by some other form of life. It is hardly a practical problem when we are dealing with these things on a relatively microscopic scale, not macroscopic – the macroscopic scales are not much use to us, but could throw some light on what is going on and on our being able to keep on the right track, assuming that there is a proper path for us to follow. Races which have a long history – such as the Jews, the Chinese – retain a certain cohesion so that they can get some idea about direction. But unfortunately these ancient cultures have also lost touch with their sources, their origins – or, as Freud put it, he doubted that Moses would understand his, Freud's, Hebrew.

It is a question of importance when one talks, as I do, about the truth. The answer seems to be so easily made, as Francis Bacon does in his essay: "'What is truth?' said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer" [*Essays*, I, "Of Truth"]. We have to rely on our feelings; somehow at a certain point we feel, "Yes, that's right." Whether it is right or what the scale of reference is, or what the relationships to the truth are to the rest of truth, I don't know – and I don't know of any way in which we can get a grip on it. What we do know is that we are part and parcel of these vogues and can, to that extent, make some allowance for the pressure we experience.

Q: To what extent, in order to think the thoughts we think, do we require other thinkers at well?

Bion: It may fall to a particular individual to be able to formulate the thought or idea. But I don't think the actual germination of the idea can be attributed to any particular individual. It is very difficult to locate that. It crops up in practice chiefly with people who think that they own ideas and are very sensitive to plagiarism. There seems to be something in it – one would like to claim a certain ownership of an

idea, but whether that is anything other than the ordinary predatory instincts, I don't know. It could be part of the wish to grab, to carve out a sphere in the latest series of discoveries.

Q: I am wondering how much of what you have been saying approximates to the Jungian concept of the analyst as the agent or container.

Bion: The relationship of one idea to another is quite a difficult problem because ideas are not so clearly defined as words – and that is bad enough. For purposes of verbal communication you can do a lot with dictionary definitions and the rules of grammar, but when it comes to ideas themselves – the real thing, whatever that is – I think it is extremely optimistic to imagine that they also conform to the ways in which we think or even express our thoughts or ideas. It seems to me that this is one of the places where the formulist mathematician gets into trouble. The assumption is that the logical capacity of the human mind is of very great importance – and so it is to us for purposes of thinking – but the Intuitionists represent a revolt (Brouwer, Heyting and others) against that particularly rigid structure that doesn't really leave room for growth. The problem is that the work of the Intuitionists is so difficult for most of us to understand at all. Contrast this with geometria. I mean by that what is to us now a rather magical use of numbers. For example, you take the letters of which your name is composed; they are placed in the alphabet, and you add them up and get a certain number. You can play that game more or less indefinitely. It isn't geometry: it's a sort of – religious mathematics? I don't know, but certainly a mathematics that is employed and does come to the surface in developments where there is a theological turmoil, one of these spaces in the total area of human thought where an upheaval begins to surface. I am thinking of it in terms of the total area of thought, sometimes called mathematical, sometimes religious, sometimes biochemical and so forth. These areas of turmoil, of emotional upheaval, break out spasmodically over the total sphere. There you get thrown up characteristics that seem to conform to those in other emotional outbursts. For example, one of the manifestations of vogue seems to be the messianic turmoil. This is peculiar because the messiah often disavows it but it is very strongly advocated by a sort of prophet. The actual centre of that particular turmoil – the messiah – is strongly affected by something outside the centre; it is ex-centric, like

a situation where psychoanalysis itself becomes the vogue, and after a bit shifts onto somebody or something else – the latest vogue.

Q: Would you in this way be talking about psychoanalysis as the prophet of something that is much more central?

Bion: I think there is something much more central – possibly of a kind formulated by Schopenhauer, who doesn't say much about it but simply describes it as "the energy to exist". It can surface in this way in Freud and in psychoanalysis as one of these temporary bubbles on the total surface. As usual in these turmoils – like the period of adolescence in the individual – various features that have been latent or unobserved beforehand become apparent, sometimes negatively; for the time being the turmoil is noticeable by being suppressed, by not being allowed to emerge. I think that with Freud, Stekel and Jung there was an attempt to apportion out the areas that would be occupied by those three particular forces, but I can't say that I find the struggle for possession of some particular sphere at all enthralling or important.

Q: Yesterday you made an analogy with a blind person using a stick to find his way about. Could you describe the instruments you use?

Bion: No, I don't think so, certainly not anything I have been able to formulate. Somebody else might have a better idea of what I do use, particularly those who come to me for analysis. I am able to draw attention to the fact that coming to me for analysis is a vastly more unpleasant matter than coming to me for a supervision; it is a great shock to discover that. The actual close contact with an actual "me" is quite different from what they would suppose if they heard me talk. I can only suggest that anything I say about how I do it is probably somewhat misleading and off the beam. It has a lot to do with what I was trying to describe when I said, "When you are asleep you are in a different state of mind from the state of mind when you are awake." I am still talking about that when I refer to the patient who seems to behave physically in a way that could be seen as cataleptic. And the same thing applies to his state of mind: it is not dreaming and it is not wide awake. I don't know what it is, but it is very precarious and does seem to depend on being able to be on the edge of a precipice – to use a pictorial image. I think it can be seen with most

patients, especially in a prolonged analysis; you can get to a point where it is much clearer that they also behave in such a way that they are aware – particularly in adolescence – that they are frightened of going mad. Later it becomes much more a case of being frightened of being *called* mad; I like to flatter myself now that I am sufficiently used to being called that not to mind it as much. But I am not so sure that I would if I were in Soviet Russia, for example, or subjected to certain other cultural forces. It amazes me sometimes that analysts really seem to believe that they will be permitted to be psychoanalysts – I don't know why. I'm not sure that we all ought not to be prepared to "go underground", as they say. Milton makes great play of the image of Alpheus, the river that disappears and emerges from time to time in different places. [See also Seminars 2 and 3.]

Matti Harris: Perhaps we ought to stop now and all hope that Doctor Bion – who will, as far as we are concerned, have gone underground for the next year – will re-surface here next year at the same time and give us a comparable but different experience. I would like, on behalf of everybody, to give heartfelt thanks for the interesting time we have had. We have no doubt it has changed us in some way or another – we know not how.

Bion: Thank you. I hope not to be put under arrest when I return to California on the grounds of having changed so much.

Seminar 7

27 March 1979

[*The "winter of discontent" began with a wave of industrial action at the end of 1978; by early 1979 Britain was paralysed by strikes, and the normal life of the country came perilously close to a complete halt.*]

Bion: [*first part of recording missing*] . . . an establishment, shall we say, like the government of this country; then it buds off plenty more, called "devolution", and each bit of the devolved thing takes in a whole lot of other people – so you get bigger and bigger bureaucracies. In this respect I think we in psychoanalysis are well in the mainstream: there's the British Psychoanalytical Society, there's the International Psychoanalytical Association, there's the European Psychoanalytic Society, and I don't know what else – there are plenty of them, all of them presumably with their distinguished people, all of them with the distinguished people swallowed up in the administration, never having a chance of getting near a patient because they have to spend so much time organizing things. This raises a very difficult problem – that of whether people who are engaged in thinking can indeed combine it in any way, and, if so, how?

Q: I am wondering if the individual's thinking in his own time is different from that of the group's time.

Bion: What happens to your feelings, opinions, ideas and theories when, as here, we all come together? They would appear to be sunk without a trace, swallowed up in the group where we would hope to get some kind of discussion or clarification of the problems with which we have to deal. But the curious thing is that as soon as we are contained in a group, it seems to be very difficult indeed to go in the direction of developing thoughts or ideas or feelings of our own;

we are dominated by a need to be like everybody else and to think what everybody else thinks and feels – although how to tell what everybody else thinks or feels may be something we would find very difficult to formulate.

Somebody posed a question to me the other day – I can't say that I have found an answer to it, but I can pass it on. A small boy came for assistance, for help of some sort. As far as I could make out from the account I was given of this experience, on the one hand there was the analyst, and on the other this small boy who started drawing pictures with coloured chalks. The analyst gave an interpretation to which there was apparently no particular response; the small boy proceeded to draw another picture. And so it went on. He drew a picture of a lot of children on skateboards, but since I can't draw as well as he did, I do this [*draws a few lines on the blackboard*]. If I allow myself to get rather excited about it, I try to do another one [*draws a few more lines*]. Those are two signs, parts of my conversation with you. If you ask me what that *sounds* like, you probably couldn't hear I was producing my version of the *Blue Danube Waltz*. You couldn't hear it and I can't make the noise sufficiently clear here, not even with the apparatus of loudspeakers and so forth. I doubt very much whether you would recognize much more than a faint hiss. So one could say: that is the language, that is the pictograph, and the pronunciation of it is that funny noise I was making; that is how you say it if you want to talk it instead of drawing it. But suppose someone scientific came along: "Do you mean to say that that was a Viennese waltz, that row you were making? The Blue Danube? Have you ever seen the Danube? It's a dirty, muddy stream that moves at a tremendous pace. What are you talking about?" So there is this problem of the scientific view, the "true view", and then these various other views like my drawing of someone on a skateboard that certainly is not an accurate view. What is the nature of the communication? Which are you going to take? You can start making signs, like A, B, C – the alphabetic script – or you can start making pictographs, the sort of thing the Chinese do.

Freud called an international psychoanalytic meeting hoping it would be the start of an international communication between people. In fact, instead of it ending as he had hoped, it ended in all sorts of disagreements. Typical of that was the disagreement between Jung and Freud as to what was psychoanalysis and who was entitled to use the term. So there is this problem – as for example here – of how we

can see any particular way in which we can communicate with each other. Is there any common language that we can talk so that we can have a discussion?

Q: There is, apparently, a shared assumption about something called "the Establishment" that is "other people": they are powerful, they are boring and, above all, one must not be like that. If one actually looks at the people who reach a position of importance, it isn't very accurate.

Bion: No. The only accurate thing about it is probably the feeling of the individual who talks like that, but not necessarily, because individuals do not have to speak the truth about what they think or feel. But I think it is a fair assumption to suppose that the individual does try to communicate accurately – at any rate, in this sort of community. When it comes to groups of people at war, that is different; then they do not necessarily want to communicate what they think or what their plans are.

Are we somewhat prematurely and precociously attempting to achieve a kind of cooperative endeavour when in fact we are not really capable of doing much more than wage war against each other? Is it a matter of domination of who is top, who did it first, who is the owner, who possesses it? It depends on what sort of culture, what sort of civilization we live in.

To revert to the dominating silence, the thing that reduces us all to silence because we are frightened of expressing our true opinion or saying what we really mean – or, for that matter, meaning what we really say: if the Establishment, or the dominating force, is one that is exerted in the direction of making everybody conform to a particular attitude or outlook, then it matters very much what the nature of that culture or group is and how individual members – people who would like to be able to respect themselves and even, if possible, respect other people – are to compete with this pressure to be uniform, all to think alike, all to be equal. Péguy [1873–1914], quoting "*liberté, egalité, fraternité*", said [in *Basic Verities*] that two of those are completely different from the third; two of those aspirations are really worthy of pursuit, but not so the third [*egalité*].[1] I don't know if that gives

[1][I think it worth while quoting at some length from Charles Péguy's *Basic Verities*, which greatly impressed Bion: see Appendix on p. 91.]

any idea as to what bunch of thoughts, ideas or feelings would come nearer to expressing our present culture: liberty? equality? fraternity? That is simplifying the problem by tacking it onto those three terms.

Q: I feel that pauses and silences in a group play an important role in understanding – just as they do in music.

Bion: That is true, and in psychoanalysis also. Long ago I was asked, "Do you only just talk?" I said, "No, we don't; sometimes we are silent." Of course, that also has something to do with the beginning of the sound because the silence contributes a meaning to the sounds, to the rhythm. Even in silence we are giving a great deal of primacy to the verbal communication. I think it is reasonable because although it is a recent achievement, this ability to communicate by means of articulate speech – by recent I mean only a few hundred thousand years – seems to have been so productive that it can be looked to as a possible way of approaching the kind of problems with which we are concerned. That doesn't mean to say that it is an adequate method of communication. Hence one cannot very well say – though it is quite easy to do so – that because the small boy insists on saying nothing but just goes on drawing, he is resisting. Resisting what? He is merely disagreeing that the method of communication is verbal. He doesn't stop the analyst from making a verbal communication – he just goes on making a pictorial point of view, a pictorial communication. When it comes to huge bunches of people – like the Chinese – there it becomes a very serious matter if we think, "Oh, these Chinese, you know, this pictorial stuff, they don't even know how to write from left to right. These Orientals have nothing to contribute to our civilization." But when we have small groups like this, is there any chance of getting any further with this problem? Or are we all still dominated by the need to be "top", or to join the group that is "top", or to join the group or person who has the biggest number of possessions? Now we might almost say, "the biggest number of mental possessions" – that is to say, the area in which it is supposed that there are such things as creations of the mind. According to Plato, Socrates said he was merely a midwife, he merely helped people to give birth to their ideas. How much progress do you think we have made in the art of mental obstetrics? To what extent are we capable of tolerating anybody who could make a contribution? Or are we wiser to remain silent, to refrain from our own particular method of communication? I am not saying that

the only method of communication is verbal – that, unfortunately, is about all I am capable of – but there are plenty of people who are not so limited, who are capable of musical composition, of painting, or even of verbal communication of a very high order. But is this the sort of culture that promotes or makes possible the creative efforts of those who are able to create? Here we are supposed to be able to express our opinion on this matter.

Q: With reference to the child who went on drawing while the analyst was talking, I am wondering if that is real communication if it is not taken in by anyone else.

Bion: This is the problem. Supposing you have something to say: you unfortunately have to have somebody who is prepared to listen. If you are capable of painting, there has to be someone who will look at the thing – and as you know, most people don't. Most people will drift through famous galleries without a clue to what is in them. As an example, a person goes to the National Gallery and says, "I could have got through in half the time if I had . . . boots." That is one way of looking at the National Gallery – you don't have to bother about the paintings, especially as, if you allowed yourself to look at them, it would take up a very great deal of time. Of course, my example is ridiculous, but it isn't a ridiculous problem; in fact we don't have a great deal of time, and it is very difficult indeed to know how to apportion such time as we think we have available. That is one reason why, as an analyst, I would like to be able to express myself clearly so that the patient doesn't have to waste too much time trying to make out what on earth I am talking about. So in this curious way the exactitude of expression is likely to become a very demanding component, whether you are a painter or a musician or a speaker, so that you express yourself as economically as possible in the hope that someone will bother to listen to you and will be able to listen as economically as possible.

Q: As regards communication, the problem with art is to decide when it is not art. This question was raised in a recent controversy over a painting in the Tate Gallery.

Bion: I think you are right. It raises the whole question of discrimination because it is so important to be able to distinguish between the fake and the real thing. There are plenty of painters who are

extremely capable of giving a very good representation of, say, trees in a forest or a wood. But there is a great deal of difference between that and a painting of trees by Cézanne. I wouldn't like to say what the difference is, especially when we have all been taught to believe that Cézanne was a great painter – so we don't have to bother about that any more. But if we do bother about it, then we might tell the difference between a painting by Cézanne and a very technically able reproduction of it. That depends on this capacity for discrimination and the fact that it is very difficult to exercise it.

The attempt to use articulate speech for the expression of problems was by no means what articulate speech was elaborated for; its roots, the savage methods of behaviour, had to become civilized. We are still in the position of being savage animals who have to tame each other. But when violence is opposed to discussion, it does seem as if the outcome is doubtful, because the person who wants to discuss may have to defend himself, or the nation that wants to discuss may have to defend itself or even the right to speak. For example, psychoanalysis or communities of people who are wedded to discussion might become very unwelcome to the authorities. It could be regarded as subversive and an encouragement to people to have ideas of their own. You only have to look back through history to see the attempts that were made to suppress philosophical discussion or religious discussion, or any other form of discussion. But there is usually some little escape, like a seed pod, carried by the wind, that sprouts up somewhere else.

Galen [Claudius Galenus, c.130 A.D.–c.200 A.D.], a revolutionary thinker who really believed in observation of the human body, finally became a sort of god whose opinion was never to be questioned; free thought was suppressed, and anatomy and physiology stood still for generations – until it sprouted up in artists like Leonardo and Raphael who decided to look at the human body, the cadaver, and draw pictures of it. Then, through that kind of lateral expression, it came back to anatomy; anatomists again started looking at the human body. It is commonplace that students have to draw pictures of their detections; anybody who has been a medical student knows how much we disliked having to dissect and to draw accurate pictures of what we saw. Sounds simple, doesn't it? All you have to do is to draw what you see – don't tell lies about it, don't invent fabulous systems

of circulation and so forth, but draw what you see. But it is not at all infrequent for medical students never to recover from their experience of the dissecting-room. Do you think it is going to be any better with the dissection of the human mind, character or personality?

There would be something very queer about any analytic experience – whether one identifies with the analyst or the analysand – in which it didn't become clear that both parties dislike that occupation. It is not possible to analyse the analysand without being analysed oneself by the patient. So both parties are almost inevitably engaged in an occupation that arouses feelings of hatred and anger – not to mention also the wish to run away, to fly from that occupation. That is one reason why the future of psychoanalysis is always very precarious. Suppose it was suppressed and then leaked out again in, say, the direction of painters who depicted the character or the soul of the sitter. Only the other day I heard about Graham Sutherland's protest at the destruction of his painting of Winston Churchill. I dare say it would have been much better if he had stuck to photography because you can get away with it on the grounds that it is only what the camera shows. But a brilliant painter may depict the character, and this can excite a great deal of hostility on the part of the beholder. It isn't simply a question of finding somebody to listen to what you say; you also have to find somebody who will look at the painting that you paint. The little boy had to find somebody who would look at his drawings of people on skateboards. What is the analyst to do about it? If he sticks to making verbal interpretations, it can easily sound as if it is an attempt to maintain the superiority of verbal as opposed to artistic communication. Plenty of people have been written off as stupid or foolish simply because their methods of communication are different from what we ourselves are used to, or different from what we are able to understand.

Q: Coming full circle, I think analysts had better understand groups and institutions if they are going to understand their patients and the task they are dealing with, as well as dealing with the internal world.

Bion: In much the same way it matters if the diameter of the circle becomes so great that it may not appear to be the diameter at all because the segment of the circle seems to be very like a straight line.

In other words, the debate can become so wide that there is virtually no communication. Suppose all this kind of debate took place 10^8 million light-years ago: we have no method of communication with the past, and indeed it is difficult now to say what we owe to our forebears, who stopped using grunts and expressions of rage and fear and tried to communicate either by visible signs or some other method. I don't think that can be explained simply by Mendelian inheritance because, as I understand it, that communication would depend upon the inheritance of acquired characteristics. In other words, if we could start where our parents left off, and if we could leave off at a point at which our children could take over, then we might get an inheritance of acquired characteristics, we could become wiser people. Even aspirations like United Nations, United States, United Kingdom might begin to become realized; there might be such a thing as United People. There might even be an agreement about the need to promote the kind of activities pursued by philosophers, painters, musicians, poets, as part of a united effort, not so much as to who, which tiny scrap, has won the championship, as it were, but as part of the general mood. It took a very long time before we became as civilized as we are, and it may take a very long time still before we become more or adequately civilized. By "civilized", I don't mean like everybody else; I mean a situation where we could have respect for ourselves and other selves, while at the same time remaining part of the community.

Q: As I said before, analysts had better understand more about their own institutions . . .

Bion: I certainly think that if we can, we should devote such capacity as we have to things that are within our reach – in the sense of being near enough to be observable and comprehensible – so that we could at least make some contribution towards comprehending them.

In the experience of analysis it is curious how often we find that the analysand is most unwilling to admit the importance of any particular excellence that he has. Patients don't really mind devoting their attention to their crimes, their faults, their mistakes, and very often would like to get the analyst to agree to become a sort of "father confessor" to dole out appropriate penances. But when it comes to something the patient can do really well, it is extraordinary how often that same patient will denigrate it, dislike it and not want to pursue

it any further, on the grounds that it is too easy or that it comes "naturally", as if doing something that is natural is a sort of crime itself. There are many things that are natural to us – such as fighting each other – and it may be true that we need to be discriminating and decide what is desirable and what undesirable. Whether we can do so with any degree of accuracy is another matter; we simply have to make a decision in the light of our own prejudices. I have a prejudice: I remember a time when I was extremely anxious to join the army and get mixed up with the glorious occupation of war, but having tried shooting people – and getting shot at – I don't like it. I think there is still a good deal to be said for standing up for one's ideas.

Q: The army must be a group in which it is difficult to know what one's own ideas are.

Bion: Yes. I have known a person undergo the whole of army discipline and then give up the military career to become an actor. So it does happen that we join a particular profession and then chuck it up, but it is rare. Most of us may feel we have made a mistaken choice, but the upheaval involved in changing it, rectifying our mistake, is too painful; we would prefer to go on with the same profession, same theories, same ideas and not change them.

Q: Do you think it is really an addiction to go on with what we don't really like?

Bion: The only thing is to question oneself as to whether one is addicted or not. For example, I choose to be a psychoanalyst, but I wouldn't be able to say with any certainty whether that is simply an addiction – in the rather pejorative sense. I would like to be able to say that I am devoted to the occupation of analysis, or to helping my fellow men. But it is very difficult to know if one is devoted to a worthy object or has become addicted to that object. It is an on-going problem from which we shall never be free.

Q: Could you say something about the difference between "devoted to" and "addicted to"?

Bion: Take an example like being devoted to one's family welfare. While everybody may agree that the patient is devoted, when looked at more closely that same person doesn't give a damn what happens to the family as long as it contributes to the glory of the parent, so

long as the child does credit to its father or mother. I would call that not devotion to the family, but an addiction. I would want to introduce some sort of pejorative term into my own private formulation of that particular character.

Q: Would you say that it is a form of addiction if a person cares only about his or her own family, while the rest of the world can go hang?

Bion: One would have to have some idea about the motive of that person. It might be apparently extremely patriotic to want the welfare of one's own nation. But it is also true that if one's nation were well off, we would share in the general prosperity. There we are up against a profound problem – as we are in this subject all the time. It starts off as something simple, blossoms out straight away, and we then find that we are dealing with profound matters.

Is there anything particularly harmful in being a member of a nation that is well off and in sharing in the general prosperity? It doesn't do anyone any harm apparently. Eric Gill said that the best thing he could hope for the English nation was that it would become poor and impoverished. I don't know if he would have liked getting mixed up with the sort of traffic jams that I have experienced here – I would rather get here easily and comfortably without any fuss. So that particular statement of a general principle may be impeccable in terms of logic, but one does want the person who is stating it to practise what he preaches, and also to preach what is practicable. But the only person one has any control over is likely to be oneself. So we can try to live up to our principles – or to have principles it is possible to live up to.

Q: I have been thinking about the way we use time as a container.

Bion: Do we use time? Or does time use us? This is one of these extremely useful terms: most of us use it in a limited sort of way; we can look at a watch or a clock and schedule our day according to the number of hours we think are available. But when it comes to closer and more scientific investigation of what we mean by "time", it becomes clear that it is no good just looking it up in the dictionary. What do we mean by "time"? The point has often been stressed: "Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away; they fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day" [Isaac Watts (1674–1748),

Psalms, 90]. There certainly seems to be some force with every one of us that contributes to the fact of one's birth and one's decline. We cannot really say it is due to time, but it is closely associated with the passage of time – as we understand it. The question should be much more, "What do you mean by 'using time', or by 'being contained in it'?"

Q: I had a patient who seemed to travel backwards in time. His material was all about the past and at times had been so repetitive that I might have one whole year of sessions of the same material, the same words. I really thought I would die with impatience and boredom. Instead of moving on in the river of time, he appeared to me to be on the bank, as if he hated time. I am thinking about the problem of tolerating someone who seems to hate time as much as that.

Bion: It certainly sounds like a peculiar kind of omnipotence if a patient feels that he can act a superior plot to all the rest of the flotsam and jetsam going down the stream, as if saying, "Yes, all these people go down the stream, but I – I'm saved; I've clambered out onto the shore." One wonders what sort of standards are being used there.

Q: It is comfortable.

Bion: Yes. You don't always have to take analgesics or hypnotics to be comfortable; you can achieve it with ideas. And indeed, it *is* comfortable to feel that we have now achieved a certain system of thoughts and ideas, and very *un*comfortable to feel that the whole lot of them might be upset by somebody who questions them – for example, by talking in a community like this. One can try to use one's theories as a sort of impenetrable armour plate.

Q: Do we have to tolerate social upheaval if there is to be growth?

Bion: I think it is fairly easy to say that there has to be space for growth or development if we stick to geographical measures, say of land, air, food, and so on. But the same thing applies to the domain of the mind. Falling back on metaphorical language, there has to be space available for mental growth. This habit we all have of wrapping our ideas around ourselves to keep out the cold so that we will never have another thought, never be upset by somebody else's thoughts, may be very comfortable, but it does not allow space for the

development of ideas. And if the unfortunate person who does that then grows, this comfortable state of mind begins to be restrictive, the suit of mental clothes becomes too tight – that is the misfortune in being the victim of these growth processes. Whether we like it or not, there is always the danger that we might have ideas or thoughts of our own, and those thoughts and ideas may want us to express them, want to be given a chance, an opportunity for expression. To fall back on the Socratic idea, there might be thoughts that want to be born, want to be aided out into a situation where they could grow and express themselves. So, from that point of view, every person has to be a midwife to his own ideas, thoughts and feelings.

The idea of being comfortable is very seductive – you only have to go outside to see the advertisements that are bombarding us on all sides to draw attention to how well off we would be *if* we had so-and-so's patent nostrum. There are plenty of invitations to be comfortable, but it is a problem to know how to discriminate between the fake and the real thing.

Seminar 8

28 March 1979

Q: I am wondering if there is a psychoanalytic way to the truth.

Bion: None whatever. Psychoanalysis is only a technical instrument, something we can make use of for any purpose we want – to make confusion worse confounded, or to mislead or deceive people, and so on. It all depends on who is making use of it. Is this building for the use of psychoanalysis, or have psychoanalysts been made use of in order to build this building? Are the available rooms conducive to the pursuit of psychoanalytic efforts? Or are they not?

The profound question in that is the problem of whether the person who purports to be searching for the truth is genuinely trying to arrive at the truth, or is a fake, an artificial representation of a seeker after truth. It is a very difficult question to answer. If you felt you could rely on your own judgement about that, then you might be able to tell whether somebody's paintings or writings are the work of a real genius. But as for the technical accomplishments of psychoanalysis, that doesn't tie you down at all – you can do what you like. Any idea that it inevitably causes you to speak the truth or discover the truth is pure rubbish.

Q: Yesterday you were speaking about patients' reluctance to talk about their own achievements. I am wondering why that is so difficult to do. Is it something linked with the harsh superego that prevents emotional enjoyment and development?

Bion: From time to time one can find various characteristics that seem to be related to obstruction. For example, this point where we can detect from a person's behaviour and discussion that there is a moral system emerging from it. We could say that the patient appears

to be dominated by very powerful moral impulses. If we had the opportunity to go on listening to and observing the patient, then it might become possible to draw his attention to the very important part that his morals were playing in the analytic experience. Perhaps we could go on further and get a bit clearer what kind of moral system this is. Psychoanalytically, theoretically and in certain religious approaches, it is also believed that there are very powerful feelings of guilt – original sin. But that sort of impulse seems to develop into a peculiar kind of moral system in which we can detect certain characteristics that do occur – namely, the moral system that seems to tell us what is wrong but never gives any inkling of what is right, that can be so dominant in the patient's mind that he doesn't dare to be or do anything. I say, "in the patient's mind", but it doesn't necessarily have to be so; I think it can also be in the society, an institution like this one, or the institution of psychoanalysis, or the Houses of Parliament – anything that can be dominated by this negative, prohibitive attitude. It is clearly described in the Book of Genesis and again in the story of the Tower of Babel, the idea being to find out what these creatures are up to, tell them not to, and stop it. That seems to some of us to be a very negative attitude, the kind of thing that is rather unimportant, in the way that a child doesn't know enough about running its own life or anybody else's to fill adequately the position of dominating the family. But one hopes that parents, who have more experience of life, may be prohibitory; they may often be reduced to saying, "Don't do this", or "Don't do that", but that is much milder than the kind of moral system to which I am referring. At some point we have to be critical of our moral outlook and ask ourselves to what extent it is, in fact, being prohibitive.

Q: Could you comment on the relationship between the internal process, and what sort of external requirements are needed to set the process going, and perhaps keep it in being.

Bion: In practice I find that it is important to be able to draw the patient's attention to just your question: it is surprising how difficult that is. The patient can express quite a lot of opinions and views, and it becomes clearer that he is dominated by some particular train of thought. But why today? What is going on? What has triggered this off? I don't know what words to use; I don't know how to draw the

patient's attention to the problem – namely, what has started him off on it.

Take one example: a patient expresses some degree of emotion, and the analyst says, "I think you are being affected by the fact that this is the week-end break when I do not usually see you", or it could be any other break in the analysis. If that is correct, it could be the trigger for that particular session's dominating theme. But in fact, it is very difficult to know.

A session may seem to be extremely disjointed: I have sometimes then been able to draw the patient's attention to the fact that he was just going to tell me something and was then interrupted. That interruption may be from outside – some noise or something I have done. But when that goes on happening, when I find that the patient cannot apparently pursue a train of thought at all, I wonder whether I am missing the train of thought he *is* expressing, or whether in fact he is constantly interrupted, constantly thrown off the road on which he is wanting to travel, the theme of his discourse, the theme he is wanting to talk to me about.

I'll try to imitate it: "Well, I was coming to the clinic just now – you know what I mean – there was a fellow on a bicycle, and he suddenly emerged from the side of the road and, er, well, er, that reminds me – the other day when I was going to talk to my son – now I've forgotten what I was going to say – er – let me think. Oh yes, I remember, yes, I think that this school to which he is going is very bad. They are always . . ." and so on. We have all encountered people who talk in that kind of way. You end up wondering whether you are talking to somebody who has something wrong with his mental apparatus, or whether he is in fact being interrupted and, if so, why? It can be that a person is very sensitive, has excellent hearing and is interrupted by noises from outside, but sometimes it is not so. Where, then, is the source of that interruption? You may not be able to answer that, but if you don't, this kind of patient still goes on pouring out more and more for ten minutes, a quarter of an hour, half an hour of disjointed sentences – it is impossible to see any theme running through it. Sometimes the interruption seems to be more permanent – not a series of interruptions but an obstruction amounting to a permanent blockage of the patient's train of thought – and then he has to find some sort of permanent circulatory diversion. If we were talking

about the body, we could say that the patient has an embolus; the arterial system has been interrupted and then there has to be set up a collateral circulation.

Such a blockage can occur in a very gifted child who may never get back again to its main capacity for expressing itself, whether artistic, scientific or whatever. But we hope that, with the analytic discussion, it may be possible to draw attention to that blockage, including this peculiar kind of moral blockage. We are not disapproving of a moral system, but suggesting that it could be a matter for discussion as to what this system is that makes it virtually impossible for the analyst to be right, for the patient to be right, for his family to be right, and so on in his various relationships. If we can do that, then we make it less necessary for the patient to resort to that kind of collateral circulation.

Q: Could you give me your opinion on the nature of envy as a component of a moral system?

Bion: No, I can't, because I think it is worth considering as being almost a fundamental, very powerful characteristic. You can see it where the patient – one hopes it is the patient and not the analyst – is so envious both of his analyst and of himself for making good use of the analyst that he cannot tolerate anything in the nature of successful or profitable analysis, even when he himself is one of the rewarded participants.

We unfortunately have to use these terms; it is one of the ways in which splitting has been turned to good account. We split things up – envy, hate, admiration and so forth – to make articulate speech more or less possible. But, of course, we don't in fact split up anything – these grammatical divisions and rules of articulate speech are quite all right for the purposes of articulate speech but not at all suitable for describing the human mind. I find it somewhat easier to think of envy and gratitude as being on the same linear progression; they are not really separable, but one is the extreme of the other, as if they were polarized, as if these sorts of feelings could be spoken of as polarized activities. [See Melanie Klein's "Envy and Gratitude" (1957).]

Q: I was thinking that in the first three years you came here the weather was very warm; my expectation somehow was that this time it would be the same . . .

Bion: . . . as long as you don't hold me responsible for having done it on purpose! There must be an explanation for this kind of weather; the meteorologists make an attempt at a scientific description of it. We can see on TV approaching low pressure just off the island there, and something else just off the island there, and between the two of them there are probably going to be fine intervals and a good deal of sleet and snow, and so on – most uncomfortable. It is an attempt to get to the truth of what it is that really affects the weather. But the truth is independent of us. Psychoanalysis is an attempt to know what it is that interrupts us, or makes it impossible to think clearly or to have any respect for the facts that are available to us; it is an attempt to investigate what it is in ourselves that causes so much trouble, not because we cause the trouble but because it is the only thing about which we can say anything at all. We can do nothing about these powers and forces that are out of our control. So if we are ourselves at fault, then it is useful to know what is the matter. "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings" [Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, I.ii] – a most profound statement. Sooner or later there will have to be a method by which the faults in ourselves have to be corrected by ourselves. This is familiar to us when it comes to clinical matters: when we have a physical complaint we have to get some sort of help – an ambulance, a doctor or a nurse; that is commonplace. But it is a much more difficult problem with regard to defects in our method of thinking. There has to be created what we call a psychoanalyst, or something better – the name is not of much importance, but it *is* of importance that the "thing itself" should exist. There should be people to whom we could look for some sort of assistance about these "blockages", this fact that we are not necessarily stupid but that we don't seem to be able to think clearly. Actors can be afraid of "blackouts" or stage fright; it is the fear of these "interruptions" that interferes with their ability to exercise their technical capacity.

Q: With reference to your comments about the man running round the National Gallery and not understanding that there was something good on the walls, how can we make something available to someone who lacks this understanding?

Bion: I don't see any way in which we can evade that difficulty. We can know about its existence and be warned, have some foresight

about it. But in the practice of analysis it ceases to be a matter of theoretical, high-powered discussion; it becomes a matter of detecting it in the actual psychoanalytic episode when two people meet together with that kind of object. It is truly dreadful the way in which psychoanalytic theory can become so learned, so prestigious, that I would certainly hate to try to understand it myself; in fact, I don't waste my time trying to. I do occasionally get bombarded with it: while trying to say something to me, the patient is constantly interrupted by his own high-powered psychoanalytic knowledge. There is the same difficulty at the other pole, where there appears to be an inability to understand or to appreciate the reality of analysis. It is a curious fact that even in physical medicine doctors or surgeons can become callous; having to deal constantly with physical pain, they become almost insensitive to it. There are occasions when it erupts: I had the experience of a surgeon and an anaesthetist having such a nice time that they failed to observe that the child on the operating table had very nearly died. They suddenly ceased enjoying the joke and started putting emergency measures into action – unfortunately too late. [See *All My Sins Remembered*: Volume II, p. 40]

We can become callous to the actual nature of the pain, whether it is physical or mental. I know from my own experience that one loses sight of the fact that the patient is suffering – and you are helped by the patient to lose sight of that. A patient may be so amusing that the session is quite enjoyable; it seems almost unkind to remember that that patient has come because he is suffering.

The numbers of things that make the cooperation between analyst and analysand very vulnerable are legion – there is no limit to them. We can only hope to be able to detect, in time, whatever is menacing that particular attempt at a creative cooperation between the two people. One comfort we have is that, in a way, analysis is not very important; it is a temporary affair and a temporary association. So we can talk about "transference" and "countertransference"; it is transferred, it is on the way, but the real point about it is that people are constantly having an uncomfortable relationship with each other – it may be with a group of people or with an individual person – and frequently the obstruction to the comfortable or pleasant relationship causes a collateral circulation to set up. If two people cannot succeed in the aspiration to become husband and wife, then they can fall back

on the physical solution of it by turning it into a kind of successful sexual experience. I pick on that deliberately because we are so used to hearing that it is sexual inhibitions that cause trouble – and so they do. But sexual freedom also causes trouble; it is a method of finding a collateral circulation to avoid the difficulties of what one might call a spiritual relationship between two people – if that doesn't have too much of a moral connotation. But people can crave for a relationship that is additional to a purely sexual one; or they can crave for a physical relationship in addition to a purely intellectual discussion. I don't think these things are settled by simply feeling, "Oh, yes, sexual inhibitions." That is one possibility, but what we really need is to be able to detect where the blockage occurred and what form the collateral circulation has taken. I am sure that analysts who work with children must be familiar with the situation in which they feel that the real blockage is something between the husband and wife, and the collateral circulation is to send their child to an analyst. So the analyst + child is a kind of collateral circulation of something that lies outside that relationship. This is one of the complexities of our approach to these difficulties; that is why I say it is the old system of co-ordinates by which one can localize the pain. It is quite easy to flog away at the relationship between analyst and analysand, to go on analysing ad infinitum – as I said before, transference, countertransference and so forth – without really being able to locate where the real trouble lies.

Take this point about the weather: it isn't the only thing we notice on coming back to this country; there are also noticeable peculiarities of the state of mind. I don't know to what extent anything is done about that. For quite a long time I have thought it extraordinary that this is the only country to have fought two Great Wars from start to finish and not lost either of them. So it would hardly be surprising if we didn't now have to pay for that sort of luxury. Of course, I cannot pretend that that is a correct interpretation, or indeed that it is relevant; we do not know what are these changes in attitude, what the difference is between, shall we say, an England in which there is a belief in the British Empire, and an England nearer to conforming with what used to be called the attitude of Little Englanders. It is now little England, and the process of readjustment to these "facts" is very difficult. Anyway, we do not know what the facts are, nor what would be a readjustment on the right track. That seems to me to be

one of the reasons why the work we do is urgent and needs to have a realistic slant to it. It is hopeless if bunches of people meet together and argue about Kleinian theory or somebody else's theory – it is a pure waste of time because there are far more important matters to think about, or even to learn to think about.

APPENDIX

Extract from Péguy's *Basic Verities*:[1]

> "Not only are the three terms of the republican device, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity not on the same plane, but the last two, which are nearer to each other than both are near the first, present several notable differences. Fraternity obliges us to tear our fellow men from destitution. That is a preliminary duty. Contrarily, equality is a far less pressing duty. Whereas it is intensely pressing and alarming to know that there are men still in want, the knowledge that, outside of destitution, men possess more or less large slices of riches does not worry me. I cannot profess much interest in the famous question of knowing to whom bottles of champagne, blooded horses, castles in the Loire valley, will belong in the city of the future. I hope that this will be settled somehow. But I really don't care if so and so has such and such a position, as long as there will really be a city from which no man can be banished or held in exile by economic destitution. Doubtless many other problems will engross the attention of citizens, but to nullify the civic pact it would be sufficient that a single man be wittingly held or, what comes to the same, be wittingly left in destitution. As long as one man remains outside, the door slammed in his face closes a city of injustice and hatred.
>
> "The problem of destitution is not on the same plane, or of the same order as the problem of inequality. Here again, the old, traditional preoccupations, instinctive to humanity, are found, when analysed, to be much deeper, far better justified, far more real than the recent and always artificial manifestations of democracy. To save the destitute is one of the oldest cares of noble humanity, persisting throughout all civilizations. From age to age, fraternity, whether it puts on the guise of charity or the guise of solidarity; whether it is practised towards a guest in the name of Zeus Hospitable; whether it welcomes the poor as an image of Jesus Christ

[1] *Basic Verities*, by Charles Péguy, was first published in England in 1943 by Kegan Paul, Trench, Tubner & Co. Ltd. (Prose and Poetry in French with English translation by Ann & Julian Green.)

or whether it establishes a minimum wage for workmen; whether it invests the citizen of the world, introducing him by baptism into the universal communion; or whether by the improvement of economic conditions it introduces him into the international city, this fraternity is a living, deep-rooted, imperishable human sentiment. . . .

"Compared with this great sentiment, the sentiment of equality will appear small. Also, less simple. When all men are provided with the necessities, the real necessities, with bread and books, what do we care about the distribution of luxury? Sentiments of fraternity must be formidable to have held in check, since the beginnings of humanity, all the sentiments of war, of barbarity, of hatred, and to have won over them. On the other hand, the sentiment of equality is not an old sentiment, a perpetual sentiment, a universal sentiment of first magnitude. At determined periods it appears in the history of humanity as a peculiar phenomenon, as a manifestation of the democratic spirit. In a certain sense, sentiments of fraternity have always animated great men and great peoples, animated them, disquieted them, for preoccupation about destitution never goes without bitterness, disquietude. The sentiment of equality, on the other hand, has never inspired anything but questionable, particular revolutions. It brought about that English revolution which bequeathed to the modern world such a nationalistic, imperialistic England. It brought about that American revolution which established such an imperialistic republic. It has not inaugurated humanity. It has not prepared the city. It has only inaugurated democratic governments. It is a composite, mixed, often impure sentiment to which vanity, envy and cupidity contribute. Fraternity disquiets, moves, passionately interests deep, serious-minded, hard-working, modest souls. Equality often reaches only men loving the limelight, men loving publicity, and men of government. Or again, sentiments of equality are artificial sentiments, sentiments obtained by formal construction; bookish, scholastic sentiments. When violent passions, deep and broad, human and popular are roused on behalf of equality, as happened at the beginning of the French Revolution, it is almost always because formal equality coincides with realities of liberty and fraternity. It is a fact that, save for rare exceptions, the men who introduced preoccupations of equality into politics were not, had not been, destitute. They were middle-class men and poor men, notaries, lawyers, attorneys, men who had not received the indelible investiture of destitution."

THE ITALIAN SEMINARS

1977

The Italian Seminars, edited by Francesca Bion and translated from the Italian by Philip Slotkin, was first published in English in 2005 by Karnac Books, London. An earlier edition was published in 1985 in Italian: *Seminari Italiani: Testo Completo dei Seminari tenuti da W. R. Bion a Roma* (Rome: Edizioni Borla).

The Italian Seminars

EDITORIAL NOTE

The seminars contained in this volume were held by Bion in Rome in the summer of 1977. Parthenope Bion Talamo translated/interpreted at all the seminars – both Bion's English into Italian and the questions and comments from the Italian participants into English for Bion. It was an exceptional *tour de force* on her part. I subsequently edited Bion's contributions for the Italian edition of the seminars, which was published in 1985.

Francesca Bion
2005

NOTE FROM THE ITALIAN EDITION

The complete text of these seminars, held by Bion in Rome in 1977, has never previously been published in book form, not even in English. The seminars were carried out in two series: the first, consisting of four sessions, was held under the auspices of the Società Italiana Psicoanalitica; the second, of five sessions, was organized by the Via Pollaiolo Research Group.

Parthenope Bion Talamo
1985

Seminar 1

8 July 1977

First, I must apologize for not being able to speak Italian, but I am consoled by the thought that the subject I want to discuss is one which I find very difficult to talk about in *any* language, even when I am able to mobilize all the English that I know. I shall have reason to revert to this point later.

What are we concerned with? What are we all here for? What are we going to talk about? Of course, we could say, "psychoanalysis", but the word simply doesn't mean anything. It is a term which is used if we want to "talk about it", but it doesn't say what "it" is. You can't smell it, you can't touch it, you can't see it, and indeed it is very difficult to say what the sensible component of psychoanalysis is.

In so far as we claim to have a scientific outlook, it is usually supposed that there must be some supporting evidence. What I would like to touch on here is how important it is to have a foundation of fact, and how those facts should be observed by us.

My training in the British Institute of Psychoanalysis, my experience with John Rickman, with Melanie Klein – all of it was verbal. Are we supposed to be blind and deaf to everything except what comes in through the ears? When a patient comes to see me, there is, in fact, a body which I can see for myself, and to that extent I can fall back on the evidence of my senses and on the information which my senses bring me. I don't think that we can afford to ignore what our senses tell us, because the facts are very few anyway.

So far, the most valuable thing I have is the evidence of my senses and the information that my senses bring me. When I say "senses", I am borrowing a term from anatomy and physiology and using it as a model in order to be able to talk about other things for which I haven't the same sort of evidence. In this respect I am dependent upon having

a healthy nervous system which can be irritated – using the term in a physiological sense: our nerve endings are irritated by the universe in which we are living. Some of those senses are extremely powerful. For example, the sense of sight and ocular capacity appears to achieve a dominant role largely because I can see things even when I can't touch them. To some extent the same thing can be said about hearing: I can hear without having actual physical contact with a physical body.

I would like to draw attention to a quotation from Freud's paper of 1926: "There is much more continuity between intra-uterine life and earliest infancy than the impressive caesura of the act of birth allows us to believe" [1926d (1925), p. 138]. He had expressed it before, but he never seemed to follow it through; it came too near the end of his life. Also unfortunately – partly, I think, because of an intervention by Ernest Jones, who seems to me to have prejudiced Freud against Otto Rank – Rank wasn't really able to carry his ideas about the trauma of birth very far. He built up the trauma of birth: Freud tended to ignore the fact of that "impressive caesura". But Freud, being what he was, still appreciated that there was a truth in the fact of birth and the fact that it was a very impressive event.

I want to suggest that we should take the hint and make allowances for the fact that we are unduly impressed by the trauma of birth. I do it this way: When were you born? What was your birthplace? If you gave me the ordinarily accepted answers, I could say, "No, that is very useful for the vital statistics of the government who wants to know your birthday was on such-and-such a day of such-and-such a month of such-and-such a year. That would suit them fine." But I would like to be able to say, "Please tell me when your optic pits, at about the third somite, became functional. Tell me when your auditory pits became functional." Of course, I know perfectly well that nobody can answer that question.

I could ask a number of questions – I wouldn't expect you to try to answer them; I wouldn't try to answer them myself. Nevertheless, without a scrap of supporting evidence, I believe that they are relevant questions.

The embryologists tell us that there is evidence of the survival in the human body of what they call "branchial clefts". It is an interesting idea, and one could play around with it. But that would be more suitable if we had been – or were, or still had elements surviving in

our make-up which would be appropriate to our being – fishes. The embryologists also talk about vestigial tails. If these vestiges exist with regard to the body, why couldn't they be hanging around somewhere even with regard to what we call our minds? Is it possible that some of our characteristics would be more comprehensible if we were water-living animals? Or if we lived in trees like monkeys? It is not very difficult to see why people often talk – somewhat metaphorically – about our simian ancestors and our simian characteristics; not so often with regard to our fishy ones – although surgeons do talk about a "branchial cleft tumour". Although they are not operating on the embryo, they make use of what the embryologists tell us to carry out a surgical operation of a sophisticated kind on what they still call a "branchial cleft tumour".

What I want to draw attention to is this idea that the human animal has a mind, or a character, or a personality. It seems to be quite a useful theory, and we behave as if we thought it was more than that. When it comes to being psychoanalysts and psychiatrists, this cannot be treated as if it were simply an entertaining theory. Nor do patients come to see us because they are suffering from an entertaining theory. We could say that there is one collaborator we have in analysis on whom we can rely, because he behaves as if he really had a mind and because he thought that somebody not himself could help. In short, the most important assistance that a psychoanalyst is ever likely to get is not from his analyst, or supervisor, or teacher, or the books that he can read, but from his patient. The patient – and only the patient – knows what it feels like to be him or her. The patient is also the only person who knows what it feels like to have ideas such as that particular man or woman has. That is why it is so important that we should be able to hear, see, smell, even feel what information the patient is trying to convey. He is the only one who knows the facts; therefore, those facts are going to be the main source of any interpretation, any observation, which we are likely to be able to make. Our first consideration therefore has to be, how are we to observe if we take that scientific view of the importance of evidence – the evidence which is available to us for that very short space of time, fifty minutes or whatever it is, for which the patient agrees to make himself available? It is very important that every single one of us should decide for himself what is his minimum requirement in order to be able to do analysis.

It appears to me that the evidence which is available to my senses directly is worth incomparably more than the evidence which can be brought to me through "hearsay". To imagine a value, for the sake of this discussion, I could say that the evidence which is available when the patient is with me is 99%; what I hear said about the patient or my conduct of the case, or anything else, is worth 1% at most. So from that point of view, whatever I hear said or reported as soon as the patient has left my sight and hearing, I don't need to bother about very much; I can be deaf and blind to anything else. It saves a lot of trouble, I admit, but I think it also has a lot of sense behind it.

We now come back again to the questions, what are we observing, and what are we to do about our observations? I remember being asked, "Do you ever do anything besides talk?" I said, "Yes, I am silent." I'm afraid it may be difficult for you to believe when I sit here and talk, but in fact in analysis I like to be able to remain silent. It is, as we know, very difficult, because pressure is put on us to say or *do* something. "Why don't you *say* something?" "Why don't you *do* something?" This is particularly the case when one is dealing with a patient who is dependent – a child, say – on parents or relatives who want the analyst to do something. By that they mean do something which they can understand. It is difficult for lay people to believe that we employ a kind of talking which is indistinguishable from action.

We become so careless about our vocabulary in ordinary social contact that the words we use, the language we talk, becomes debased, devalued. I think it is therefore very important to get as clear as you can *your* language, the language which *you* use both for communication with yourself and for communication with somebody who is not you.

In your introspection I don't think it is a good thing to concentrate on writing what you think the patient has said – a sort of case history. That kind of narrative can be useful; I don't want to dismiss it, and perhaps we shall talk about it further later. But, in the meantime, think of what words you most often use in analysis, cut them down to fewer and fewer, and then use them very sparingly, very exactly, only in order to say what you mean. If you use very few words, and if you always use them correctly – meaning relating directly to what you think or feel yourself – then the patient may gradually understand the language which is spoken by you. Patients will often say to me,

"I don't understand what you mean." There are two possible answers to that: one is that there is no particular reason why they should, because they are not familiar with the matters I am talking about; the other is that they don't understand my use of those few words which I use. But it is very difficult indeed for patients to believe that I say what I mean. In a way they are quite right – very few people say what they mean. So it is hard to believe that that is what the analyst is doing. In time they may discover, extraordinary though it is, that the analyst is meaning what he says, or at least is trying to say what he means, which is very difficult. It is like doing a surgical operation and having to sharpen your scalpels and get them into working order *while* you are operating. So, while you are practising analysis, you have also to practise sharpening and making precise the vocabulary which you use. It is important to be sure what your vocabulary is, those few words which are really useful to you, and to keep them up to date and in a condition in which they can convey your meaning.

To digress for a moment: Why talk? It is a very recently acquired skill. I suppose the human animal has invented and developed articulate speech only in the last few thousand years – no time at all. So there is a great deal to be said for verbal communication and for keeping it as near to accuracy as we can get it. However, I don't think it is a good thing to ignore the fact that there are other forms of communication. Even verbal communication has been made by carving letters in stone. There are others who carve and sculpt shapes which are also methods of communication. Recently people like Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth have carved shapes with holes in them. That is a resort to a method of communication in which there also has to be a receiver; it assumes that somebody will look at the sculpture. Similarly, painters use pigments – like the Impressionists. The Impressionist painters – and indeed all painters – are falling back on the communication of light; they can use varieties of colours, different ranges of the visual spectrum. It would be useful if you could consider for yourselves the various methods of communication that are known to you, their respective merits, and the extent to which they are capable of great subtlety.

I have talked for a long time, and I personally find it very difficult to tolerate information about questions I have not asked. Therefore, I think it would be a good thing if you could state what the questions

are that you *do* want to ask, and then between the lot of us perhaps we could find some kind of response.

Q: If you like, I can start, just to break the ice. Compliments and the like aside, neither I nor the rest of the group was prepared for Dr Bion's subject matter, but, of course, I was very impressed by the element of surprise, the form of expression and the pathos conveyed throughout. At the same time, I was quite surprised to discover that it fitted in with one of my own professional interests at this time – namely, the symbolic function of emotions. What I mean is the function of emotions as signs – that particular warhorse of late Freud – or a whole series of concepts used by Hartmann and other psychologists of his school, which have recently been taken up again by Rangell. I'm referring to the function of emotions as signs: emotions that perform an information function in themselves. Of course, it isn't the information function that sums up the content and meaning of emotions, although it certainly represents a good part of them. So when you talked about using the sense of smell, and all the senses, it seemed to me that you were somehow also referring to the possibility of nonverbal communication – that is, all the emotional forms we use to communicate both with ourselves (because they are intrapsychic symbols) and also, in a way, for communicating with others. Although they need not necessarily be translated into words, they also supply the patient with a reinterpretation of his phantasy or of the object of his perceptions. So I'd like to ask you now whether you would also include emotions among these non-linguistic forms of communication.

Bion: I think that what the patient feels is the nearest thing to a fact – as I ordinarily understand it – that he is ever likely to experience. The same thing applies to myself. For example, an infant seems to be "aware" – the best word I can use – of its "dependence". Inseparable from this, it also seems to be aware of being "all alone". I think both feelings are unpleasant, and I think they are both fundamental. An infant also seems to be aware that there is what we should call a personality present which it could depend upon; at the same time, that infant can be aware that there is not another person there.

With regard to patients who are described as being "psychotic" or "borderline psychotic", I think they are extremely aware of things which most of us have learnt not to be aware of.

Let us take that same infant twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years later. You, as the analyst, are getting a bit tired, so you fall back on theories, theories which I think are difficult to differentiate from what Freud calls "paramnesias", which are intended to fill this space which is left because somebody has forgotten some particular point and therefore invents something to fill that space. In that way one could argue that the whole of psychoanalysis is a kind of beautiful paramnesia worked out, made consistent with itself, a sort of architectonic in which every bit is in its proper place – only, here and there do there seem to be things which are paradoxes which start to emerge. When we are tired, our remarkably cosmetic conversation, which sounds exactly like psychoanalysis, in fact becomes jargon. In short, it is like the well-known statement that people try to make deep noises from the chest sound like profound thoughts. When this happens, the borderline psychotic will react in a way which shows that he knows that the analyst who was there has now become absent in mind.

I don't know if that is what you have been talking about, but it seems to me that it is very similar – this extraordinary communication. It is not physical, as far as we know, and yet an emotion is communicated from one body to the other – or, I suppose one ought to say, from one mind to the other.

Q: If possible, I'd like to take another look at the problem that was touched on at the beginning and go into it in greater depth – that is, the problem of the trauma of birth and the subsequent comments about the animal vestiges in human beings. After all, it seems to me that in what Dr Bion has said there is a kind of transition from the actual trauma of birth to what we might call the concept of a birthday: being born is one thing, but remembering one's birthday is another – that is, the moment when one began to feel, to see and to laugh. So I was very excited by this fact – whether the problem can be seen, to use Dr Bion's language, from this vertex. Dr Bion's emphasis on the need for the analyst to specify his own language to himself extremely precisely basically means, it seems to me, that the analyst must be absolutely sure that he is saying what he is really feeling. So when the analyst feels, more or less, that he is really saying what he is thinking and feeling, and therefore is genuinely becoming conscious of what is going on inside him, can this moment be compared with the transition from feeling to

articulate language that you mentioned earlier in the seminar? If this corresponds to the aspect of birth as a birthday – that is, not of birth in the sense of when one comes into the world, but of birth as the time when one becomes conscious of one's own perceptions and of what one feels – then the real question is this: might this process of self-specification and, as we might say, self-assumption of his own language by the analyst really be the analyst's repeated trauma of birth in analysis, and might the patient be in the position of a spectator of this on-going process of birth of the analyst? And finally, how can the birth of the analyst be linked up with the birth of the patient? What is involved in terms of identification, learning, nonverbal communication, and so on?

Bion: It would take me a very long time even to start answering the number of questions you have posed. But I would like to draw attention to a passage in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* in which Prince Andrei says, "That is sooth; accept it"; that is a feeling he has, and he communicates that feeling very clearly in those words. I don't know what validity is to be attached to it, but I do know that there are certain situations in the consulting-room in which *both* people are illuminated.

Translating the same thing into slightly different language: two people have a sexual relationship; they say – they can even get a licence for it – that they are married. Sometimes both of them have an experience about which they feel, "That is really an expression of love." In that way the two of them learn what passionate love is in an unmistakable manner, and measured against that experience you can re-assess all the other kinds of sexual relationships you have had – even with the same partner – and what a difference there is between them. Whether it is possible ever to bend this recently acquired capacity for verbal communication so that it could approximate to a description of passionate love is another matter. When you consider the cultural history of the human race, how many poets, philosophers, saints do you think have ever approximated to describing that extraordinary experience of passionate love? In fact, the words, the vocabulary, is so debased – so that many people have learnt how to talk about "love", "hate" and so forth – that it is a commonplace for people to say, "Yes, I know; yes, I know; yes, I know." They really think they do, but they don't know the first thing about it. It is possible to say, "Of course I know *Les Coquelicots* – I've seen countless

reproductions of it." Or, "Yes, I know Mozart's Horn Concerto – I've heard lots and lots of recordings of it." But they haven't experienced the "real thing".

After the last rehearsal of *Petrouchka*, the producer said, "No, it's not right." Both Fokine and Stravinsky were staggered by this idea that it wasn't right – it ended, if you remember, with the death of Petrouchka. When Fokine and Stravinsky attacked him and said, "Well, how ought it to end?" he said, "The ghost of Petrouchka must appear." So, although that was supposed to be the final rehearsal, they set to work again and changed the end so that the ghost of Petrouchka appeared on the wall, fantastically waving its arms.

What is that object which purports to be the ghost of an inanimate doll and which one would think had been dead all the time, having simply made gestures as if animated, pulled by the puppet-master's strings? Putting it another way: when you see your patient tomorrow, will you be able to detect, in the material which is available to you, signs that there is a ghost of a puppet? If you can, you may still be able to breathe some life into that tiny survival.

Q: I'd like to ask Dr Bion something. I have detected two smells in everything you have said here. The first was the smell of the things you said, which seems to me to be a smell of facts, and then there was another smell – in my view, a smell of theories. I'd like to know your personal impression of this and whether these two things are inevitably always mixed up with each other.

Bion: It depends what you mean by "inevitably". I think splitting has a very long history. For example, the diaphragm, separating the upper part of the anatomy from the lower part, was quite sensibly seen as the location of the spirit or soul because it goes up and down as one breathes; it's perfectly obvious that that is what makes people think or get frightened. So much for the anatomical facts, and so much for the ideas. It is quite rational, it is based on good observation, and it becomes an impenetrable theory until somebody penetrates it. According to Democritus of Abdera, the useless mass of the brain has something to do with thinking. You can see for yourself what a silly idea that is: it doesn't *do* anything. So a theory that the brain has anything to do with thinking is really fantastic and is unsupported by any evidence. Well – not quite, because some genius discovers that

if you tackle this brain matter, in spite of its bony covering, with, for example, a battle-axe, that will put an end to troublesome thinking. So there could grow up the idea that that drastic and violent form of operation reveals the source or origin of thought.

We have become so intelligent that I have heard it said that ideas don't exist in infants and embryos because the fibres aren't myelinated – therefore they cannot possibly think. But I have seen a very young baby who was frightened; I have seen a baby put on the pot and immediately "do its stuff". Does its bottom think? Or has it no myelinated fibres and therefore cannot? Or shall we have to reconsider our physiological knowledge?

The same thing applies to the whole body of psychoanalytic thinking. These theories are very useful – the difference between the conscious and the unconscious. Falling back on metaphor, one could say that when we secrete an idea, or when we produce a theory, we seem at the same time to lay down chalky material, we become calcified, the idea becomes calcified, and then you have another impressive caesura which you can't break out of. An asset, a useful theory of conscious and unconscious, then becomes a liability; it becomes a caesura which we cannot penetrate.

Dr Matte Blanco has spoken quite a lot about the possibility of thoughts or ideas which have never been conscious. I would certainly agree from an analytic point of view, from my experience of analysis, that there are certain ideas which appear never to have been conscious and which even seem to betray their existence in adult life. For example, I have a patient who talks very freely, and at the end of a session I know a great deal – if I were to attach much importance to hearsay evidence – about everybody except the patient. That seems to me to become a bit more comprehensible if one supposes that this patient has tried to get rid of every undesirable thought, feeling, even primordial thought, before he ever had them, so that he is surrounded, so to speak, by the thoughts which are voiced by other people – according to the patient – but never his own thoughts or ideas – never: he hasn't any; they have all been evacuated. One wonders if it is possible to mobilize what could be described as a mathematical capacity, or mathematical thinking, to express that state of affairs in a way that would be communicable to other people. Using as much analytic theory as seemed relevant, I made no difference

whatsoever to this flow of material in which everything appeared excepting the patient – the one object which was completely unexpressed. I have given plenty of interpretations about projection and so on and so forth; they make no difference. There is something about the total evacuation which requires some different form of approach.

A patient tells me that he has had a dream and that he dreamt . . . whatever it is. That is a narrative account. It could be described, borrowing from mathematics, as a linear progression from A to B. The individual is born, marries, dies. *Hic iacet*. There's the whole story – finished. But a problem arises when you want to draw the patient's attention to something which requires a more subtle delineation than a linear progression from birth to death.

Patients will very freely confess sins – lots of them – and after a time one feels that there is an inexhaustible supply of mistakes, crimes, failures with which to keep the analysis going. But if an analysis is turned into a somewhat elaborate version of the confessional known to the Church, it will not do. So even restricting ourselves to articulate speech, it is important to be able to decide when an analysis has turned into a kind of modern version of the confessional. If it has, then we may miss drawing attention to what the patient has got right.

I have experienced this curious state of affairs in which it would seem that the Freudian architectonic requires readjustment, particularly in the direction of leaving room for growth. While we are trying to elaborate a system of thought, or a system of analysis, we have to be aware that we are also excreting a kind of calcification which is going to make those thoughts become more of a prison than a liberating force.

Melanie Klein was rather annoyed at being labelled a "Kleinian"; she considered that she was an ordinary psychoanalyst and was simply following on the established theories of psychoanalysis. Betty Joseph said, "It's too late. Whether you like it or not you are a Kleinian"; she couldn't escape from that. And then, under the pressure of the various objections to her brainchild, she became more and more dogmatic and, I think, further and further from being able to draw attention to the merits of certain ideas which deserve to be given a chance to grow and develop.

This matters to us tomorrow when we see our patient. I think it is helpful to forget all our theories and our desires because they are so

obstructive that they become an impressive caesura which we cannot get past. The problem is how to let the germ of an idea, or the germ of an interpretation, have a chance of developing.

If I want to pictorialize this, I can talk about alpha- and beta-elements – a beta-element being something which is purely physical; an alpha-element something mental, like the idea that a baby is able to think if it knows what to do when a pot is put under its bottom. Take the next stage of the development, when it becomes something you can very nearly pictorialize: I would like to say, "Where did you go last night, and what did you see?" I am not really very interested in the fact that you went to bed and went to sleep. I would still like to know where you went and what you saw. Under pressure you might admit, "Oh well, I had a dream – but I don't remember it." Freud regarded the interpretation of dreams as being very important – it is hardly surprising when you consider how very early in history certain dreams have been recorded, such as those which appear in the Bible. However, while I agree, I think it is also liable to become – has, indeed, already become – a structure which is very difficult to break out of. When the patient says he "dreamt" something, we think – rightly or wrongly – that he was asleep. The places that he went to and the things that he saw were visited and seen, in a certain frame of mind. When he is wide awake and conscious he is in a different state of mind, and the story that he saw such-and-such is sure to be falsified because it is told when he is fully conscious. The experience was had when he was in a quite different frame of mind – "asleep" or "unconscious".

To come back to tomorrow's session: what you have to do is to give the germ of a thought a chance. You are sure to object to it; you are sure to wish it conformed to some cherished psychoanalytic theory, so that if you said it to some other psychoanalyst it could be seen to be in accordance with psychoanalytic theory, or the theories of your supervisor or your analyst. That is not good enough for what you tell *yourself*. Therefore – and this is really the central point, but very difficult – you have to *dare* to think and feel whatever it is that you think or feel, no matter what your society or your Society thinks about it, or even what *you* think about it. I can try to classify these thoughts and feelings as speculative imaginations, speculative ideas and speculative reasons. But I don't think that we should therefore allow ourselves to be misled into supposing that these speculative

thoughts have the same status as that which scientists ascribe to facts. As far as facts are concerned, I would think that they add up to evidence supporting a particular belief, idea or theory. The things I am talking about do not amount to anything better than a probability – something for which there is inadequate or insufficient supporting evidence. Even a person with as acute a mind as J. M. Keynes wrote on the Theory of Probability. But I am very doubtful that that kind of mathematics is good enough to further the problem of probability; there is something about the precision of mathematics which is valuable, but at the same time that precision must not be allowed to become so ossified, so calcified, that there is no room for development.

More recently, Brouwer and Heyting have attempted to release mathematics from the prison of present mathematical thinking by the elaboration of Intuitionism. Gödel has done the same thing with regard to meta-mathematics, which has involved questioning the law of the excluded middle.

I would like to be on the side of any of these things which have been excluded, whether it is the diaphragm which separates the top from the bottom, or whatever it is. Later I shall hope to talk about the excluded part of psychoanalysis, or what will be excluded from your consulting-room tomorrow when you and your analysand meet. The excluded part plays a large part and may not even yet have emerged into psychoanalytic theory.

Seminar 2

9 July 1977

Q: Before yesterday's seminar, I was curious to know what Dr Bion thought about music. I'd been reflecting on an analytic experience of mine when I felt that a woman patient preferred music to analysis and was trying – and had begun – to find music in analysis too, for certain reasons: music banished visual experiences, especially terrifying ones associated with the phobic space. She was able to dissolve the terrifying experiences of sounds by putting them together in a melody and using only certain sounds or certain limited pitches. If the music was broken down, the sounds took on a terrifying quality reminiscent of the terror of the visual, almost bodily, three-dimensional images of a claustrophobic space. But I had attributed this possibility of seeing terrifying images to her phantasy of a Cyclopean eye – the third mental eye that psychologists talk about – which she seems to see graphically before her.

An experience with another analysand puts me in mind of Ulysses, who turned himself into "Nobody" so as not to be seen and eaten by Polyphemus. So I wondered if Dr Bion feels we can also invoke a Cyclopean perception that has to do with music and analysis, as some psychologists have demonstrated.

Does Dr Bion think there is any connection between all this and the problem of musicians who play without reading the notes and others who can only play if they have a score in front of them?

Bion: If your patient is a musician or has musical capacity, then it is likely that in the consulting-room you can hear words *and* music. The patient's problem is not simply his relationship with the analyst. Obviously the analyst is a person the patient only meets for a few sessions a week for a limited period – it is not supposed to be

a permanent attachment. Then why does the patient come at all? It certainly cannot be because he disagrees with the analyst, or likes the analyst, for the analyst is not a person of any importance. As far as we are concerned, the real trouble is the patient's dis-agreement with himself. The psychoanalytic theory that there are mental conflicts is easily lost sight of but is, in fact, very important. However, as a temporary affair, what you can see is something of the relationship between those two people – the analyst and the analysand.

Falling back on the report of what happened – and this is what makes this kind of discussion of it of secondary importance – what would happen to you if you were bombarded with words as this patient bombards his analyst? Suppose the analyst is sensitive to what he is seeing and being told by the patient – that is what we are theoretically supposed to be. Taking first of all the words: what – as far as the analyst is concerned – are the nerve endings which are being stimulated? There is a wide range of stimulation of the analyst: the remnants of his classical education, knowledge of Greek mythology, knowledge or experience of any other culture. He is now free to show who he is by picking on, say, Greek mythology, or psychoanalytic theory or psychological theory. So from this point of view the analyst is invited to express his opinion of who he is.

What about the musical accompaniment of this mass of verbal information and stimulation? The patient is really giving a performance of a full operatic experience, of words and music. The problem is, what is the analyst to do? Whatever he does, the patient will have something to go on, something the patient can then himself interpret.

Again identifying oneself with the analyst: what are you to do when you are bombarded with such a vast variety of mythology, story, classical history and music? There is the further point that the analysand probably knows that the analyst is medically qualified; he can therefore always stimulate or not, as he chooses, the medical knowledge of the analyst. For example, this particular patient might show bodily symptoms of a blood disease. What is the analyst to do when he feels that the patient needs medical treatment and, at the same time, the analyst wants to be an analyst? I pose the question because those in a sufficiently hostile community will be very glad to bring accusations of malpractice against the doctor who has failed to interpret that the trouble was not mental at all, but that the patient had this, that or the other blood disease. I have known this happen:

the analyst was accused of having failed to diagnose that it was a case of cancer and of having gone on – according to the patient – mistakenly interpreting in psychoanalytic terms a cancerous condition which finally destroyed the patient.

I should be suspicious about so much "noise" made by a patient who bombarded me with such a mass of facts. The analyst can be deafened, blinded and put in the position where he virtually cannot use his senses because they are *all* being bombarded.

Suppose the patient shows signs of physical disease but just passes it off. I think in that instance I would say, "With regard to the physical complaint you have made, you will, of course, be seeing your doctor. But *here* we must consider something else." Out of all this variety of material from which I am invited to choose, I would like to select what appears to me to be psychoanalytically relevant. That is quite simple as a general theory; in practice, it is not. In such a mass of information the noise is so great that you cannot hear the noise you ought to be hearing. The impression that it creates on me is that if I were subjected to that experience, my attention would be drawn to the repetition of this word "terrible" – it kept cropping up. I would strongly suspect that this is the vestigial remains of something that I would regard as sub-thalamic fear. I am not using that phrase as an expression of my medical or psychoanalytic or any other knowledge. As far as I am concerned it is an idea which belongs to what I have described as "speculative imagination".

Now that is all very well for me: it is not good enough for me to transform my impressions into a psychoanalytic theory, or a psychoanalytic interpretation. Therefore, I would want to hear more, and the minimum condition for me to analyse that patient is to be allowed to remain silent, because I don't want to add my noise to that which the patient is already making. *If* I am allowed more time to be silent, then I may be able to hear just a little bit more.

The situation in analysis is misleading because there is apparently only one person there with the analyst. I have found my experiences in groups useful – a group is almost like one person, character or personality, spread out over a space. In a group I would want to know, "Who is this person who is saying, 'terrified . . . terrified . . . terrible'?" Similarly, if I were a physician I would want to see the whole body, and then perhaps I could locate a swelling, or a flush of the skin, and I could wonder, "Is this some sort of infection?" As

I say, in the group one could then locate, so to speak, the origin, the source, of the infection.

Having taken that sort of group view, narrow down your observation. At this point I would be paying much more attention to this "terrible" and listening to the occurrence, apparently, only of a word; but I would hope, if I am given a chance of remaining silent, to be able to detect a certain similarity about all these "terribles". And then when I thought that things had gone far enough for me to feel that I could formulate my observation, I would do so. But I would ignore all the rest of it.

However, there is still this point that included in this is also the music. The two of them together would perhaps make it a bit easier to see or recognize the centre of infection, the point which really requires to be interpreted. That is much more difficult than it sounds in a discussion like this. The experience of practical analysis or practical medicine, or the practice of anything, is very much tougher than the discussion about it.

Q: Someone told me about a psychiatric institution where, over a period, a professor gave identical red sweaters to a number of mothers, who held their babies in their arms until, after a while, the sweaters were taken back and placed together on a carpet. Then all the babies were put down beside the sweaters, all of which were the same colour, and quite a few were able to find their mother's sweater, presumably by the smell. But then, the head of the institute where I worked for many years boasted that he could identify a person's schizophrenic state from the particular smell he or she gave off while in that state. I had never experienced this and doubted that it was true, until one day I was analysing a schizoid, perverse patient, who had great difficulty in expressing some of his feelings in words: it turned out that in some sessions he was putting out a very particular smell, which tended to put me in a dream-like state in which quite disturbing images came up in my mind. I mention this because it seems to me that we have had a lot to say about nonverbal communication here.

Bion: The nonverbal communication is very difficult to interpret, to transform or translate into articulate speech. That applies both to the analyst and to the analysand. The analysand likewise expects that he will have to talk an articulate language with his analyst, and he hasn't

any words with which to do it. This happens in a variety of different ways – here, we can discuss it again, not only with regard to this particular patient, but to recognize a certain similarity between that kind of communication and the patient who responds with floods of tears. Tears, like smiles, don't mean a thing. So the analysand is up against this problem of finding a method of communicating what he wants to say. Falling back on a narrative view of the situation – from birth to death – smell can be one of the long-range methods of communication. Therefore, some stage in the development of the patient – or, as I would put it, some aspect of this patient at the present moment – still betrays a survival of that state, or what I am compelled to call "a state of mind". Where is this smell located? Anatomically and physiologically we can produce all sorts of theories based on our knowledge of embryology and so forth, but, ignoring that for the moment, where is it cropping up with these apparently two people in the room? I say "apparently two people" because of the dominance of what one could call a rational point of view – there are only two anatomical structures in the room. But it is difficult to know how many minds or personalities there are there, and which one is the source of that smell.

Again indulging in speculative imagination, I would say that this patient finds it very difficult indeed to say that he is coming for mental nourishment. If he could by any chance re-mobilize extremely primitive equipment, then perhaps he could smell the place where he expects to find mental nourishment. But suppose that, at the same time, the patient is afraid of making a smell which would make *him* locatable so that something could come and prey on him. In that way I would begin to suspect that he is sometimes afraid that he will get devoured, and sometimes afraid that the analyst will notice that *he* is being fed upon, being used to provide mental nourishment.

Then why not say so? Why not say that he wants an analysis, that he wants to have his emotional or intellectual needs satisfied? The obvious answer would be, "Because he can't." Articulate speech, which can be comprehended by somebody else and which the patient can understand, is not available to him. So he is afraid that there is no chance of getting the help he wants from the analyst. This is a very common state indeed. I still find it astonishing how few patients believe that any relief can be obtained. And the same thing applies to analysts: they do not feel that they have any evidence that the kind

of conversation that takes place in analysis will satisfy anybody or anything. It takes a long time before it becomes clear that, in fact, the analytic intercourse is yielding an experience which is nourishing to both parties.

The same thing applies to the patient who repeats "terrible, terrible". All that is said in a vague hope that somebody or something will turn up who will be able to understand what he is communicating and will be able to supply the correct mental nourishment. It is a matter of touch and go whether the patient will be able to come to analysis long enough to find out if it is worth doing.

The kind of thing I have been saying is something of a generalization. From day to day, from free-association to free association, one is dealing with a little bit of that fundamental story. In the one instance there is this problem of how to find something to feed on without getting eaten up in the process; in the other, how to let anybody know that he is terrified, especially in a situation where there may be nobody. In this way both patients resort to a somewhat obscure, primitive and incomprehensible method of communication. Then they can feel, "Well, nothing comes of it, but it doesn't matter. It's not worse than it was before." But if the analyst has been able to give enough interpretations to lead the patient to think there could be somebody who understands, then terror is released.

To make that point clearer, using a pictorial image: a party of some five people were survivors from a shipwreck. The rest had died of starvation or had been swept overboard from the remnants of the raft. They experienced no fear whatsoever – but became terrified when they thought a ship was coming near. The possibility of rescue, and the even greater possibility that their presence would not be noticed on the surface of the ocean, led them to be terrified. Previously the terror had been sunk, so to speak, in the overwhelming depths of depression and despair.

So the analyst, in the midst of the noises of distress, the failure of analysis, the uselessness of that kind of conversation, still needs to be able to hear the sound of this terror which indicates the position of a person beginning to hope that he might be rescued.

Consider this patient who smells the possibility that the analyst could nourish him, but also that the analyst might devour him. Let us put that into more rational terms: will the analyst understand

him? Or will the analyst shut him up in a mental hospital so he will never escape? What interpretation do you give? This highly sophisticated one, saying, "You are afraid of getting locked up in a mental hospital"? – in which case he might not understand why the analyst is talking like that or what it has to do with what he is saying. That question can only be decided by the analyst or analysand, or both of them, because it is such an extremely subtle position. That is why I don't like butting in with theories which are out of touch with the actual patient and the actual experience. I would again say that the more the analyst appreciates the extremely wealthy circumstance of an actual session to which the patient comes, the greater chance he may have of being able to make up his mind: "No, I won't give that interpretation, I'll give this one."

If I say he is afraid of getting locked up in a mental hospital, it may frighten this terrified patient so much that he cannot go on with the analysis. Or if I say he has no sense of smell, the situation would again be hopeless. It is necessary to give an interpretation which lets the patient have a chance of knowing that he has been understood, and a chance of feeling that he will not be incarcerated or devoured.

This is partly a by-product of the fact that, thanks to articulate speech, we do seem to establish a contact, a verbal intercourse. Therefore, the patient who has these terrifying experiences can be afraid that the terror will be communicated to the analyst, and if he, the patient, doesn't run away, the analyst will. Falling back on the group experience, I can say that the patient is afraid of a situation which can develop into fight or flight and can express itself on sophisticated levels of the mind of the analyst who says "Oh well, I think you are cured" and finishes – in other words, runs away – or gets angry and says "Oh don't be so silly; don't be so ridiculous."

I think it is necessary to interpret the patient's relationship with himself. He isn't simply frightened of being eaten up by the analyst or the hospital; he is frightened of being eaten up by *himself*. For example, suppose the patient finds that masturbation has a very soothing effect and that the anxiety is somehow relieved by the stimulation of his own genitalia. Then comes the fear that the pleasures of masturbation will take possession of him, that he will go mad – a very common fear we come across where people are able to express feelings of fear of going mad but don't usually know why. It can generally be traced to their fear of a pleasurable or rewarding experience.

To revert to the point I made yesterday: the importance of the analyst's ability to provide the space in which he can develop. Whatever body of theory attracts you, you should also consider whether there is room in it for the expansion of yourself. You should not be afraid of these speculative imaginations and speculative reasons, which are extremely vulnerable and which can be destroyed with the slightest inclemency of weather, so to speak. If you find yourself speculating and imagining that this or the other story is relevant, you should allow yourself to entertain that speculation in the hope that it might grow into a communicable idea.

Q: May I ask Dr Bion if his suggested methodology, involving something in a constant state of renewal and ferment, or rather *in statu nascendi*, might be connected with the Eastern tradition, or have something in common with it? I'm thinking of the kind of teachings that gurus or yogis pass on to their followers. After all, what happened before strongly suggested this to me.

Bion: I hope so, because I am somewhat distrustful of a method of treatment which suddenly springs out of the ground or springs out of the sky. I don't know why, but I have a prejudice in favour of acknowledging my indebtedness to my ancestors. I don't think I mind very much if I am accused of ancestor worship – I still would like to be able to acknowledge some sort of gratitude to my forebears.

Let us take a previous inhabitant of this city: he says, "*Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona multi, sed omnes illacrimabiles urgentur ignotique longa nocte, carent quia vate sacro*" [Many brave hearts lived before Agamemnon, but they drove to that long night unhonoured and unsung for lack of a sacred poet – Horace, *Odes*, IV: 9]. It is comforting to feel that our brilliant psychoanalytic theories are not necessarily a barrier which, while no doubt establishing our superiority to our ancestors, cuts us off from them for ever. I have no complaints about the complacency which is engendered by a feeling of success about achieving an analytic insight, but it is a great pity if it becomes ossified or fibrosed into a kind of impenetrable diaphragm which separates us for ever from our ancestors. If Horace could acknowledge the existence of poets long before him, I don't think there is any harm in our also acknowledging the existence of our predecessors even though they were never heard of.

Q: I'm pleased to say that, whereas yesterday Dr Bion was suggesting that we search for an object, today he has given us some coordinates, some positions, to help us get our bearings. So I wondered – to return to the people on the raft for a moment – whether something that might be useful to them is the idea of reversible perspective. It would be like providing them with an optical instrument to allow them to see more, rather than showing them an object. Let me give an example. In a group, there was a situation that went on for perhaps ten sessions where a girl spent the entire two hours of the session panting. Now (the whole thing was totally opaque to me at the time), from what has been said, it seems to me that what was needed was to find a different way of looking at the situation or, at any rate, first of all to overcome my inability to think. Later, when I realized it had to do with cowardice, I felt I could suggest to the group that it should look at the situation not from the medical and sacrificial point of view, but in terms of the impossibility of developing in a dimension of past and future. I merely wanted to add that it is an attempt to communicate.

Bion: The analytic situation stimulates very primitive feelings, including the feelings of dependence and isolation; they are both unpleasant feelings. It is not, therefore, really surprising if one of the pair, and probably both, is aware that the psychoanalytic raft to which they cling in the consulting-room – beautifully disguised, of course, with comfortable chairs and every modern convenience – is nevertheless a very precarious raft in a tumultuous sea. Besides the various theories and interpretations to which the analyst gives expression, there needs to be an awareness that the two people are actually engaged in a dangerous adventure. There is always a tendency to snatch at some piece of material – some psychoanalytic theory or idea – as a kind of lifebelt which would help to keep the two feeling that they are still alive and floating. A common piece of wreckage is the idea of a "cure"; we snatch feverishly at the latest bit of cure that is available in order to keep afloat. That is something the analyst should be able to resist because, while it may have a temporarily curative effect, if it is constantly repeated then it becomes an addiction – the pair get addicted to cures. And in this peculiar sphere with which we are concerned, there are any amount of cures floating around. So it is a good thing if the analyst – in so far as he identifies himself with

the responsible person – resists too many of these cheap cures which can be built into an elaborate structure so that, before you know where you are, the raft which is made of bits of wreckage turns into a delusional system which is a veritable *Titanic*. As we all know, the *Titanic* was unsinkable, it was the latest thing – but it hit up against a fact, and that sank it.

Mathematically, lines, circles and so on were profoundly changed by their translation into vectors, directions. I would suggest this: let us consider for the sake of argument that this experience here is a fact. Working our way back through speculative imaginations, speculative reasons, can we get back to the dream that we haven't had yet, tonight's dream, the dream which originates in the fact of this meeting? If we could do that, then we would be in a position to trace back the train of thought which might help to explain how it comes about that we are all in this room just now. This "fact" is one which ought to be classified as "incredible". If somebody wrote, or could write, the story of each individual member of this meeting and say they would meet in this particular room, in this particular hotel, at this particular date and time, anybody reading that story could only say, "How ridiculous!" There is no story which is so unbelievable as the true one.

Q: After the comment on the question of the ancestors and the quotation from Virgil and so on, I found myself thinking about yesterday's Freud quotation, in which he seemed to be emphasizing the continuity between intrauterine life and early infancy, rather than the caesura of birth, on which a lot of stress had been placed.

Now in Dr Bion's presentation yesterday, when he mentioned Otto Rank's concept of the birth trauma, I thought he was suggesting that we are "too impressed by the trauma of birth". On this point I disagreed with the interpreter, who interpreted that we are *not sufficiently* impressed by the birth trauma. Could you please enlarge on this point, as I don't want to make too much noise.

Bion: I am not aware that I was stressing either being impressed or not being impressed by the caesura of birth. I wanted to suggest that the caesura of birth, the anatomical and physiological fact, has a dominant effect on our view of whether the mind also is born at the moment of physiological birth.

When you are in the state of mind of the person who is awake, with all your senses about you and conscious, what relation does

what you *say* you dreamt have to the experience which you had when you were in a different state of mind – namely, the state of mind when you were asleep? I am sometimes told that the patient had a "dream" and that, for a fact, such-and-such happened. I am not so certain that "in fact" the patient dreamt it, nor am I so sure that the "facts" are as he described them. There are plenty of things we can call it: dream, delusion, hallucination and so on. The words have become so debased that they are virtually meaningless, and if they *are* given a meaning, that meaning is virtually useless. So it is hardly surprising if the patient we heard about earlier thinks that there is a lot to be said for the music. You may sometimes wonder why a patient comes to see you, and why the patient starts telling you whatever he tells you. As a step on the journey it may be quite useful to have an analyst who, the patient can say, thinks this or that – it is a relationship between two people. But it is really a relationship that the analysand has with the analysand. The highly intelligent embryo sees and experiences whatever it sees and experiences; the highly intelligent man or woman also gives a very convincing account of what is taking place. A difficulty would arise if by any chance we could introduce this highly intelligent postnatal person to the highly intelligent embryo who could tell such very different stories, different narratives about the same facts. If the "unsinkable" *Titanic* could meet with its passengers, those it sank, I wonder what the dialogue would be. If they met *before* that unfortunate fact, they could say, "I had a terrifying dream." One could reply, "Don't be so silly – it was only a dream." I leave it to you to imagine what they would say *afterwards*.

Seminar 3

10 July 1977

Q: I'd like to ask Dr Bion if he can tell us more about his ideas on the countertransference, because it seems to me that this is the particular type of noise in the analyst's mind that can be picked up in the psychoanalytic experience. I wonder if it might also contain musical elements, and if so if we should adjust our minds like a high-fidelity system that can not only extract the signal from the noise, but also act like a resonance chamber and allow us to receive the entire range of acoustic stimuli, even if that means that the clarity of the melody is lost.

Bion: The idea of the transference and the countertransference has been extremely productive, provocative and growth-stimulating. But, like every really good idea, like anything which provokes or stimulates growth, it makes itself out of date at once. When individuals are exposed to the analytic experience for the first time, they don't understand what that experience is or what its name is. Nor does the analyst say, "You are experiencing transference to me" – that is a technical term which is useful for people who have already had the experience of psychoanalytic training. After a time, though, the novice begins to understand that the analyst is drawing attention to an actual experience which he is having. If he is becoming an analyst, then he may reach a point where we could say, "That is what we mean by transference – that is a transference manifestation. Your feeling that I am your father or mother can be compared with other ideas you have: you can bring together both the idea that I am your mother or father *and* the idea that I am a stranger whom you do not know. Then you can decide for yourself who or what you really think I am – that is your affair. In that way a new idea is born. The idea

that you had before – namely, that I am a blood relation, a father or mother – is transient; it is a temporary idea on the journey of your life. From that point of view the technical term "transference" can be seen to have a resemblance to ordinary usage. It is an idea that you have "on the way" – you transfer it to me as a temporary measure on your way to what you really think or feel. At the same moment the new idea that you have is a temporary one and will be discarded sooner or later. It is another of these places where you stop on your own particular journey. If you could look at these various ideas which you have in the course of this experience with me, you might be able to trace a sort of map showing the stations of your journey from point A to point Z. Where you are now, when you have just seen this point, is already out of date."

Consequently I would say that the idea of transference and countertransference is hardly worth mentioning to this audience. That would be suitable if we were concerned with writing the history of psychoanalysis; then it might be interesting to say, "Transference, as defined by Freud is . . . Transference, as defined by Abraham is . . . Transference, as defined by Melanie Klein is . . .". In short, may I hand you the *Encyclopaedia of Psycho-Analysis*. You will find all the definitions laid down here if you want to know the history. But if you are, in fact, having a psychoanalytic experience – that is different.

Nansen was asked, "How did you get to the Pole?" His reply was something like this [*draws on the blackboard*], "That's my route." That is a pictorial representation of how Nansen discovered the North Pole; that is how he got there; there's the map. He drew it much better than I have – although he had just had a very good dinner. In the actual experience of analysis there isn't time to do that; there isn't time to carry out this sort of discussion. Once the patient begins to understand what the analytic experience is, then he changes so fast that what he thought or felt at the beginning of a sentence is out of date by the time he has reached the end of it. That is why, when you are satisfied that the patient is actually developing, it is as well to be able to forget what you know and to discard what you want to happen. It is difficult to de-barrass the mind of its load of experience; we are liable to slow the patient down by clinging to out-of-date ideas and, as a result, are unable to watch the patient's progress to some other idea.

As I said yesterday, I think it is as well to be able to acknowledge our debt to our ancestors – our mental ancestors. It is quite appropriate for us, as analysts, to know what was meant by "transference" or "countertransference" when used by Freud, Abraham, Melanie Klein or anybody else, only if at the same time we learn how to forget it all so as to be open to the next move which is made by the patient – the next stopping station, as it were.

The patient who has very gifted genetic ancestry – a very intelligent father and mother – is the product of what the biologists call "sexual relationship" between that particular father and mother and therefore develops from a germ which has chromosomes derived from both parties. If the development is adequately expressed in physical terms, then it can be worked out in terms of that sort of inheritance. But if there is such a thing as a mind or spirit or soul, that may not follow the same laws as those of Mendelian inheritance. As psychoanalysts who believe in the existence of a mind, we then have to consider what are the laws of inheritance of the mind. Provisionally, transiently, on the way to something better, I would like to suggest something like "phenotypes" as contrasted with "genotypes". By supposing something of that sort, we might be able to work out the laws of, the inheritance of, acquired characteristics which according to Mendelian theory are not transmitted. I suppose the existence of speculative imagination, speculative reasons, for the early development of those characteristics which are mental, which, as I have already suggested, have a different form of inheritance from that of the genotypes.

Every single one of us would be hard put to it to write down his or her mental journey and mental inheritance. Who or what were your ancestors? I don't want to hear about your genetic ancestors – what are the other ones? Could you have a look at your character or personality, this queer thing which I am sure exists? I am convinced from my experience – partly as an analyst, but on the whole through life – that there *is* such a thing as a character or a mind. I don't think I am always affected by the physical appearance of the person, although, thanks to the dominance of our eyes, the cosmetic element is likely to play a very big part and we can immediately be affected by the feeling of liking or disliking somebody. We don't even have to go deeper than skin-deep, literally or metaphorically: "I don't like

that person – he's white" (or "black"). It would be a ridiculous situation if a doctor refused to examine a patient who had a cachectic flush or showed signs of inflammation or of jaundice. As doctors we are expected not to take such a prejudiced view of what the body tells us, because our examination of that body is supposed to be more than skin-deep. The situation is not so very different if we are supposed to be concerned with the human mind or character or personality. If we are sensitive to this supposed "thing", then the fact that we don't like that person – or that character or that personality – is irrelevant. We are nevertheless supposed to know some more about that character or personality, whether we like it or not.

As analysts we have to be disciplined to a situation where, whatever the facts are, we do not allow them to make us run away or do the opposite – fall in love. We are supposed still to remain analysts. We are not obliged to become inhuman people who cannot love or hate: we are still supposed to retain the capacity to have feelings of love and hate and all the other feelings which go with them, but at the same time we are supposed to remain disciplined. To take an extreme example such as battle action: an officer is not supposed to be afraid, but that does not mean that he does not know that a situation is dangerous. Nor yet is he supposed to be so carried away by a victory as to assume that the war is over. That is one reason why I suggested last time that we are surrounded by the wreckage of cures all over the place – the remains of the wreckage of the disaster in which somebody has been sunk by cure, sunk by his desires, misled by his hopes and fears – whichever part is showing above the surface, like the iceberg. As the poet [Arthur Clough (1819–1861)] says, "If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars."

Have we any coordinate system which could give us an idea as to where we are, where the pair are – the analyst and the patient? In the narrative story we can get an idea of a person's development by taking any two points, A and B, and the direction would be from A to B. Those two points, A and B, we could call "real and distinct". However, suppose those two points were mobile; then they might travel round the circumference of a circle and become "real and coincident", And if we try to draw in the two points which are real and coincident, we can say that they meet and describe a line which is a tangent.

Take these two people – the analyst and the analysand – who have met at one point. I don't know what spiritual route the analyst

has taken, the journey that his mind has taken between the point at which it is supposed it began its existence and the point at which it became coincident with an entirely different personality – coincident and real. Let us suppose that these two points go on with their journey: the analyst and analysand continue to live; they don't stop at psychoanalysis; they don't stop at this point at which they are real and coincident. I was taught to call that "conjugate complex". I didn't have – and still haven't – any particular ideas about what to translate that into. I am glad to find that even my translator here had to hesitate for a moment. However, I use these two words "conjugate complex" as imaginary points. I am assured – and I hope there is a mathematician here who can inform me more correctly – that these imaginary points still obey the laws of real ones. In that way I think we ought to consider, as if it were real, that the analyst and analysand still continue to exist even when the analysis is over, when those two points, which are real and distinct, real and coincident in the analyst's consulting-room, continue in a space about which I know nothing because that mind which is no longer in contact with me has gone I don't know where.

Q: Thinking of this alchemy of human existences and encounters between thoughts, I wonder if Dr Bion can explain to me the role of the human need to know – what I think he calls K. And, second, what part is played in the patient by the need to express to someone his desire for knowledge?

Bion: I suspect that these are vestiges of fundamental characteristics which have not yet been destroyed either by the inability to tolerate ignorance or by the inability to tolerate the answer. The trouble about curiosity is that it is liable to provoke a response. From what I know of myself, the danger to which anybody exposes themselves by asking me a question is another flood of questions. I do try to resist the temptation to say, "Yes, I know; I know about transference; I know about countertransference." I am partly assisted by the fact that I *don't* know. That picture in which Nansen showed exactly how he got to the North Pole does not tell me – and I would never know – what it would be like to be Nansen wandering in the wastes of the Arctic. I only know a little bit about what it feels like to be me wandering in the realms of the human mind. One hopes that it is a relatively limited sphere – not quite so dangerous, perhaps, as wandering in the realms

of omniscience or omnipotence. There are various pictorial images, narrative images, fables, in which it is supposed that the attempt to eat of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Wisdom excited the highly dangerous wrath of omnipotence and omniscience. To be dominated or motivated by curiosity, by our wish to know, would seem to be a dangerous occupation, especially if we come across another mind which has the characteristic of omniscience or omnipotence. As Milton put it, "who durst defy th'Omnipotent to arms" [*Paradise Lost*, Bk. I]. As analysts we may be always running the risk of questioning whoever or whatever is clothed in authority. It is not only the psychoanalytic investigation which is suspect, but also any activity which might be seen as arming ourselves by improving such minds or instruments as we have available for investigating the unknown.

Q: Let me take up Dr Bion's image of the analytic couple who meet at a certain time at a real, coincident point, and later split up so that each, as it were, goes off at a tangent. Dr Bion says that the couple nevertheless continues to exist, but he doesn't know how and where. I wondered if what happens is the transformation of a relationship which, as between the analysand and the analyst, is an object relationship, and if this object, which goes off at a tangent, later becomes a spatialized object – if it becomes an area or a space. And this applies to the analysand as well as to the analyst. In other words, I wanted to ask Dr Bion what relation there is between a relationship with a real object and one with a spatialized object.

Bion: I doubt whether any of us would ever know, because we are so ephemeral, so short-lived. One feels that we, this group, have some existence previous to this meeting. You can put any number of years to it if you consider that the calendar gives you an adequate measure to go by. But a few orbits of the earth around the sun is a very insignificant method of counting time. Similarly, the distance from Los Angeles to Rome is too small. So the measurements of both time and space are simply not adequate. These two "things" – I have to borrow from the language of material objects – leave the consulting-room and go out into space and time. It is difficult enough to find a coordinate of geometrical space; it took several hundred years before the Cartesian co-ordinates were produced, and then really by accident. The co-ordinates of the time and space into which these two characters or souls or personalities – again, I am not even able to give a precise name

to it – are launched are very difficult to describe. Even our imagination is not free if we try to imagine what would be occupying this space, here, in the relatively insignificant time of two thousand years ago, who or what was occupying what we now call "Rome". But the same thing applies to this space which is occupied by "Rome" and what it will have turned into in two thousand years' time – which, as I say, is a relatively insignificant time span. As far as absolute space is concerned, the astronomers imagine that the solar system will have completed its journey when it has made one revolution around the galactic centre. The most recent estimate that I have heard is that the diameter is something like 10^8 million light-years – quite a long time. Nevertheless, I suppose we can add some minute bit of knowledge to this problem of the coordinates by which we could plot the course of these two people when they leave the consulting-room.

I would like to mention an example, which I have often used, of the kind of thing that I mean. Hugh Kenner was talking to a yokel in Warwickshire and mentioned how beautiful the dandelions looked. The yokel replied, "Yes, we call them golden boys and girls, and later when the petals fall off, we call them chimney-sweepers." Hugh Kenner was familiar with a song from *Cymbeline*, two lines of which are, "Golden lads and girls all must, / As chimney-sweepers, come to dust." The Warwickshire yokel, without any education, was using a language which must have been commonplace in Shakespeare's time. So Shakespeare may have been making a commonplace remark – "as chimney-sweepers come to dust". I don't know what Shakespeare could have been thinking . . .

[*The remainder of this seminar is missing from the recording*.]

Seminar 4

13 July 1977

In some ways it is an advantage to me to know that I don't know any Italian, because I think you can be misled by thinking you *do* know Italian. Patients *seem* to talk French, or English or Italian, but what *we* want to hear is not any of those languages. I find it difficult to say what language we need to listen to; the nearest I can get to it is to say that it is the language of what Freud would call "the unconscious".

I have seen this stated most clearly recently by Dr Matte Blanco, who mentions this peculiar fact of Freud sometimes talking about "the unconscious", and at other times talking about something as "unconscious". They are two different things. Furthermore, I have come across material which seems never to have been what Freud would have called "conscious". Dr Segal described a situation in which a patient says it is obvious that somebody who is playing the violin is masturbating. I had a patient who, I began to feel, wore his mind inside out – that is to say, like clothes worn inside out: what ought to be on the inside is on the outside. Falling back on metaphorical language, I could say that the patient behaved as if his unconscious was outside. So the interpretations which we would think appropriate formulations of unconscious thoughts and ideas are, in fact, ordinary statements to the patient. He has no difficulty whatever in thinking that the analyst is saying things which are obvious. On the other hand, if we resort to ordinary speech, waking thought, conscious thought, the patient says, "I don't know what you mean." He has no difficulty in understanding a psychoanalytic interpretation of something we could regard as "unconscious", but he cannot understand the language we talk when we are wide awake, fully conscious and aware of what we call the "facts", "reality".

I used to find this difficult to understand – I still do. I also found that it made me angry. I thought I preserved a disciplined attitude and was quite polite, but the patient had no difficulty at all in knowing that I was annoyed. That was also annoying – I didn't like being analysed by my patient. But I persisted, and so did the patient.

After a time I drew the patient's attention to the fact that he had not said why he came to me or what he wanted me to do. His reply was, "I have been telling you all the time. You mean to say you don't know now?" Well, I didn't. I felt I had to do a lot of thinking about this extraordinary situation. Why did the patient keep on coming? I didn't know.

Another patient complained strongly about the behaviour of everybody else. Thinking of this in terms of projection, I tried to draw his attention to the fact that everybody was wrong, but that there was nothing wrong with him. There again, thinking over the matter, I couldn't understand why he kept on coming. If the situation was that A, B, C, D and so on were so hostile and so difficult, what was *I* supposed to do? What was I supposed to interpret? There is nothing I can do about a universe in which everybody is wrong. The inhabitants of this world don't all come to me for analysis; the one person who does come has nothing the matter with him.

I searched my mind in the hope of finding some interpretation which would appear to approximate to this situation. I thought of the various interpretations which Freud gives – particularly those dealing with *the* unconscious, the repression of conscious ideas, the filling of the gap, the space occupied by amnesia, by paramnesias – but it wasn't any good. I thought of Melanie Klein's idea of projective identification – an "omnipotent phantasy" that the patient believes he can evacuate his thoughts which are out of control but which nevertheless persecute him. I gave various interpretations in accordance with that theory. I couldn't see that it had any effect whatsoever. So the problem was, is psychoanalysis any use at all? Why give these interpretations – Freudian, Abrahamian, Kleinian and so forth – none of which has any effect at all?

It seems to me that the one essential in analysis is that we should be able to go on thinking in a situation which is extremely tense. We are bound to be anxious about our ability to treat and, at the same time, about our apparent inability to do anything about the fact that

either the theories of psychoanalysis are wrong, or the idea that the correct interpretation will cure the patient is wrong, or that something else which we do not know is wrong – or all of them.

I would like to continue the discussion in a way more applicable to what we want to know or think about before seeing tomorrow's patient. I shall be glad to try to go on from there on any theme that you wish to introduce. I could sum up the question by saying, "Where do we go from here?"

Q: Dr Bion's comments on nonverbal communication put me in mind of something that Paul Valéry said: that the entire substance of what people say lies in song and in the sound of a voice, yet these are often disregarded, neglected. I'd like to connect this with the problem of distance and time in analytic work – when we might be either too close to the patient or too far away from him, and when we might say something either too soon or too late. As to the patient mentioned by Dr Bion who asks "What do you think of this?", I would ask a question: from his own experience, can he give us an example of a situation in which he answered immediately and another where he felt it was better to wait?

Bion: The question goes to the root of the problem – namely, what is the space or time that we are talking about and are in? What coordinates can we suggest for locating the source or origin of the difficulty?

Can we observe the "thing itself"? Milton says in *Paradise Lost* [Bk. III],

> So much the rather thou Celestial Light
> Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
> Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
> Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
> Of things invisible to mortal sight.

We are mere mortals, mere human beings, so how are our minds to be irradiated by celestial light so that through all their powers they are illuminated, enabling us to see (first point) and tell (second point) of things invisible to mortal sight? Our problem tomorrow is, how are we to see, observe – which is regarded, in any case, as the first requisite of a scientific outlook – these things which are not visible? How are we to see the invisible and then formulate what we see in such a

way that the patient can see what we want him to see. There are two points: the first is to be able to see it ourselves; the second, to find a mode of communication so that we can tell the patient.

Are we able to be scientific at all in the sense of observing the facts? Up to a point we can. We may have a patient who is flushed: in other words, in so far as his body is communicating and if we have enough medical experience and training, we are able to observe a flushed appearance on the cheeks of the patient which a lay person couldn't see. We can teach medical students how to observe. We say, "You must examine the patient; you must look at him; you must ask him to remove his clothes so that you can palpate his body and in that way understand the language spoken by the body – that is, diagnose the condition." It doesn't seem to me that that is in any way different from the analyst who is trying to interpret the mind. Physically we call it "diagnosis"; analytically we call it "interpretation".

In saying that, I have made an entirely artificial separation; I have talked about the body and the mind as if they were two entirely different things. I don't believe it. I think that the patient whom you see tomorrow is one, a whole, a complete person. And although we say – obeying the laws of grammar – that we can observe his body and mind, in fact there is no such thing as a "body and mind"; there is a "he" or a "she".

To take up this other point about distance: what is the distance between "there" and "here"? What is the distance between the state of mind which is repressed and the state of mind which has done the repressing?

The same thing, put in a different way: what is the distance between the person, awake and conscious, who says, "I had a dream last night", and the person who, in a different state of mind, experienced the dream? Suppose the sleeping person is restless, twists and turns because he is aware of a pain. It may be because he has appendicitis, or it may be because he has painful thoughts or ideas. When he tells us that he had a bad dream, where do you locate the discomfort? Is the source of that discomfort physical? Or is it what we call "mental"?

That is your problem tomorrow and all the other tomorrows. The only person who knows the answer to that question is your patient. Therefore he is the one collaborator on whom you can really rely.

If the patient is suffering from leukaemia, he doesn't know enough to understand what his body is telling him; he is dependent on a doctor, or a psychoanalyst, or both. A doctor, if he is well-versed in medicine, and if he knows how to observe, can see that there is an infection, something producing an inflammation; that is what his patient's body tells him. What are psychoanalysts to observe? How are they to be aware of these pains? And, then, how are they to see them – the total situation, body *and* mind, one person? In the consulting-room the analyst is all alone; he can depend only on such powers of observation as he has and on the patient. Similarly, the patient has nobody on whom to depend except the analyst. Therefore this *practical* situation, the *practice* of psychoanalysis, involves the relationship between two people – but, half a minute: is it only between two people? Anatomically, physically, there are A and B. Is that real? Are there only two people? If we look at and listen to what is in the room, what shall we look at? The patient? Our own free associations? Our own ideas as to what this is? Or a *relationship* between two people? It is *at least* two people. Is it what Dr Matte Blanco calls a "symmetrical relationship"? Or is it something else? That seems to me to be a matter which can only be decided by us who practise psychoanalysis. It is no good looking at books about psychoanalysis – there is no time. This has to be observed in your session tomorrow.

Perhaps somebody here could formulate the nature of this problem still further. I think it is a mistaken idea that there is some analyst who knows the answers. I now know quite enough to know that I don't know. And in spite of all the pressure to which I am subjected to know the answers, I *don't* know them. But I am sure that between us all we may learn a bit more and be a bit wiser by tomorrow evening.

Q: The problem of communication and non-communication – the aspect of the limits of communicability – centres on the patient rather than on the analytic relationship. Otherwise it might be possible to do something about the different potentials of certain analytic couples for development, which sometimes favour the development of the analyst as well as the patient. Here one really feels that the things that are developed are very close to primary repression – aspects that have never benefited from contact with reality. This potential often impresses its stamp even on the intake session, so that the analyst sometimes feels compelled to take on

a patient he had not previously thought of accepting for analysis. Perhaps it is precisely this situation which results in analyses that are productive for analyst and patient alike.

Bion: No one should set up as an analyst or doctor unless he is prepared to pay the price. To put it in other words, "If you can't stand the heat, keep out of the kitchen." Once you want to help your fellow men and women, you are in trouble. It doesn't matter how ill you are, how tired, how mentally or physically sick, you have to preserve your discipline. I gave the example of getting angry with a patient. It doesn't fool the patient. That is *not* good behaviour on the part of the analyst – he has to continue to behave in a civilized manner.

To take a more extreme situation: the officer in war whose troops are frightened and want to run away. The officer is not privileged to run away too. His privilege is to stay where he is, even if it costs him his life. That may seem to be an exaggerated description of your session tomorrow with your patient. I don't believe it. I think it is hidden because the psychoanalyst's consulting-room is comfortable, he has good food, and so on. But he can be so overwhelmed with noise – putting it again metaphorically – that it is difficult to hear. The noise comes from within – hypotheses about physical illnesses, hypotheses about analytic theories – masses of them ad infinitum. They all make such a noise that it is difficult to hear what the patient's body and mind are saying. I have tried to put this rather crudely as divesting our minds of memory and desire so that the noise made by our learning, our training, our past experience, is at a minimum. In that way you get as wide a view as possible. Then you can begin to hear or feel something which, if it were an inflammation, would cause you to narrow down your view to the site of the infection so that you could look at this spot which is painful. If your patient will allow you to see him often enough, if he will allow you to remain silent, if he will allow you to be ignorant, then you may be able to see what this painful spot is – whether it is in the mind or the body.

In saying all that, I am talking about matters which have not yet been discovered; nobody can help you there except you and your patient between you tomorrow. A physician would have to dare to say, "I shall want to see you tomorrow; I don't know what is the matter, but I think it *may* be going to be an appendicitis, or it may be nothing in particular." The analyst can observe the body, the appearance

of the patient, *and* can observe what appears to be a symptom or a sign that the patient has a mind. The capacity for articulate speech can be observed, can be searched, can be looked at so that it might yield evidence of the location of the pain. I suspect that sometimes a physical pain – say, below the diaphragm – can seep its way up to the mind so that the symptom, the sign, which is not so obvious in the body can be observed in the mind. Then the analyst may be able to make an interpretation which a physician cannot make because he hasn't learnt how to observe the mind.

As I have said, the occupation of psychoanalysis is a dangerous one, but the analyst cannot deal with that dangerous situation by running away from it. We all know that; we all know it would be no good getting up and leaving the room. What is not quite so easy to see is that we can become *absent in mind* if we don't like what the patient is saying. In my experience, the borderline psychotic patient – so-called – always knows when the analyst has become absent in mind. Sometimes the patient will say, "You have gone away", and it is easy enough to give an interpretation such as, "Ah yes, you are aware that it is coming up to the week-end break – I shan't see you tomorrow or the day after." It is a rational explanation – and in analysis rational explanations are so common that there is no shortage. We can produce interpretations, clothe ourselves with interpretations which hide our nakedness. Not so with the borderline psychotic. The problem is, are you going to interpret the patient's statement as his reaction to the week-end break or the termination of analysis? Or are you going to interpret, "You are feeling that I am not really paying attention"? This is the penalty which the analyst pays for being an analyst – he is under constant observation. Unless we are aware of that, we don't know why we get so tired.

A greedy patient can behave in such a way that when his hour is over, you are so bothered about what he will get up to next that you take up the next patient's time in thinking about the previous patient. I think it is as well to be clear about this: that you will try to prevent the patient, say, from throwing himself out of the window while he is in your consulting-room during that hour. After that you can say that you will not be responsible: somebody will have to bring the patient to your office, and somebody will have to take that patient away – whether it is a child or an adult, psychotic or non-psychotic. Otherwise, the other patients during the day are cheated; the

attention which the analyst ought to be devoting to the observation of all his patients is spent on thought about what this one patient will do. You cannot work twenty-four hours a day: only you can say how many hours you can work, only you can arrange the conditions so that, during those hours, the conditions enable you to work because your attention is not distracted by matters that take you away from the job in hand.

Let me remind you again that this is why I think it is important to be able to denude your mind either of what you know about the past or of your desires for the future. The whole of psychoanalysis seems to me to be shot through with a certain optimism – these ideas of "cure", that there's a good time coming. What do we know about what is coming? What do we know about this universe in which we live? It is possible that the patient needs to be stronger and more disciplined in order to be ready for whatever happens – not just prepared for heaven, a cure which is heaven-on-earth.

One idea we can pursue is that of the truth. You can feel that a painter is a good painter if his painting is an attempt to show you what is true – the Impressionists didn't paint in order to make things more difficult to see. You can feel the difference between a musical composition which is an imitation of the truth and another which is a formulation of the truth. In analysis we have to forget whether the interpretation is the right interpretation, or the Kleinian interpretation, or the Freudian interpretation – it is all irrelevant. The only relevant thing is whether it is a *true* interpretation. This is illustrated with dramatic force if you are asked to see a patient who is in the terminal stages of disease. The doctor can expect the analyst to tell the patient reassuring stories: the analyst has to resist that pressure. I don't think such a patient is misled about his condition – although it is possible, because we are all so used to believing nonsense of one sort or another, of being told reassuring stories. A patient will sometimes say, "I don't know what you mean" – he doesn't believe that the analyst is in any way different from everybody else. He thinks it very unlikely that the analyst will say just what he means. But the analyst has to get so accustomed to saying what he means that he does so *always* – however unpleasant it may be. He cannot think, "Ah yes, X is the right interpretation, but I will say something nicer." He must ask himself, "What language shall I talk to the patient so that he can understand what I say?"

It is possible to feel that in certain patients, ideas, thoughts and feelings are prompted from a basic physical level – for example, prompted by the adrenals or by the gonads. Can the impulse, thought or feeling that comes up from a physical source affect the mind and thoughts of the patient? Can that same mind be told something in language which can track its way back again to these primitive, fundamental levels?

I had a patient who submitted to surgery for a heart condition. Whether the operation was really carried out or simply an incision made on the skin, I don't know. For all I know, it may have been a psychological incision. But I do know that the operation was not successful. I had to draw the patient's attention to the fact that there must be some reason why he kept coming to me when his heart had been operated on – or so he told me – and that he must know that all I ever did was talk. Yet that patient, who hadn't dared to travel, began to do so. *I* hadn't operated on his heart and I don't know what happened to my interpretations once I had given them. The impression I got was that the patient did listen to what I said – but what happened from his ears to his mind I don't know.

These are problems which we may be able to solve if people come to see us; you may gradually feel – tomorrow, the day after – that there is some evidence which begins to formulate itself in the same way that an obscurity on an X-ray film shows you a pattern. If you know what the skeleton of the chest ought to look like, then you can see on an X-ray film that there is an area of opacity; where a photograph of the skeleton ought to emerge, there is a misty patch. So getting back – or forward – to tomorrow's patient, I suggest this view where you are vulnerable to anything that your senses will tell you: as you watch, you begin to narrow it down, and then ask yourself why you are acting in that way. That depends on daring to feel or think whatever you feel or think. I have spoken of it before as a situation in which all sorts of thoughts are flying around – the patient gets rid of all his thoughts which then, in my pictorial imagination, are flying around. If you can be wide open, then I think there is a chance that you might catch some of those wild thoughts. And if you allow them to lodge in your mind, however ridiculous, however stupid, however fantastic, then there may be a chance of having a look at them. That is a matter of daring to have such thoughts – never mind whether you

are supposed to have them or not – and keeping them long enough to be able to formulate what they are.

Q: I wondered what space we should be looking into: might it perhaps be a mental space that can also gradually be built up? And, then, what might a space for looking inside ourselves be worth?

Bion: Projective geometry is implicit in Euclidean geometry, but it took a very long time before Descartes was able to formulate the Cartesian co-ordinates. Then, released from the pictorial image of lines, circles, points, it could be formulated in terms which were not visible. It is possible to formulate things like conic sections mentally – and not only the lines, but the *direction* of the lines: vectors.

What about these thoughts that float up, shall we say, from the adrenals? Could we discover some kind of coordinate system by which it would be possible to observe them going in the other direction? To take my pictorial example of a hand, one side being psychosomatic, the other soma-psychotic: if you can give an interpretation about a psychosomatic condition, could you also give an interpretation in such a way that it would be soma-psychotic? In that way, these puzzling things like schizophrenias, manic-depressives and so on could become much more comprehensible. Consider "manic-depressive": manic husband marries depressive wife, and they thus give birth to a *folie à deux*. Could we put it in the other direction? Start at the *folie à deux* and end up with two people? And would they remain married?

Q: There is some confusion here in the translation: are we, in fact, talking about "soma-psychotic", or should it be "soma-psychic"?

Bion: They are different views of the same thing – it is a sort of diaphragm, a caesura, the "impressive caesura of birth". There are plenty of impressive caesuras of the birth of ideas, and each time somebody has a new idea – for example, psychoanalysis – it at once becomes a barrier, something which is difficult to penetrate. Instead of being liberating, it becomes imprisoning. So even while we try to formulate an idea which would be liberating, we formulate yet another caesura which is liable to become impenetrable.

Seminar 5

15 July 1977

I don't know "us", and I don't think that we know "us" either, because we – whoever we are – have not met before. We are none of us who we were even an hour ago, so I shall start by having a speculative imagination, something that is *not* a fact, an imaginary fact. When there are a lot of individuals here, there are also a lot of thoughts without a thinker, and these thoughts-without-a-thinker are floating around somewhere. I suggest that they are looking for a thinker. I hope that some of you will be prepared to allow them a lodgement in your minds or personalities. I realize that that is asking a lot, because these thoughts-without-a-thinker, these stray thoughts, are liable also to be wild thoughts. And nobody likes giving a home to wild thoughts which are then said to be *your* thoughts. We all like our thoughts to be domesticated; we like them to be civilized thoughts, well-trained, rational thoughts. All the same, however wild, however irrational, these thoughts may be, I hope that you will dare to give them a temporary lodgement and that you will then provide them with a suitable verbal costume so that they can express themselves publicly and be given an airing even if they do not appear to be very well fitted out. I hope that these speculative imaginations will have a chance of achieving a certain degree of respectability, so that they can exist even in a scientific community. Like speculative reasons, they are feeble creatures, easily destroyed.

I find from time to time a patient who says that he is incapable of imagination. In such circumstances I am not surprised if that same person complains of insomnia. Such people are afraid that they will be off their guard as they are when they go to sleep. When they *are* able to go to sleep and to have dreams, they say they have had a dream because a dream is relatively respectable; we are permitted

to have dreams. It is not regarded as quite so respectable to have an hallucination or a delusion, although sometimes the society or group or the culture allows people to have daydreams. Usually an attempt is made to make these daydreams respectable by excusing them as a poem, or an impressionist painting or a modern musical composition. But that again depends on daring to have a wild thought, whether awake or asleep. And it depends on being able to wake up, to be fully conscious, to have all your wits about you, and then to be able to transform the wild thought or the wild image so that it becomes relatively respectable, so that you can say, "It's a field of poppies."

Sometimes such people are forgiven, especially if they are dead. Then you can say, "After all, it was Giotto, or Leonardo." People like that can be excused if they drew a line around their wild thought and called it "God", or "The Virgin Mary", or "Saint Anne". But most of us hardly dare to hope that we shall be able to make that excuse for our wild thoughts, wild images, wild music or wild paintings. So when I say to you, "I think somebody else ought to do some talking, however wild the thought, however irrational, however unaccepted or unacceptable or unthinkable to the group or person", I am really expecting you to be courageous. That point is difficult to see, because apparently and factually the circumstances are quite comfortable; it sounds and looks and feels as if it is safe to say what you think.

I try to speak the truth to my patients and to dare to say what I think, even though I have to modify it slightly because I want them to understand what I have said. Sometimes the patient will say, "I don't know what you mean." This may be because I am not good at expressing myself in articulate speech, but often it is because the patient is not used to hearing somebody say what he means. So here you run the risk of being regarded as responsible for your wild thoughts, and then you run the risk that somebody will say, "That person is a trouble-maker."

If I now fall silent, it is in the hope that you will be able to hear yourselves think, however wild the thought is, even to yourself. There is always one person who can hear what you think – and that is you. [*Long silence.*] You can hear the clamour yourselves. The group seems to me to be suffering from insomnia.

Q: In a report I read about life in Persia today, the journalist said that the principle followed by most of the population is that everyone

> is the slave of what he has said and master of the words he has not said. Now it seems to me that the opposite may also be the case – that is, that a person is the master, the owner, of what he has said and may, in fact, be the slave or prisoner of what he doesn't say. In such a situation, it seems to me that if someone thinks something, there may be someone who does not think or whose thinking is confused; at least he has a path of his own to follow. Alternatively, there is the situation of someone who thinks but doesn't express what he thinks. That puts me in mind of a pregnancy in which the foetus is likely to die if it is born too soon, because it is too weak and not fit to live. In the same way, if a thought is not expressed, if it is immature, it will not survive; it won't go very far. But if the foetus stays in the mother's body for too long, it will die inside, just as a thought will die in the throat if it is held back for too long.

Bion: The idea has been expressed, as I said the other day, by a previous inhabitant of this city, Horace [see Seminar 2]. Think of the first people who started to communicate with grunts and then dared to invent articulate speech; they had to be their own poets. You have to dare to be an artist; somebody has to dare to write graffiti on the walls of the cave. What those artists were called, I don't know. They were not called "Homer" or "Leonardo", and yet their terrifying dreams are there on the walls of the cave. Their terrifying sculptures are visible in the caves of Elephanta. The first attempts must have been very crude. What about the graffiti now, the drawings which appear on the walls of Rome? In the Lascaux caves I have seen the uneven surface of the wall used to produce an effect of perspective; that sculpture has been achieved by a collaboration between a human character, personality, and the forces of nature; the earth bulges out in a certain place and the artist uses that as a part of his sculpture.

But never mind the past; we can do nothing about that. What we can do something about is the present. Faced with a choice, you always choose both what to do *and* what not to do. I can choose to do that, and I can choose to do that, meaning "I choose this, not that".

Here, now, dare you express your creation, make it public – at any rate to yourself, because you are bound to hear? Somebody once collected the bits of paper left after a meeting of important statesmen;

their scribbles on pieces of paper would not have been accepted by a museum of modern art. If you decide to remain silent, then you are also deciding not to say what you could have said; you are bound to regret not having spoken up, and you are bound to regret having been so foolish as to have said what you were thinking.

Q: I'd like to put to Dr Bion an attempt of mine to use speculative imagination. In so far as a cell membrane separates an inside from an outside and selects the distribution of the cellular substances into two parts of the space, we can say that the membrane sends a remote message and organizes the space in a more complex way than would be possible if the molecules were scattered at random. As the complexity of the functional aggregation (an organ, for example) increases, so too do the interdependences and complexity of the relations that must be maintained between the inside of the organ and other regions of the organism. For example, the adrenal gland will be separated from a surrounding space by a sheath, but this sheath will have lost the property of maintaining functional relations with the outside, as the cell membrane did. The function of an organizer capable of acting at a distance will now be assumed by the system of adrenal secretions and specific receptors for these substances, which are located outside the adrenal gland (in the pituitary, say). In other words, new membranes are created to regulate exchanges, and these are no longer located at a single point in space and do not act by contiguity. So in effect we have membrane systems capable of acting at greater distances with less transport of substances.

My question is this: Considering these examples, do you think it useful to see evolution as a series of functional leaps that tend to preserve homoeostasis in a system whose growing complexity gives rise to ever-increasing dishomogeneity between the various regions of the space and, for this purpose, needs regulating systems capable of acting over greater and greater distances? Do you feel that this can throw any light on the fact that the senses are a membrane capable of acting at a greater distance between two inhomogeneous entities such as the body and the external environment, by forging a relationship between substances originating in the systems that act at short distances (hormonal stimuli or emotions) and receptors in the far-off mind of the mother?

> Could it be that the birth of thought here serves as a membrane that can actually interpose itself for action at a distance between individual substances and social receptor systems?

Bion: The physiologists – I don't know with what degree of accuracy – describe the relationship of the cell to the extracellular fluid, which is as near to unpolluted water as you are ever likely to get. This makes it easier for me to reply to a part of what the previous speaker said. I can imagine – again, a speculative imagination – that, living in a watery fluid, a potentially highly gifted creature, an embryo, would not be able to tolerate what its primordial senses tell it. For example, it might hate the noise of the blood rushing through its embryonic body.

For the sake of simplicity I will mention an exaggerated case which nevertheless is factual – as far as I know. The mother, while pregnant, was subjected to a terrifying experience. What changes in pressure occurred in the amniotic fluid, I can only guess. And what those changes in pressure would be perceived as by the optic and auditory pits, I don't know. I am still postulating the possibility that the embryo, which has all the mental and physical makings, can be precociously, prematurely subjected to an experience which it cannot tolerate. The actual experience that I am acquainted with was that of a patient of mine who had severe symptoms. When he was a full-term foetus, a man entered the bedroom. He murdered the father, the mother, and three children and precipitated the premature birth of this full-term foetus. The child grew up and knew . . . well, what? I don't know. But everybody agreed that the child knew nothing about it, that it was not told, never had been told of this terrifying event. When I knew the patient, he was disapproved of by everybody, including the foster-parents. The patient had no dreams. After being subjected to the analytic experience with me, he became – and everybody was in agreement – infinitely worse. He had terrifying dreams; he was delinquent; he hated any man or woman that he had to deal with; he threatened murder and suicide. Naturally he was removed from the bad influence of the analyst; obviously analysis was doing the wrong thing and so was the analyst. So I could do nothing more. But the patient, when he was of age, came back to me. He didn't know what he wanted, but he knew he wanted me. That seems to be a situation in which the person, even before birth, is prematurely subjected to a stress which he cannot stand.

I have had other, less dramatic experiences in the analysis of patients who had been psychiatrically diagnosed as schizophrenic and borderline psychotic. I have three examples in mind: the root trouble appeared to me to be the great intelligence of all three people. I couldn't very well pass on the fact that, to me at any rate, they were highly intelligent people, but it was possible in two instances to draw the patients' attention to vestiges of acute observation – so acute that they could not stand the information that their primordial senses brought them.

There is one fundamental experience which I can put in this way: the patient is aware of two very unpleasant experiences – being dependent on something not himself *and* being all alone – both at the same time. That seems to me to be something which can happen even before birth when the patient is, as it were, aware of his dependence on a watery fluid and his inability to tolerate being all alone.

Ordinarily we are able to continue to operate our sense of smell by taking the watery fluid with us after birth, after entering into a gaseous fluid; the watery secretion of our nostrils enables us still to be able to smell, even in a gaseous medium. Sometimes there is too much watery fluid; we complain that we cannot breathe, we have catarrh – what is potentially an asset becomes a liability. Similarly, the patient cannot stand the load of intelligence he has to carry; he does his best to get rid of it. After the "impressive caesura", he still remains highly intelligent but learns it all again. That highly intelligent person *appears* to be very intelligent and to know and to learn easily everything that he is taught. The only trouble is that he can be extremely intelligent but not wise.

Note that I have to make a distinction between "intelligence" and "wisdom". I would hate to try to define either, but here in this group I can fall back on your assistance in grasping what I mean in spite of the inadequate articulate communication I make. You can use your own wisdom to decide for yourselves how wise you or anyone else would be to rely on the wisdom of a group. Sometimes you may find yourself in a culture which is highly intelligent but not wise; you can make up your own minds about the extent to which you would regard such a distinction illuminating in clarifying your own impressions of the group in which you find yourself. In that very activity, you add a dimension to your self; you exercise and develop

your capacity for discrimination. You can rely on a certain amount of experience – possibly hearsay, possibly direct experience – which you yourself have had, to assess the nature or characteristics of the society of which we are members.

Are the inhabitants of this geographical space wiser than they were in the time of Homer, Horace or Virgil? Of course, we don't know because we cannot say what Rome was like when those poets existed. But you can have an idea whether or not *you* are wiser than you were when this meeting started. And on your answer to that question will depend whether you go on meeting together or not. That depends on daring to discriminate. How do you measure the distance between these two points – now, and the beginning of this meeting? Or the distance between Horace's Rome and today's Rome? In kilometres, hours, weeks, days? Or will somebody have to invent a system of coordinates by which we could place ourselves in mental time and space?

Those capable of mathematical thought seem to have done something about it. Euclid's geometry didn't solve the problem of parallel lines satisfactorily, but geometry, as we know it now, was *implicit* in Euclid's geometry. It took a few hundred years to become *explicit*. That depended on a growth of experience by the Hindus with their decimal system, and Descartes with his Cartesian co-ordinates in which the limitations, the confines, the restrictions of Euclidean geometry could be transcended by algebraic geometry. We are no longer dependent on our eyes or even on what Milton called "inward eyes". In that way we can suppose the line that joins two points, both of which are imaginary. So I say, *dare* to use your speculative imagination, whether your culture likes it or not.

We know about the function of the adrenal glands – something which we could say is not thought at all but chemistry, biochemistry. When and how does it become possible for the individual to be able either to fight or to run away? When shall we become capable of running away from, or fighting for, the freedom to think? I have interviewed plenty of people who could not get over the fact that they had had to surrender in war and were taken prisoner. I have had good reason to mourn those who, in a hopeless situation, sacrificed their lives rather than surrender. "He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day." But how much time have you to make up your mind? Here we can debate the problem for an hour, two hours; in real

life there is not time for debate: you have to decide instantaneously whether to translate yourself into action which is apparent and clear, or whether to preserve it for another day. That is why, in producing a framework suitable for learning, there must be ample opportunity for making decisions. To put it in visual terms, one must provide a child with the space necessary for development. This applies to us also – any decision that we make, any statement that we make, should leave room for growth and development. In talking like this, I am actually producing a system, an architectonic, of my own thought. But that very fact also involves secreting a kind of calcification – I borrow the term from physiology, where we say that the arteries become hardened. We have to be aware of something similar happening with our thoughts: we become wedded to a state of mind which is serviceable, may even serve us well, and we don't want to have it disturbed. The advantage of a group of people coming together is that it is like seeing various aspects of our own personality all at the same time. Can you detect the calcification in this group? Can you detect it in yourself?

Q: I'd like to ask Dr Bion a question. Is it possible to identify any kind of relationship between the factor he has described as intelligence and wisdom and the entities he calls Ps and D?

Bion: A person can often rid himself of a disturbing tendency to initiate *anything* – he prefers the depression to the state of mania. Sometimes, when the person has rid himself – at whatever stage in his life – of the unpleasant experience of constant changes from depression to jubilation, from jubilation to depression, by becoming permanently depressed or remaining in a permanent state of mania – to put it in the exaggerated form – such a person will attempt to deal with it by finding a partner who will be depressed instead of him, or who will be manic instead of him. Someone who doesn't allow himself to be too acutely observant may say, "What a happy marriage!" If you allow yourself to be more acute, you might say, "No, not a happy marriage – a *folie à deux*". There are various versions of what is basically the same thing; it depends on the extent to which you allow yourself to be sensitive to the *implicit* facts. Geometry does not change – projective algebraic geometry is implicit in Euclid's geometry and became explicit later. What is the origin of this culture? When was it implicit, and what was it implicit in? The civilization

of Valerian? The civilization of Hadrian? And what civilization will be shortly occupying this space? I say "shortly" because the scale of measurement with which we are concerned is not the span of a human life – a few hundred years is nothing. What is the culture implicit in this meeting? What will it look like when it becomes explicit?

Q: Let my try to suggest some answers, or at least to reformulate some of the questions. Well, I don't know what I shall say in a little while, but I imagine I can rely on the support of the group while I speak. My feeling is that there were two simultaneous stories, at least as I experienced them. One of them had to do with me directly, as someone who was very worried in a situation of blockage, embarrassment, respect and concern, and the other was more connected with the group. One of the impressions this gave me was of a sense of rebellion stronger than my own, which I perhaps felt as a part of myself, but it also had a lot to do with our being psychoanalysts or, alternatively, with our being people meeting each other. There was something else too. On the one hand, I felt that I didn't agree with the ideas Dr Bion was putting forward about thinking, while on the other, perhaps I did.

In other words, the feeling I normally have when speaking in a group is not that I am speaking myself, but that, at the very moment when I have noticed that the group is spatialized, just as my mind is spatialized, I can speak as one of the focal points of a multidimensional conversation. On the other hand, I recognized that what Dr Bion said about the patient whose father and mother had died – had actually been murdered, leaving him alone and dependent – applied not only to me but perhaps also to other people in so far as they were not in an all-embracing group situation. Let me say just one more thing, and then I won't take up any more of your time: it's that I felt that if I had suggested creating an atmosphere – for instance, a damp atmosphere – then either I would have felt like getting drunk, having a drink together with other people, or . . . well, I'm also told that an analyst can't drink.

Bion: To fall back on a physiological model: if an embolus forms in the circulatory system, it may lead to the death of the part of the body which is dependent for its supply of blood on a particular arterial system. Alternatively, a collateral circulation is formed. If this group, for example, prevented the development of thought and

mental growth, then I think it would die. I have no difficulty in believing that in certain societies analysis will not survive, but there may be other societies in which a collateral circulation can be set up. Put in more general terms, I don't see any reason why the human race should survive; the function of life could be taken up by an entirely different form of animate object – like viruses, or bacteria, or bacillae. In some respects our inherited simian characteristics can be far more active and virulent than what we regard as our "human" characteristics. Our simian intelligence may be so clever at inventing tricks that it could invent an atomic bomb – only better. That would solve the problem long before we had the wisdom to know how to use our capacity for nuclear fission. At present we try to forbid the import or export of nuclear submarines and so on, but none of our statesmen would bother to prohibit the export of intelligence – and still less would they be bothered about wisdom.

We will have to have a pause for thought – I take it that our bodies have to have a certain amount of rest. So I suggest that we adjourn for our terrifying dreams or happy visions, according to taste.

Seminar 6

16 July 1977 – Morning

Q: Last night Dr Bion asked us to express our wild thoughts and, at the same time, warned us not to express them too respectably. Then he made an interesting point about the difference between intelligence and wisdom, specifically as regards groups. I'd like to ask Dr Bion if putting one's wild thoughts into respectable form might not be equivalent to intelligence, as opposed to wisdom – in other words, a particularly well-masked form of destructiveness.

Bion: It is much more difficult to reply to that question when it applies to one's own thoughts at the time. There is no way of avoiding the fundamental fact that one is always dependent and alone. When I use those words, I am using relatively highly developed articulate speech about something which is basic, fundamental and has to be experienced. Even the infant has to be able to solve that problem; it does not like the feeling of dependence or the feeling of loneliness, isolation – nor do any of us. I can practise my speculative imagination and say that the infant feels that it may express its feeling of isolation by crying, supposedly for assistance from whatever it is dependent on – the breast, the mother, the parents. Both the infant and the parent have this same problem. The child one suspects of being psychotic or borderline psychotic can be so terrified of its feelings that it expresses them by crying for help, constantly, tirelessly. But the parents do tire; their problem is whether to nurse that infant or whether to escape from the sleepless situation. So when an individual – as, for example, here – knows that he has something to say, the question is whether to say it or not, because he is afraid of discovering either that there is no one to hear or that there *is* somebody to hear but that somebody will run away. Thus the dreaded isolation is made worse, not less.

We can turn the present situation to good account by trying to decide whether to say, to express, what we have to say, or not. That may not matter very much to us here, but tomorrow the group or the culture may not be so friendly. Here you can practise expressing whatever you are capable of expressing – your distress, your happiness, your capacity – and dependent on that experience is what you express tomorrow, in much the same way as the infant's capacity to express what it feels depends on the experience that it has at its first attempt.

Practising your speculative imagination, consider this: does the infant initiate birth by trying to break out of an intolerable situation, the mother's womb or the amniotic fluid? If so, it could then feel responsible for initiating the expression of its own experience, responsible for making obvious its own existence. In today's complex situation where there is so much evidence, can we still detect vestiges, very active vestiges, of our anxiety, of our fear to express whatever it is that we are capable of? We can be afraid of expressing our stray thoughts, wherever they come from, because we are afraid of the reception they will get. And then the poet, the painter, the musician implicit in each of us does not get expressed, for fear it would be destroyed if it were.

Winnicott was once asked, "Why is the good object destroyed?" The "good object" is only a technical psychoanalytic term – I don't feel particularly impressed by the question or the problem. But I do suggest that we have a chance of seeing not *why* the good object is in danger, but that destructiveness is stimulated by the presence of something which can be destroyed. In other words, there is a primitive pleasure to be gained by the exercise of cruelty and the destruction of something which is worth destroying. In so far as we are capable of being parents, we are also vulnerable to the forces which would destroy what the creative or potentially creative parents could create. We have to become used to finding ourselves members of this particular group or culture, but we cannot get used to it unless we dare to exist in it.

Q: I thought the image with which Dr Bion began his presentation last night was very beautiful: one quite expected to see wild thoughts floating around in the room. But afterwards I wondered whether these thoughts were an emanation of the Holy Spirit, and, if not,

what is Dr Bion saying? I then expected a solution to the mystery of the beginning of St John's Gospel, which would tell us where the Word was and help us to understand how it had been made flesh. But none of the rest of what was said helped me with this, and, in particular, the long discussion of man's difficult acquisition of language, starting from grunts, confused me. I felt that this beginning was contradictory: in a word, does God – or whoever – grunt, or does He speak?

Q: I thought I would tell Dr Bion that I felt the group had uttered a wild thought by bringing this previously expressed wish . . . I also thought that our discussion was, in a way, a manifestation of longing, and, provided that Dr Bion is prepared to tolerate this insistence on language, I wanted to return to the subject of music . . .

[*Interruption due to external noise*]

Bion: I can't answer that question, but you can see the answer for yourself: either I can cover my ears so I can't hear so much noise and won't have to listen to your questions, or I can get up and leave the room. In fact, with my amount of experience, I am quite capable of being deaf and blind to what I don't want to hear and see without either covering my ears or shutting my eyes. I am also capable of being geographically mobile – in fact, I shall leave Rome shortly. But I don't propose to try to take the place of your own ability; I don't propose to tell you why I leave the room, or why I am deaf and blind to what is said to me, because my answer would be prejudiced – in so far as I know it at all. You are free to use your capacity for discrimination and think what you like about my reaction. I know that it will be disappointing because I know by this time that I am only human, and I shall therefore probably do what any other human being would do. When somebody is able to make an apocalyptic statement, like the Revelations of St John, it depends on whether anybody would be prepared to hear when the individual is able to transform his thoughts and feelings into verbal expression. Milton says, "Hail, holy light . . . may I express thee unblamed?" At the end of this passage from the commencement of the third book of *Paradise Lost*, he says,

> . . . from the cheerful ways of men
> Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,
> Presented with a universal blank

> Of nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
> And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
> So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
> Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
> Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
> Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
> Of things invisible to mortal sight.

In the Revelations, St John states it in terms of a light which is expressed verbally, but he *himself* expresses it verbally. Can we listen to that verbal expression? And can we further regard or tolerate the meaning which lies beyond the verbal expression?

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna expresses doubts that Arjuna would be able to tolerate the spectacle if he were to reveal himself. In other words, it depends on the meaning which lies beyond the apocalyptic revelation. There are certain gifted people who are able to dare to express what it is that they can hear or see: "In the beginning was the Word"; "Let there be light"; "Won from the void and formless infinite."

A mathematician might try to express "infinity"; a religious person might try to express the Godhead (not God, but "the Godhead"); a scientist might try to locate the source of light (Newton attempted to do so by his work on optics); Leonardo could draw a picture and say, "This is what I see"; Giotto could say, "This is what I can see." But none of them can *make* us look or listen to what is shown or said. We can be as blind, as deaf, as insensible to the composer, the painter, the dramatist who is either in ourselves or outside. Here we don't have to pay any attention to anybody – not even to ourselves or to anybody who is "not self". The advantage of coming together is that we have a chance of making our own choice. As Shakespeare puts it, "To be, or not to be, that is the question". He doesn't say what the answer is; he says, "Whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them?" That is a choice nobody can make for the individual – except the individual. Only he can decide whether to be or not to be.

Q: We were talking about thoughts without a thinker. Let me tell you about something that I personally found very striking, which I cannot explain rationally to this day. Perhaps, in the end, it will all

turn out to be much simpler than I imagine. At any rate, at about 11 o'clock on Wednesday morning I received some very sad and distressing news. On the same day, a patient began his session by saying that he felt that I was in great pain. So far, I must say I was not surprised, but then he brought a dream he had had on the Tuesday night. Putting together the dream and the associations, it was clear that they amounted to a perfect description of the event that had made me so sad. When I met Dr Bion last week, I had already been wondering whether a situation like this could be called communication.

Bion: So much seems to depend on our pre-existing classifications. That is why I say that, in the actual practice of analysis, in real life – as opposed to the theories about what life is or what analysis is – you can compare the facts. Either there is something wrong with science if it does not allow room for the growth of the human spirit or mind, or we have to reconsider what we regard as "facts". What is a psychoanalyst? It appears to me that Freud aspired to a scientific standard according to his ideas of what science was at that time. I don't think that his system really made room even for his own development. After all, the quotation, "There is much more continuity between intra-uterine life and earliest infancy than the impressive caesura of birth would have us believe", is from 1936,[1] near the end of his life.

What happens if somebody allows himself to have an experience such as the one we have just had verbalized for us here? It seems to me that the analyst who actually participates in the experience has a chance of deciding whether to try to communicate – as he is doing here – and whether we would be capable of hearing and understanding the communication. If he is to communicate the experience, which language is he to talk? Will articulate speech do? Or would he have to be a musician, a composer, or would he have to paint it? In any case it requires courage if he is going to dare to make public, to communicate to somebody not himself, his experience. It may take a long time, either in the individual's life – which is, after all, pretty short – or in the life of the group. This sad event, this experience

[1][This is a mistake. The quoted phrase is in fact from Freud (1926d [1925]), p. 138, though there was a New York version with the publication date 1936. *Ed.*]

of sadness – where did it originate? Could it be located in some geographical place? Or could it originate in the mind of the analyst? Or could it originate in the relationship between two people? Let me take refuge in the relatively reasonable explanation and say it originates in the relationship between these two people – you can see how *rational* that would be, how in accordance with theories of transference and countertransference and so forth. But suppose we are not satisfied with that explanation. Perhaps we should then have to extend our ideas of what is science or our knowledge of the central nervous system and our capacity for receiving information via our peripheral and central nervous system. We can all be aware of the information brought to us by our "senses" – in the neurological sense – by the stimulation of our nerve endings. But the questions that have been raised here may mean that we have to become aware of the possibility that there are other receptor organs of which we are not aware. A physician, who only purports to be concerned with the body, can fall back on what his senses tell him; he can take precautions to be sensitive to the universe in which he lives. But then he also has to be able to tolerate that information and to try to understand what it means. The same thing applies to the apocalyptic vision which to some extent can be communicated to us by the greatest of our predecessors, like Leonardo, Giotto, Newton, Milton. But first of all we have to look at what they show us – and most people don't – and then, while we are looking, allow ourselves to recognize the meaning which lies beyond. It is easy to dismiss St John on the grounds that he was . . . well, one of these "queer" people. It is easy to dismiss this particular patient as a psychotic or a borderline psychotic. But what are you to do when there are two people involved – yourself and this supposedly borderline psychotic? You can hear what these two people say to each other, and you can be aware that you are not satisfied, that there is something that you do not know.

Q: When Dr Bion talks about this wild thought that is in some way waiting for us to express it, I feel that he is talking about an infantile experience, such as when a very young baby experiences the emotion of coming upon a thought of its own as a foreign body. I'd like to know his opinion on three different situations. First of all, when does each of us as an individual come into contact with his own thoughts, and how does this mating with one's own wild

thought come about? Second – and this is perhaps even more interesting – how does the mating with these thoughts come about in the dyadic analytic situation?

It seems to me that in a relationship between two people, there is actually a whole crowd of characters on both sides, and so I ask myself who is thinking, why they are thinking and how these thoughts meet. There seem to be a multitude of people with wild thoughts flying back and forth all the time. But what happens in the group situation when the individual, faced with the encounter with his own thoughts, is much more alone and, in a way, much more fragmented than in the dyadic situation? In the dyadic situation of analysis, one seems to be several different people. In the group situation, what happens is like a kind of fragmentation and delegation of something of oneself to another person, to make the encounter with the wild thought less dramatic. To sum up, how is the Word made flesh in the individual, in the dyadic situation, and, on another level, in the multitude represented by the group?

Bion: We come across this situation at a very late stage. We are so educated that it is practically impossible ever to get to wisdom. We can start by learning the alphabet – a, b, c ; it is stupid and it's dull. But if we persist we may learn to put it together – c . . . a . . . t – and then somebody might say "cat" and relate it to an actual picture or animal. If this process goes on, we can learn to put words together and discover that sentences have a meaning. In that way we can reach a stage where it is almost impossible to see the words for the alphabet; and finally we cannot detect the meaning for the words. We can be so well educated that it is almost impossible to realize that life may have a meaning. Therefore, some process has to be discovered by which we could forget what we have learned in order to be sensitive to the fundamental thoughts or feelings which may still have survived – there may still be some vestige of wisdom in the human race. I don't want to adhere particularly to either an optimistic or a pessimistic position if I can avoid it, but it is difficult to remain blind to the possibility that we now know so much that we are virtually incapable of being wise. We can look at a sculpture, we can look at the written word, we can read the Revelations of St John – they can mean nothing if we are so clever that we cannot see the meaning of what is pointed out to us. I don't see any alternative to allowing ourselves

to practise, as opposed to theorize; to live instead of theorizing about living. Victor Hugo suggests that the physical world of which we are aware is, indeed, the creation of some God or Spirit. Another of these gifted people said, "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handy-work" [Psalm 19]. Even astronomers are trying to read – not books, but the heavens themselves. Someone else could be engaged in examining this same universe through a microscope. So the group as a whole has a wide view – we can examine this universe in which we find ourselves with a microscope, or a 200-inch reflector, or a radio-telescope. Between the lot of us we might make some small contribution in much the same way as somebody who has contributed to who or what we are today.

At some point, before birth, we can feel, fairly rationally, that we are individuals inside another individual. What the communication is between the environment of the mother's womb and the infant, depends on some sort of contact between the two – whether it be physical or something else. Is the embryo, at the stage of three somites, when the optic and auditory pits are beginning to form, capable of receiving some sort of impression? When is the mother aware of having a character or a person inside her? At a comparatively late stage of pregnancy, I think a mother is aware of the athletic feats of this object inside. Is it something which is going to grow into a violent creature which will attack the body from outside? Or will it turn into a ballet dancer?

These questions can be stimulated now, after this meeting, tomorrow, and so on as long as we exist. We can attempt to read the writings, the monuments which have been bequeathed to us, but there is also the problem of reading the universe which impinges upon us *now* and in which – as I have said – we might just as well be embryos in contact with a gaseous environment. If you are capable of painting, the sooner you learn it the better. If you are capable of composing a musical vocabulary, musical words and sentences, it would be useful to know that. If you are a writer, the sooner you learn a vocabulary and how to use it the better. It is no good learning *my* vocabulary – that might be useful as a transitory phase, a point at which you lodged on the way to discovering your own vocabulary and how to use it. That is why my answers to these questions are of no consequence. That is simply knowledge which then acts as an obstruction to your own discoveries. Similarly, it is quite useful to

know what this culture is, but not if the culture takes the place of where you are. The space which you occupy cannot be occupied by somebody else without sacrifice of yourself.

Q: This comment is directed more to the other people in the group than to Dr Bion. It seems to me that Dr Bion is suggesting not that we should perfect our learning, but, perhaps, that we should partake of a creative moment, rather like partaking of Raphael's creativity when he contemplated the Mona Lisa (sorry!). The Mona Lisa will never give us an answer to the problems of our personal existence, let alone our scientific existence, and yet I think that by reflecting on the ambiguity of the Mona Lisa, we might be in a slightly better position to accept our personal difficulties and see them in a clearer light. Our setting in this seminar is perhaps ambiguous because we have probably all read Bion and learnt how much attention he pays to questions.

It is my mistake if I come here expecting Bion to be able to answer the questions he has raised in his books. Perhaps the truth of the matter is that, in this personal contact with Dr Bion, we see only the confirmation that acceptance of the questioning within ourselves is the only way to stimulate the very painful process represented by our personal creativity.

Bion: I think it is what psychoanalysts are trying to express when they talk about a "transference relationship" – that is to say, that we have these preconceptions that there is some sort of authority, a father or a mother, who knows the answer. The aim in analysis is to make that point clear, not so that you can go on feeling how important that person is for the rest of your existence, but because you can then discard it and make room for whatever ideas you might want to express yourself. In the meantime, the analyst can appear to occupy a more and more important position, but it should only be a temporary affair drawing attention to the fact that the analyst is supposed to know this, that or the other thing, just like a father or a mother. The importance of the analyst's position is brought to light so that it can be discarded; the supposed authority becomes redundant, the position of the analyst is no longer useful. This is why it is important to learn, if you can, during the transition stage, who the musician, the painter, the poet is who is struggling to get free from inside you.

Rightly or wrongly we behave as if we think there is such a thing as a mind, a character, a spirit. There are a number of inadequate descriptions – soul, spirit, supersoul, ego, superego, id. They are not very illuminating. But when, in your ordinary life or in your consulting-room, you come across another "something", like the patient who appeared to dream the fact of sadness, then how will you clothe that discovery in words, and what words will you clothe it in?

Seminar 7

16 July 1977 – Afternoon

Bion: Does anyone feel the urge to express an idea or have an idea expressed?

Q: I'd like to ask something: against the background of informal thinking of the last few days, and influenced by what Dr Bion has said at our meetings over the past week, the question of a concept of time occurred to me several times. The way things emerge in the present had seemed to me to be a peculiarity of the group situation, but it also came up, for me, in a dyadic setting – not only as a trick of the trade, but as the only possible way to relate or, rather, to exist. Well, how does Dr Bion see time? Is it a property of space? Is it the act of linking or the conscious link between two or more spaces? Is it the way we perceive our mental space as alive and filled with living objects? . . . How are we to ensure that the concept of relativity that follows from the abolition of definitions does not coincide with stasis?

Bion: It would be interesting to know what has stimulated or caused this particular topic to be initiated. As it has been initiated *here*, it may be possible to form an idea about the source from which this problem has been derived. We can hear the actual person who has asked that question, so we can locate among all of us individuals the particular geographical spot at which this idea of "time" has emerged. We can also feel that we would like to be able to locate the space from which it originated – it would appear to be at a particular spot, which we could describe by giving the name of the person asking the question or by observing whereabouts in the room it seemed to arise. So far, it lies within the capacity of our senses; we can use our eyes and our sense of hearing; and we can use both the binaural capacity and the

binocular capacity to see the point of intersection. Suppose – or, in other words, imagine, use your speculative imagination – that this group has a character. Going on from there and making a further supposition, a further speculation, could the fact that that sort of thought or idea was given expression be regarded as evidence for the existence of the mind or character of the group? Could we compare it with another collection of people? Would they also give evidence of being concerned with this question of time and space? It seems to me that they would, because if I look at today's newspaper, I see a date mentioned on it; it is stated there that in someone's opinion – and it isn't usually disputed – we occupy a particular point in time. If we look at the paper we may also get evidence that someone believes that this is a particular geographical space: if we examine the stone monuments, we get what appears to be evidence that there used to be groups that also thought so at a different time from the present one. So there does seem to be evidence – at least to me – for the existence of a human mind. I wonder if a scientist would be convinced that this was evidence of the existence of a human mind; I could ask him what evidence he had for supposing that there was such a thing as civilized or group behaviour, but it depends on what we consider to be "evidence". We are familiar with people who regard psychoanalysts as being wildly astray in their various theories, hypotheses, but I would like to know what the physical scientist's criterion is and how he considers what *he* regards as evidence for facts as in any way different from what I, for want of anything better, regard as facts myself.

If we watch a group of young children, we see signs of the kind of thing *I* might have thought when I was their age. I can suppose that there was a time when I noticed that things which presented themselves to my senses were not within my reach and I would therefore have to resort to some sort of locomotion to get to them. That would give rise to a feeling which might grow into an idea later, that there was such a thing as time and space which divided me from the object which presented itself to my senses. I could hope to be reminded of almost any state of mind of which I was at some time conscious, and I could use such knowledge or experience as I have to re-assess that evidence for time and space. How much more validity would I be justified in attaching to the evidence for which I depend on this wristwatch – a bit of modern machinery – or how much more value would I attach to a thing which I can see with the aid of a microscope,

or a radio-telescope, or anything between the two? Am I to evaluate my present idea about time and space vis-à-vis the idea of time and space that I would have if I were a hungry baby trying to get at what I regarded as some desirable sweet from which I was separated? "*Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie*" [Pascal, *Pensées*]. I couldn't say that if I were a baby, but I could *feel* it; I could feel that it would be a terrible thing if I had to find the time and the athletic ability to get from here to there. In the meantime, I would be starved for the sensuous satisfaction which I craved to achieve.

If we have minds and need to satisfy our curiosity, we have to find a mode or a scale of measurement. I wonder if that has anything whatever to do with reality, or whether it has much more to do with the ineffectual nature of ourselves. For example, I have read that the distance across the nebula of which the sun is a part, measured through the galactic centre, is estimated as 10^8 million light-years; the space we occupy at the present time, in absolute space, we shall reoccupy again in 10^8 million light-years. I don't know whether anybody here feels any the wiser – I don't. But it sounds terribly knowing and terribly wise. As far as I am concerned it means virtually nothing, except that somebody is feeling better.

On the whole, we fall back on something simpler: we say we meet at four o'clock today, or at a quarter past nine tonight. That will do for our infantile capacity to do a bit of mental crawling.

Q: Between omnipotence and impotence, between dependence and being alone, there are thoughts about power which I don't know how to think.

Bion: That again brings the problem into an area in which it seems we are able to work effectively. That is to say, if we discover that we do not know how to think – although apparently we have the apparatus which might make it possible – then at least we can try to learn how to use such capacity for thought as we *do* have. That still supposes that we have a capacity for thought, that we have a brain, or a CNS, or a sympathetic system which somehow enables us to think. If the supposition were correct, it would be necessary to learn how to use this newly discovered capacity. At present, I think the vast majority of us simply assume that *of course* we can think. And what *I* believe to be thoughts, other people may consider to be nonsense – which is a simple solution of the problem. But when we discover that we do

not know how to think, although we are apparently able to use our CNS and the senses which this makes available to us, the question is, do we know the meaning of what our senses tell us? We assume that we understand the meaning which our senses give us; we do seem to meet together here by using our senses – that is, by being aware of what the information is that they bring us and also understanding the meaning of that information. It is not a particularly profound discovery, but we may have our ambitions stimulated to do a bit more than that. There is something to be said for the idea that if we can cooperate, if we can get so far as to come into the same room at the same time, then perhaps we can collaborate enough to achieve something more than that. We might debate this matter which has been initiated by somebody asking about time and space. And then, if we can collaborate further, we may, by our combined knowledge, make more inroads into our ignorance.

Q: I have a question. One of the pillars of Freud's work is the reality principle, which is also one of the fundamental parameters for assessing analytic work. It also seems to me that most of us, when we refer to reality so as to measure, evaluate and assess it, are as a rule referring to a whole series of spatio-temporal parameters. I also feel that one of the foundations of Bion's thought and work is the reference to truth, so I wonder what use can be made of these spatio-temporal parameters. I'm not saying that there is no reference in Freud to the problem of truth – for example, he mentions it explicitly towards the end of the Schreber case, where he asks whether there is more truth in the scientific mode of expression or in Schreber's way. I myself wonder if there are parameters or coordinates that can help us to feel that we are dealing with truth (beyond the effects – for example, feeling better or feeling worse . . .).

Bion: I think we should resist the temptation, the seduction to believe in our own omnipotence and omniscience. There is plenty of evidence to bring it home to us that we are neither omnipotent nor omniscient – we are not even successful in doing the simplest things. Our reaction to the discovery, so constantly repeated, that we are not omnipotent or omniscient is nearly always to swing over in the opposite direction; the belief in our omnipotence and omniscience is directly built on the foundation of our knowledge that we are

ignorant and incompetent. Let me say the same thing in what may appear to be a different way: our feelings of helplessness, ignorance, incapacity are brought home to us because they are based on the foundation of our omnipotence and omniscience. The more we think we are omnipotent and omniscient, the more certain it is that it is brought home to us that we are nothing of the sort; so we oscillate between one and the other – we are constantly making that journey between A and B.

That might point in the direction of establishing some absolute value in the way that mathematicians do. But this comes nearer to having to invent or create the tools with which to think. While you are attempting to analyse the mind of somebody who is not you, or the relationship between the two minds, you also have to invent or create the very tools you hope to use. Here, we can watch and listen to us trying to learn how to think. That particular space and that particular silence are so penetrating that we get frightened of them. To repeat the quotation from Pascal, "*Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie*"; we are frightened of the penetrating quality of silence. It is not only a matter of being afraid of what we say and think and make audible; it is also fear of what we do *not* say. The musicians have a way of actively symbolizing this with things which they call "rests"; they can record the "rest" as part and parcel of the music. If the orchestra is really in contact with the reality to which it can give expression, then sometimes the cooperation between the various instrumentalists and the conductor will feel different from what it does on other occasions when they are playing the same piece of music. You can say that the orchestra gave a very fine performance of, say, Brahms's Fourth Symphony. What piece of music are we expressing here – "The Collected Works of Freud"? "The History of Philosophy"? "The History of Religion"? We talk about being "psychiatrists" and "psychoanalysts". Are we? Or shall we become so one day?

Wordsworth says, ". . . hearing often-times the still, sad music of humanity" ["Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"]. We are supposed to be in contact with our fellow human beings. When you give an interpretation tomorrow, are you sure that it will approximate to expressing the music of humanity or the little bit of it which has got into your consulting-room?

Note that there I have introduced an element of rhythm, timing. Most of us probably have the experience of sometimes feeling that

"that was a good session", when we were really together with one of our patients. We were acting in conformity with a rhythm, even if we couldn't describe it or record it.

Q: Let me suggest something. If we consider the etymology, *pensare* [the Italian for "thinking"] means taking on a weight, *pondus*; the same is true of pondering, in the sense of weighing up – they are all synonymous. *Cogitare*, on the other hand, is interactive with *cogere*, which means "to constrain". So I wonder if a concept of mass and gravity could be introduced into the theory of thought. Thinking would then be tantamount to being compelled to support or lift weights. In that case, one could imagine a kind of gravity applicable to thought, too, which warps its space. My question is this: can we say, "Give me a fulcrum, give me a sign of support, and I will lift up a thought for you"? Also, is the group generally an instrument that is more capable or less capable of acting as a lever for lifting up thoughts?

Bion: The metaphorical use you mention shows that at some time human beings have been aware of this "weight". It crops up now because this use has not been good enough; the question then is whether the group could refine the capacity for thought which has so far been achieved. "*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*" [Daniel 5:25] – that was a definite resort to a language which we ordinarily use for describing quantity or weight. The problem today is, are you able to be sufficiently sensitive, either here or in your consulting-room or in your home, to be able to hear the mention of these weights and measures? Could you then consider what they were measuring in that state of mind? If so, then perhaps we could add a dimension to our capacity to think. We may not make much progress, but the fact that we are thinking may strengthen our mental musculature. Could this group think and talk and discuss in such a way that our mental capacity would be able to carry a bigger load at the end of an hour, a day, a week, than it could at the beginning?

Q: I'd like to add something to what the previous questioner said, about whether there can be a fulcrum on which to rest thought. There are two things here. The first is whether this fulcrum can be thought of in relation to the group's ethical, rather than its aesthetic, reference. The second point is completely separate: it concerns Leonardo da Vinci's idea of weight, which I can't remember

in detail but will quote in part. It goes something like this: "The lover moves towards the loved object like sense towards the sensible . . ." I don't recall the whole quotation, but at one point he says: "if the loved object is base, the lover becomes base, and if the loved object is good, it gives satisfaction and gratification." Then there is a reference to weight: "So the lover rests and the object settles there" – which I would like to put together with the idea of resting on something. I apologize, because it's a while since I read this quotation. I wondered if this resting, the possibility of putting one's weight on something, might be a reaction, in a group situation, to what we can imagine as the ethical reference – that is, the possibility of respecting other people's thought. The example that occurred to me this morning was Freud's essay on Leonardo da Vinci, where he puts forward a number of hypotheses about Leonardo, respecting his thought on the aesthetic level without doing violence to it. I'd like to know Dr Bion's opinion.

Bion: Leonardo was one of these people who appears to have had a very great mind, a very great personality; indeed, the remains he left still have a powerful effect on people who are living long after his death. Horace was another inhabitant who is supposed to have lived geographically in this area. His "Ode to Pyrrha" has worried a great many people: in it he describes the painful consequences of having fallen in love with Pyrrha's golden hair. In navigating that particular sea, he appears to have come to shipwreck and has hung his dripping clothes as a memorial to the experience. I find it very moving to see portrayed on the walls of an Etruscan tomb the costume presumably worn by the inhabitant. That is a pictorial representation of what looks remarkably like a similar state of mind: it seems to be expressing a similar difficulty with regard to the passion of love. Clearly there seems to be something which brings two different human beings together; whatever the outcome of their coming together, whether it is shipwreck or continued journey, it appears to be a very stimulating experience. So those who are disposed to launch themselves on the stormy seas of love are risking a painful and frightening experience of shipwreck. Our problem here involves not only being able to think intellectually, but also being able to feel emotionally. Let me put the question again: what wild thoughts and what wild feelings are you prepared to risk giving a home to?

Q: I've been nurturing a wild thought for about three-quarters of an hour now. I need to tell the story of a film I thought of when Dr Bion talked about omniscience, omnipotence and leaving space. Its title is *Phase IV*, and it's a science-fiction film. The plot is about two scientists, an ethologist and a doctor, who are assigned to investigate an invasion of ants somewhere in America. On arrival, they find totems, monuments built by the ants. Nearby, they build a "biodome". The ethologist bombs the monuments to smithereens, causing the ants to run amok. The men try to destroy the ants with a yellow acid. The surviving ants take away this yellow material a little at a time. Then these yellow ants surround the dome and build pyramids, or pyramid-like parallelepipeds – set up so as to reflect the sun's light on to the dome. At this point a very important new element is introduced into the story: a girl survivor of the yellow acid joins the scientists in the dome. The ethologist who was studying the ants *in vitro* is bitten by them, and the girl has a fit of hysterics and breaks the test-tubes. The ethologist is intent on destroying the ants, so he goes outside to smash the pyramids that focus the sun's heat on the dome and raise its temperature. But the cybernetician manages to establish a human relationship with the girl and, to make contact, makes a square for the ants – in other words, he tries to use this square as a language. The ants respond with a circle, with another smaller circle inside it. At this point the girl feels the need, or possibly the wish, to sacrifice herself – in other words, she thinks the ants want *her*. So she goes outside. As for the ethologist, he has been driven completely mad by the ant bites and, leaving the dome, is killed by the ants. The cybernetician is very disturbed by all this and goes to look for the queen: he goes down a tapering tunnel in the hope of finding her there. Instead of the queen, a hand appears, and then the girl. Then the film cuts to a different scene.

It ends with a man and a woman walking in the hills, which have been transformed by the ants – I don't know what happens then; perhaps they'll make another film.

Bion: What strikes me about this is that I cannot imagine how the adrenals could ever get a mode of expression, although I can see that through a relatively short space of time, a few hundred years, vestiges of their activity could emerge in the human mind. And then at last the

poor inarticulate glandular substances could find expression, aided by the machinery of film, film projectors and mass advertisement. So we get a modern representation of flight and fight which, with the combined wisdom of the human race, can produce a modern method of dispersal of the message which the adrenals presumably could never have expressed. In this way it might also be possible to add a little quota to the whole by drawing attention to speculative imagination and speculative reason, elaborating a continuation of the conflict between the capacities for flight, fight and dependence. So far, the human animal has been pretty good at destroying its rivals. But every now and then, it is not so successful: in 1918 there was an outbreak of influenza, or Spanish 'flu, or "pyrexia of unknown origin" – PUO. In a short space of a few weeks those minute objects – viruses – killed off even more human beings than human beings had managed to destroy in the war. Our capacity for self-destruction hardly requires augmentation; there are plenty of forces waiting to do the job and to put an end to such creative capacities as we have. Perhaps somebody would like to write the script for a film of a war between the adrenals and the gonads. Perhaps we should end by all being impotent or infertile, or perhaps make the world uninhabitable because there were too many of us. I shall wait – though I may not last long enough – to hear the continuation of that film. Perhaps it won't be just a film; perhaps at this present time we ought to prepare our minds and capacities for future dangers to which our present and past ones are just the *hors d'oeuvre*. The capacity for thought needs to be fostered so that it becomes much more capable and much more robust than it is. Even our ability here to debate is easily affected by the sight of a helicopter over the building, a dog barking, or motor traffic. An ability to think and debate which is as vulnerable as that is just not good enough. As a by-product of the discussion, we hope for a stronger, more robust and more accurate method of thought.

At this point the time that we heard about earlier in the meeting dictates to us again that we have to disperse.

Seminar 8

16 July 1977 – Evening

Freud was impressed by certain caesuras, but they are, in fact, multitudinous. Birth and death both seem to create a mental turbulence; it is possible that we ourselves notice the upheaval when we are born and change from a watery fluid to a gaseous fluid, from the amniotic fluid to air. But it is the birth of someone else which creates the disturbance in the already existing people – usually the mother and father. Death also creates a disturbance in the survivors. But that doesn't mean that birth or death are of any importance as far as the individual is concerned. We can easily imagine that if we fail to be born adequately that would create a disturbance; similarly if we fail to be adequately killed, or fail to die.

When I was studying medicine I became familiar with the saying, "Do not strive officiously to keep alive", meaning "Don't go out of your way to keep somebody alive, officiously". Thanks to the scientists it is now possible to keep certain bodily functions operating – for whose benefit I don't know. Recently there was a notorious case in which the parents were extremely anxious that all this apparatus should be allowed to cease functioning so that the patient, their daughter, could die. Their wish was disregarded. The antivivisectionists used to object to animal nerve-muscle preparations which were used in the teaching of students in physiology. The case to which I refer was one in which the human being was used like a nerve-muscle preparation. Cui bono? To whose benefit is it?

To get back to these periods which seem to create a powerful impression on living people: babies are born, and people die. Once we are alive, we can die at any time. So how many funerals are we going to celebrate? How many deaths are we going to exalt into ritualistic upheavals? Each one of us who exists at the beginning of a meeting,

like this, has ceased to exist almost every second of time that passes from then onwards; we have all changed into different people. What we were before that is not important; it rapidly becomes the past about which we can do nothing.

As I say, periods or episodes like birth, adolescence, latency, marriage, death seem to release an emotional turmoil, so a great deal of importance is attributed to these caesuras whenever they appear to obtrude into our notice. The emotional turbulence which is initiated is of some consequence because all sorts of elements, to which we don't usually pay much attention and of which we are not aware, get churned up and thrown onto the surface. They are often so noticeable that we give them a name – I tried to summarize it in a talk called "Break Up, Break Down, Break Through". I could almost say, "Choose Your Own Preposition". But we as analysts should use these words carefully; if we are going to talk about "break down" or "break up", at least let us be clear in our own minds by which coordinate system we are measuring the direction of the break. You need to make your own vocabulary and to be quite clear what *you* mean when you use a particular word, so that you always use it consistently. Pressure is put on us when people who are not used to speaking with care say, "So-and-So is having a breakdown." I don't think you should be seduced into the belief that the person concerned is having a breakdown – a break, yes, but leave yourself a chance to come to your own conclusion about the direction in which that break is occurring. Socially we don't need to argue the point; we can agree and fall in with the ordinary everyday use of language. But we shouldn't allow that to blunt the language that each one of us uses. It is possible, of course, in a group like this, that we might elaborate a common language which could be understood by all of us, but the essential thing is your own private language which has to be kept in good working order.

Q: An essay on truth and falsehood begins with a metaphor taken from Hans Christian Andersen's tale "The Nightingale". It goes more or less like this. A forest extended from the boundary of the Emperor of China's gardens to the sea. Sailors told of a nightingale singing in a tree in the forest. The emperor wanted to have this nightingale for himself at all costs and threatened his inept courtiers with death and destruction if they failed to bring it to him. In the end, a lowly kitchen-maid was able to help the searchers; the

Emperor had the nightingale, which made him happy, and the nightingale felt rewarded by the Emperor's delight. Seven sons of seven samurai were given his name. But the Emperor of Japan, who was envious, one day sent a gift of a mechanical nightingale to the Emperor of China. Its song seemed more beautiful than the real nightingale's. A music-master wrote seven theoretical volumes about the song of the mechanical nightingale. The real nightingale flew away in a huff. The mechanical nightingale unfortunately broke down, and the Emperor lay dying, from the pain of the loss of his music. The courtiers had given him up for dead, but that night the real nightingale came back to the Emperor, remembering how moved he had been in the past. Entering the Emperor's bedroom, the courtiers were astonished not to find him dead. He was standing up and happily bade them good morning. I won't report what the story says but, instead, my conclusion. After these seminars, I felt I understood that the truth might be displaced from the nightingale and found in the Emperor's suffering. Or perhaps in the suffering of the two Emperors. But I'd like to ask Dr Bion if a different vertex can be detected in this story – something about the truth that can rescue the situation. I'd been thinking about life.

Bion: One of the peculiarities of certain forms of communication is that they are hieroglyphic, pictorial – Chinese, for example. The objection to that method of communication is usually that it is somewhat clumsy and ambiguous. Indeed, according to Fenollosa, the number of characters which are used in Chinese hieroglyphic writing can be reduced enormously; it is said that only about four thousand are really necessary; the remainder, which certainly amount to at least ten thousand, are redundant. Take this particular fable: it must have taken quite a long time to transform it into present-day articulate European languages; the hieroglyph has to be changed into a verbal version of a pictorial image. For our purposes, in our vocabulary, I think it is necessary to cut down the characters to a minimum; the same thing with regard to the pictorial images which we have to use. What store of verbal images and articulate words belonging to an articulate language are we to keep to draw on? And how is that vocabulary to be integrated in order to express something which we want someone not ourselves to understand? In this group it would be a great advantage if we had a common language. You can see what a

nuisance it is when somebody like myself comes into the group and cannot talk a language which you all understand: it is a nuisance to you, and it is a nuisance to me.

Q: I'd like to say something – that is, I'd like to try to express this idea: what I have understood is that we need to try to listen. And also to see with our senses and . . . I'll stop there. Even though I feel that this causes tiredness and danger.

Q: . . . I felt from the beginning that deciding whether or not to express my thoughts did not matter very much, because I felt encouraged mainly to recover my capacity for internal listening – possibly by dropping my guard. But when I decided to express my thought, I felt anxious about the dependence and loneliness that could arise if someone were to listen to me and then go away. But the anxiety of loneliness and dependence could become intolerable if my internal listener also went away.

Bion: I am not sure what you feel is the problem there. Is there any reason for supposing it would go away?

Q: The internal listener might go away together with the external listener.

Bion: But if you know that, what is the difficulty?

Q: It might make it harder to express anxiety, to express my own thoughts, and increase the tendency to listen to them only inside myself.

Bion: The feeling of being dependent *and* alone is fundamental; it seems to antedate any ability to employ articulate or any other form of speech between two people. The first person with whom we have to be able to communicate, the most important person in this context, is yourself.

I used to try to deal with that sort of situation by writing or recording notes. Nowadays I don't bother. I don't know what I am going to say in response to the emotional situation in which I find myself here. Experience teaches me that I am sure to be dissatisfied with what I say, but it also teaches me that I have to put up with the fact that I am me and that, whether I like it or not, I have to tolerate my own way of talking and thinking. Here, I am dependent on having what I say translated into a more comprehensible language. But this happens in

any case; when I wish to communicate what I think to someone who is not me, then I have to use a language which, as near as I can make out, will be understood by the person to whom I address myself. I have to put up with the fact that I may not remember what I said in the previous session, or last week, or last year. On the whole I am persuaded that what I say and think has a certain coherence. I don't know what the coherence is, but I have to be reconciled to that.

Q: What is the place – the *topos* – where the individual and himself meet? The individual and the other, the individual and the group? Might it be the place where thought and action, spirit and matter, come together?

Bion: I am not particularly illuminated by the various descriptions of the mind or personality – ego, id, superego, and so forth. A Jesuit I know of speaks of the "arbitrium", a name he gives to a function which acts as a final judge. I am not convinced by giving any particular name to the fact that I seem to discriminate and choose to say one thing and not to say the other. I think there is every reason to treat our verbal communications as an action which is similar to athletic action. I see no evidence for giving it a name. Nor would I agree with people who somewhat contemptuously dismiss the whole of psychoanalysis and philosophy as "so much talk".

Tacitus describes how the Germanic tribes used a method by which a bard expressed himself, and in accordance with the reaction of the group to that aesthetic communication, the leader decided what impulses were to be translated into physical activity like going to war. There are also legends about the songs the sirens sang. Perhaps each of us may be able to make some contribution to this problem of "what is it?" or "who is it?" who decides in the republic of our own personalities which thought or action is to be translated into further action.

Walter Landor puts it in this way;

> There are no fields of amaranth on this side of the grave.
> There are no voices . . . that are not soon mute, however tuneful.
> There is no name with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated
> Of which the echo is not faint at last.
>
> [Walter Savage Landor, *Imaginary Conversations*]

Each of us, so long as we live, appears to be able to record various experiences in the course of his lifetime. Something seems to be able to determine what, out of all that store, is worthy of recall. But there is still the problem of deciding what to do with it. We may be able to come to some kind of temporary conclusion as to how we are to decide. It is complex: a number of thoughts, ideas, feelings are stirred up, and almost instantaneously we put them into an order of precedence. That is very much of an intellectualization, and I am not particularly satisfied that it is a fair representation of the facts.

Q: In all these seminars we have touched upon the subject of death, and I believe that, if what we have said is to be coherent and efficacious, we need to be able to encounter the Buddha – and also to be able to kill him. I'd like to ask Dr Bion if he thinks that the discussion we are having at this moment has any connection with Freud's reflections in the short paper where he is accompanied by a poet ["On Transience", 1916a]: together they see a field of flowers and reflect that although they will die, it is nevertheless worthwhile to live and work.

Q: I, too, would like to ask something. When you spoke about the listener and establishing a language of one's own, does this have to do with bringing about a situation where, when we say something in the course of analysis, we say it first of all to ourselves, and can this give rise to growth?

Bion: I am not sufficiently acquainted with the *Upanishads* to be familiar with the earlier formulations about the human mind and the human spirit. There are certainly some works which appear to establish a contact with Western modes of thinking. The *Bhagavad Gita* is one of them; there is a distorted version, by Fitzgerald, of *Omar Khayyam*; there is a French version of *The Iliad* which is said to be the best there is. There is a curious similarity between various races and times – for example, the prophet who is supposed to be able to voice the opinions of God. Moses, Jesus, Mohammed are all said to have expressed the will and views of God. The Muslims seem to regard the Hebrews as having gone astray, and to have done so markedly on the occasion when Moses descended from Sinai and found them worshipping the golden calf. The Christians likewise, according to Mohammed, have made the mistake of deserting to a polytheistic religion by not being faithful to a monotheistic one.

Although the subsidiary gods are, as it were, clothed in the characteristics of sainthood, it is a return to polytheism and a departure from monotheism – the vital and essential part of the religious outlook. Accordingly, the Muslims regard both the Hebraic and the Christian religions as having departed from the true religion. What about the psychoanalytic sainthood? Do you detect any signs, in the mental sphere, of stratification? Kleinianism? Freudianism? And in what direction would you say these strata are discernible? Is it possible to detect in our debate here any signs of what I call "stratification"? Geologically, of course, we can see these strata – sometimes they are up-ended like pillars; sometimes they lie horizontally. We can imagine that in a time of upheaval the strata become bent in all directions; the various religions and patron saints are fragmented and can only be described as being in a state of turbulence, of constant movement. And then it gives way to a period of relative quiescence and apparent security. But the strata still remain and can still be detected – these multitudinous gods, together with their followers.

Pressure is frequently put on an individual to suppose that he or she is one of these important people. It is very misleading – there are fashions in these religious attitudes. The god who is thrown up and exalted, rapidly disappears. Remember the poem,

> "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings;
> Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
> Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
> Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
> The lone and level sands stretch far away.
>
> [Shelley, *Ozymandias*]

I don't think we should be too depressed if we can see these stratifications appearing, or, to change the metaphor from geology to religion, these varieties of polytheism. We can regard them as temporary, transient phases in our journey.

Q: May I ask Dr Bion what he thinks of the daily organization of one's own mind, and whether it can facilitate dialogue with one's internal interlocutor.

Bion: I think it is dangerous to assume that we are in any way exempted from the general movement in a community. Freud described a situation in which the mere change of the observer is

liable to be mistaken for a new discovery in psychoanalysis, or a new form of psychoanalysis. I mentioned before the point about modern geometry being implicit in Euclidean geometry; at some time it became explicit – it seems to be almost accidental, as if, for example, the Cartesian co-ordinates were a by-product off the main line of Descartes' thought, and yet very important.

Q: I wanted to say that this evening I'm constantly thinking of a poem. It describes the act of finding names for things. The poet seems very pleased, very happy, that he has this capability. At the end of the poem, he imagines he can see a beautiful ring at the bottom of a lake of particularly clear water. He also realizes that he is absolutely unable to think of a name for this object. But this seems only to increase his joy. So I'd like to ask Dr Bion if he thinks that this difficulty in naming – like the particular difficulty we sometimes have in making the implicit explicit – might perhaps be added to the series of caesuras we have been talking about . . .

Bion: It could be a caesura which impressed him, and he may be able to communicate that experience verbally to you and to others because of his capacity as a poet.

I think we are all liable, in accordance with our individual natures, to be impressed by some particular caesura which may not mean very much to other people. One of these impressive things is what we might call "cure". There is a tendency for the group to pursue the shadow of a caesura; we pursue a particular relic or idea as if it really existed. In psychoanalysis there is an implicit idea that if we go through that discipline we shall achieve a cure. I see a certain difficulty: there is one particular capacity which I have come across over and over again – so much so that I would regard anyone as being extremely deficient if he couldn't make a fool of his analyst. A patient who couldn't make a fool of me must indeed have something wrong with him. It is difficult to tolerate: consider what you would feel about a person who succeeds in making a fool of you. Nevertheless, anybody who aspires to helping his suffering fellow men and women has to be sufficiently robust to survive being made a fool of.

When I happened to get swept into hospital in England, I saw the elaborate laboratory tests and auxiliary forces of nurses and hospital wards used to cure diabetics. These people were having extended to them the resources of the Welfare State. Part of it consisted in being

allowed to be visited by their friends and relations. So, on the one hand, there was extended to them the diet in accordance with the findings of medical science about dietetics: on the other hand, their friends and relatives, taking pity on these poor people whose freedom was being restricted by the cruel hospital doctors and nurses, would see to it that they were plentifully supplied with the kind of food that they really liked. I didn't stay there long enough to see what was the outcome of that particular story, but when we are proposing the correct – in our view – mental nourishment, we also have to be aware of the fact that there are plenty of other people who will supply what *they* consider to be the correct mental nourishment. You will probably soon come across a professional paper depicting the need to reassure and comfort terminally ill patients by telling them something to act as an antidote to their belief that they are dying. I wonder what chance advocating the truth would have against forces of that nature.

Seminar 9

17 July 1977

We are all concerned with mental health from a responsible position. I am not considering as a part of our immediate discussion what we as individuals feel; as people in a position of responsibility with regard to patients, what we feel mentally or physically is a matter of no consequence whatsoever. It matters to us individually, but to no one else. It doesn't matter how tired we are, how physically or mentally ill – all those are matters of complete indifference. They are only *facts*, like any other facts about which we can do nothing and about which nobody else is going to do anything either. Your mental or physical health is a fact like the weather or the geographical location in which you are working, which is otherwise of no consequence. Whatever those facts may be, as responsible people we have to exercise our skill; we have to be capable of thinking clearly, no matter what is going on.

Our problem is how to be sensitive to the sufferings of people who come to us for assistance, but not to be so affected by them as to interfere with our thinking clearly about the work in hand. In certain situations we can be unmistakably aware of the danger in which we are, particularly those in which we are threatened with physical violence. It is still important that we should continue to think clearly even when it is also clear that our lives are in danger. But most of the time, that sort of danger is not at all obvious; our circumstances can appear to be comfortable and consequently reassuring.

In war, most of the people who are engaged in the combatant forces are aware that the fact that there are medical services is really irrelevant. It could be very seductive; it might seem to exert such a pressure that troops would like to be looked after instead of having to fight the enemy. Even in putting forward that picture I am drawing attention to something which is relatively simple. It is difficult to

realize that analysts and those concerned with helping mental sufferers face any dangers. In the mental sphere one point can become clear: we find ourselves alone in a room with a particularly violent patient; there is not much we can do about it because most of us haven't the muscular, physical strength to cope with such a patient. It *is* possible to be prepared to use such physical capacity as we have. For example, if your room is high up, then it is obvious that the patient could resort to throwing himself – or the analyst, of course – out of the window. Therefore, during the time that you are seeing that patient, place yourself between him and the window. It would, in fact, be preferable not to have the consulting-room in such a position that it would be easy for the patient to commit suicide or murder by using the distance between the room and the earth below.

I found this a somewhat alarming and yet stimulating fact when I was director of the London Clinic of Psycho-Analysis, where there were no lifts and *all* our patients had to climb to the top of the house to be seen for analytic purposes. I cannot remember now how many stairs they had to climb to get to the consulting-rooms – and therefore how many stairs there were available for throwing themselves down with disastrous consequences. So we took various palliative steps which were supposed to act as an antidote to the situation in which we found ourselves. I don't know who felt better as a result of those steps, but I am reminded of the statement made by a famous British commander-in-chief, Wellington, when reviewing his troops: "I don't know what effect my troops will have on the enemy, but they certainly terrify me."

The best and the most highly qualified collaborator we have in analysis is the patient; the outcome of the meeting depends on a collaboration between the analyst and the patient. It can be very frightening if we also allow ourselves to be aware that we are all alone with, and dependent on, the patient. The patient may have outstanding athletic ability, and a manic state can lend great force to that ability. So a patient who is trying to prevent you from being helpful, creative or constructive sets you a considerable problem. How are you to continue to think clearly while someone is trying to murder you?

That is a comparatively simple situation, because you have the evidence of your senses and of the source from which the danger is arising. The position is more difficult when you are dealing with what we believe to be a mind, a spirit, a soul – or whatever the fashionable

term is for it. I am sure that we all have experience of a great deal of education. So we are probably familiar with words like "spirit", "soul", "ego", "Buddha", "Brahma" and so on. Paradoxically what we may not be quite so familiar with is the name which would seem to us to be most suitable for the "thing" that we are dealing with when we are all alone with someone who comes to us for help. If the patient tries to throw you out of your window, it may be difficult to appreciate that he comes to you because he wants help. This same force which may be manifesting itself in a physical struggle with you, is what he has to live with. So he may be afraid that you will not be able to resist him physically and is terrified that he himself may not be able to resist or deal with that terrifying force.

In the practice of psychoanalysis – as opposed to the theory – your problem is, are you able to see such facts as are available? Some of them are easier than others: a physician can train his powers of observation so that he can see that the patient's countenance is not displaying a beautiful colouration of the cheeks such as would be appropriate to exercise or perfect health; he may be able to distinguish between the blush of rude health and something which he can say, if he understands the language spoken by the body, is the sign of an infection. The patient may be hostile to the mental helper, whether he is an analyst or whatever his position. What is the source of that hostility? Does it arise from within the individual, or is it an infection derived from the culture of which he is a member?

I have lived long enough to have had the experience of knowing that at one time psychoanalysis was all the rage amongst the intelligentsia. I am sure all of us can remember times when particular attitudes or beliefs were fashionable. I remember when it was fashionable to read *The Forsythe Saga* [John Galsworthy]; it was then forgotten; it was then revived, thanks to the dominance of television and the evidence of the eyes. So that story was rejuvenated – apparently. However – and this is a difficult point to describe – what really matters is the *real* Forsythe Saga, the fundamental story, the facts, reality. The only thing that I can call it is "the truth". That is not going to be affected by the fashion or by whatever we may happen to think about it.

Changing over to something more scientific like mathematics: the visual geometry of Euclid – lines, points, circles – proved gradually, in the course of a hundred years or so, to be inadequate to the

human beings who used it. But I think that there was a *real* geometry which was also, as it were, trying to get expressed. Putting that in a different way: real geometry was implicit in Euclidean geometry. That truth, that *implicit* truth, was a kind of sleeping beauty waiting to be rescued, waiting for someone or something to break through the barriers of thorns and weeds and awaken the true geometry. In other words, Euclidean geometry and all its adherents had built up a barrier against the emergence of the truth, until at last the dominance of the eyes and the pictures of lines and circles was overthrown by the coordinate discovery and the application of algebraic thought to geometry. The truth hadn't altered; the truth that was implicit in Euclidean geometry became explicit.

This is one more example of the point that I have already made: an activity like psychoanalysis is fashionable, and fashions change. If, therefore, there is any truth in psychoanalysis or any truth in psychiatry, then it would be helpful if any of us could do anything to make that truth explicit. But it does mean cutting through an enormous growth of brambles, thorns, rationalizations. What we cannot afford to lose sight of is the main goal – the truth. Our own mental capacity has to be nourished, but there is nobody to choose for us; we have to be capable of respecting the truth whether that truth is expressed by our patients, our colleagues, our musicians, painters or religious authorities. So anyone who has respect for the truth deserves our support, and we have to deserve it. If we are to help our manic, depressive, schizophrenic or neurotic patient, we ourselves have to be worthy of respect. That can be partially dealt with by going to analysts and others who might help us to get to know who we really are. But in the position in which we find ourselves – a position which, it could be said, we have inherited – we *are* the authority, we *are* the parents, and there is no one for us to go to excepting ourselves. To modify that statement: while attempting to help a patient, as a sort of accidental fringe benefit we also learn something about ourselves.

To fall back again on the simple model of actual physical warfare: if, by any chance, we survive, we can learn something about ourselves. A book written in the First World War described a situation of perpetual and never-ceasing war – the war of the mind. The writer quoted the statement which was made long before psychoanalysis had even been thought of: "From that warfare there is no release". Here we can make breaks in this discussion, take rests, but that does

not mean that the warfare takes a rest – it does not. Disease – mental disease, physical disease – does not take a holiday. That is why we have to be so robust, so healthy. Whatever our difficulties may be, we have to remember to be concerned not with our problems, but with the work in hand – the work which never stops whether we are there to do it or not. There was a famous warrior named Crylon to whom Henry IV said, "Go hang yourself, brave Crillon; we fought at Arc and you were not there."

Q: I have always felt that what we think about other people is bound to have some effect on them, even if we don't reveal our feelings.

Bion: That awareness could be regarded as part of the evidence for the existence of the human mind. It is usually fairly easy to see that you can be affected by a physical contact with someone or something which is not you. A child may bump into a table or chair, or hurt itself by falling down; it then wants to hit the table or chair or the floor because it has been naughty and has hurt it. The point is not quite so easy to see – if one can call it easy at all – when you are dealing with states of mind; that is when you are aware that you have come "in contact" with somebody who is not you. That "character" does not appear to be observable by what we have hitherto regarded as our physical senses – our sense of sight, of smell, of hearing and so on. Nevertheless, even an infant seems to be able to tell when it is all alone and also when the object on which it depends is present. In that respect the discovery and awareness of dependence, and the discovery and awareness of being all alone, are fundamental. Those fundamental feelings, thoughts and ideas can still be stirred many years later. Of course, it is obvious that we are dependent on the existence of something which is not us and, at the same time, that we are alone with the thing on which we are dependent. But as analysts we depend upon and are alone with what we call "a mind". It is therefore important that we should not be overwhelmed by the latest fashion either of belief or disbelief, but should still remain capable of exercising such judgement as we have with regard to facts which are insensible.

At a time of turmoil, at a time when the leaders of the country were carrying out a revolution against the existing order, Milton wrote, "So much the rather thou, Celestial Light, / shine inward, and the mind through all her powers / Irradiate. . . ."

As analysts we have to make contact with somebody who comes to us for help. We are just as fallible, just as vulnerable, as any officer, NCO, or any one of their troops. As responsible people we do not have the privilege of being able to be ill, or to run away, or to be dominated by freely expressed emotions. We are just as much cowards as any of our troops; we are just as fallible as anybody that we are trying to help. In one way or another, we find ourselves inheriting a position of authority; how we have got there it might be very difficult to say. Even if you look back on the history of your own life, it will still be difficult to say how it comes about that you are in the position of being one of the authorities, one of the helpers. Victor Hugo described the experience which is shared by an army and its opponents as one of terror. We harbour the illusion that the enemy is very powerful, brave, well-trained, well-equipped: the enemy probably shares the same emotions about our own army. But if a poet is able to ignore these uniforms – mental and physical – then it is possible for him to see that the experience which is shared by both armies is one of terror.

This complicated situation was illustrated at Christmas time in 1914 when the opposing troops of the British and German armies fraternized and played football against each other in no-man's land on the day which was supposed to be the anniversary of the birth of Christ. To imitate Wellington: I don't know what effect that had on the enemy, but I can say that it terrified the Staff.

The further we get from the fighting line – the practice of psychoanalysis, mental health, psychiatry – the more we become aware of the ferocity of the staff, the ferocity of the theoreticians. If they had their way, the bloodshed would be terrible.

This seems to be what the speaker who asked this question was talking about. I am sorry to have given such a long-winded answer – the thing itself is much shorter: the real experience of affecting the patient and of being affected by the patient is almost instantaneous.

Q: I'd like to take up Dr Bion's earlier invitation to talk about difficulties we have met with in our work. Let me tell you about a patient who was diagnosed with a fatal disease – acute leukaemia – after two years of analysis. The patient was only partially informed. He dreamt that *he was on a couch or table, which was both the analyst's couch and the transfusion table; he was about to fall, but then seemed to be resting on a pivot, about which he was able to turn horizontally*. In this

situation you can't say that the dream symbolizes time – the clock concept – but you have to say that the patient himself *is* time: he is clock time. If the patient is time and not the symbol of time, let me ask Dr Bion what the analyst must be, or can be.

Bion: We can approach this problem, first of all, from a general standpoint and express a general principle. We conform to a certain discipline which we have acquired or been taught. However, as a practising doctor or analyst, you close down your view and concentrate your attention on an area which is more restricted. To put it in more philosophical terms, the general principle is being transformed into a particular instance.

If you were to ask me what my job is, I couldn't tell you, but I can tell you what *I* think it is. It is up to you to decide – you are the only person who can – what *you* think your job is. Narrowing this down further, let us look at this particular person of whom I have hearsay evidence which I have been told by the last speaker. This patient's death doesn't interest me any more than his birth. That tiny little bit between birth and death – that *does* interest me. It may be a very small space indeed, because there is such a thing as infant mortality, death at birth – or death at death. So I don't think there is a great deal in this tiny little space between the moment of being born and the termination of that life – as I say, it can terminate virtually at the start, or even before the person ever becomes "conscious", as we call it.

This particular patient is said to be dying. That again doesn't impress me; we are all dying since we are, in fact, living. But it does interest me if the life and the space which is left is worth living or not. We do not know what we shall die of – I am sure that somebody sooner or later will oblige by diagnosing it. In this instance, it is said to be lymphatic leukaemia. It might be something else; it might be the death of the person's mind. I have come across people whose bodies still survive, but as far as their minds, spirits or souls are concerned they are dead. To turn again to this more particular view, this very small view in which we don't bother very much about all these general principles, then we need to focus on the question, is there any spark which could be fanned into a flame so that the person could live whatever life, whatever capital, he still has in the bank? How much *vital* capital has this person? And could he be assisted to use that capital to good effect?

Although this patient is said to have leukaemia, a fatal complaint, since I cannot foretell the future I don't know what he will die of; I *do* know that it won't be death, because death is not a disease. That is simply one of these impressive caesuras.

This patient is living in a certain culture – I gather that he hasn't been told that he has lymphatic leukaemia, and I doubt that it would mean much to him anyway, if he is a layman. but I have no reason to doubt that he can interpret certain physical facts. What is his interpretation of the sort of behaviour to which he is subjected by his culture? Who does he think the analyst is? Is he somebody to help him to live, or to die? Most of us – to widen the view again – can be relied upon to indulge in plenty of activities which are much more likely to kill us than to make us live; we take things into our alimentary systems which are poisonous. There is nothing wrong with alcohol, but we can use it for purposes of poisoning our physical system; there is nothing wrong with taking air into our lungs, but we can indeed breathe polluted air or smoke and inhale the fumes. In Britain there is a warning compulsorily printed on all packets of cigarettes and on all advertisements for tobacco: "Smoking is injurious to health." That statement, that warning, has become part of the ritual of smoking; it is part of the beautiful, seductive picture of the pleasures and delights of smoking. It is made respectable and even scientific by saying "Low Tar". I have never smoked tar in my life – I am not interested in buying tar, so I can see how virtuous I am because I don't smoke tar. Now, I can get on with smoking tobacco – unless, of course, the manufacturers should feel it was more profitable to sell me low tar. I can see that it might be cheaper to make a big cigarette with a large wad of cotton instead of the rather more expensive tobacco leaf.

Narrow down the view again to get nearer to what we are concerned with: a mind. While the body of this patient is dependent on various sorts of somatic nourishment, what are we to provide him with by way of mental nourishment? By this time the analyst certainly knows a lot about the patient, so he could tell the patient all sorts of things about lymphatic leukaemia. To widen the picture, I could say, "In my opinion he should tell him the truth." Narrow it again: what is the truth? What does the analyst know about it, and what could the patient understand if the analyst tried to communicate with him?

I am sorry to take such a long time to discuss such very simple points. We still haven't got to the point – namely, what the analyst is to say that this patient could understand. It is possible that the patient could feel that this particular helper is more interested in his living a life worth living than in the various rituals and procedures which are appropriate to dying. If that is the case, he could feel that this object with which he gets into contact – even if it isn't a physical contact – might be friendly and helpful. That may or may not be psychoanalysis – I am not bothering with that because I am not interested at this point in theory but in practice, in life. Whether the patient is at the beginning of his life, at birth, or whether he is at the other end of the spectrum, at death, he can feel the presence of a friendly or health-giving object.

I think it is very difficult to resolve to avoid the truth and to start telling some sort of agreeable lie. It is hard work, it doesn't seem to me to be worth doing, and, as a result, one's own mind, character, personality is polluted. Our capacity to speak the truth dies through the lies we tell other people.

Let us try to bring to bear on this problem the combined wisdom of all of us. If you were in this position, what would you say to the patient? Apparently he had what he calls "a dream". That means that he was in a different state of mind from that in which he is when he is wide awake, "conscious", and carrying on a conversation with you. The dream he tells you is, in fact, what he, in the state of mind in which he is when conscious, thinks happened when he was asleep. In this conversation, what should we be most impressed by? The fact that he is awake and conscious? Or that he is also in the state of mind which is a "hangover" from the state of mind in which he is asleep?

In the quotation I mentioned from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, he says, ". . . there plant eyes, all mist from thence / Purge and disperse . . .". Can the analyst forget all that he has heard or learnt about lymphatic leukaemia? These "facts" form a mist, obscuring the truth which might help this person to live his remaining hours, weeks, months, years perhaps, in a way that is worth living.

It might be possible to draw the patient's attention to the fact that he fears that when he is off his guard – as he is when he is asleep – then the analyst may subject him to the same sort of treatment as all the other doctors. So that what is in fact only a psychoanalytic conversation would appear to be something which was sucking the

vital substance out of him. His blood may be very defective stuff – it has a lot of white cells which are not beneficially operative – but it is the only blood he has.

Translating that into mental terms: the patient is well aware of the defects of his character. But he does not want to lose such soul as he has. You could try saying, "You are afraid that I am trying to cure you, but that my cure is going to kill you by taking away anything good that you have." I don't want to attach any importance to that particular interpretation, because, in fact, it is worthless – *I* am not treating this patient and therefore I don't know.

There is no outrage that I know of which is greater than the one you permit when you allow someone not yourself into the privacy of your own mind. So the patient can be frightened of the analyst, and frightened of himself for talking to an analyst. The analyst will certainly be subjected to pressures; he is liable to be attacked – "Why tease a dying man with all this stuff which might be appropriate *if* the patient was going to live?" It is difficult to defend your position, which would mean saying something like, "Yes, but this patient has still got a few minutes, hours, days, weeks left to live, and that is why it would be helpful for him to know what I am telling him." Whether we are in good health or whether we are suffering from a fatal disease, it may still be worth while to know how to use our minds.

Q: And the survivors? What do you have to say about the survivors?

Bion: The survivors, of course, are able to go on thinking and feeling. The fact of death is so impressive that it nearly always stirs up a turmoil; thoughts and feelings which we have forgotten become conscious. In that way we have an experience which is more powerful than any psychoanalytic experience because it is real life. In an organized, socialized group, the death of an important person – or the death of a symbol of an important person, somebody who might represent or remind you of a father or mother of a nation – is dealt with by elaborate rituals. Sometimes they involve the participation of the armed forces, who make a slow march behind the body to the place of burial to the accompaniment of pieces of music like the "Dead March" from *Saul* [Handel oratorio], or, "The Flowers of the Forest Are All Gone Away" [traditional: commemorates those killed in the Battle of Flodden in Scotland in 1513]. As soon as the body has been disposed of, the troops, representing the nation, march off in quick

time. The slow march is the depression, mourning up to the moment of burial, and then – quick march! That, I think, is a profound group reaction: it is a reminder that when the dead are dead, that is the end of the story; it is time to get on with living.

I think we might also consider the reciprocal of this – should we interfere with anybody who *wants* to die? Does the fact that we purport to be helpers entitle us to interfere at all with somebody who does not want to be helped? There is a difficulty here: we have to consider what evidence leads us to suppose that the individual does not wish to be interfered with or to pay any attention whatever to such warnings, opinions or advice as may be conducive to longevity. It matters very much, of course, whether the person who does not want to live would pollute the atmosphere for the survivors.

Who or what are the forces which are liable to be conducive to *mental* death? It would be useful to know what is good mental nourishment – which would imply also knowing what is bad. The advantage of a group situation is that you can survey the entire group and possibly detect sources of infection in it. The entire group could remind you of various aspects of your own personality at different stages in your development. Instead of seeing it in narrative form, from A to Z, you could, so to speak, see all the letters of the alphabet spread out on one plane. That is a pictorial way of getting rid of the time component – we exchange a temporal component for a visual emphasis of the spatial component. Here and there you can see for yourself the sort of behaviour, activity, which has been designed to destroy the group's capacity for learning or developing its own abilities. When you feel the need for silence, and possibly the chance of hearing your own thoughts or ideas, the silence can be destroyed. The noise becomes so great that you cannot hear yourself think. This is one of your problems if you are concerned with education: with trying to make available, to people who don't know, such experience or knowledge as you have. Parents find themselves in the same position *vis-à-vis* their children – they would like to do something for them. And it also applies to the human family, not simply blood relations.

Q: I have on occasion given some attention to what you might call a state of slight chronic depersonalization – that is, a state in which mental capacity is diminished both in waking life and in sleep, so that the possibility of experiencing facts or emotions, or even sense

data, is reduced. It seems to me that such a situation has components that stem from the group and from the individual. Can Dr Bion tell us how we might define or find coordinates to locate the source of such a mental state, and why – at least in my own experience – emerging from such a situation, even if it is acknowledged to be useful and growth-promoting, proves to be painful, dangerous and tiring.

Bion: As usual, it is easier to talk about it in its more exaggerated forms: a patient who never seems to mention himself at all – I am thinking of a particular patient – but constantly pours out information about the characteristics of a very great number of people, all members of the society of which he finds himself a member. Such a state as that could be a later stage in what Melanie Klein described as an omnipotent phantasy of infancy, the phantasy of getting rid of the character or personality. The grown person sees faults everywhere: that seems to me to be not dissimilar from this theory of evacuating all the characteristics which are feared and disliked, and then being persecuted by them from outside. Every analytic interpretation, every person and thing, comes over as a persecution because they remind the patient of himself and his fear of these selves which become reunited in his own personality.

Let us get back to this *chronic* case. Could we again fall back on the group situation and say that between the lot of us we represent a *chronic* state? We are not only individuals to whom we attach some importance because of our individual view of ourselves *as* individuals, but we are individual bits out of a total pattern. What I want to know more about is what is meant by this word "chronic". Is it, in fact, a reference to "chronos", to time? What is this "chronic" or "chronos" about? What is the meaning of it?

Q: I think I can be more precise: it seems to me that "chronic" describes a state where there is no clearly definable distinction between two situations. Second, it seems to me that "chronic" also has the property of not being easily distinguishable, in the sense of not manifesting itself as an obvious fact.

Bion: This may be the sort of thing that psychoanalysts are trying to describe when they talk about a "latency period". I find it easier to believe that what we have just had described to us is a latency *state*

rather than a latency *period*. In this way, the patient can at any time present a somewhat featureless landscape. Is there anything which sticks up above the level of uniformity? One thing, of course, occurs to me at once – namely, the presenting quality of nullity. I will try to put it pictorially by reminding you of the termination of the fifth book of the *Aeneid* by Virgil: he describes Palinurus, who was the helmsman of the ship which is to give directions to the entire fleet. Somnus presents himself to Palinurus and puts forward the seductive view that all is going well. The sea is calm, there are no clouds, there is no danger anywhere. Palinurus, however, says that he is not so innocent as to be taken in by the calm face presented by the Mediterranean Sea. He ties himself to the tiller and to the stern sheets, but the god hurls him into the sea with such force that he is drowned and carries with him the stern of the ship. Now look at the calm and uniform surface presented by this patient – there are no features. What has happened to the storm?

What is to be said to this patient? There must be something which causes his musculature to react and to bring him into the analyst's view. We could point out to him that there seems to be absolutely no reason whatever for coming to talk to an analyst. The only thing wrong with this story is the patient's presence. So we could try to draw attention to the fact that there is a mystery which confronts the pair of you, and that is the mystery of a fact.

If you draw the patient's attention to this fact, then he may be able to contribute something further; he may not know much about himself, but what he does know is a great deal more than anybody else is ever likely to know. The patient knows – nobody else can – what it is like to be him and to have his thoughts and feelings. So if you can draw attention to this mystery that he is in the room, then he may be able, from his vast store of knowledge – it *is* vast, even if the patient is a child – to throw some further light. And then it may be possible for you to give another interpretation.

Take the previous patient we heard about: if he is able to interpret all these peculiar facts about a hospital ward, a bed, hypodermic needles and so on, what does he think they mean? What does *he* think is the interpretation of all that apparatus? Why talk to the analyst?

One could say that the question is the same in both these cases: why talk to the analyst? Of course, it could be because the patient

is sure that the analyst knows nothing about him and will not say anything frightening or disturbing. But that is very unlikely, because most of us have in our time been told stories of one kind and another with the express purpose of terrifying us. We even play games like soldiers at war. But what is the game they want to play with the analyst now? Why do these two people talk to the analyst? What is it a part of? What is this conversational intercourse about? I borrow a term from the sexual experience because I think that there is something in the capacity to converse which is not altogether unlike the capacity to have a physical relationship. The psychoanalytic conversation is a kind of childhood game, just as a childhood game is a kind of implicit reality; it is referable to something in the present. This group meeting is referable to something we don't know about – namely, the future. Are there some vestigial remains in both these conversations? Is there something which reminds you of the wreckage, the vestiges of a previous conversation? Are there any vestiges, any discernible bits, of wreckage which remind you of love or hate?

Here we can assume that there must be some reason for wanting to meet together. That doesn't mean to say that our feelings of dislike or hatred have disappeared, any more than the storms have disappeared for ever because the surface of the Mediterranean is calm. So even as we survey the dominance of the friendly relationship which causes us all to come together, what about the vestiges of the *rest* of our personalities? If we want to break up the meeting or destroy the furniture, what has happened to those impulses? Could it be faintly reminiscent of civilization itself? There is a thin film of civilization which covers all our human community. The United States, the United Kingdom, and now the United Nations – how united we all are . . .

Francesco Corrao: The group is probably a place – *locus* or *topos* – a privileged place where space and time, feminine and masculine, hate and love, truth and falsehood, all come together. Now, this coming-together is violent, hard to bear and hard to transform. So we need the support and guidance of a way of thinking and a method that is problematic and unifying at one and the same time. My feeling is that Dr Bion has supplied us – is supplying us – with this way of thinking and that he himself represents a strength in the here-and-now, because he embodies the strength of thought – its function, its use

and its communication. These group research centres – the first, the Pollaiolo, and then the others – concentrate on an area defined by the relationship between the group and the analytic function.

After all, it is worth remembering that the Bionian view is generated by an extremely intensified and amplified analytic experience. My feeling – or perhaps I should say, our feeling – is of deep gratitude to Dr Bion, for having enabled us to partake of the depth of his thought.

Bion: I thank you very much for that expression of gratitude. I hope it doesn't appear to be ungracious if I say that I can compare your description of my contributions with the fact of which I am aware and which I don't very much like. The nearest image I can give to it is this: like a leaf falling off a tree – one never knows which side up it will land. And when I look back on what I know about my life, I would never have been able to guess that I would be here today, at this time and in such a position.

There is a passage in a poem by Yeats, *Solomon and the Witch*, in which he talks about "Choice and Chance":

> And when at last that murder's over
> Maybe the bride-bed brings despair,
> For each an imagined image brings
> And finds a real image there;
>
> [W. B. Yeats, *Solomon and the Witch*]

"Journeys end in lovers meeting / Every wise man's son doth know" [Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*]. I don't think they end in lovers meeting; they *start* at that point. Is there any vestige, do you think, in this hospital bed and the analyst's couch, any remains of the possibility of a loving or positive relationship between this person who calls himself an analyst and this other person who call himself something else? What is this group likely to give birth to? What thought or idea or action? And what relationship is likely to occur between it and some other group? Love or hate? Fight or flight? Dependence or freedom?

A PARIS SEMINAR

1978

'A Paris Seminar' was previously unpublished in English. The seminar was held in Paris on 10 July 1978 and was organized by Dr Salomon Resnik. It was published in French in 1986 as 'Une topique groupale. W. R. Bion et le groupe', in *Revue Psychotherapie Psychanalytique de Groupe*.

A Paris Seminar

INTRODUCTION

This seminar, held in Paris on 10 July 1978 and organized by Dr Salomon Resnik, was published in 1986 in the *Revue Psychotherapie Psychanalytique de Groupe*.

It has not previously been published in English. I am grateful to Dr Luis Goyena for his very kindly sending me two audiotapes in May 1997 from which I have made this edited transcript.

Francesca Bion
1997

10 July 1978

Bion: I must explain why I have to speak English. It is partly because I don't speak French, although I have learned or been taught French as it is spoken in the English Public Schools, but it is not the sort of French that you would understand. There are other reasons which will become clearer as we go on with our discussion.

I would like you to regard this as a working conference in which this problem is one which faces all of us. For example, a young man of twenty-five complains of having an unsatisfactory family life; I am not sure what family he is talking about, and in the course of a preliminary discussion I ask him his age and he says forty-two. Forty-two? But I said twenty-five just now. As I see him more closely I notice lines on his face, and every now and then I think he looks more like sixty-two than forty-two or twenty-five. Well, what is his age?

The first question I put to you is, will you take this patient or not? I am not suggesting that you should tell the patient or me or anybody else, but what do you tell yourself? If you want to write down your immediate impression now, it would perhaps be interesting to you to make a note saying "yes" or "no". To answer that question I propose to use a procedure in which I assume a "vertex" from which I could form some impression as to whether I want to see this patient again. Suppose you walked into a bookshop, picked up a book, turned a few pages and read what I have just said. Would you put the book down and pass on to another? Or would you like to turn over some more pages before making up your mind whether to read that book or not? So there's my second question: are you interested in this story; do you want to read any more of it?

I'll try another one: suppose it was a piece of music you were hearing. Would this sort of music interest you? Would you decide to

go to a concert and hear the rest of the piece of music? Or would you decide that it was not your kind of music? That is another vertex. Of course, in reality we haven't so much time, but here we can play this little game.

Changing the vertex again: suppose you were walking through a building and saw on the ground a pattern of colours thrown by the light coming through a window. Heredia, in the poem "Vitrail" [reproduced in the Appendix (p. 213)], describes the effigies on the tombs: they cannot see, cannot hear, but with their eyes of stone they see these colours spread out on the floor. As this patient is talking to me and the light falls on this conversation, what colours do you see? Do you like them? Would you like to spend some more time there? Would you like to study the window through which the sunlight penetrates to find out what sort of design there is in the glass of that window. I won't suggest any more because I would like you to think of various vertices which you can employ when confronted not with a book, not with a painting, not with a window, but with a person. What sort of shadow does he cast in your mind?

Getting back to the analytic situation, shall we tell this patient to come again? Shall we, as it were, open another page of the book, or listen to some more bars of music, or shall we stop there? Each one of us has to answer that question all alone. I am not asking you to take a psychiatric vertex at this point – it is too early. You have only had a few sentences [of conversation] and only a few moments in which to see this man. Do you feel inclined to say, "Well, I think I had better see you tomorrow", or next week, or "I would like to see you again in a month's time"? Nobody can tell you what to do because nobody knows what kind of person you are or what you are capable of.

Another reason why I am speaking English is this: I am familiar with phrases such as: green with envy, yellow with jealousy, black with despair, red with rage. Do you think like that? If so, what are the colours that you see in this conversation? In what colours would you paint that conversation? You may say you are not painters, but it is very important for you to know who or what you are. That is one reason why we advocate that people should have an analysis in order to get accustomed to who they themselves are. It is very unlikely that you have discovered that yet. So although your tendency may be to say you don't paint, I say you do. Therefore, get out your colours;

don't write notes about this story, make some marks on paper. Use a few simple colours like blue, black, yellow, green. Then look at it; there you will get an idea of how that patient struck you. If you were a musician, what piece of music would you compose? If you were a writer, what language would you choose? French? French as it is spoken in Paris, or the Midi, or the Touraine? So, listening to the conversation between yourself and your patient, what language is being talked, either by him or her, or yourself, or both of you?

Q: It is interesting to note that in French we say, "Yellow with envy" rather than green.

Bion: That is why it is so important to know not what language is spoken in France or England – these geographical boundaries are not of importance when it comes to a question of the mind or character or personality – but to borrow the language of painters, musicians and so on, and to use it in this extraordinary subject with which we are concerned.

Q: Do you think we are able to choose the vertex?

Bion: Yes, and the more you know about yourself, the more you know which vertex to choose in order to look at the problem. For example, looking at this man who I have tried to describe, would you choose him to go mountaineering with? Would you choose him as one of your team in the Tour de France? Never mind about psychoanalysis or psychiatry for the moment – is there anything you would choose him for? Whether we like it or not, the choice is an arbitrary one because analysis has to be done by each of us alone – it is a lonely occupation.

We have become used to the idea that psychoanalysis is an attempt to make a scientific approach to the human personality. It is a view which attaches great importance to facts, to the truth, to the real thing. If that is so, there are plenty of people who are scientists without that official categorization. A painter, for example, may believe that a painting should be true to truth, should show you some aspect of reality which you might otherwise not notice. He is not a psychoanalyst, but he paints a picture. Look at this picture and then you may see what a tree or a face looks like. If an author writes about imaginary characters like Falstaff, Lear, Othello, Macbeth, they ought nevertheless to remind us of real people. Does the last scientific article

that you read in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* remind you of real people, or doesn't it?

Q: Are you suggesting that the analytic experience can be a dehumanising one?

Bion: I think that there is a great danger of it. I come across a lot of what is thought to be scientific psychoanalysis, but it doesn't remind me of anything except boredom.

The situation in the consulting room, the relationship between these two people, could be like the ashes of a fire. Is there any spark which could be blown into a flame? In this little bit I have described, we would have to examine, observe, devote care to mental debris – bits of what we have been taught, bits of what we have learnt, bits of what the patient has been taught. In analysis one is seeing the totality of debris. What has happened to the face of a man of forty-two? Why does he look twenty-five or sixty-two? Why does he say he is forty-two? It is all part of the debris. Do those pieces come together? Would you be able to put them together so that they make sense?

Q: [*an inaudible reference – to "psychotic experience"*]

Bion: The idea that it is a psychotic experience is very cerebral. In analysis we are concerned with something which might ultimately be expressible in cerebral terms, but that is not how it appears to us as practising analysts. That is one reason why we have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that patients do not come to us with little labels tied to them saying, "manic", or "depressive", or "manic-depressive", or "schizophrenic". If they do come with such labels we should regard them as more pieces of debris. I do not mean by calling it debris that it is not worthy of attention; I mean that it is something which has to be observed and scrutinized with very considerable care, otherwise you might throw away the necessary, vital spark. One cannot afford to cast aside imaginative conjectures on the grounds that they are not scientific – you might as well throw away the seed of a plant on the grounds that it is not an oak or a lily but just a piece of rubbish. This applies to all that goes on in your consulting room. But I suggest that it would be worthwhile considering it not as your consulting room, but as your *atelier*. What sort of artist are you? Are you a potter? A painter? A musician? A

writer? In my experience a great many analysts don't really know what sort of artists they are.

Q: What if they are not artists?

Bion: Then they are in the wrong job. I don't know what job is any good because even if they are not psychoanalysts they need to be artists in life itself. A mathematician can see that an algebraic formula is a beautiful one; a musician can hear a manuscript which is simply black marks on paper. Even using the language I know best, I cannot tell you what an "artist" is; I prefer you to go beyond that word and see what I am trying to convey to you by this very inadequate word. It is certainly not somebody who is able to deceive your eyes, to make you think that there is a tree there when there isn't one, but somebody who has made you able to see there really is a tree there and its roots, even if they are underground. I suggest that behind this forty-two-year-old man is hidden a person, and that person has roots, an unconscious which, like the roots of a tree, is hidden from sight. There are not only branches which are ramified and have veins, but under the surface it has roots. So when this person comes into your room, what do you see? I am not asking simply what do you see with your eyes, but also what does your intuition enable you to see?

Q: When you relate the roots of the tree with the unconscious, do you have an image of something that can be experienced as roots of the unconscious, or the unconscious as roots?

Bion: No. "Unconscious" is simply one of these words invented by Freud in an attempt to draw attention to something that really exists. But, as usual, one gets caught up in the word, and then there are these interminable, wearisome – to me – arguments about Kleinian theory, Abrahamian theory, and all sorts of theories. I cannot be interested in them because they obscure the fact that there is, as far as I am concerned, actually such a thing as a human mind or personality. I don't believe that anybody has yet discovered how that human character or personality is to be described, although a really good portrait painter can paint something which shows not just the colour of the skin or the shape of the person. An artist in England painted a portrait of Winston Churchill. His wife hated it so much that she destroyed it. And yet plenty of people thought it a very

fine portrait. The artist, Graham Sutherland, was not a psychoanalyst, not in that category, that box, but was he an analyst or wasn't he? Similarly, you might say to me, "Ah yes, but I'm not Cézanne, I'm not Sutherland". I don't want to flatter you, but all I can say is, how do you know that you aren't? Have you been to your *atelier* and discovered what sort of artist you are?

Q: Would you say something about what you have described as a catastrophic situation.

Bion: The word "catastrophe" has also to be understood in the light of something which goes in the opposite direction. I think of it as "breaking down" which is very close to the metaphor, "breaking up". In an analytic situation, the analyst is concerned with trying to make conscious, trying to bring to awareness, something which the patient has often spent his life trying to make unconscious. There are two people in the room who come together at the same time, in the same place, but the directions in which they are thinking are different. They could agree if the analyst consented to become very disturbed and afflicted with the same kind of neurosis or psychosis as the patient, but it is usually supposed that the analyst should not lose his capacity for being aware of the world of reality, although he may be drawing attention to a world of a different form of reality. The simplest example I can give is this: we are in the state of mind which is usually known as being awake or conscious and aware of what is taking place – so we think. But when we are asleep we are in a different state of mind. This division into day and night is not very illuminating, but I think it is useful if one can retain the valuable quality of being able to go to sleep, as well as the valuable quality of being able to wake up. That "marriage" often seems not to be harmonious. For example, patients may admit that they had a dream but they don't take it seriously; they don't feel disposed to tell you where they dreamt and what they saw. They say, "Oh, I just dreamt it"; I don't know why they "just dreamt it". If the acorn said, "Oh, they're just roots", what would one think? After all, even an acorn on an oak owes something to the roots. So what is one to make of a patient who thinks he "just dreamt it"? Freud considered that dreams ought to be treated with respect; I think that is the most important part of his work, but I don't believe we have got anywhere near to reaping the consequences of treating dreams with respect.

Q: [*Questions about the meaning of the terms "breaking down" and "breaking up". There are no direct equivalents in French*]

Bion: What does the patient say to you when he thinks he is "going mad"? You have to find out from the patient what it means. When he says he is breaking down, presumably that is what a breakdown looks and sounds like. You don't have to believe that the patient's diagnosis is correct, but you can look at the picture yourself which he calls "breaking down". You then have a chance of using your senses to tell you what this word means and also what language the patient is talking. It is no good saying he is talking French or English – that is too clumsy.

Q: Is it the specificity of the language which develops in the "*atelier*"?

Bion: Yes, and the specificity of what the analyst does. Cézanne's pictures of the Montagne Sainte Victoire are not the same as mine would be if I took photographs of it. What is the difference? You have to look at the paintings to find out; they are the only language Cézanne could speak to convey to me what I ought to be able to see if I look at that mountain. Your patients are not really very good artists, but they do usually know what it feels like to feel their feelings. When they try to tell you, they haven't much of a vocabulary. So you listen to what they say and look at what they are, compare the two and then form your own conclusions about whether they are – to use the English language – breaking up, breaking down or breaking through.[1] The patient is usually describing something which I am sure exists – mental pain. When it is physical, you can ask, "What sort of pain is it?"

With the kind of patients that we have we need to be able to recognise the different names which are given to pain: anxious, frightened, terrified, embarrassed, ashamed, and so forth. They are all different varieties of pain. If you were trying to paint them you would have to use different shades of colour, but psychoanalysts have to invent the language. Our material is not visible, it is not palpable. Sometimes a patient doesn't seem to be able to communicate and wants to hold your hand, to have a physical method of communication. Most

[1][Bion drafted a rough sketch of a paper with this title in 1975 to use for a talk given to members of SCOLA on 9 December 1975, but he did not complete it. See footnote on p. 61. *Ed.*]

analysts restrict themselves to verbal communication, but that is only a recently discovered method of communication – not a very good method, but the best we know.

Q: I recently had a patient who didn't feel it was necessary to talk in order to communicate with me.

Bion: Such patients don't really understand the possibilities of verbal communication. They do understand the possibilities of being able to evacuate their urine, their faeces, and even their breath. So when they talk they are aware of the muscular activity of expulsion, not the mental quality of thinking.

Q: That confirms my experience with this patient. Once he was frightened about a friend called Pierre. He thought he was very hard [*inaudible sentence . . .*] similar to throwing stones out of his mouth.

Bion: It is very difficult to get any impression unless you are with the patient. One possibility is that he is impressed by muscular movement. In that way he would be afraid that he would either lose some part of his personality if he spoke, or he might injure the analyst with these stones; he could say things which were very hurtful, rude things, insults. Even – a rational conjecture could be – that he is afraid that if he is spontaneous or natural he will say insulting things which would make the analyst very angry. When this patient talks to the analyst, what aspect of himself is being expressed? Could he be aware of the growth of renal calculi [kidney stones] long before anything showed in X-rays or in physical palpations? As well as the more accepted ideas of our response to the free associations of the patient, there can be this complication: a bodily symptom, a chemical symptom, the formation of calculi, shows up earlier in the mind than it does in any other way. The question is, what are you to say to the patient? How do you transform your thoughts, feelings, ideas about what is presenting itself to you into a verbal language which the patient would understand and which would also be correct. It is a very tough problem, and I see no way of answering it unless you are in your consulting room.

Q: I wonder if it is what happens with children as well . . . [*inaudible passage*]

Bion: It is difficult to know where the origin of the pain is. Children today are often acutely sensitive to what is going on; they know a great deal about their schools, their teachers, the town or city or country that they live in. But it is not the same thing we know as grown-ups. So when they tell you something, you can be reasonably sure that their information is very acute but their experience is not great; they have not lived long enough to be able to understand what their knowledge or their senses tell them. It may be perfectly natural for a child to be loyal to its contemporaries and not therefore want to pass on information to somebody who is of a different generation. So there is a division which is not simply between one's unconscious and one's conscious, although it is similar to that; it is a division between what the child reminds you that you once were with what you know you are today. You may have forgotten that the child you were was loyal to other boys and girls and did not tell your parents things you knew and didn't regard as dangerous, because you did not have enough experience to know they were dangerous. So you have this problem which is partly to do with yourself, partly to do with the actual child who comes to you, but is also concerned with what I have described as "the vogue". I am not talking about the mode, just a passing manifestation of the vogue, but the vogue itself: that force which exists, always exists and is very powerful.

I feel that we have left the interview with the man of forty-two for rather a long time. Here we can discuss the problem at considerable length, but not in the consulting room. The question is, why does he remind me of a young man of twenty-five? And why, as I look at him, does he remind me of a man of sixty-two? At this point I wonder if he has any children. Would they make him older or younger? I think I would like to see him another day; I might then find out whether he is married or not, or if he and his girlfriend have produced children.

I am used to the idea of mental conflict, but are there physical conflicts? Can a person look twenty-five and sixty-two at the same time, but not forty-two? What bodily muscles are being used? Some of them are vocal cords, but what else? What about his skin? What about the lines or the lack of them on his face? How is that done? Do we as psychoanalysts have to be aware of physical as well as mental conflict? I recall one patient who was always very co-operative, and after a time – probably after too long a time, I'm afraid – it became clear to me that he was the only patient who didn't disturb the

appearance of the couch; when he left, it was almost as if nobody had lain on it. Then it occurred to me that he lay in exactly the same place every time he came. That made me think that it was a sort of catalepsy, mental catalepsy. I could never honestly say he had a dream; I could never honestly say he was awake; he was between the two. He wasn't unconscious; he wasn't conscious. How did he live in such an exact state of mind? Physically he could lie in exactly one position on the couch: now it became clear that he was doing the same thing mentally.

Q: There are two points I would like to raise. First, here in Paris there are complaints that there is no discussion about the choice of patients. Second, I have been told several times that patients want to stop analysis but their analysts don't want to wean them.

Bion: I would fall back on an expression I find useful, borrowing a term from the mathematicians: "absolute initiative". By "absolute" I mean in either direction – initiative to go back; initiative to go forward. The important point is the initiative, not the direction. That seems to me to be very close to something fundamental and basic, even physically, almost like the functions or the impulses which are born when the adrenals become active, making it possible to fight or run away, to run into the danger or away from it. I say "initiative" to give this neutral spot in between the two. Who gives birth to a child? The mother, or the full-term foetus? Does the full-term foetus in some way indicate that it has had enough of being in the mother's inside? Or does the mother indicate that she has had enough of carrying that load with her? That is putting it in pictorial terms. Let's start again. Does the patient want to see the analyst, or does the analyst want to see the patient? I think the cataleptic situation does represent a sort of refuge; you don't do either.

The other day I heard an interesting account of a patient who seemed to mention the Fourteenth of July. He apparently said quite a lot, but nothing about the Fall of the Bastille or the people dancing in the streets celebrating the holiday. That seems to me to be rather like looking at an X-ray in which you can see the lungs, but why is it hazy in this part? Why can't you see the ribs clearly? What is the matter with this story? While you are looking at this debris, as I call it, you also need to be aware of what is wrong with the story that you are

being told. What is missing? You have only heard the beginning and would almost certainly have to see the patient again. But when you do that, you are also starting analysis and you may discover that you don't want to go on with that patient, but that patient *does* want to go on with you. You have to be aware of that possibility at any moment. The same thing applies in your *atelier*: you may not have decided what sort of artist to be, but as you see what you are fairly good at, you may have to "make the best of a bad job", as we say, and decide to find out what you can do with what you have in your *atelier*.

It is very important to be aware that you may never be satisfied with your analytic career if you feel that you are restricted to what is narrowly called a "scientific" approach. You will have to be able to have a chance of feeling that the interpretation you give is a beautiful one, or that you get a beautiful response from the patient. This aesthetic element of beauty makes a very difficult situation tolerable. It is so important to dare to think or feel whatever you do think or feel, never mind how un-scientific it is.

APPENDIX

"Vitrail", by José-Maria de Heredia [1842–1905]

Cette verrière a vu dames et hauts barons
Étincelants d'azur, d'or, de flamme et de nacre,
Incliner, sous la dextre auguste qui consacre,
L'orgueil de leurs cimiers et de leurs chaperons;
Lorsqu'ils allaient, au bruit du cor ou des clairons,
Ayant le glaive au poing, le gerfaut ou le sacre,
Vers la plaine ou le bois, Byzance ou Saint-Jean d'Acre,
Partir pour la croisade ou le vol des hérons.
Aujourd'hui, les seigneurs auprès des châtelaines,
Avec le lévrier à leurs longues poulaines,
S'allongent aux carreaux de marbre blanc et noir;
Ils gisent là sans voix, sans geste et sans ouïe,
Et de leurs yeux de pierre ils regardent sans voir
La rose du vitrail toujours épanouie.

This window saw great dames and barons high,
Sparkling in mauve and gold, in flame and nacre
Beneath upraised right hand that makes the maker
Abate proud coifs and crests, and prostrate lie.
Then forth, to hunting-horn or trumpet-cry,
Falcon on fist, or falchion slung and saker,
Towards plain or wood, Byzance or St. Jean d'Acre,
Course or crusade, as hawks at herons fly.
Now castellans and chatelaines repose,
The greyhounds couchant at their pointed toes,
Prone on the dalles in lozenged white and black;
Sans speech, sans sight, sans semblance, in the tomb!
Only blind eyes of stone the rays flash back,
Hues of the Rose forever in full bloom.

[Heredia, 1927, p. 73]

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME X

Sea near Swanage
Watercolour painting by WRB

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VOLUME X

Edited by Chris Mawson

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KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume X): 978–1–78220–238–7

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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The Grid (1971)

	Definitory Hypotheses **1**	ψ **2**	Notation **3**	Attention **4**	Inquiry **5**	Action **6**	**...n**
A β-elements	A1	A2				A6	
B α-elements	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	... Bn
C Dream Thoughts Dreams, Myths	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	... Cn
D Pre-conception	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	... Dn
E Conception	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	... En
F Concept	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	... Fn
G Scientific Deductive System		G2					
H Algebraic Calculus							

TWO PAPERS:
THE GRID AND CAESURA

1971/1975

'The Grid' and 'Caesura' were based on talks given at meetings of the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society in April 1971 and June 1975, respectively. *Two Papers: The Grid and Cæsura* was first published in 1977 by Imago Editora, Rio de Janeiro. A revised and corrected edition was published in 1989 by Karnac Books, London, by arrangement with Francesca Bion and Mark Paterson.

Two Papers

The Grid and Caesura

THE GRID

The Grid is an instrument for the use of practising psychoanalysts. It is not intended that it should be used during the working session.

The left-hand vertical column is an indication of categories in which a statement, of whatever kind, should be placed; this category indicates developmental status.

The horizontal axis is intended to state, approximately, the use to which the statement is being put. The two axes should thus together indicate a category implying a comprehensive range of information about the statement. It has been considered useful to include two rows for β- and α-elements neither of which are real or observable. The β-element row is for the categorization of elements like an unpremeditated blow which is related to, but is not, thought. The next row, C, is intended for categories of thought which are often expressible in terms of sensuous, usually visual, images such as those appearing in dreams, myths, narratives, hallucinations. This category will certainly require extension as psychoanalytic experience accumulates; even now it deserves a 'grid' of its own to expand it suitably for psychoanalytic use.

The use of the remaining categories may become clearer as the paper progresses but it may be as well to anticipate comment on rows G and H. These rows can hardly be said to have any approximation in reality. G is supposed to await the development of psychoanalytic deductive systems, and H the equivalent of algebraic systems. It is to be hoped, as always, that they will not be prematurely developed, for premature development can become as tiresome an obstacle to progress as post-maturity-blindness to what might already be seen to be available for practising or theoretical psychoanalysts.

Row F is intended to represent a category for statements, formulations which already exist. In it can be placed psychoanalytic theories, scientific but non-analytic theories, so called laws of nature and other constructs already accepted by various disciplines as being at least temporarily acceptable as genuine attempts to formulate scientific observations.

The horizontal axis is supposed to fulfil the same scheme with regard to the 'use'. The first column is for definitory hypotheses, however primitive, however sophisticated – as expressed by the row in which it is thought fit to place it or them. About these it may be worth observing that they always presuppose a negative element, that is to say, if I say this paper is about the Grid *that* is what it is about, *not* cookery or measurement etc. Equally, however erroneous my claim may be, however obvious it is to someone else that it is about measurement (or cookery or anything else) their formulation is not relevant to this discussion, or any discussion for which the definition has been formulated by the protagonist. Its falsity or otherwise is a function of its relationship to other elements in the scheme. Thus, if, 'we shall leave at sunrise', is stating a definitory hypothesis about the hour of 'our' departure, it is incontrovertible and the fact that an astronomer would consider it to be astronomically incorrect, or a theologian that it is a statement betraying 'hubris', does not controvert the definitory hypothesis. This is my definition of a definitory hypothesis, and as a definition it is a dictate not subject to alteration. The rest of the paper and the various ways in which its elements can be categorized can, however, be criticized as incompatible with the definitory hypothesis.

Column 2 resembles row C in that it requires expansion into a 'grid' of its own. My original idea was that it would supply a series of categories for palpably false statements, preferably known both to the analysand and the analyst to be false, but it was soon evident that it would be necessary to consider what the lie was to be used for, and it was evident at once that 'lie' was a question – begging and possibly misleading term. I remember Melanie Klein saying in the course of a private conversation (and it was a view she expressed more than once) that liars were impossible to treat. I could see that it is a terrible handicap for a psychoanalyst, who depends on being correctly informed, to be habitually and consistently incorrectly informed. I suggested, however, that it could possibly be a form of

deep disturbance which was betraying its presence by that form of operation – indeed her theory of projective identification could itself be presented in the course of analysis as a series of lying statements. It became evident that a distinction would need to be made between a lying statement and a false statement, the false statement being related more to the inadequacy of the human being, analyst or analysand alike, who cannot feel confident in his ability to be aware of the 'truth', and the liar who has to be certain of his knowledge of the truth in order to be sure that he will not blunder into it by accident. In short, it was evident that once again the 'use' to which a statement was being put is an essential feature of the practising psychoanalyst's appreciation of his evidence as it unfolds before him. To leave the problem for the time being, it is simplest to consider column 2 as relating to elements known to the analysand to be false, but enshrining statements valuable against the inception of any development in his personality involving catastrophic change. At this unsatisfactory point the discussion must, for the present, be left.

The columns 3, 4, 5 are relatively simple; column 3 approximates to Freud's idea of memory and notation as he describes it in his paper on Two Principles of Mental Functioning (1911b). Column 4 comes closer to attention – free floating with column 5 as more directed to some particular object. The psychoanalyst who is devoting his attention to arranging his schedule has his attention directed to a particular; a patient dominated by feelings of suspicion will likewise be devoting his attention to particular persons or things. Columns 3, 4, and 5 may be conveniently regarded as a spectrum of attention ranging from memory and desire to floating, general attention to a further extreme of particularity. A good example would be the experience of the psychoanalyst when he attends to material seeming to support a theory such as the Oedipal, or the patient seeking to refute or confirm a suspicion that he is admired.

Column 6 is intended to categorize thoughts which are closely related to, or are transformations into, action. This category, like row C and column 2, is one which soon illustrates the difficulties inherent in trying to evolve an instrument which might assist a psychoanalyst to clarify his thinking about his psychoanalytic problems. I wished to find some category in which I could place acting out. At first it seemed helpful but it took very little time to demonstrate its defects. Indeed, I can say that an early casualty in trying to use the Grid is the

Grid itself. Nevertheless, its use has made it easier for me to preserve a critical and yet informative, illuminating, attitude to my work. In this respect it has, as far as I am concerned, served a useful purpose which has made me think that others might find it profitable to invent and apply a grid system of their own; in time someone may evolve a more generally acceptable system and proceed from that to the formation of grids suitable for particular types of difficulty, different disciplines and perhaps different nationalities.

The first difficulty to be cleared up is what relationship column 6 bears to row A (β-elements). The intention is to include a category which is not thought at all. Just as it can be argued that Descartes himself in his concept of philosophical doubt failed to doubt the necessity of a thinker – an omission which I have been convinced should be repaired by psychoanalysts – so I think psychoanalysts should entertain the reciprocal belief in personality without thought. In the practice of psychoanalysis it is well known to everyone that patients will often say they 'have no thoughts', or are 'thinking of nothing'. It seems to me that the usual supposition that resistances or denials are operating are theories which have so often proved their value that it would be dangerous, to say the least, to suppose anything else without convincing evidence. Yet I am certain that the psychoanalyst should at least be open to conviction. The existence of a β-element row appears to leave room for such convictions if it should prove useful to entertain them. The column 6 category is intended for something which by contrast is thought, even though it is thought apparently instantaneously transformed into action, or, to reverse Keats's formulation of Negative Capability, 'action which is used as a substitute for thought and not action which is used as a prelude to thought'. Keats, it will be remembered, speaks of the capacity for tolerating half-truths and mysteries as essential for the language of achievement in contrast to thinking as a substitute for action. This differentiation of row A from column 6 seems potentially to be a useful aid to assessment of psychoanalytic experience provided it is used in situations other than the session during which analysand and analyst are engaged in psychoanalytic practice. As with row C, the column 6 categories could themselves be extended, using a grid system for that category itself. The uses to which I put the Grid, which I shall now illustrate, may serve as more effective than further explanation.

First, I will give some examples of row C constructs which I have chosen because they have a vivid pictorial quality; they are well known and the first is Freud's own famous choice, *the Oedipus myth.* 1
As it is well known I do not propose to take time on it except to stress the part played by Tiresias and the Sphinx in addition to the characters usually regarded as constituting the central feature of the story – the old King, his Queen Jocasta and Oedipus.

In the *Royal Cemetery at Ur,* approximately 3500 BC, the King was 2
laid to rest. As far as the scene can be reconstructed from the excavations carried out by the joint expedition of the British Museum and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, included in the ceremony was a procession of the notables of the monarch's court into a specially prepared pit. There, clothed in the splendour of their jewels and finery they took a potion of a narcotic drug, conjectured to be hashish; to the accompaniment of music the pit, with its occupants in position, was then filled in with earth.

The site chosen for this cemetery was the city's refuse heap. We may assume that the magic performed that day was held to have sanctified the ground chosen and thus to have overlaid not only the real rubbish deposited on that site but also the view, if it existed, that the human remains were rubbish and that the appropriate place for the disposal of rubbish was the rubbish heap. Sanctification made the ground desirable for those who sought a resting place of magic property for their own dead rubbish. Thus the sanctified place, together with the sanctity which made it desirable, came in the course of time to lose its virtue as it became vulgarized, too full for further burials, and finally reverted to its former use.

Some five hundred years later a different kind of procession took place at the same site. Unless psychoanalysis develops a technique analogous to that of archaeology we shall not know what was in the hearts and minds of those courtiers of Ur, Abraham's City, when they walked into that death pit, took their potion and died. It may be easier to guess what was in the minds of *the plunderers* who became so 3
active during the Third Dynasty. Five hundred years was not long in those days and the mental climate in which that court, with its wealth about it, chose to accompany its king cannot have been so completely dissipated that the tomb robbers could be without fear that they might meet the spirits of the Dead in the course of their adventure.

The Royal mourners demonstrated the power of Religion, Ritual, Magic, Drugs. The plunderers demonstrated the power of gain, and we should perhaps accord them a high position in the Pantheon of Scientific Fame as the forerunners of Science in the domain more usually left in the possession of Magic, Religion and the Dead.

This reconstruction is a transformation of the archaeological report on the joint expedition to form the verbal counterpart of two visual images, burial and plunder. For convenience I transform burial to A; plunder to B. I propose to use the two images A and B to represent the entire domain in which it is usual for psychoanalysts to operate. The visual images represented by A and B impose a degree of rigidity and immobility on the elements composing the pictures. If we disarticulate the images, the elements composing them are freed and the patterns become incoherent elements on which one can impose a pattern which makes order appear where none existed before. The facts worth attention are those which introduce order into this complexity. I have done this by introducing a five-hundred-year gap which separates these two facts in a relatively meaningful way: order has been introduced though it may not seem to add much to what is known. The fact which I have introduced is an idea of dividing the elements into two – those occurring in say 3500 BC and those occurring in 3000 BC. Separating the elements, dividing them into two categories or sets labelled respectively 3500 BC and 3000 BC may make the elements meaningful.

It is possible that that categorization, effected by introducing an idea of time as the instrument by which the separation and selection is effected, yields a train of thought of this kind: how powerful must be the force, emotional, cultural, religious, which can impose on a group of people a course of action certain to lead to their death, without their apparently being deterred by what is so certain. Is there any equivalent force in operation today which could obscure or conceal a fact as dangerous to us and as apparent to our posterity as the death of the men and women who proceeded into the death pit appears certain to us? A child can do something as dangerous to its life: are we correct if we assume it is ignorance? Would we be correct to assume that it is something unknown, more dynamic than ignorance which impelled it on a course certain to lead to its death? Is it the ignorance of the childhood of the race which is amply sufficient to explain the death of the Royal Court of Ur? Or is there some force for which we

require a name – like 'religion' – because 'ignorance' is not pointing or denoting a sufficiently dynamic force?

Reciprocally, should we regard the 3000 BC group as demonstrating the power of a prospect of wealth to overwhelm the fears of the tomb robbers? As I have said, the space of five hundred years would then be scarcely long enough to dim appreciably the fears of the forces which had led to the death march of the ancient court. What courage would be required to brave those murderous forces – or was it simply a love of gain? How did the robbers come by the knowledge which enabled them, five hundred years after the event, to sink the shafts into the earth with such accuracy as to find the Queen's Tomb? Was it luck? Should we regard our religious hierarchy as spiritual descendants of the priests of Ur? Should we erect monuments to the plunderers of the Royal Tombs as Pioneers of Science, as scientific as our scientists? Or should we consider today's scientists as deserving of obloquy for their cupidity?

The A group seem to have each taken a narcotic drug before they were buried alive. Was that the only drug, conjectured to be hashish, or was there some much more powerful force, more deserving of the title of 'drug', which was operating even before the death of the monarch?

What was the drug taken at B? Was it curiosity? When we consider the hostility attributed to the deity both with regard to the Tree of Knowledge in the *Garden of Eden,* and expressed by the confusion of Tongues in the myth of the building of the *Tower of Babel,* the question becomes significant. This and other points will be discussed further when we consider omnipotence. 4 5

The five stories, numbered in the margin, constitute a verbal picture gallery. They provide me, with such few additions as I pick up from my general reading, with models for almost any aspect of the emotional situations I can see for myself in that domain where practical psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic theories intersect.

The Ur reconstructions are based on those of Sir Leonard Woolley: I think they conveniently adumbrate the whole emotional domain with which psychoanalysts have to deal in romantically primitive and therefore compressed terms. [Historical writers, reconstructing what Freud calls historical truth for lack of psychoanalytic history, have to leave out the people – Hamlet without the Prince. *See* Sir Frederick Powicke, *The Lord Edward*.]

In addition to the five stories mentioned I include the *Death of Palinurus* (Virgil, Aeneid Book V) [see page 29].

Religious formulations which divide good and evil do not possess the significance of the undivided principle residing in the same deity. In the practice of psychoanalysis I am convinced that the emotional experience can be discerned as a constantly changing pattern of emotional experience. If the psychoanalyst develops his capacity to intuit these experiences he can become aware that there are certain experiences which are constantly conjoined and that these constant conjunctions are themselves experienced as repeated conjunctions. These constant conjunctions become manifest to the psychoanalyst after a period of time (provided he resists an irritable searching after certainty) as a sensuous kaleidoscopic change; the sensuous change will bear a resemblance to elements of the C categories that are found amongst his models.

I am aware that it may seem that I am suggesting that the psychoanalyst should engage painfully on the elaborations that he then strives to match against his emotional experience in his sessions. This is directly contrary to fact. His own analysis should have put him in reach of denuding himself of his memory and desires. The formation of his own private battery of C category sensuous elements – myths, images and so on – is carried through away from any psychoanalytic session, though it may be genetically related to his work sessions. Once formed it does not matter how often and how variously he re-forms these C-category elements provided he conforms to the discipline of denuding himself of memories and desires and, as soon as he can, of his tendency to understand. Darwin expressed one aspect of this discipline when he stated to his wife (as she reported in the appendix to his autobiography) that "it is fatal to reason whilst observing, though so necessary beforehand and so useful afterwards". The opacity of 'understanding' and its plausibility as an aim of the psychoanalyst tend to hide the danger of precocity and prematurity.

The more the Grid, or something more effective, is studied, the clearer will it become that the psychoanalyst will not only have to develop his power to intuit but he will need to keep it in good repair in the way, analogously, that the eye surgeon must keep the small muscles of his hands in perfect order. It is useless to have an armament of theories and to be insensitive to the facts which have to be

interpreted. Classical, Kleinian, or other theories present no difficulties in practice. The psychoanalyst is aware of Freud's principle that matters which are observed must be called by their proper names. If he witnesses certain facts he is under an obligation to state his evidence; equally, he must not report what he does not see. Otherwise he is guilty of fraud.

For the purpose of this communication I propose to give a factual account of a one-time patient who attended regularly for a psychoanalytic course. I categorize it as a fairly sophisticated account; so I label it F3. The man had, I understood, an academically successful career until he left school and joined a commercial firm as a research chemist with good prospects and a safe job. An admiring relative was going to pay the fees. He was well acquainted with psychoanalytic circles and had slight knowledge of me but I did not know how much. He lay on the couch and lapsed into silence. I waited and after a few minutes asked him what he was thinking about. He did not reply. I became aware after a further silence that he was not in fact being silent – he was stammering. Of course, I thought, I should have realized that; he had told me he had a stammer which sometimes became so intense that for a period he could not say anything. I listened intently. (It was directed attention so I call it column 4 row B? row C?) He would breathe deeply, pause, let out his breath and start again. Each time he would draw in his breath suddenly and sharply and then suddenly let it out again as if experiencing considerable relief. I could make nothing of it. After a few moments he became silent again.

After a further pause I realized I had been listening in the expectation that he would speak and not listening to what I could hear. At first my impression was that he was straining to pass a motion. Again he relapsed into a silence. This time it was broken by sounds as if he were swallowing, perhaps nearly retching. I drew his attention to the facts and said that they could, if I ignored all impressions other than sound, be evidence of activity at both ends of his alimentary canal. He agreed verbally but as if the 'stammer' continued; as nearly as I can represent it he breathed out sharply "Hah, hah, just . . . hah . . . a problem . . . hah . . . hah . . . in ph . . . huh. . . her . . . nation." I said he seemed to be making both a sarcastic comment on what was taking place – his 'stammer' and my interpretation. He then said, after

a preliminary check in his voice but not in his lips, "I think you are quite right." Fear of further difficulty made him talk hurriedly, stop quickly as if exhausted and remain silent.

In this brief account of one part of one session I shall assume that the narrative is as nearly truthful as I can make it. I do not make notes in a session or afterwards so that it is open to anyone to object that the account cannot be true. I am sure it would be even less true if mechanisms had been devised which seemed to record and repeat whatever was to be thus preserved (F3). But I have already categorized my attention to the patient as being suitably represented by category F4. Either the categories are badly drawn up and unsuitable for the load I am trying to make the Grid carry, or my assessment of the material is faulty or, more likely than either, both are true. Anyone who examines the Grid both on psychoanalytic grounds and for scientific methodological rigour will be dissatisfied. Too much must not be expected of human beings attempting discipline with a method which is hardly a hundred years old. J. O. Wisdom has been critical, but rightly appreciative, of Guntrip's attempt to bring methodological standards to bear on psychoanalysis. As I am not able to offer any suggestions for improvement I shall leave the unsatisfactory formulations alone and comfort myself that I am resisting the temptation to reach irritably 'after fact and reason' through my not being 'capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts'.

The most striking feature of the episode was the discovery of the extent to which I began to feel the futility and exasperation of sitting waiting for a man to tell me what he wanted when he would not speak at all. This was almost at once followed by astonishment that apparently he could not talk – that his stammer was so severe. I felt no wiser and no nearer to thinking of any interpretation which was likely to have the effect which I had always understood good interpretations to have. One of my colleagues once told me he had given the patient all the interpretations known to psychoanalysis without any effect whatever. Allowing for exaggeration I could sympathize with his feelings. Today they are my familiars, but two points help – these feelings are no longer strange to me and I do not quite so easily allow myself to be deafened by the uproar of what the patient is not saying or doing. The danger is not that some possible interpretation known to psychoanalysis is not known to the overburdened psychoanalyst, but that he is so distracted by particular instances masquerading as

the discovery of a new general theory that he cannot observe the facts. Although I have now for many years devoted myself to the practice of analysis, as opposed to talking about it, I am constantly surprised by the extent to which I fail in this apparently simple and yet rewarding task. In fact, it took me a very long time to become convinced of the need to denude myself of memory and desire, and longer still before I appreciated the vicious effect on observation that was exerted by a need to understand. The latter is a particular instance of the obtrusion of desire which is liable to rationalization by psychoanalysts. It may be as well to mention some features which contribute to the difficulties of any psychoanalyst disposed to try this discipline. It appears to be easy. It is contrary to the conventions of ordinary medical practice to be unaware of so many and such apparently important items in the family and individual history, and it would leave the psychoanalyst open to attack on the grounds of negligence should something go wrong. The mass of evidence which becomes available in contact with the personality of the analysand makes it necessary to tolerate the constant oscillation from paranoid-schizoid to depressive position, or from patience to security which I suggest as more accurate descriptions of the psychoanalyst's fluctuations.

The resolve not to allow myself to be distracted by the facts about the patient which I did not know, but thought I might be expected to know, proved a great, though at times guilty, relief. I soon extended the procedure through all my practice, always, it seemed, with advantage. I cannot describe the process in detail, though with regard to the Grid I found the thought required, whether to satisfy myself, which I did not succeed in doing, of the soundness of my estimate of what had taken place, or to effect some improvement in the Grid as an instrument, itself led to a great clarification of my thinking both generally and with regard to the particular patient with whose problem I was concerned. This advantage, like others, did not quickly become clear to me. The gradual and imperceptible nature of the progress contributes to the difficulty in my knowing how to proceed in order to pass on the nature of the experience to colleagues. Being wise after the event, it surprises me how often the attempts to clarify my experience would lead to the emergence of what seemed a bright idea and how often the bright idea failed to materialize in practice. At first I was outraged by this and wanted to distort the evidence to conform to my hunch. This breaking of my own rules was always a

failure and contributed to a sense of fraudulence. It took some hardihood and misery to say goodbye to any of my brain-children. I was hardened in my resolve to do so by the discovery that the bright idea shared the quality which is displayed in a dream when it appears to disappear not so much bit by bit, but completely and as a whole. It was at about the same time that I realized that the same idea could reappear as suddenly and as completely. I hoped that full attention to the analysand would act as the trigger which would start off the forgotten, but hopefully appropriate, thought. None the less it is a sad thing to have to abandon one's bright ideas before ever having discovered how bright they were.

I am concerned here to write some of the thoughts stimulated by this and other sessions round about this time. This is not so much a report – the kind of event which I would categorize by column 3 – as a reverie *now* about the kind of reveries I learnt to indulge in these early days of psychoanalytic practice. The effect of my own analysis was that it diminished the obstructive force of unconscious memories and though I acquired new ones, usually believed to be the theories of my analyst, the effects of such recently acquired memories were of a different kind from those usually characterized as inhibitions; these last could be more fruitfully, though more vaguely, described as column 2 categories – that is to say, psychoanalytic objects feared as liable to trigger off developments of a catastrophic nature, to initiate 'catastrophic change'. Their nature may well be exemplified by two descriptions which cannot possibly be described as psychoanalytic.

The first is that in which Poincaré, the mathematician, describes, in his *Science and Method,* the psychological accompaniment of elaborating creatively a mathematical formula. I shall not quote it again because I have already quoted it so often as to risk pushing it towards becoming a ritual, a recital in scientific terms of a formula intended to keep at bay the development, in today's cant terms of the political dictator, of 'dangerous thoughts'.

The second is a quotation from the autobiography of Max Planck of a discovery which was only incidental to his work with mechanical quanta. "It is one of the most painful experiences of my entire life that I have but seldom – in fact, I might say, never – succeeded in gaining universal recognition for a new result, the truth of which I could demonstrate by a conclusive, albeit only theoretical proof. . . . This experience gave me also an opportunity to learn a fact – a remarkable one

in my opinion: a new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it."

After I had discovered in the course of my work with all members of my practice, the obstructive quality of preconceptions, the patient's analysis became more lifelike. It did not matter whether the preconceptions had sprung from what I had consciously and unconsciously gathered from the contact with the patient, or whether it was something I had heard in another context, or whether it was some psychoanalytic theory. The increase in lifelike quality was associated with an increased readiness to perceive non-verbal quality. As I became more practised at ignoring – or as Freud put it, "artificially blinding myself" – certain memories and desires, I found the patient's attempts to speak less able to demand my attention. There he lay, spluttering and farting and sucking away with his lips, and never a word of English. Had he been in command of the knowledge one would expect of a man of his age, I should say it was a perfect symphony concert of rude noises. It was, had I realized it earlier, a virtuoso performance. For some time I made interpretations appropriate to the idea that the noises were being made by a single mouth but I could be aware, in the course of my daily cogitations – the occasions for which I had elaborated the Grid – that this idea was related to an assumption that a personality corresponds to the visible anatomical structures of the person. There used in my childhood to be a character known as the one-man-band. With an arrangement of pulleys, strings, a drum and a sort of harmonium he could be kicking up his heels, waving his arms, throwing his head back violently and suddenly, and thereby putting up a tolerable imitation of a musical performance, sounding his drum with his forehead, ringing a bell with his occiput and so forth. For some reason I could not understand, I was not allowed to watch this performance but used to be hauled off as if from some indecent spectacle. I was reminded of this – another model for ephemeral purposes – as I dragged myself into contact with the patient. After a time I said it sounded as if his mouth, his anus, his throat, were all engaged in a struggle for attention, for who should be supreme. "Fff . . .", he replied, "F.f.f . . . Ffphonation" , he finally exploded. "It sounds" he said with increasing freedom "as if they were trying to settle who was top. But. . ."and again he became inarticulate. For a moment or two

he repeated noises which I was quite used to hearing. The pattern of sound was very distinct but though I felt sure it resembled something I was still unable to suggest any further interpretation. I said, "These different parts of the anatomy seem each to have a personality, like a real person, and each to be ambitious to make use of your "phonation"". "Like trying to get hold of the microphone and keep all others out", he said. I thought of 'internal objects' (F4) but could not see that this theory met the difficulty of which I had been vaguely conscious before when speaking of what was to be considered as marking the boundaries of the personality. I could not feel sure that the patient felt that these 'objects' were inside him. As he was speaking they might as well have been 'outside' him. I asked him if he felt they were outside. He continued easily and fluently about a companion of whose intelligence he had very great doubts. He said he was afraid he might have to work with him as his partner on an explosive project and that might be extremely dangerous. Once before, a man had caused an explosion in the laboratory which seemed to fragment every glass vessel in the room. They might both have been killed. As it was, his companion had lost an eye. He did not want to lose his. He stopped, leaving me somewhat surprised by such a long speech. There was no sign of impediment; nor could I see any impediment to the expression of a copious flow of interpretations which was occurring to me. I would have been reduced to stammering myself if I had even tried to formulate them. I said he was expressing his anxiety about having to come for an analysis to a psychoanalyst whose intelligence was as limited as my own. Compared to Doctor X, a very good psychoanalyst whom he knew, I was felt to be about as intelligent as a bottle compared to a breast. "Contrariwise", he interrupted. I then said he felt the bottle to be at least efficient compared with the human being with whom he shared the laboratory. I said the envy with which the eyes regarded the intercourse had led to an explosive destruction of the eye and the glass vessels. He began to stammer again and there was no further verbal communication. The session ended but not before I had noticed that this time no sound came from his lips. The movement of his lips was most pronounced and most peculiar. As far as I could see from my position it was as if the muscles of the mouth were fibrillating in a way which I have known only in heart muscle and associated with the lipidoses. I could not see how this effect was

produced. Though I was for a number of reasons suspicious of this patient and was careful not to allow symptoms to escape notice, I did not see this symptom recur. However, it alerted me to the necessity for watching for transformations of problems of personality into systems with which they are not usually associated. In so far as developments of either one's own or the analysand's outlook can be traced to certain nodal events (in fact I am convinced it cannot), it forms a convenient fiction which may be used for separating one part of a discussion from another.

I have gathered together my cogitations on this and other cases which I was psychoanalysing at that time without a temporal or spatial framework. A problem which seemed to be insoluble, or to be assumed to be solved by being linked to an extremely inadequate solution, was that presented by the liar. Having had experience of the creations of someone who was in fact notorious enough in his capacity as a liar to be known diagnostically as a pathological liar – a diagnosis that begs all the questions but becomes more manageable if it is regarded as a definitory hypothesis (D, E, F1) – I found I had to respect what, had he been a writer of fiction, would have been regarded as great gifts of imagination. The situation became more complex when I found it necessary to give papers, write reports and teach. What a gift, what a blessing I thought it would have been to be a born liar! No sooner had I thought it than I realized that I was deploring the lack of the one characteristic which is in fact inborn though it had to wait, as always, for the genius to reach its full capacity. In this case the genius, or group genius, who invented speech released the liar from his bondage. The point was brought home by a veterinary surgeon who, on being asked whether it was not a great handicap to have patients who could not say what they were complaining of, replied that it was made up for by the fact that they could not lie either. My stammerer was on certain occasions in that position: he lacked the gift of language! And even when he could talk his whole prejudice was to speak the truth. I did not at first realize the handicap under which he laboured when, as was often the case, he wished to preserve a private life *and* have a psychoanalysis. For convenience, the assumption of priority of deception as the senior function, has some value for emphasizing a possibility usually disregarded. In fact I claim no value for this idea other than that of drawing attention to

one of the inherent problems of psychoanalysis. Communication, not even verbal communication, was designed for the purpose of psychoanalysis as a method of scientific investigation of the personality. Many methods of investigation, religious, legal, philosophical, have been elaborated for the discovery of truth. The lot of psychoanalysis has been to expose the hollowness of the pretensions of all these disciplines. As far as possible we need to find some method by which we do not fall into the same pit. At the outset there is a difficulty – for we do not purport to dictate, even suppose we could, how anyone can be made to use psychoanalysis for scientific purposes only. Anyone is free to undergo a training and, once qualified, use his qualification for any purpose he chooses. The analysand can persist in courses of action which led to his original departure from health and which will inevitably undo any growth which psychoanalysis might promote. The patient I have selected as a point of discussion was one who by training, ability and prejudice was particularly likely to pursue his analysis to develop his scientific flair.

I shall begin with the choice of two apparently different types of liar. One I shall call the 'charming' liar, the other the 'poisonous' liar. The terms have an advantage in being known in conversational English and are usually reserved for people who symptomatically are very different. This superficial difference soon tends to declare its superficiality. Both are peculiar in the significance they share socially. Indeed, a phrase which has come into use recently shows that the presence of both psychological trends operates in the very highest circles to such an extent that an almost scientific term has had to be invented, namely, 'the credibility gap'. The chief reason why these trends need to be recognized is because they appear to have, borrowing a biological term, a toxic effect on mental development. I am not speaking only of individual mental development, though that is naturally the central concern of psychoanalysts, but the mental or psychological or moral development of whole groups. This is not the place to discuss the group aspect of this problem but I think psychoanalysts will ignore this extension of the individual to their peril. But . . . why did my patient stammer? Certainly I would have been hesitant about regarding him as falling into either of the two named categories. He was mischievous in a pleasant way, he was kind and considerate. He was the victim of much cruelty, a fact of which he was unaware and for which I was dependent on hearsay.

As the analysis proceeded I was able to interpret the stammer as part of a dramatic presentation of three people in the room. The most obvious trio was of course Father, Mother, Child. The closest representation of this depended on the actual session. I have found no way in which it is possible to pass on to someone who was not there the changes constantly occurring in the sessions as a whole or those occurring in any single session. Naturally psychoanalytic colleagues would like to have evidence; naturally I would like to give evidence. But with the passage of time I am convinced that there is no substitute for psychoanalysis.

The following is an attempt to indicate the direction in which evidence is to be found. Let us assume that the psychoanalyst has managed to rid himself of the clamour of psychoanalytic gang warfare, the pressures of the daily problems of individual survival, to a point where it is relatively quiet in the office. The man of whom I am writing was often speechless for very considerable periods. As I have already indicated, my preconceptions – now I would call them my psychoanalytic and other prejudices – made it difficult for me, as it was for him, to tolerate the silence. As I became more able to silence my prejudices, I also became able to be aware of the evidence that was there rather than to regret the evidence that was not. As my ears became used to the silence, little sounds became easier to hear. I was reminded of an analogy which Freud used where he wrote of having artificially to blind himself in order to direct the faintest glimmer of light in a very dark situation. Transforming this I used the analogy to consider the importance of 'artificial silence' in order to hear very 'faint noises'. It worked. I began to hear sounds which would formerly have passed unnoticed.

My object in giving these accounts is their value in providing verbal formulations of visual images. The visual image, as television and the movies have shown, has great power of lateral communication. Verbal communication, or at least the written form, depending on the durability of the medium, has greater staying power, as witnessed by the Homeric poems, the code of Hammurabi, Virgil and, in recent times, Shakespeare. When it comes to phonation (it will be remembered that when my patient did vocalize he did it with great accuracy and precision and used that term) the situation is more complex. Tacitus gives a good general description of the function of the bard in the Germanic tribe; he also gives particular descriptions of the

part played by Percennius after the death of Augustus Caesar. Should you wonder what this has to do with psychoanalysis, I suggest that you let your curiosity lead you to listen to recordings – I was able to study some which I borrowed from the British Broadcasting Corporation – of Hitler's speeches made at rallies in Nürnberg. The emotional forces active in the time of Tacitus are still active. I am fortunate in not understanding German and therefore was not distracted by the element of articulate speech to a point where I could not hear the phonation or be unaware of the *β*-elements. I define these as elements which lie outside the spectrum of 'thought'.

The dilemma for the psychoanalyst is this: I do not believe, and nor does anyone else who has had close contact with men in battle conditions, prisoners of war or civilians in similar stress, that the feelings of men and women either as individuals or as members of a group have changed; they are dormant. Often they are covered by a veneer of civilization which, however, does not conceal though it may disguise the forces beneath. Sometimes it becomes clear to the psychoanalyst that the boundaries of the person do not correspond to the person' s anatomical structure. Melanie Klein, as I understood her to say, did not think that there was any mystery about apparently concerted movements in a group of analysands beyond what could be explained by transference relationship with the same analyst. I think we should keep an open mind. I do not feel any need to postulate 'extra-sensory' perception, a herd instinct as Wilfred Trotter did, or a group unconscious as Jung did. I think, however, that there may well be some analogue in the personality to the capillary blood system which in ordinary conditions is dormant but in extraordinary conditions may dilate as in surgical shock. The analogy would be such hyper-stimulation of the individual 'groupishness' that his capacity for conscious, sophisticated behaviour seeps away into his 'unconscious'. Freud considered that there might be substance in Weismann's theory of the individual personality as subordinate to the germ plasm (1915c, page 125). There are certainly situations in which the analysis seems to be on the periphery of the main theme: the investigation continues but it is difficult to suppose that the field being investigated is of real consequence; yet the patient comes, though he complains of the futility of the procedure. The complaint suggests awareness of some preoccupation which is not futile. If the patient were a child who goes to a parent and asks, "What shall I

do now?" it would be easier to understand. But he is not a child and the psychoanalyst does not purport to suggest solutions for such problems. Why then does the analysand behave as if he were? It may be that the analysand has developed, the psychoanalyst has developed, and the problems have developed the fastest of all – so fast that they have outgrown psychoanalysis itself. That is a guess but there are others. I do not limit myself to one 'favoured' solution. Freud may have been on the wrong tack, or, as I think more likely, man, even Freud, cannot possibly do more than scratch the surface in the short time available to him. There is also a possibility that the training, the teaching, is both too good and too bad. It is so good that it becomes second nature to go and find some expert to work out the problem. It is so bad that all initiative, all capacity for finding out is destroyed. The problem, the object of curiosity, has to be approached symmetrically. 'Too good' and 'too bad' is not a formulation of a conflict; it is a formulation of a symmetrical relationship. It is analogous, in the domain of personality, to bifocal vision in the domain of visual inquiry. In sensuous experience the eyes are focused, brought to a point where they 'meet'. The 'apparatus' of intuition cannot be expressed in the simple terms available to formulation of homogeneous sensuous experience. Real and imaginary only supplement each other when they do not meet, when it is known that two parallel lives in the domain of sensuous experience meet, but in the domain of personality they become symmetrical.

Freud's second thoughts about using the term 'interpretation' when 'construction' would appear to be more apposite is certainly compatible with, though I could hardly regard it as confirmatory of, my idea that for some purposes for which analysts use interpretations they require constructions, and that these constructions are essential instruments for the demonstration of symmetry. A sensuous component of this apparatus is the visual image. The C elements I have sketched out differ from the interpretation, which is usually monovalent, whereas the construction (C element) is polyvalent and is faster than the F or G formulations though it may not be faster than the H formulations if and when they can be discovered. This is a matter of great practical consequence when the psychoanalyst has to cope with primitive material. The analysand operating on a primitive level comes close to acting on the principle of 'act first, think later'. Usually the analysand in such an episode is acting in relationship with

the analyst as if, to put it in a mixture of real and imaginary terms, an extremely active, flexible and speedy unconscious were being pursued by a slow, rigid, lumbering conscious.

I must now take up in some detail a word I often use, in common with most psychoanalysts – 'analogy'. I have in fact used analogy in describing the conscious as lumbering after the unconscious. I used it without acknowledgement because the form is disguised (revealed?) as a silent metaphor; its use is disguised. Sometimes the metaphor has become so much a part of conversational English that it is 'dead' – unless, as Fowler points out, it is brought to life by juxtaposition with another metaphor whose inappropriateness, non-homogeneity, sends a galvanic-like flutter through it. As I have already pointed out, confusion can occur because attention is given to the two images used in the analogy, and not, which is the important point, the relationship between them. Vaihinger exaggerated the relationship, not surprisingly, into a philosophical system.[1] Freud spoke of this contribution in *The Future of an Illusion*. Bringing to bear the construction, the polyvalent weapon of symmetry, I would suggest that we need to consider the future of an analogy, the future of an 'illusion', the future of 'transference' which is the name given by psychoanalysts to a particular and potent form of relationship. If one could arrange the term, spectrum-wise, in ascending power of emotional drive it could be: generation → analogy → transference → delusion illusion group illusion → hallucination → asymmetry → degeneration. C elements are used to provide anchorage for the relationship – mouth is one anchor, breast is the other. Both of these terms have been treated as if they were the essential features of the analogy. It is exactly this point that marks the divergence of the path of growth from the path of decay. The breast and the mouth are only important in so far as they serve to define the bridge between the two. When the 'anchors' usurp the importance which belongs to the qualities which they should be imparting to the bridge, growth is

[1][Hans Vaihinger (1852–1933), a German philosopher influenced by Arthur Schopenhauer and F. A. Lange, developed Kant's thinking by putting forward a theory of 'fictions' as the basis of what he called his 'as if' philosophy. His major work, begun in 1876 and published in 1911, was *Die Philosophie des Als Ob* (The philosophy of 'as if'). Vaihinger's ideas informed Bion's work on the value of analogies and of mathematical thinking. *Ed*.]

impaired. The man with the stammer was 'held' because he could not progress beyond the importance of defecation, urination, the mouth as an object to be sensuously gratified by the tongue and vice versa.

The interpretation or construction produced by the psychoanalyst depends on the intuitive link between analysand and analyst. As it is constantly imperilled by deliberate attacks, its essential frailty and ordinary fatigue, it needs to be protected and maintained. The object of the Grid is to provide a mental gymnastic tool. It can be used in relative isolation from attack and cannot do harm so long as it is not allowed to intrude into the relationship between analysand and the analyst as by the elaboration of some theory about the patient which is then stored up and used as something which can be discharged like a missile in a battle.

What I have said of the function of the anchors in an analogy will show how acute the attention needs to be. The point is emphasized by certain patients whose sending and receiving of signals depends on the use of a very narrow waveband. The message sent by the analyst is either correctly metred or it is not received. Similarly, the message sent by the analysand has to be received by the wide-band receiver as represented by symmetry. I have experienced this in its most acute form in the musician who has perfect pitch. I have also had to contend with it in a patient whose visual sense made it impossible for him to tolerate the slightest deviation from what was, in his opinion, the correct colour.

These facts require that the analyst should not allow himself to be restricted simply to the evidence provided by speech, but must he be restricted to the communication? Freud said it is better to avoid 'symbolic disguisings', but what about symbolic revelations? It may be the only kind of reception which is commensurate with the child's ability. Analysands often think they can afford an analysis. If the figures add up correctly according to the rules of their religious belief in the omnipotence of money, and if the power of financial rituals to control their anxieties are commensurate with their anxieties, they may be betrayed into an entirely erroneous belief that they can 'afford' a psychoanalysis.

Freud shows that while he regards belief in God as an illusion, he has no doubt about the reality of the illusion. The illusion must be taken seriously by psychoanalysts. In this particular sphere I think *interpretation* (as opposed to construction) of omnipotence

is particularly unfortunate. It minimizes the constant conjunction which is the reality that is often so inadequately represented by the single term, 'omnipotence', or even the symmetrical version of it, 'omnipotence–helplessness'. The Palinurus story [see below] (which I think Virgil intended us to take seriously as part of religion and not just an epic poem, any more than Milton regarded *Paradise Lost* as an exercise in artistic virtuosity) provides a better 'construction' than any 'interpretation' or other invention to draw together the conjoined elements when 'omnipotence' is in question. The liar gives substance to his phantasies of omnipotence because, unlike speaking the truth, he does not simply record – he does something. Recording, speaking the truth, is merely to be an insignificant cog in the machinery. In effect this means that in the personality in which intolerance of frustration coexists with great ambition, greed tends to dominate and the 'result' dominates the greed. The 'end', or 'aim', or 'supposed aim', of an activity precipitates prematurity and precocity. It is difficult to accept real life because frustration is an essential feature of real life. In an extreme position it obstructs the development of thought. As Freud points out, the capacity for thought acts potentially by interposing delay between an impulse and its transformation into action, but it can also make the frustration, inseparable from translating thought into action, more bearable. The 'ambitious–intolerant conjunction' can then perpetuate itself; thought being replaced by omnipotence (which has no part in reality) tends thus to increase frustration, denies the personality such moderation of frustration as thought might provide, and impels towards violence such as robbery and murder. The premature acquisition of the supposed valuable object means that even a genuine valuable cannot be used to yield satisfaction because the maturity required to effect the transformation from potential to actual is missing. The term 'omnipotence', as contrasted with 'construction', such as the Palinurus story, is too abstract to give an idea of the reality to which the psychoanalyst attempts to draw attention. Omnipotence–omniscience–god, together with the symmetrical elements, helplessness–incomprehension–agnosticism, are the abstract statements of the basic group. I shall now introduce, instead of these abstract terms, the C version, a verbal formulation of a visual image.

THE DEATH OF PALINURUS

The anxieties of father Aeneas being allayed by Neptune, the fleet takes advantage of the calm following the storm; it is ordered to conform to the movements of the column steered by Palinurus.

The sailors go to sleep. Somnus seeks out Palinurus bringing the guiltless man bad dreams. Disguised as Phorbas he seats himself on the stern and proceeds to seduce Palinurus by pointing out that it is time for sleep, the seas are calm and favourable and that he, Phorbas, will take over the tiller allowing Palinurus to rest. Palinurus makes a very direct and contemptuous reply, scorning the suggestion that he would sleep when dealing with such a treacherous sea, or risk the life of his commander. He does not let go the tiller or take his eyes off the stars by which he steers.

The god then shakes the dews of Lethean forgetfulness over him and hurls him into the sea with such violence that Palinurus carries part of the stern with him. His comrades do not hear his calls for help and he is drowned.

Aeneas, finding the ship yawing, and saddened by the fecklessness of Palinurus, takes over the helm.

This model is one from which, according to the dictates of the material, the analyst can formulate a 'construction'. Interpretation, in the sense which Freud discards the term, may indeed be a useful preliminary, a prelude to the 'construction'. The symmetrical nature of the story makes possible the choice of any element to be the vertex, without alteration in the value of the function. Thus, the patient might be obtruding an anxiety about drugs; the analyst is offered a choice of drugs in this story. A patient may wish to obtrude a grievance about unfair treatment; again, the analyst has a choice of elements on which his attention might focus. The point I make is that the story helps to draw attention to the fact that certain elements are constantly conjoined; that fact may escape attention but for a model of this kind. The gap between the theory and the patient on the couch can be too great for relevance to be apparent, especially when the prejudice in favour of theory is too active. Equally, if there are not enough C models, the lack of theory may mean that the structure is not strong enough to carry the load it has to bear in practice.

The respect in which psychoanalysis seems to me to be seriously deficient is in models (C) of omnipotence–helplessness (F). As a result the constantly conjoined elements are recognized as isolated units which have relevance only on rare occasions and fail to stimulate a response when they should on occasions which are of more frequent occurrence. The deficiency may be more apparent than real. If the Eden and Babel myths are used for models for the omnipotent–helpless theme and reinforced by the riddling Sphinx of the Oedipus myth, the deficiency is lessened. The 'morality' of the deity may also be expanded by consideration of the views expressed in Chapter 2 of the *Bhagavad Gita.* Such models help a psychoanalyst to bridge the gap between a theory and the material which is manifest in the psychoanalytic experience.

It is assumed that the psychoanalyst considers that the sophisticated theoretical formulation (F) and the model (C) are legitimate transformations, each of the other. In other words, there are invariants present in the psychoanalytic experience and in the theoretical formulation. On the correctness of this assumption the genuineness of the psychoanalysis depends. I have described elsewhere that under projection a round pond and an avenue of trees on the ground can be represented by an ellipse and two converging lines on a piece of paper. In short, there are invariants in these two factually different objects – the pond and trees, and the drawing. What are the invariants if one object is the fountains of Rome and the other the score of a piece of music by Respighi?

I have given a summary in visual terms of Virgil's account of the death of Palinurus. What are the invariants common to this and to the stammerer on the couch? What are the rules which have to be obeyed if the analysand can reasonably be expected to understand the analyst and vice versa?

In the world of physics an orchestral performance appears to be transformable, given suitable apparatus, into wireless waves; these can be transformed back again so that another human being can assume he is listening to an orchestral performance. Can a modern English-speaking person be trained to understand the printed representation of Virgil, Aeneid, Book V, lines 827–871? Can a trained person intervene between the Latin formulation and an American in such a way that there is a carry-over of invariants common to the Latin poem and the English comprehension?

I cannot, even if I wanted to, answer these questions. Nor, as far as I know, can the Grid. But I have found, and think that others might likewise find, that the Grid could serve to provide a mental climbing frame on which the psychoanalyst could exercise his mental muscles. Even its defects could be turned to advantage.

Ezra Pound has been severely criticized for his translation of the classics such as his *Homage to Sextus Propertius,* the *Analects of Confucius,* and the *Classical Anthology.* It could easily be shown, perhaps too easily, that Pound was guilty of certain schoolboy howlers in his translations from the Latin. Since he is a human being there is no shortage of human frailty available for ammunition, the symmetrical approach being adulation and abuse. The practising psychoanalyst, the portrait painter, the musician, the sculptor, all have to 'see' and demonstrate, so that others may see, the truth which is usually ugly and frightening to the person to whom the truth is displayed. In the same way the ugly and frightening are usually believed, by the person to whom they are displayed, to be identical with the truth.

℘ It takes a genius, a Faraday, to demonstrate the reality of electricity so that people of less messianic capacity can understand so much that they can switch on an electric light.

It takes a mystic to demonstrate the existence of God so that people who lack that endowment can understand enough to know when and how to switch on the appropriate ritual and employ the correct magic.

It takes a Freud to demonstrate the reality of emotional resources to such a point that people who have not such capacity can nevertheless receive the communications which demonstrate the resources and make them available.

So-called Scientific Laws are vulgarizations of that which the scientific mystic can achieve directly. Religious dogmata are similarly vulgarizations of that which the religious mystic can achieve directly.

The function of the Establishment, Scientific and Religious, is to protect the mystic from destruction and the group from the disruptive effects of the mystic. The Grid, like a primitive scheme of electrical switches, wires and so forth, is intended to help preserve psychoanalysis from being destroyed 'in its infancy', and

> the group, which has the misfortune to harbour such a lusty child, from disintegrating as a result of the uncontrolled and undirected vigour of the infant. As is the way with infants it can impress its environment both with its power and helplessness. ♁

The total description between ♁ and ♁ is by way of a pictorial simplification, and therefore an inevitable distortion, of the facts to be represented. Either the description becomes, like so much mathematics, indistinguishable from a meaningless manipulation of symbols, or it gains in psychological digestibility at the expense of scientific vigour. Psychoanalysis has not reached a point where it can be communicated without the presence of the objects which have to be demonstrated. In short, the object being interpreted, for which the construction is being elaborated, must be present at the time when its presence is supposed to be made manifest by the 'construction'. A microscopist cannot be constructing his microscope while he is looking through it – though he may be adjusting his powers of observation to its defects. The Grid is to be used in the process of this period of preparation, not as a substitute for observation or psychoanalysis but as a prelude to it.

CAESURA

SOURCES

S. Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*.

> There is much more continuity between intra-uterine life and earliest infancy than the impressive caesura of the act of birth allows us to believe.

M. Buber, *I and Thou*.

> The prenatal life of the child is a pure natural association, a flowing toward each other, a bodily reciprocity; and the life horizon of the developing being appears uniquely inscribed, and yet also not inscribed, in that of the being that carries it; for the womb in which it dwells is not solely that of the human mother.

V. C. Walsh, 'Preface' to *Introduction to Contemporary Microeconomics*.

> If one leaves a happy, spirited discussion with friends about currently debated topics . . . to get down to the job of arranging introductory lectures on the subject for a large audience, one may be struck by a certain oddity. The two worlds seem to have no intersection.

M. Buber, *I and Thou*.

> Every developing human child rests, like all developing beings, in the womb of the great mother – the undifferentiated, not yet formed primal world. From this it detaches itself to enter a personal life, and it is only in dark hours when we slip out of this again (as happens even to the healthy, night after night) that we are close to her again. But this detachment is not sudden . . . like that from the bodily mother.

M. Buber, *I and Thou*.

> From the glowing darkness of the chaos he has stepped into the cool and light creation without immediately possessing it. . . .

S. Freud, Letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé from *Letters of 1873–1939*.

> I know that in writing I have to blind myself artificially in order to focus all the light on one dark spot. . . .

St John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*.

> The memory must also strip itself of all those forms and kinds of knowledge, that it may unite itself with God in hope.

S. Freud, Letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé from *Letters of 1873–1939*.

> . . . renouncing cohesion, harmony, edifying effects and everything which you call the symbolic element. . . .

M. Buber, *I and Thou*. (Reference to Jewish myth).

> . . . in his mother's womb man knows the universe and forgets it at birth.

St John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*.

> . . . the love which the memory always has for other forms and kinds of knowledge which are of supernatural things, such as visions, revelations, locutions and feelings which come in a supernatural way. When these things have passed through the soul, there is wont to remain impressed upon it some image, form, figure or idea, whether in the soul or in the memory of fancy, at times very vividly and effectively. Concerning these images it is also needful to give advice lest the memory becomes encumbered with them and they be a hindrance to its union with God in perfect and pure hope.

The foregoing quotations were made from the vertex of different disciplines, at different times and in different languages. They delineate the universe of discourse within which this paper is confined.

Psychoanalysis is concerned with the domain of ideas; included are thoughts and feelings of all kinds. Although it could be described as a limited domain, a limited human activity, its scope nevertheless is vast when one considers *all* thoughts, feelings and ideas which are presented to us in the course of our work. In the physical sciences the human being is dealing with a physical material: psychoanalysts are concerned with characters, personalities, thoughts, ideas and feelings. But whatever the discipline there is a primitive, fundamental, unalterable and basic line – the truth. "What is truth?" said jesting Pilate, according to Francis Bacon, and would not wait for an answer. *We* probably cannot wait for an answer, because we have not the time. Nevertheless, that is what we are concerned with – inescapably and unavoidably – even if we have no idea what is true and what is not. Since we are dealing with human characters we are also concerned with lies, deceptions, evasions, fictions, phantasies, visions, hallucinations – indeed, the list can be lengthened almost indefinitely.

In our relationships with analysands time is limited and choice inescapable. Which, of all the right interpretations, are we to choose to formulate? The analyst's freedom, though great, can be seen to be limited, at any rate on one boundary, by the need to be truthful, to give an interpretation which is a true one. If the analysand is sincere in his wish for treatment he likewise is limited; his free association should be as near to what he considers to be the truth as he can get. The course of the discussion itself between analyst and analysand may make it more possible to assess the degree of truth or falsity in

any particular idea which is under scrutiny. But is one to call a feeling 'an idea'? It is a matter of definition, but we cannot exclude feelings any more than ideas from the field which we are to survey.

The embryologist speaks about 'optic pits' and 'auditory pits'. Is it possible for us, as psychoanalysts, to think that there may still be vestiges in the human being which would suggest a survival in the human mind, analogous to that in the human body, of evidence in the field of optics that once there were optic pits, or in the field of hearing that once there were auditory pits? Is there any part of the human mind which still betrays signs of an 'embryological' intuition, either visual or auditory?

This may seem to be an academic and unimportant matter – unless we think that there may be some truth in the statement made by Freud that there is some connection between post-natal thought and emotional life, and prenatal life. To exaggerate the question for the sake of simplicity: are we to consider that the foetus thinks, or feels, or sees, or hears? If so, how primitive can these thoughts, or feelings, or ideas be?

Events sometimes take place in the consulting room, where there are present only myself and a grown man or woman, which suggest feelings that I could describe as envy, love, hate, sex, but which seem to have an intense and unformed character. It is convenient to fall back on physiology and anatomy to borrow ideas in order to express my feelings about some of these events; to think of some of the feelings which the patient is expressing as being subthalamic, or sympathetic, or para-sympathetic. There are occasions when the patient mentions some anxiety, fear, or a symptom (like blushing) briefly and unobtrusively, yet in a way which suggests that something is being mentioned in disguised and feeble terms because it is the best that the patient can do to give effect to feelings which are feared for their intensity, magnitude and obtrusiveness compared with those feelings which most people are used to regard as normal. Similarly, the patient may express a fear of the future which has many of the characteristics of a past which one thinks he could not possibly remember; nor can he remember the future because it has not yet happened. These things, so faintly expressed, may in truth be very powerful. I can imagine that there may be ideas which cannot be more powerfully expressed because they are buried in the future which has not happened, or buried in the past which is forgotten, and which can hardly

be said to belong to what we call 'thought'. If you apply pressure to your eyeball you can see, in response to the physical pressure, what appears to be something which could only be a response of the optic apparatus. If that is so then maybe the optic pits respond to pressure even before the dramatic caesura of birth itself. From the point of view of the analyst the fact that the analysand is a grown man or woman can be so obtrusive, the evidence of the eyes so obtrusive, that it blinds him to feelings which are not so clearly presented to the optic apparatus.

Any attempt to classify the material with which we have to deal should be regarded as provisional, or transitive; that is to say, part of a process from one thought or idea or position to another – not a permanency, not a halting spot at which the investigation is ended. When the analyst is not sure what it is that is obtruding he is in the position of having an intuition without any corresponding concept – that intuition might be called 'blind'. Any concept, for example projective identification, is empty when it has no content. The problem for the practising analyst is how to match his hunch, or his intuition, or his suspicion, with some formulation, some conceptual statement. He has to do that *before* he can give an interpretation. The analyst's role, in other words, is one which inevitably involves the use of transitive ideas or ideas in transit. The analysand, likewise, is attempting through his free associations to formulate an experience of which he is aware.

As things are at present, giving an interpretation means that the analyst has to be capable of verbalizing a statement of his senses, his intuitions and his primitive reactions to what the patient says. This statement has to be effective as a physical act is effective. The analysand's difficulties, already great enough, are increased by his being limited to what little he can in fact do even when able to use free associations. We have to impose limitations; the analyst could not work if the analysand were free to resort to physical violence. When a patient comes with firearms the analyst has to rely on physical alertness to deal with such a potentially dangerous situation. It is less serious when the patient substitutes a musical instrument for the gun – although some types of musical instrument can make the analyst's interpretations inaudible. One instrument that is usually available is the ability to scream. I have mentioned elsewhere the trained singer who is able to scream in a way not open to less gifted

or less well trained people, and who can thereby make an analytic session painful for the analyst.

What are we to think about the patient who does not want to lie on the couch? Is it possible that lying on a couch subjects them to physical pressures of a kind which are beyond their capacity to tolerate, or to verbalize, or to 'understand'? The analyst cannot interpret the 'sights' a foetus could 'see' if subjected to pressure on the optic pits. This is an object of research by the analyst in the course of a psychoanalysis where he has the opportunity for detailed and prolonged contact with patients. If he can also discuss differing experiences with different observers there is hope of seeing what is observed in common. It is one of the justifications for an analytic society.

There are difficulties analogous to those associated with the caesura of birth. A similar caesura seems to exist between the inhabitant, say, of the East and of the West. Some of these similarities/differences are spectacular, particularly in time; the mystics express themselves in terms which are strikingly similar although sometimes separated from each other by many hundreds of years. How is one to penetrate this obstacle, this caesura of birth? Can any method of communication be sufficiently 'penetrating' to pass that caesura in the direction from post-natal conscious thought back to the pre-mental in which thoughts and ideas have their counterpart in 'times' or 'levels' of mind where they are not thoughts or ideas? That penetration has to be effective in either direction. It is easy to put it in pictorial terms by saying it is like penetrating into the woman's inside either from inside out, as at birth, or from outside in, as in sexual intercourse. These pictorial formulations are primitive and general; they may be so general that it is difficult to see what is to be said at any precise moment – which is the analyst's problem. One cannot go back – although we talk about it in those words – to childhood or infancy. It is in the present that we have to have a method of formulation which can penetrate the barrier.

If, as I think, our constant problem is that of choice, this also involves inhibition. Thus, if I want to give one interpretation I have to inhibit other interpretations which I am not choosing to give. This is usually fairly simple because the choice is between a number of consciously entertained ideas; it is not easy when the inhibition has a pathological quality which makes it more difficult to entertain an unwelcome idea. Choice involves what some of us call 'splitting';

perhaps four or five possible interpretations must be considered. The human personality exists as a whole; we have to split that personality to formulate several possible ideas or interpretations. That I call non-pathological splitting. We have to find some method by which those particular interpretations can be put into an order before establishing which one is to be given precedence. This has to be done in a way which is not the same as talking about it 'doing' must be quicker. The interpretation has to be made at the right moment; it is, therefore, necessary that this non-pathological splitting, ordering of those splits and choice of formulation become part of a rapid and practised mind.

The analyst is restricted to what is available to him from his experience of his own life on the one hand, and to what he considers to be the facts which are unfolding in his presence on the other. In the practice of psychoanalysis the analyst has the advantage of the presence of the analysand. The possibilities are open-ended; we do not know what the analysand is likely to say or do to express himself and his character. The analyst is dependent on such facts as are made available to him while the patient is present and available for observation. What the patient does away from the session cannot be known to the analyst; hearsay evidence is fallacious and of small value in comparison with the direct evidence.

An infant can show a startled reaction to certain forms of stimulus. On the other hand there are stimuli which are consciously more striking to us as adults, but which pass the infant by. In an obstetric ward a baby will show no signs of awareness of the slamming of a door although it is obtrusive to the adult observer. In analysis the analyst likewise has an opportunity of observing certain reactions which are 'slight' but may, nevertheless, be of significance and therefore worthwhile bringing to the patient's attention. These trivial movements or noises show up clearly with the patient who is virtually inarticulate or silent, in contrast with the prevailing silence. This kind of experience is difficult to convey to a non-participant; it is one of the problems of communication with colleagues who, however experienced in analysis, cannot be familiar with the experience that the analyst has with a *particular* analysand. No terms – 'autistic child', 'psychotic', 'borderline' – are of much use because the experience in an analysis is more subtle, detailed and difficult to divide up into these somewhat crude divisions available to us when we borrow from the practice of medicine, or existing philosophies, or analytic theories.

Since analysis takes place in time, the tendency is to believe that when the patient is talking he is describing a state of affairs that is also 'ordered' in time; patient and analyst are liable to think of something as having happened in the past. This obscures the fact that we exist in the present; we can do nothing about the past. It is, therefore, seriously misleading to think as if we dealt with the past. What makes the venture of analysis difficult is that one constantly changing personality talks to another. But the personality does not seem to develop as it would if it were a piece of elastic being stretched out. It is as if it were something which developed many different skins as an onion does. This point adds importance to the factor of the caesura, the need to penetrate what is recognized as a dramatic event like birth, or a possibility of success, or a breakdown. The patient has a breakup, or breakdown, rather than a 'breakthrough'. Many a façade has been saved by the misfortune that has made it a successful ruin.

I do not wish to abandon the idea of the conscious or unconscious; the existing theories are valuable, when properly used, either for thinking about a situation or for illuminating the situation for the sake of someone not-self. These ideas that we hear in the course of analysis have at some time been interpretations though now free associations. We are dealing with a series of skins which have been epidermis or conscious, but are now 'free associations'.

The ability of the analysand to take advantage of the possibility of success which has opened out is a symptom of the penetration from the situation which Freud describes as intra-uterine, to the situation which is conscious and post-caesural. I do not suggest that the event is related to the dramatic episode of birth itself, but rather that that dramatic situation, if borne in mind, is easier to use as a model to understand far less dramatic occasions which occur over and over again when the patient is challenged to move from one state of mind to another. In other words, to penetrate an obstacle or layer between the states when opportunity opens out, or there is some apparently disastrous state of affairs to be turned to good account. Since we can do nothing about the dramatic or obvious external event, it provides an interpretation, later to become a free association, for the not-at-all-obvious event.

I want now to consider a non-analytic situation, namely that in which the patient has to deal with changes in his affairs by making decisions. This situation is comparable with the game of Snakes and

Ladders. The patient's choice may fall on the head of a snake and he returns to an apparently unfortunate state of affairs which he deplores and regrets; or he may arrive at a ladder and find himself in the position of being able to make several moves which are towards his final goal – which he may also regret. In either situation the choice that the patient makes compels readjustment to the consequences. Much then depends on the extent to which he is a victim of self-hatred or self-love.

The situation of the analyst is similar to that of the analysand in that he lives in a world of reality of which the analysis itself is a part. He therefore has to make choices, including the possibility of having to keep silent because he does not know an answer or cannot think of an appropriate interpretation; he can indulge himself by giving an interpretation which is only a way of passing the time.

Consider a decision which confronts most people whether to propose marriage or to accept a proposal. Either way the two people have to make a decision. I quote from Yeats's poem on this precise dilemma, 'Solomon and the Witch':

> For though love has a spider's eye
> To find out some appropriate pain –
> Aye, though all passion's in the glance –
> For every nerve, and tests a lover
> With cruelties of Choice and Chance;
> And when at last that murder's over
> Maybe the bride-bed brings despair,
> For each an imagined image brings
> And finds a real image there;

Like birth, the caesura of marriage is dramatic; it may obscure the fact that the events at the time of marriage and after are influenced by events which take place long before the marriage. As Freud put it with regard to birth, events in the patient's mind are greatly influenced by events which were in fact intra-uterine. Using this for theoretical purposes, events which are in the womb of time eventually show themselves in the conscious life of the person concerned who then has to act in the situation which has now become actual.

There are any number of different caesuras. How are they to be traversed? We must reconsider the transitive characteristic of the free association and the interpretation. Opposed to that there is what we

might call the situation at which the patient or the analyst wishes ultimately to arrive – the 100 mark on the Snakes and Ladders board. There are plenty of snakes and ladders on the way during the course of the transition from one to the other. Each free association and each interpretation represents the change in the situation which we psychoanalyse. Even the wrong interpretation causes change; misinformation in the form of false – deliberately false – statements changes the situation. How quickly can we become aware of the changed situation, and how quickly can we see what good use could be made of that changed situation even though adverse?

The likelihood of meeting old friends there makes the prospect of Hell less frightening than the prospect of Heaven for which life on earth has given no adequate preparation. But this also applies to decisions which are made over and again. One may deplore an unfortunate decision; how terrible it might be if we never made unfortunate decisions or unfortunate interpretations. In analysis it is recovery from the unfortunate decision, the use of the mistaken decision that we have to accustom ourselves to deal with. In this view of the position there is no question of a cure.

It has been said that the English and Americans have everything in common except the language. The same could be said of the analyst and the analysand; the language is apparently the one existing means of communication. Nevertheless it is also the one thing which they do not appear to have in common probably because they are talking from different vertices. A mountain viewed from different points of the compass *may* be recognizably the same mountain, but it may be such a different view that it appears to be an entirely different mountain. Consider the patient who says that he is seriously troubled by blushing, but to the view of the analyst appears to be almost invariably marked by an extreme pallor. Is it possible that the patient who rejects blushing does so by inhibiting his blood flow in such a way that he does anything but blush – the place of the blush is taken by this great pallor? I do not suggest that this is actually the case, but I think it is useful to be able to air these 'hunches' as a transitive statement on the way to an interpretation. It is important to get used to this transitive method of thinking with a view to arriving at an interpretation, which is also arriving at an immediately changing situation; whether the interpretation is correct or incorrect, fresh

interpretations will have to be made in order to meet that changed situation.

Suppose the patient does not want to lie on the couch and, having taken his place on a chair, then displays considerable restlessness and has to change to a different chair. This may be the reaction to sensations generated in the autonomic system, or from the stimulation by the CNS (in turn generated by the unpleasing sight of chair or couch). It could account for dreams of which the patient can give no account, or of which he gives a narrative account with no free associations. They would be inappropriate if he has had not what we would ordinarily call a dream, but a sense of muscular position which has reflected itself in his having a sleepless night.

Having had a dream which is in fact a sensuous experience, the patient then has to find a dream which is more in conformity with what he thinks is expected of him by the analyst. He will often betray the fact that it is not an ordinary dream by the absence of free associations. This applies particularly to a patient who is afraid that he is psychotic, or that he is going mad. He prefers to behave and speak in a way which he regards as neurotic and less severe than a psychosis. Conversely, the patient makes statements to which he attaches little importance and which he hopes the analyst may regard as unimportant; for example, the patient who complained of blushing. Some patients repeatedly state that they have some particular experience and then give the reason why – making it part and parcel of their formulation. This continued repetition suggests a state of mind which is proper to a person who only lives in a causal world. But the only world in which causes can be said to be a prominent feature is the world of *things* – not the world of people, or characters, or personalities. The patient who is always telling us that he feels such-and-such 'because . . .', is avoiding a particular relationship which exists between one character and another.

We need to re-view commonplace formulations – psychotic, neurotic, psychosomatic, soma-psychotic and so forth – to consider, from our own experience, what we think those things are when we meet them. A patient may complain about headaches together with a number of plausible explanations which are probably correct. *Rational* interpretations might be adequate if they were the only important ones, but what may appeal to the human mind because it seems to be

logical, or to fit in with such powers of logic as we have, may be by no means the correct interpretation of the factual situation which is beyond our comprehension or experience. To distort that experience in order to make it fit into such capacities as we have is a dangerous thing. On the other hand it is equally dangerous for an analyst to think that medicine, art, religion are inadequate to describe or make it possible for us to be consciously aware of the actual phenomena of reality. The analyst has to use what we hope is a non-pathological method of splitting because the total situation that presents itself to us is beyond our capacity, just as we suppose that it is beyond the capacity of the infant to have a grasp of the world as we know it as adults. It is natural for the infant to see a *part* of the world of reality; that particular view is not wrong – it is inadequate. To limit ourselves to the observation only of what we understand is denying ourselves the raw material on which present and possibly future wisdom and knowledge might depend. The fact that it is incomprehensible now, because our minds are unsuitable or ill-fitted to grasp it, is not a reason for limiting the facts such as are actually available.

It is possible that the splits in which we have to indulge as analysts, as adults, make it possible to see some things which the patient, or child, or infant can see and vice versa; they are essential to discrimination. This could be said to be one of the advantages of marriage; the two partners can, as it were, pool their defects and thereby also pool their wisdom. In analysis we are seeing a total personality who has at some time, consciously or unconsciously, chosen a particular view or a particular vertex from which to see the view. This always involves inhibition of the capacity to see the views that one does not want to see. The psychotic patient may be anxious to suppress, be blind to or unaware of what the sane person is able to see; the character is psychosis minus neurosis, or psychosis minus sanity, or sanity (rationality) minus neurosis or minus psychosis. The important thing is not that a patient is a borderline psychotic, or a psychotic, or a neurotic, but that he is a total character *minus* . . . and then we have to form our own judgement of what that patient is minus, whether the person who is almost a caricature of robust common sense and sanity is not really a character who lacks important components because he believes that a psychotic is 'mad' or 'insane', or that someone would think him insane if it were known that he had such thoughts or ideas. We could regard artists, musicians, scientists, discoverers as those

who have dared to entertain these transitive thoughts and ideas. It is in course of transit, in the course of changing from one position to another, that these people seem to be most vulnerable – as, for example, during adolescence or latency. At the same time they are vulnerable to the observation of others who cannot tolerate the totality of the human personality, and therefore cannot tolerate someone who is so 'mad', so 'curious', so 'eccentric', or so 'sane'. I remember a fellow officer in the army complaining of 'the robust common sense' of another officer. He said, "That man makes me understand why people talk about 'rude health'; I have never known a person who seemed to be so rude as he does by being so healthy". Making due allowance for the jealousy and envy which is directed towards what a person is able to be, there is nevertheless something to be said for noticing the hostility and resistance which is stirred up by the creature which is different from ourselves, or the state of mind which is different from our own, or our own state of mind which is so different from that which we like to think we can always present to our fellows.

Thus we have returned to this problem of how to transcend the caesura when one is in movement from one state of mind to another; how to surpass the various obstacles in the course of a psychological or spiritual journey of development; whether to regard those obstacles as pathological, needing pathological terms to describe them, or whether they are in fact non-pathological. In the psychoanalytic experience we are concerned both with the translation in the direction of what we do not know into something which we do know or which we can communicate, and also from what we do know and can communicate to what we do not know and are not aware of because it is unconscious and which may even be pre-natal, or pre-birth of a psyche or a mental life, but is part of a physical life in which at some stage a physical impulse is immediately translated into a physical action. That transitive experience from a passive to an active physical state may reflect itself even when we are dealing with potentially rational and articulate persons. Can we detect in these expressions of conscious rational communications vestiges of something coming from a part of the personality which is in fact physical? Sometimes we call it psychosomatic medicine; at other times it does not even become sufficiently obvious in the mental life of the patient for us to be able to detect that it is arising from an area of a person *in the present,* although it might once have existed simply primitively and

in the realm of physical action. This involves taking a different view about the obstacles to psychoanalytic progress, the development of the relationship between analyst and analysand, and considering phenomena which present themselves in the actual analytic situation, but which have not usually been interpreted – may never have been interpreted even by the patient – into terms which are communicable in the realms of articulate speech or articulate thought. I do not suggest that we can interpret something like a migrainous headache in psychological terms. This is one of the difficulties about the sort of communication which is possible in lectures, supervisions, discussions between colleagues; a supposition or hunch or suspicion, such as I make when I suggest the possibility that the fortification of light patterns which present themselves to certain types of headache really come from pre-natal levels of mind, may seem to be offering an easy explanation of something which is extremely complex, thereby interfering with, and itself becoming an obstacle to, psychoanalytic research in the one situation in which it can really be carried out – in the consulting room with such patients as present themselves for analysis. What I am putting forward as a mere suspicion or conjecture may be turned into a theory, or treated as if it were something which could be used for immediate translation into an interpretation. In so far as that is possible what I say becomes more of a liability than an asset. An analyst reading this paper must be able to forget it, to dismiss it from his mind, unless something is said by the analysand which calls it into his consciousness and causes him then to formulate it in such language as he is able to use.

Has this discussion any *practical* value for a psychoanalyst? It is a question which I fear may be provoked by my stress on practice rather than theory, not only theory of psychoanalysis but of anything – finance, political science, mathematics, painting, music and so on. The only material I have to study is a human character that can study me also and is free to walk out of my office if and when it chooses. As I cannot – within the bounds of civility and respect for facts – I must find some way of engaging the person in conversation of a kind that he might be able to tolerate while material presents itself for my assessment. A painter could estimate the quality of the canvas on which to practice his art; a sculptor might discern the grain of the wood or marble which he contemplates; the composer might allow his 'inner' eye to be impinged upon the sight, or his 'inner' ear

upon the sounds, from which he chooses to discriminate and then transforms into music. How is the psychoanalyst to transform his assessment of the person who comes to see him professionally? Into a learned article? An interpretation? A printed judgement?

Suppose the analysand begins, to all appearance, to weep. The analyst becomes aware of his own funds of compassion and is impelled to participate with caution lest his responses, like a chisel of tempered steel cutting into balsa wood, too easily fashion a pattern of which the effect could not be obliterated or corrected. The analyst is affected by the patient's tears which may trace out channels in his composure no less lasting than the excoriations which he has feared to produce in his patient. He must, therefore, be sensitive to the difference in real life – not in theory – between 'tears', and 'moisture' extruded from the bodily surface open to his inspection, both his own and the analysand's.

Rephrasing Freud's statement for my own convenience: There is much more continuity between autonomically appropriate quanta and the waves of conscious thought and feeling than the impressive caesura of transference and counter-transference would have us believe. So . . . ? Investigate the caesura; not the analyst; not the analysand; not the unconscious; not the conscious; not sanity; not insanity. But the caesura, the link, the synapse, the (counter-transference, the transitive–intransitive mood.

At this point I cannot proceed for lack of the very elements which have not yet been discovered or elaborated. It is typical of decision which has to serve the human at those junctures when knowledge is not there to be used.

FOUR DISCUSSIONS

1976

Four Discussions with W. R. Bion was first published in 1978 by Clunie Press, Strath Tay. It was reprinted in 2000 as Part Two in *Clinical Seminars and Other Works*, edited by Francesca Bion (London: Karnac Books).

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

These four discussions took place over the month of April 1976, at the Los Angeles Veterans Administration Hospital. What is striking in these, and all the recorded talks and discussions, is Bion's consistent preference for *addressing* questions put to him rather than answering them. However tangential or peregrinating his responses seem, they are illuminating in most cases, and in many they clarify at least the question posed.

In an unpublished 1977 paper with the ironic title 'New and Improved' (included in Volume XV), Bion expressed his gratitude to André Green for bringing to his attention the saying by Maurice Blanchot, "*La réponse est le malheur de la question*" – the answer is the misfortune (or illness, or disease) of curiosity – a quotation to which he had referred frequently. Bion was aware of how hostility, generated by the frustration and anxiety accompanying curiosity, can draw us to prefer the security of closure offered by certainty; much of his behaviour in discussion groups arose from his desire to keep questions alive and open – to the extent, in some large-group situations, of waiting in the growing silence in the hope that a Work-Group mentality might emerge to counter the prevailing culture of dependency combined with idealization.

Four Discussions

INTRODUCTION

These four 2-hour discussions at the Veterans Administration Hospital, Brentwood, Los Angeles, took place during April 1976, at intervals of one week. The group, numbering approximately twenty-five, was composed of psychiatric residents, psychotherapists, and psychologists. This edited version represents about half the original transcription of recordings of the four meetings; repetitive passages have been deleted, together with material already published.

Francesca Bion

1978

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Questioner: I should like to hear you talk about the theory of projective identification.

Bion: I don't think there is much to be said beyond Melanie Klein's version – what she called an omnipotent phantasy; a phantasy that a person can split off feelings, thoughts and ideas he does not want and evacuate them into another person, more particularly into the mother, and more particularly still at a primitive stage of existence, namely, at the breast itself. Of course the infant doesn't *do* anything, nothing happens. But the infant *feels* as if it could do that, and *feels* that it gets rid of some characteristic which it doesn't like and then becomes afraid that that same characteristic is directed towards it by the other person – originally by the mother, or by the breast into which it projects it. The theory was not intended as a substitute for already existing psychoanalytic theories, but as an addition to them.

Q: You have used the term 'bizarre bits' to describe one aspect of projective identification. Could you elaborate on that?

B: I never intended it to be a technical term, but in discussing it with Melanie Klein I suggested that these bits which are supposed to be projected, these parts of oneself which one doesn't like, then become bits which are felt to exist, as it were, outside oneself. I think that would help to explain certain types of behaviour.

We talk about 'getting back' to childhood or infancy. It is a useful phrase, but I think it is meaningless. Do any of us 'get back' to infancy or childhood, or even tomorrow? It is clear that we don't. Why do we bother to talk about these things which, supposedly, have their origin very early in one's life? What if we do develop a character in infancy or childhood? What does it matter? Why any sort of psychoanalytic approach? The answer seems to be, and it also *seems* – how justifiably

is another matter – to be worth while bringing to light some of these alleged early developments. We could say that these characteristics which are supposedly split off, or got rid of in some way, are forgotten – and after all, we do not continue to behave like infants; apparently these things *are* got rid of. Do you remember when you were at the breast? No, it's forgotten or got rid of. But having been forgotten these things persist in some archaic way in one's mind, so that they still continue to operate, to make themselves felt. We are not aware of them although other people may be. Since they operate in this archaic way they go on affecting one's work. That is why it is supposed that the analyst has to be as thoroughly analysed as possible.

Q: When you talk about being thoroughly analysed, are you referring to bringing those things up to consciousness? What effect does a deep interpretation have – like that regarding the breast relationship?

B: The immediate reaction, from my experience, is that it is so much nonsense, a foible of the analyst. I cannot see what other preliminary reaction there can be. But after a time you begin to think there may be something in it and to be suspicious that you do behave in this peculiar manner and that therefore there is much to be said for that theoretical formulation. But to speak of a theory as if it were 'absolute truth' is ridiculous. Luckily most of us react negatively to that kind of dogmatic statement and seem to preserve our own view. The problem is how to make a statement decisively and clearly in such a way that it is possible for the other person to understand it.

Supposing there is some truth in this idea that the event is forgotten and then operates in this archaic manner, what does the individual do about it? All I can do is draw the patient's conscious attention to a view which, as likely as not, they regard as one of these things which psychoanalysts say. But if that was all there was to it, it would just stop there. We must assume that these ideas seep through; the individual is able to communicate with himself. Look at it another way: Why does the individual say he hates or fears the analyst? That is a *feeling* and if the patient says that, I haven't much doubt that he says it because he means it. If that patient has that feeling, how does that feeling seep up into consciousness to a point where it can be articulated? There must be some method of communication between these forgotten things and the conscious ability of the individual to articulate them. An infant could feel terrified or angry or hostile, but

would have no language with which to express it other than by a tantrum or a rage. In analysis it appears to be possible for people to communicate fear or hostility, or love or affection to themselves and then translate it into articulate speech – if possible even the kind of language they think the analyst understands.

To turn to another point: Is a psychoanalysis that goes on for two years, three years, four years, five times a week ad infinitum, the only approach? One hopes not. But at the same time, I haven't come across anything which is more effective, and I am sufficiently convinced of its effectiveness to want to persist in it. It is, however, dangerous to be satisfied with psychoanalysis itself; a psychoanalyst must be *dis*-satisfied with psychoanalysis. But we all hate the upheaval of revising our views; it is so disturbing to think that we might change in such a way as to feel compelled to change our partner or profession or country or society. Thus the pressure to say 'thus far and no further' sets up a resistance to learning.

Q: Confronted with a world in which all established standards have collapsed, man realizes with a sudden surge of despair that he no longer has recourse to any higher appeal. This means that he is totally free but has what Camus and Sade call 'dreadful freedom'; man must now assume the responsibility for all of his actions with no appeal to a supreme authority. "There are no longer guilty men" says Camus, "but only responsible ones." In existential thinking this has several implications. Unable to stand the anguish of uncertainty a man may lapse back into some ready-made pattern of behaviour, letting himself fall into a stereotype – religious, political, philosophical and so on. Camus calls it 'philosophical suicide'. Or a man may make a leap into faith by creating for himself a new deity as a transcendent source of appeal. My question is: When you are confronted with a patient who is vacillating between coming to terms with himself, learning to be introspective, and falling back on the quasi-religion, whether it is psychoanalysis or standard religion, how would you feel about guiding that person to self-realization?

B: I have an objection to guiding the person, because I cannot believe that I know how to conduct my own life. Many years of experience indicate to me that I am still in existence more by luck than judgement; that is the only way I can put it. Therefore I dislike suggesting to somebody else how they should solve a problem. Of course, patients ask you to do that for them, and of course you

always are doing it for them – even if unwittingly – because the fact that one turns up in the office so many days a week and expects the patient to do the same, itself suggest that that is the way to behave. And because I behave or try to behave in a particular way in analysis, the patient – like the child who is fascinated by the bad habits of the parent – is most likely to pick up our bad habits, not our good ones. It is possible that patients convert them into some sort of symptom which they then repeat until they get it right themselves – they solve the problem. A patient may learn the particular habit or mannerism – such as I have with my hands for example – but if they pick it up and repeat it, it begins to feel wrong to them; they feel that it doesn't suit *them* and seem to correct it in some way. It is not always the case; the psychotic patient pays little attention to a communication unless it is on exactly the right wavelength. He is very precise, very exact and does not like interpretations which are off the beam; he usually ignores them as if they haven't been said at all.

Q: If analysis enables the patient to learn to articulate early, forgotten, or put-aside memories, how does that lead to change?

B: It *appears* to be because it is articulated, but I don't think it is true. I would prefer to say that this habit of grunting and making noises is developed by certain animals – the human animal being the most striking example – into articulate speech. It is a recent invention developed over the last few thousand years, which is nothing at all on the scale I am talking about. The important point is not the patient's ability to express something articulately, but that if it has reached the level of the mind where the patient is relatively civilized, there can then be some interchange between this civilized individual, educated and articulate, and a primordial mind. This primordial mind I can pictorialize by taking as a model the fact that it is a survival of parts of our ancestry like the branchial cleft, signs of a kind of fish anatomy, or a vestigial tail.

Q: Is this similar to Jung's archetypes?

B: I think he was probably talking about the same thing. There exists some fundamental mind, something that seems to remain unaltered in us all. If the race develops sufficiently to be able to communicate in terms of articulate speech then it is only rational to assume that that is a total development. But it does not mean, therefore, that there is nothing to it except man's capacity to talk and his consequent ability to give himself the title of '*Homo sapiens*'.

Q: I have been thinking about this process of feelings 'seeping up' into consciousness. It seems it would often happen when the person is having a traumatic experience, like a loss or falling in love.

B: I have described 'emotional turbulence' as a state in which there is this kind of churning going on and all kinds of elements keep on obtruding – as in adolescence for example. (Latency likewise, but it is dealt with in a different way. The person becomes amenable, there are no particular signs of emotional life, because the emotional turbulence is, as it were, turned round; the superficial calm appears instead.) From time to time the individual is aware of this kind of turmoil and aware that there is some development which is striving to take place; the pressure which arises in a particular area is feared as being likely to break out and destroy his accepted method of behaviour. He will then mobilize assistance from other people, trying to get them into the system to help him suppress the forces which are pressing him from inside. The other people in turn then hate the forces which are pressuring them from outside.

Q: When the patient is in this state where he feels that he cannot handle these forces and tries to marshal outside forces to help, obviously one of the first persons he turns to will be you. How do you deal with that? Do you feel you should never handle these forces for him?

B: I try not to influence the patient into a way of life which might conceivably suit me, but would certainly not suit him – that is a negative aspect of it. The more immediate aspect is that I would like to say to him, "You are really expressing" – and then I say whatever I think my interpretation is. The object of that is to introduce the patient to the most important person he is ever likely to have dealings with, namely, himself. It sounds simple; in fact it is extremely difficult. One is always liable to affect the patient with one's own views, both those consciously held and others one is not consciously aware of – the countertransference. The main object is to help the patient to be less frightened of his own horrible self – however horrible he thinks he is. The moral impulse is extremely primitive. You only have to look at a child and say, "Ah!" in a reproving way, and you will see it wince guiltily before it knows any language whatsoever – or so one would think. The moral system, the conscience, cannot be appreciated unless its primitive nature is recognized. Unfortunately we have to use terms like 'superego' which immediately suggests something which is above everything else. It is much more likely to be underneath

everything else, basic, fundamental. It is easy to find various methods of rationalizing it, thus building up a whole rational moral system and a whole mental space for which we have no co-ordinate system as geographers have.

Q: You talk about the fundamental mind which I assume is something like a genetic mind, a mind that comes as part of our accoutrements at birth. When I consider a palaeontologist, someone who may search and search and occasionally find a fossil, and compare it with the process of therapy in which it is difficult to tell rocks from fossils but easy to interpret many rocks as if they were fossils, I wonder how much damage we are doing when day after day with our patients we are hearing phantasies and assuming they represent some part of this genetic mind without really having the accurate tools to be able to tell what comes from the archaic mind and what is simply our own misinterpretation.

B: The disastrous nature of mental interference can only be excluded if it is claimed that psychoanalysis cannot possibly do harm.

We become aware of a mind, or think we do, and build this vast super-structure of theories without any real consideration of what a mind or a personality is. We learn these theories – Freud's, Jung's, Klein's – and try to get them absolutely rigid so as to avoid having to do any more thinking. But we cannot make a conscious and deliberate attempt to help the process of development if we start by being mentally fossilized.

Q: Do you think morals primitive enough to be instincts? And if they are that primitive, what purpose do they serve? Are they for the preservation of the person?

B: The persistence and survival of moral attitudes which may once have been valuable is often injurious. I can see, for example, that patriotism might be a characteristic which is valuable; I think it might be important at some stage of development to learn to be loyal to one's contemporaries. But I think you can get to a stage in which the formulation, possibly valuable at the time, becomes inappropriate if it persists beyond the period during which the formulation and its context matched. The persistence of such a morality can become dangerous. Think of the moral grounds on which people do things today; how easy it is to accuse somebody of upsetting the morals of the nation or the person or group. But we cannot discard these attitudes; the fact that they are primitive doesn't mean that they

are therefore unjustifiable. The analytic investigation should display these qualities so that patients can make up their own minds about them and revise their opinions if they want to – not so that they should go on feeling exactly the same for ever and ever. Even if one has been an animal at some point, it doesn't mean that one should continue to be an animal for ever. Nor, having achieved some sort of civilized status, should one therefore want to stamp out these animal characteristics. Consider genetic inheritance: anatomical and physiological theories seem to be fairly satisfactorily worked out. But are they also applicable to the mind? Does all generation take that same course which has a considerable body of theory attached to it when it comes to anatomy and physiology? Take a primitive form of life like that of the aphid, the green-fly; it is almost a louse and almost a plant. Its method of generation is incredible; it is one of these unbelievable facts. Whole generations are exclusively feminine; they continue to produce through parthenogenesis. At another stage the young have wings, giving rise to another generation which has no wings; and then there is the one solitary individual which is male.

Ought we not to be open-minded about the communication of ideas? It is clear that it cannot be done by one individual – our lives are too short. But the communication of these ideas from generation to generation seems to be important. The method of communication and creation in the mental role is something we have to be prepared to find extremely complex and cannot be regarded as following the principles which seem to apply to physical generation.

We can do nothing whatever about the world in which we live; I can do nothing about the universe of not-me. But I *can* do something about me. In order to do so I have to make a choice – out of a vast mass of facts. But choosing what I am going to pay attention to also involves *not* choosing what I am *not* going to look at or talk about; in other words, inhibition. That process is, it seems to me, indistinguishable from the pathological mechanism of splitting.

Q: When you are listening to a patient, trying to determine what is relevant of what this person is telling you or trying to communicate with you, you suggested a kind of 'free-floating' attention –

B: That is how Freud described it; as good an expression as I know –

Q: – treating it freshly as it comes and also waiting for a pattern to emerge – which to me implies something which slowly builds over

a series of sessions, not one. Is there some way in which you can give us a feeling of how you work, of what you do in an hour or a series of hours? I am trying to get some sense of what it is you are looking for, what it is you do – or is that impossible?

B: I don't think I can do better than I have tried so far, but it does involve realizing that you may learn something about me that I don't want you to know. l have to take that risk. You likewise have to take the risk of finding out something you don't want to know. The position of the analyst is somewhat prejudiced because the patient has already found out that you are a psychiatrist or psychoanalyst and from the outset regards you as an enemy butting into his private life. You cannot, after all, commit a bigger outrage than you do when you enter into, or seem to enter into, a person's mind. In surgery the fact that an outrageous assault is being made on the body is usually accepted, although you cannot rule out the possibility even there of someone taking very strong exception indeed to the surgical interference with their anatomy. A patient consulting a psychiatrist will want to know who this person is who is wanting to talk with him. The psychiatrist must be able to tolerate his extreme vulnerability; the fact that one lives to adulthood means that one must have done all sorts of things which would meet with disapproval if people knew about them – one is vulnerable. In a recent court case it was obvious that one of the attorneys decided it was a good plan to work on the weak spot of one of the psychiatrists. Your patient doesn't know if you are there to gather information which you propose to use against him, or whether you are there to be helpful. It is usually difficult for the patient to believe it is intended to be helpful; it is easier for him to regard it as an outrage on his personality.

Q: It sounds almost as if we have an investment in coming up with an answer which encompasses everything we see so that we don't have to make that assault, so that we can give some distance to the person we are working with.

B: I think that is true; do what we can, we hate being ignorant – it is most unpleasant. So we have an investment in knowing the answer, or we are pressured from within to produce an answer and closure the discussion. Keats, in a letter to his brother, describes what he calls 'Negative Capability'. It is clear that he is talking about this same curious business in which most people want to closure off

what they don't want to see or hear. That makes it difficult, of course, if you also *want* to say what you see and hear. It is one reason why it is such an extraordinary achievement that Shakespeare was able to be so verbal – he could verbally pictorialize things which most people don't want to see.

Q: If we assume that we can be open enough and fresh enough in a session to get some grasp on what is going on, really 'hear' it, and that we can get the patient to believe and to trust the purpose of the invasion is for their long-term benefit, how do we then go about using that?

B: It is supposed that having brought these things out onto the surface you can then forget them, because you cannot forget what you cannot remember. In fact it isn't so simple, because there are really felt to be some disagreeable experiences which are better not remembered. So this question about the therapeutic value of psychoanalytic investigation is far from settled. It doesn't seem, so far, to do any particular harm and there are people who appear to benefit from it. One could argue, philosophically, that it is a good thing for the patient to know who he is if he can bear to find that out, because if he knows who he is then he can have some idea about his capacities and potentialities. In physical medicine it seems to be accepted that it is reasonable to believe that the patient should live even if he is a murderer; not so in psychiatry. I don't think people would agree that it would be a good thing to make somebody into a really efficient blackguard. And yet, why not? If it is all right to mend a person's arm or leg, then why not mend his mind? Of course I could raise a personal objection to it; the first person the patient would be likely to try his skill on would be myself. In war this becomes crystal clear; you may have to deal with a wounded enemy who may start wounding you.

Q: Are you optimistic about what analysis may do to help people submit to this invasion, learning to trust the analyst in order to relieve the pain they find themselves in?

B: No, I am not optimistic about it, although I think that it is on the right lines. I do feel that in spite of the somewhat rudimentary nature of our approaches they are of the utmost importance. But is the growth of our wisdom likely to keep pace with our intelligence? – using 'intelligence' in the pejorative sense of the ability to learn tricks. It is a matter of the greatest possible urgency that the

human animal should discover what sort of animal he is *before* he has blown himself off the earth. The monkey-trick department is far and away in advance of the rest.

Q: For the past couple of years we have been noticing here that when certain employees have upset states these are followed by illnesses – actual physical illnesses – and I have been wondering whether the illness was coming on before the upset state, or whether the body was signalling in the upset state, or was the upset state heralding a major illness?

B: The advantage of the physical illness is that it is almost respectable and it is relatively comprehensible, so that the person who has some kind of mental discomfort can welcome the physical ailment because that at least gets relatively rational attention. There is a pressure in the direction of escaping into what is already known – which may not be much, but it is something. These physical discoveries are made very early. For example, a child can be fascinated by the extraordinary behaviour of its penis which, if it is fingered by himself or nurse or anybody else, gets erect. It's marvellous – it's a part of the body which seems to have a sense of humour, which cooperates and which is friendly. The child has a chance of establishing a friendly or workable relation with its own body which behaves as if it wasn't its own body anyway because it carries on in its own way. There are these peculiar zones of the body which do behave as if they had a brain or mind of their own. If we have to be clever about this and put it into anatomical or physiological terms we would have to say, has the parasympathetic got a brain? Does the thalamus do a parasympathetic sort of thinking? There are situations in which a patient shows great signs of fear; that patient may also have learnt *not* to show them. Such a patient will complain heartily of his blushing. "*Now* I'm blushing"; you look at him and he is as white as a sheet. What sort of blushing is that? *He* knows, because he has been able to mobilize this particular vocabulary. It would be foolish in a case like that simply to dismiss it on the grounds that the patient didn't know what he was talking about, or had got hold of the wrong end of the vocabulary. In fact one has to pay great attention to it. Similarly with a patient who says he is terrified and shows no signs of terror whatsoever; the terror may be so socially unacceptable, and to him too, that he tries to ignore its existence. I find it convenient to think of this as thalamic fear. I could say to the patient, "This blushing you

are talking about is something which is so painful to you that I think you are afraid you might kill yourself rather than have that experience". But is it any good making a verbal approach? – remembering that this capacity to talk is a very late development.

In many of these cases one is invited by the patient to make reassuring noises. But then the patient once more realizes that there is no hope of anybody ever understanding that his blushing is extremely painful, or that the fear is almost unbearable. We must be sufficiently aware of the curious way in which symptoms present themselves, as it were, by their absence, and avoid welcoming the patient who says, "Oh well, there's nothing wrong with me. I'm all right". They invite you to leave them alone; they do not want you to intrude into their personality. Psychiatrists and psychoanalysts are indeed likely to become perceived more and more by the general public as a threat. Their approach to the mind or character or personality is felt to be something which could undermine government itself. People will readily say, "It's all this horrible psychoanalytic nonsense – that's why people are behaving in such an unrestrained manner, sexual promiscuity and all kinds of things – good-bye to all decency". That accusation will become more and more widespread as it becomes more and more obvious that psychiatrists are dealing with something that matters very much.

2

Questioner: I have been wondering why taking a history during an interview is important to me. I don't think I could give that up yet.

Bion: The first thing you have to consider is yourself and your way of working. If it is convenient to you to start off in some particular way you should do so. You can readjust it if you run up against a case in which it seems unsuitable. Patients are often used to this routine of giving a history, and you may as well let them feel at home by allowing them to do exactly that – otherwise it is so strange to them. If you start off by saying, "Now, what do you want?" or "What can I do for you?", the patient may reply, "That's what I came here to find out", and will not move from that point. You are straight away in the middle of a story without knowing anything of its beginning. The essential thing is to give patients as much help in that way as you can, because they are the people who don't know what they are up to. If it can ease the situation for them to follow the sort of routine they are used to that's a good idea.

Q: I would like to get a concrete idea of how you personally work with patients, to what extent you guide the direction of a patient's introspection and talk as opposed to letting the patient talk about what he or she wishes.

B: I would like to be able to say that I don't guide them, but in fact that is not true. It is a great mistake for an analyst to imagine that he doesn't. Theoretically you leave patients plenty of space to say whatever they like, but in fact your mere presence distorts the whole picture. They take one look at you and make up their minds either that they are prepared to talk to you, or that under no circumstances will they do so. The relationship between the two people is a two-way affair and in so far as one is concerned with demonstrating that

relationship it is not a matter of talking about analyst and analysand; it is talking about something *between* the two of them.

Q: Most people talk about personality or mind as if it were located *in* a person. It seems to me that the only sensible way to think about personality is to talk about a functional relationship.

B: What I have just been saying about the patient applies also to the analyst; the physical presence of somebody else in the room dominates his ideas. You can see the person; you can hear the person; therefore you are powerfully stimulated by your senses. We believe there is a character or personality which has the same sort of boundaries as the physical body which can be seen and heard. Why does one suppose that there is some kind of mental phenomenon? If you watch any group of people – a crowd at a football match for example – you get the impression that there is more to it than just the physical presence of those people; there is some sort of communication that is not visible. It is audible because of the cheers or shouting – there is a verbal expression. But it is a verbal expression by something which is not sensuously perceivable.

Q: Although I have entertained ideas of the sort you are mentioning, I find myself afraid in the therapy session to act as if they were true. I think my fear is that I would be behaving much more crazily than the patient ever could.

B: I think you are right. If one assumes that there is a mind, then the question arises, what sort of mind? Terms like 'crazy' are widely used – one wonders why. Can there be this widely accepted word unless it is about something? And if it is about human beings, as it always is, it is difficult to imagine that one is somehow exempted from exactly that same situation. So I think it is only right to assume that if it is fair to talk about people being crazy or sensible, then it must be true of all human beings. It would be foolish to imagine that one is ex officio sane or sensible and that other people are not.

Q: I am not sure that I see how that follows. Certainly the word 'blonde' applies to human beings, and yet some human beings are blonde and some are not. I may agree with the conclusion, but I am not sure that I know how you are getting there from the notion that since the word 'crazy' applies to human beings, then it must apply to all human beings.

B: Because it is so universally applied, such a common-place, one of these words which are used over and over again. I don't know

enough about foreign languages to know how widely spread it is; certainly there are some words which have a universal currency. But I don't think linguistics would get us very far – we, as analysts, have gone beyond that point already.

Q: How does this and the things we have been talking about relate to what you actually do behaviourally in working with somebody who is your client?

B: That question is a difficult one which has, in a way, been vitiated already because there are such masses of ideas about what we do. In fact when you and the patient are seated in a room together, that is a unique situation – if we are right in supposing that we need to respect the peculiarity, the speciality of a particular relationship. An individual comes to see me, he thinks I am a psychoanalyst; I think he is a patient. In fact I don't know. What would you do? Would you talk, pass the time of day? Closeted in a room, alone with a strange person, you have to decide in a flash how you will behave. When the patient comes into the room you have to make up your mind there and then, with very little information to go upon, what you will do. At that point I think one is justified in falling back on theories. In physical medicine you are supposed to be able to observe the difference between a patient who has a cachectic flush and one who has ordinary sunburn. A good physician will walk into a ward and will notice that somebody is extremely ill, or somebody is showing other signs which obtrude themselves on his perception. In analysis the same thing applies; we are supposed to be able to notice some quality which makes us think that one particular person isn't another particular person. For about three sessions the whole of psychoanalysis is very useful – that is all you have to fall back on anyway since you know nothing else. But it is only useful because it might enable you to say something appropriate to the person concerned, passing the time until you know who you are talking to.

Q: I am curious to know what you regard as generally appropriate behaviour for a therapist.

B: My reaction to that is that you cannot say what is appropriate and what is not. Fundamentally there is nothing that you can do about it – if you can, then it is wrong. What patients have to realize is that they have to put up with having me there. It is useless my wanting to give the impression that they are dealing with a doctor or analyst; I have to dare to be alone in the room with someone who

can have his own opinion about who I am. This may not be at all the sort of opinion I would like, so it is a matter of not minding that situation. One of the advantages of having an analysis is that you get used to the fact that your analyst makes comments about who you are, so that by the time you yourself are treating people you may be more able to tolerate that situation.

Q: Patients will often verbalize that they want to know who you are or know something about you. I had a patient last week who was very keen that I call her by her first name, very upset that I would not. She had just seen another therapist who had been recommended to her and she was quick to point out that he had called her by her first name. She asked why I didn't. She felt estranged from me – if I cared about her I would call her by her first name. She said, "The only people who call me by my last name are bill collectors". How do you deal with that?

B: It is difficult to say because I wasn't there. I might have said to the patient, "I think you must be very afraid of what I would call you if I were honest. You are anxious that I should diagnose you as Mary Smith or whatever. You don't mind if I call you by a particular name of your choice, but you are afraid of what the words would be that I would use if I were honest". But I don't know the patient nor whether she could stand that.

Q: She could stand it. She feels she is a whore; this is what her father has implied. She says, "Because I have sexual desires for more than one man, my father must be right". She is having an affair with another man; she is married and has children. In some ways she wants to be closer to me at this particular point. She wouldn't be put off by what you suggest; she would get irritated with your reply and insist that you call her by her first name.

B: Why not the second one? Why not whore? Or prostitute? If she isn't one, then what's the trouble? Is she wanting to be called a prostitute or a whore? If not, what is the point of the story? What convinced her that her father was right?

Q: She wants sex with other men besides her husband, therefore in her view she must be a whore. She's afraid that if she got a divorce from her husband she would run around and have sex with all sorts of men – behave like a free whore.

B: In view of what you are saying I think I would try to draw her attention to the way in which she wishes to limit my freedom about

what I call her. It is just as much a limitation if the patient wants you to give the correct interpretation. Why shouldn't I be free to form my own opinion that she's a whore or that she is something quite different? Why be angry with me because in fact I am free to come to my own conclusions?

Q: Her fear is that your own conclusion will be that she is a whore.

B: But why shouldn't I be allowed to come to that conclusion?

Q: So you conclude she is a whore – now where are you?

B: But I haven't said that I do. The point I want to show is that there is a wish to limit my freedom of thought. To exaggerate it for the sake of clarity. It is ridiculous for a patient to come to see a doctor and say, "Doctor, I've got a lump in my breast. Now, I don't want to hear anything about cancer or anything of that kind". Is the patient coming for a diagnosis? If not, what is she coming for? It is not fundamentally different if the patient wants to lay down the law beforehand about what you are to think or feel about her.

Q: I gather there are basically two trains in your thinking. One is that you are primarily interested in interaction between you and the person in the room – not too interested in what takes place outside the room. The second is that you are primarily interested in noticing patterns of this person's behaviour; you seem to be asking not *why* the person is this way, but *what* and *how.*

B: Although I would like to have knowledge, from whatever source, about the person, my justification for sticking to what I can see and hear for myself is that experience – which is not simply experience of psychoanalysis – has persuaded me that hearsay evidence is extremely unreliable. It is frightening to feel one is limited to what one can observe for oneself, because you learn the fallibility of your own senses. But at least if you can see and hear for yourself you can have a certain amount of evidence for what you are saying.

Q: Would you discount, therefore, the fact that the girl's father called her a whore? Would you try to find out if she were a whore, or if she thought of herself as a whore?

B: No. I think I would feel that it told me more about the father than about the daughter. This is one of the snags about an interpretation. A patient may not know much about me or psychoanalysis, but my interpretation will tell him more about who I am than about who he is. I hope it will tell him something about who he is, but even if he

feels that what I say is right the fact that I say so tells him something about me.

Q: What is the advantage of that?

B: There seems to me to be a great deal of value in respecting the facts. Therefore patients need to have some respect for what they see the facts to be.

Q: You've got me puzzled. I can readily see this in terms of some of the research into psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, saying that the patient adopts a relationship with the therapist and in a sense imitates or incorporates aspects of the therapist's personality. But I don't see the facts, because the impression I am getting from you is that interpretation in conversation is basically to keep the meetings going so that something like black magic takes place and the patient changes his behaviour based on the incorporation of the strong ego or good ego of the therapist. We do know that some therapists live rather wild lives and their patients end up having wild lives. Some therapists are rather conventional and their patients end up being rather conventional. So I wonder if it is the facts, or just a technique by which you can keep the relationship going until something magic takes place.

B: Here again I shall have to fall back on theory which is a sort of summary of my experience. The human being is what I would call extremely *clever.* There are certain animals which are clever – circus trained animals, for example, can behave exactly like a Lord Mayor's procession. So you can be certain that the patient will be able to behave exactly like the analyst – and that is indeed what they learn to do. The patient only has to go on coming for a certain length of time to have a pretty good idea of the analyst's various foibles and habits. That patient can be *just like* the analyst and be cured *just like* the analyst. The trouble is that it doesn't seem to be adequate or satisfactory. It is the result most easily and quickly achieved; getting to a stage where the patient does not become just like the analyst, but becomes someone who is *becoming* somebody, is more difficult and somewhat frightening – it might mean becoming insane. Patients will, therefore, often prefer to fall back on being like the analyst. We can see how children quickly pick up the bad habits of the parents. The bad habits of the analyst will be reflected in his patients every time – very fast.

Q: Could you give us examples of the kind of bad habits you exhibit?

B: No, but my patients could. I can only hope that these characteristics will help rather than hinder the patient, that I am the sort of analyst who is less of a liability than an asset.

Q: When you are talking I have a sense that you are saying what doesn't happen rather than what does. For instance, you can't say specifically what the bad habits are because you are not aware of them; or when you give an interpretation it is more a reflection of the therapist and who he is rather than of the patient; or you talk about diagnosis of the patient in terms of what you are not looking at, or what you are not doing.

B: What I *am* looking at is what lies beyond the sensuously perceptible. Therefore you are quite right in saying I am talking about what sensuously *is not*.

Q: I notice in your conversations that rarely do you ask 'Why?' You ask 'What?' or 'How?' of the patient, and that reminds me of the kinds of basic patterns of human behaviour that Piaget or Lévi-Strauss work for. I wonder if you are moving the same way.

B: Certainly; it is a basic, underlying pattern. One could go on interpreting ad infinitum matters which are of very little consequence or importance, but one would really like to interpret the fundamental thing, the fundamental language. In physical medicine this would be clear; you are not concerned only with what obviously presents itself for inspection. What you want to know is what lies behind that. Why is this patient not simply pale? Why do I think that this is a peculiar kind of flush? That is difficult enough in physical medicine; in the kind of thing we are talking about it seems to me to be infinitely worse. That is why I think it would be a good thing if we could consider in the course of ordinary life, ordinary experience, what this fundamental language is.

Q: Would you suggest a direct intervention to get at that level?

B: No, because owing to the cleverness of the individual he can always counter that; he can feel "I don't want to hear there is anything wrong with me", and instantaneously responds by a defensive barrier so that the screen is drawn over again.

Q: How do you deal with it?

B: I don't know.

Q: But you do it, I know.

B: I think that one does sometimes. People do hope that the doctor will not be taken in and will find out what is the matter with them.

I don't think people come to us because they have been told to – that may be a rational explanation of their rational behaviour. They themselves might be hard put to it to say why they come. Indeed one of the difficulties we have to deal with is a morality which has been forgotten and which we were probably never aware of anyhow. That is why, when a patient comes to see you, it is so difficult to know what sort of idea to have in mind. Rather than consider the situation as spaced in time – past, present and future – you would have to consider it more in terms of a military map in which it is all portrayed on a flat surface, linked up with various contours. This means that talking to a person it is all 'now', 'here and now.' Can you distinguish one part from another? And if so how would you do that? One way is to say to the patient, "This has a very long history; these are feelings you had even as an infant before you could actually verbalize them". I am doubtful about that method; the patient *may* be able to understand what I mean by that and to observe the characteristic to which I am trying to draw attention. But I don't know what sort of language is to be used. In the *Phaedo* Plato reports Socrates as talking about the ambiguity of verbal communication. He points out that the spoken word doesn't tell you anything more than a painted picture; it is as ambiguous because a painted picture has to be interpreted. In the space of two thousand years I don't see that any progress has been made with this problem. Occasionally a philosopher, like Kant, observes once again the ambiguity of language and the need that it should be made more precise and more exact. I am sorry to say that it seems to me that we, as psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, often behave as if it weren't a problem, as if we can do something with the language we talk even before having tidied it up.

Q: I think you are asking too much of man.

B: It is possible, but the fact that *I* ask it doesn't matter in the least.

Q: Suddenly, as you were talking, I remembered a story. I once worked with a man, and in the course of our conversation I said, "The thing you should not do is go to college"; I gave him all the reasons – and he left. Two years later I was driving in a remote town in Arizona and stopped for a cup of coffee. Suddenly this same man came in, shook me by the hand and said, "Thank you very much for talking to me". "What did I say that helped you?" I asked. "You told me to go to college". People don't listen. The role of the therapist is,

in a sense, to be there, something like a blackboard. Maybe that is your key – maybe you are so busy puzzling out what the patterns of this person are that he has the chance to reflect upon things in your presence.

B: A lot depends on whether the patient can turn the experience to good account; I would like if possible to make it more likely that he could turn it to good account than bad. What matters is whether the person can have enough respect for the reality, for facts, to allow himself to observe them. I once worked with two surgeons, one of whom had a world-wide reputation, Wilfred Trotter, and the other who was locally well known and extremely proficient. If Trotter did a skin graft it took; if the other one did a skin graft, perfect in technical equipment, it sloughed off and was rejected. Wilfred Trotter, who wrote *The Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, always listened with intense respect to what the patient had to say; he never brushed patients aside as unimportant. He never even brushed them aside because they were so important. I saw him when he was called in to deal with royalty. He simply sat down on the bed and proceeded to listen to what the royal patient had to say. He said, "Right, we'll fix it". He then carried out what ought to have been done long before – a perfectly orthodox, simple rib resection. Nobody had ever been able to treat the royal ribs so disrespectfully before.

Q: I wonder if you are so busy trying to understand and listen to the patient that your comments are really designed to encourage the patient to keep talking so that you can observe him more.

B: Perhaps, but if you are lucky the patient may also feel that he could likewise dare to pay attention to such facts as exist – however unpleasant. That is the difficulty – facts don't make themselves acceptable to the human being. For all the laws of science there isn't any evidence that anybody or anything obeys those laws. It would be convenient if the world of reality kept within the bounds of our comprehension – but it doesn't and there is no reason why it should. That is why it is so important that we should have some respect for the facts; then somebody else might similarly dare to respect the facts again – it spreads.

Q: There is some controversy in psychoanalytic circles about the value of seeing the spouse or members of the family of a patient. With your concern for the facts and avoiding hearsay, I wonder if you could comment on that.

B: I have found that in certain situations I have been unable to avoid seeing the family. I prefer not, because I find that the amount I get, even from an apparently uncommunicative patient, is so vast that it is as much as I can cope with. If it suits you to see the entire family, then that in my opinion is what you should do. It is no good resorting to the method which suits somebody else. The fact that other people do differently is useful – it may give you a hint – but the fundamental point is, can you find out what suits you?

Q: You have talked about goals which you have in therapy, one of which is presenting patients with facts about them as you see them, the truth about themselves; the other is being available to them as a person. I am troubled about whether these are compatible.

B: Making yourself available is something which is more easily understood if you simply regard it as any other commercial advertisement. You must make it known that you exist, that you have a name and address. Who you are, what sort of person you are, is a matter of opinion which the analysand is free to form for himself. The analysand may be able to deduce who he is from the mirror which is presented to him – preferably without too much distortion – by the analyst's attempt to reflect back the meaning of his free associations. The analyst does not in fact tell the patient who he is, but leaves him to form his own opinion from the mirror which the analyst has tried to hold in front of him. It is a mistake to think that the analyst can tell the patient what his own character is; any such attempt would only be a distortion of the mirror. I do not think the fact of the analyst's personality is incompatible with the attempt to speak truly.

Q: You have talked about how, when you are with people, you are bombarded with a lot of information which is ambiguous and that what you are seeking is to find facts and truth. What do you mean by 'facts'?

B: I mean that I believe there is a fundamental reality even if I don't know what it is; that is what I would call a 'fact'. But we are prisoners of our senses. *"La réponse est le malheur de la question"* [Maurice Blanchot] – the answer is the misfortune or disease of curiosity: it kills it. There is always a craving to slap in an answer so as to prevent any spread of the flood through the gap which exists. Experience brings it home to you that you can give what we call 'answers' but they are really space stoppers. It is a way of putting an end to curiosity – especially if you can succeed in believing the answer is *the*

answer. Otherwise you widen the breach, this nasty hole where one hasn't any knowledge at all. In certain physical situations there are ways in which the hole can be blocked in a more or less convincing manner; if you are aware that you are hungry you can put food into your mouth and hope that will, as it were, shut you up; a mother can stuff her breast into the baby's mouth – if she does it with feelings of anger and hostility that is a different state of affairs from doing it with love or affection. Even in the domain of mental curiosity, of wanting to know something about the universe in which we live, that hole can be blocked by premature and precocious answers.

Q: Can the analyst guide the patient by expanding the space for curiosity when that seems to be the path for the patient, and by giving an interpretation or answer – not an omnipotent answer but one that might limit the space?

B: One would like it to be something like that. I am very doubtful that it is so because we cannot help sharing the itch of the patient to fill the gap. He wants to believe, and is likely to seize on any excuse to feel, that the analyst does know. And of course the analyst is quite happy to oblige. It is difficult to resist that; if you do you can equally choke off all curiosity – people think you are deliberately withholding information or knowledge.

Q: At Tavistock conferences they often say that 'the answer lies within the group'. They use this phrase over and over again. Upon examination it sounds at first as if it is definitive, that it means there is an answer and it is right here among us. And then upon closer examination it is infuriating because the search, this endless search around the group for the answer usually does not turn up an answer. I wonder if you would share a few thoughts on that theory – 'the answer lies in the group'.

B: I think it is a convenient idea because it restricts the area of search. If you were lucky there would be truth in it. The problem is, does the answer kill curiosity, or is it a prelude to an informed and disciplined curiosity? Any statement is valid as far as I am concerned if it is a prelude to the exercise of disciplined curiosity.

Q: Do you believe that a group has an unconscious?

B: I wouldn't want to abandon that idea; nor would I want it to obscure the discovery of what else the group has. It is easily done. I could say, since I have a body why not leave it at that? Why confuse the whole thing by supposing that I have a mind as well? We all know

that the theory of conscious and unconscious has been quite productive; it may have been sufficiently productive to make us doubt its efficacy or use now. If you make a group approach, then it may become clear that this will have to be augmented with some further theory, because the existing one, valuable as it is, is nevertheless not good enough for that purpose. For some time now the law courts have been talking about 'rehabilitation'; they even call on people like us to express opinions, because they are aware that those time-honoured and experienced forms of treatment – guilty or not guilty, punishment or let them go free – are no longer good enough. So an open-ended curiosity is revealed; it is ever-expanding; the whole way of conducting our affairs is called in question.

Q: I am having problems putting together some words like 'clever', 'wise', 'intelligent'. You seem to me to say that we should have the common sense to listen to a basic language – that is my own interpretation.

B: Of course, in order to have common sense you have to have senses which work in common and that would seem to be fairly successful because it seems to happen anyway; the infant is able to co-ordinate what it hears and smells and sees. It is difficult to say how one achieves a certain common sense; it is easier to see that as we grow older our senses tend *not* to work in common. I was once an athlete; I couldn't be an athlete today because my physical functions aren't sufficiently coordinated. Presumably this applies also to one's common sense.

Q: So everything is on-going and constantly changing?

B: I think so. This is why I have talked about 'turbulence', I take the example of Leonardo's obsession with drawing water and hair. He could in that way skilfully 'draw a line' round that idea or feeling. In our work this turbulence sometimes becomes sufficiently obtrusive to be given a name; adolescence, for example. Does that answer anything? Is that one of these space stoppers, so that you never enquire what has happened to that turbulence, why it is emerging just then, why it is that when you think you are talking to your little girl she turns out to be a young woman *while* you are talking to her; why, when you think you are talking to this irresponsible little boy, he is in fact already a young father.

3

Questioner: Do you still do group work, or are you still interested in group work?

Bion: I am still interested in it, but I get very little chance to do it because I get so much pressure on me for individual analysis which I find extremely rewarding and interesting. Is anybody here taking groups?

Q: Yes; but I doubt the use of applying group relations methods to patient work. I don't think it works very well from what I can see of running a small group of hospitalized people.

B: You don't find it helpful with the actual family group?

Q: I don't feel ready to use it with families yet. I do get a sense of sub-groups forming and of groups getting into basic assumptions – I think family life is an established basic assumption, the pairing group in a sense. At present I find it difficult to deal with the complexity of the inner actions in my own life.

B: One thing which strikes me in dealing with the individual is how little consideration seems to be given to this question of what is basic, what is fundamental. Is there any way in physical medicine of defining what the fundamentals are? What does the doctor concern himself with? What could you call fundamental in the sense of wishing not to diffuse your observation or your time?

Q: I have often wished that in psychiatry there was something as fundamental as the vital signs – blood pressure, pulse. One can consider vital signs in psychosomatic medicine, and in psychiatry too I suppose, but it is much harder in working with groups or individuals in therapy to have something as a baseline of 'normality' as readily as the blood pressure, pulse, respiratory rate and temperature. I am

not sure if that is what you are talking about when you say 'fundamentals'.

B: I think it is.

Q: Even more fundamental than that I suppose is that when in physical medicine a person presents himself to a physician and says, "It hurts here", if you look there you may find something in that vicinity and the patient is able to cooperate, to participate in helping you to identify at least some parameters, some areas where you might look for what hurts. But in the mental arena you may look in one place while the trouble is somewhere else. Most of the places the patient points to are cover-ups – it is more respectable to point to the area in physical medicine.

B: We should not overestimate the importance of pain. Even in physical medicine some pains are extremely acute but not particularly important. Some parts of the body are extremely sensitive to pain, so if the intensity of pain were the only criterion one would be led astray.

Q: The intensity of the pain, or the area of the pain gets the attention of the helper; the patient, therefore, participates more.

B: I agree. I am sure that it is important that one should regard pain as being a most informative symptom, but the intensity is often minimized or otherwise disguised. A patient says, "terrified"; the analyst must distinguish a fundamental even when covered up by a cliché. Even in physical medicine of course one has to diagnose, 'interpret' that pain.

Q: I think we in the field of psychiatry have done more to try to interpret that pain. Our language has more descriptive terms developed for that.

B: Yes, but still shockingly inadequate. It is extraordinary, from our point of view, how little progress has been made in that respect – especially since we attach so much importance to verbal communication. It is difficult to know what is the fundamental function of language. Is it to communicate helpfully in the way a mother would want to communicate with her child? Or is it in the service of deception and lying and evasion? Deception and revelation are both fundamental activities. Taking your experience with children, what is your impression? How soon does the verbal communication become of importance to the child? And why?

Q: There is a variance in the time when children begin to develop language – possibly across socio-cultural levels. It would be important to know what is the social field. What are the acceptable sounds at a certain point? What are the social consequences of making a particular sound at a particular point? And what particular sounds does one make?

B: I am impressed by the fact that the physical birth is so impressive. The obstetrician's view, the gynaecologist's view, the statistician's view are all based on "When were you born? Date? Time?" The *fact* of birth certainly impresses the individual and the group. But it seems to me that it is too limiting to assume that physical birth is as impressive as many people suppose it is. In physical medicine it is recognized that the prenatal history is of great importance.

Q: Do you feel this is important in clinical work with patients?

B: I think the lack of discussion of this point is a blind spot. Freud developed this idea of 'the impressive caesura of birth', of our being too impressed by it. He didn't investigate it deeply – a great mistake from our point of view.

Q: In what way? How would you utilize it facing your patient on the couch? How do you use the trauma of his birth?

B: The first thing to do is to be aware of its existence. If there can be vestiges of what a surgeon would call 'branchial clefts'; if, in our development, we do indeed go through these peculiar stages of fishy ancestry, amphibian ancestry and so on, and it shows signs in our bodies, then why not in our minds? This is a purely academic thing we can talk about here; but what do we talk about, or think about, or observe when dealing with a grown man who comes to you with some complaint or another?

Q: Or a five year old child –

B: All right. Do you consider that the child is born on its birthday? Has the full-term foetus no character or personality?

Q: We had the very special experience of having a premature baby. I had a relationship with that child – born five weeks early – during the three days in the labour room before his delivery. I felt I knew his personality. The doctors kept coming in to take the foetal heart-beat to determine whether or not they were going to let him arrive naturally. He had a very strong heart-beat, although they were afraid they were going to have to do a Caesarean section. But they didn't have to and I felt the strength of that child.

B: In a sense it would be possible wouldn't it, that the demands of physical medicine made it impossible to wait until the child was mentally ready to be born? One could say the time of birth was dictated by some critical situation which was not in accordance with what one would suppose was the natural development of the child.

Q: It was clear when he first arrived that he was not fully prepared. Compared with the second child, who was full term, his instincts weren't fully developed. He didn't nurse as well; it took a lot of coaxing before he was able to feed himself, to take the breast. Whereas the other one instinctively did. He had an immature liver so he was jaundiced and sick.

As you were talking I was thinking – I never put these things together before – that he was forced to be doing things mentally that he wasn't ready to do by facing the world five or six weeks early. That has been a characteristic of his behaviour ever since. He is mentally precocious now and always seems to be trying to do things several years ahead; his best friend is about five years older than he. I don't know if you can make a connection – I never thought of that connection before.

B: We don't know. The point about discussing it like this is that we can mobilize the experience of everybody here and then perhaps be open to some sort of behaviour pattern which would be more understandable if one took into consideration the points you have been mentioning. I find it useful for myself to make a distinction between intelligence and wisdom.

Q: When you talk about the pre-natal period what are you thinking of?

B: I am thinking of it strictly in this sense of the period before physical birth, accepting the caesura as being of as much importance as it appears to be – simply for purposes of discussion. But whether it is as important as it appears to be from the physiological standpoint when it comes to the mind, is another story altogether. We have to use physical terms for this subject, borrow from physical language. I now feel – and I think that it seems to me to be borne out by experience I have had and am still having – that there is a lot to be said for considering that we are observing a symptom which will not be understood if it is supposed that it only develops *after* the child's birth. I wish it were possible to discuss these matters without having to invent a language as if it were scientifically accurate. But it is the best we can

do until such time as it becomes possible to use it scientifically. It is useful to consider 'sub-thalamic' fear, meaning by that any of these emotions which have not risen to the point where they could be called 'conceptualized', or conscious, or verbalizable. Take, for example, the premature infant you were speaking about. What sort of mental life can you observe in that person? – assuming that you are dealing not with a premature baby, not a physiological object, but a premature mind. Or consider the auditory pits, or the optic pits. Embryologists have their views about what these extraordinary objects are, because experience shows that they appear ultimately to turn into ears and eyes. If pressure on the eyeball can make you think you can see light, then isn't it possible that pressure could create some similar effect on the foetus when it is living in a watery environment? When, from that point of view, is it able to 'see' or 'hear'?

Q: It has been found that the foetus can hear and responds to musical sounds.

B: Not the slightest doubt about it –

Q: The foetus moves *in utero* in response to certain tempos and responds to finger pressure.

B: I wonder when the psychiatrists and psychoanalysts will catch up with the foetus. When will *they* be able to hear or see these things? A very young child has no difficulty in observing, but its observations may be regarded as having less validity than the possibly less sensitive ones of the adult who may respond, "Yes – come along, don't waste time like that". The child obediently accepts the low estimate made of what it has sensed; it is suppressed and comes back as "the return of the repressed" [Freud, 1915d, page 154]. It doesn't come back into notice unless it becomes sufficiently dramatic; the grown person behaves in a way which seeps through to conceptual thinking and at last someone says, "This person is hallucinated, deluded". But that may be the survival of some kind of capacity for seeing and hearing things which the adult regards as insane or neurotic.

Q: How would you tie this in to your thinking or experience when actually working with a patient?

B: If possible you have to be open to impressions. Unfortunately the whole of our training seems to be at the sacrifice of our animal characteristics or our animal ability. I had a patient who didn't seem to pay the slightest attention to what I said, but was fascinated seeing my words going over him, and then thinking he saw them caught on

the pattern of the curtains. I have also seen a very young child most amused at a frieze round the top of the wall of his room because those colours had a meaning which was comprehensible enough to make him laugh. The fully developed and possibly intelligent adult who sees jokes which we cannot is called 'crazy', or 'insane', or 'psychotic'. Are we right, or is this simply a lack of observation, a lack of being sensitive to the facts? Is it because one does not and cannot see what the patient can see – like those sounds going through the air and getting stuck on the curtains?

Q: Did the patient say he saw that, or was that your inference from the way he behaved?

B: That was my inference from the way that he behaved.

Q: What did you see or hear that enabled you to infer that?

B: I could see him watching in that sort of way; I could also observe that he had not the slightest idea of what I had said to him. He attached no importance to the ordinary – from my point of view – way of thinking or talking. The pattern of the sounds that I made was not of any consequence to him.

Q: Does something have to have meaning in order to give someone delight? For instance, the colours around the room which delighted the child.

B: I don't see why it should have meaning for anybody; meaning depends upon our interpreting these observed facts. In physical medicine you can say, "Yes, the patient has a cachectic flush. That means . . .", and then you launch off on your diagnosis. All that depends on interpreting the facts which are obvious to you, but first of all the facts have to be obvious. That is why clinical observation is so important. A precocious child can see and observe *and* attribute a meaning to what is seen and observed. What about a precocious foetus? Could that be said to attribute a meaning to what it hears and sees? If so, suppose the foetus could hear angry sounds. Would it be able to interpret them? Would it be able to attribute a meaning to them? And when you see that patient at twenty, thirty, forty, whatever age, are there certain meanings which that patient attributes to what is going on which would make you think that meaning would be comprehensible if I were talking to a foetus? The only reason it isn't comprehensible is because I am talking to an adult.

Q: Thinking in terms of what this would imply or mean when I am seeing patients from my clinical practice, it is hard for me to

assimilate what kinds of things you attend to as facts, and what you use for making interpretations.

B: It is very difficult to explain, partly because the language we have to talk is so ambiguous. If I were demonstrating a patient's physical condition I could say, "Look, that colouration of the skin there – it isn't just a bruise; it is something else, a symptom or sign of some underlying and more important – from a medical point of view – fact". By discussing it here we may be able to become a bit more sensitive to what we see the moment we get into contact with actual patients. It requires a training which enables the physician, surgeon, psychiatrist, to denude himself of his preconceptions and be vulnerable to the facts. Knowing a great deal of medicine may be quite useful – one assumes that it is – but what is much more important is that it should not be at the expense of one's senses. When we see or hear a patient we should at once be sensitive to what we see and hear, and from that point of 'observation' go on to the 'meaning'.

Q: You mentioned earlier the word 'reason'. Since the seventeenth century, when Hobson and Locke were much concerned with reason, most philosophers have agreed that there isn't such a thing; that what is reasonable to us may not be reasonable to someone in China or an aborigine. You said that to learn is to be completely open to the 'reason' or the modes of operation of human beings whatever their backgrounds may be. What kind of an approach, if there is such a thing besides a complete openness, can we as a group rely on to communicate? You stress the limitations of verbal communication, but there must be some basics that can transcend national origin, language and so forth, beyond just being completely receptive to the spoken word.

B: It is difficult to say. It is brought home to all of us who have children whom we hope to educate. What are we to do? About the only thing that seems to be basic is not so much what we are to *do,* but what we are to *be.* That is why it is so important if the parents are capable of what I call passionate love. Then the child has a chance of learning something from the way the parents behave. Nothing in their school education or anywhere else can teach them this.

Q: I can see there is no cut and dried method of communicating, but I feel that the mother's love for the child, the nurturing love, the warmth, a hug or a kiss that is meant sincerely, is something that any

human being could understand and feel. If a family were to give this to a child they would obviously have a far better chance than someone who didn't receive this kind of warmth.

B: It might perhaps help to explain something I mentioned earlier – the two superbly trained surgeons, one of whom had *become* something and the other who was just *like* a surgeon, but could never become one – not in this fundamental sense. It is most mysterious.

Q: This same phenomenon has been observed in different teachers. One can use all the media and follow all of the rules and do everything to perfection, but the children don't learn; another, by some mystery of being in the classroom with the students, succeeds in getting them to learn. I suppose it has something to do with relationship – caring about people and transmitting it in some language no one knows about yet.

B: In a crude way we can say one of them is ill and the other is not. But in fact we are dealing with something which is not pathological, something which requires a great sharpening of the senses and perceptions. Can we in any way find a method of excluding what is irrelevant and concentrating on what is fundamental?

Q: It seems as if that is really the dilemma that is being raised in these discussions. If I understand what you have been saying, you are pointing out that when we start out in the world, whether one looks at the point of birth or something prior to that as being the onset of mentation, we begin a process of responding in some cases with a great deal of painful sub-thalamic emotion to the chaos of all that there is to know and experience and feel about being alive; and then we immediately begin this process of attempting to categorize, to know, to find meaning – presumably to prevent some of the pain and maximize some of the comfort; and that in this process of categorization you have to start excluding; and once you start excluding then you begin to lose the ability to perceive everything.

B: Yes – it's the dilemma of choice. You cannot be a responsible person who makes a choice without inhibiting what you don't choose to observe. You can carry this to a point where inhibition begins to slide into the spectrum of a pathological condition, inhibiting one's capacity to see or hear.

Q: Hysterical blindness would be an extreme example.

B: Yes; by that time it has become sufficiently noticeable, so to speak, to be given a label of its own.

Q: The psychotherapist hasn't quite reached that point yet!

B: Not yet, but later perhaps people will say, "Well, all these hysterics take up psychoanalysis". In a way that seems to me to be possible. Curiosity is so often linked with danger. The animal seems to smell out a danger because that is what it needs to know; that is one of the most primitive, long-range senses. For the human being it is very short-range. We can say a noise is getting too great or intolerable; there must be a similar way of sensing that a smell is too strong.

Q: The example you just mentioned brought something to my mind. In a combat situation we had Cambodian and Vietnamese scouts who could smell the nearness of the adversary and see signs which the Americans were incapable of seeing. But after two or three months the Americans were able to see and smell more because they had to train their senses for survival.

B: In certain intimate situations one would like to be able to communicate that – particularly of course to one's children. If only we could enable them to smell a danger or develop some sense which makes it possible to detect danger at long range.

Q: When you were talking about the patient who watched your words being caught on the curtain, I was wondering how you tested your hypothesis to find out if it was valid. What did you do with the information? How did you communicate with him?

B: First of all, it took me a long time to observe that fact. Indeed, this is one of the complaints made by patients – "I come to you for analysis; nothing ever happens; I am just as bad as ever I was" – and unfortunately it is true that it takes a very long time before a point of this kind emerges. When it emerges sufficiently for me to be able to verbalize it I also have to consider whether it would be possible for the patient to verbalize it. He may ignore my interpretation either because it is wrong and just passes him by, or because it is correct and he doesn't like it. He can feel, "This analyst is crazy" – a situation where the patient instantaneously projects his own feelings or fears of himself onto the analyst. Sooner or later we have to decide whether to give that interpretation or not. I gave the interpretation; the patient agreed with it and said he thought I would never be able to see the obvious – in fact he blamed me for taking such a terribly long time to say something which was so clear and so simple. On the whole that seemed to bear out that I was correct, rather more than it would

do if the patient said, "Yes" in complete agreement, but meaning nothing whatever; you know the patient is agreeing because that is the kind of thing he thinks you want him to do. These are matters of information. It is difficult to say why one 'yes' seems to be of greater significance than another – the fundamental ambiguity of language again. It is only a kind of elaboration of the grunts and noises made by an animal; we have learnt to be somewhat more expert in the use of our musculature.

Q: Could the patient make use of it in the sense of beginning to hear you more, beginning to assimilate some of the things you said?

B: There was a marked change in his behaviour after that. I can't remember now what it was, but at the time it convinced me that he was right, he had been saying this for a long time without any adequate response from me. When I did respond he was able to transform what I said in a way which made it possible for it to seep from conscious rational levels to other levels of mind.

Q: Isn't it because we not only make a sound to verbalize the interpretation, but it carries with it intonations, posturings that set up reactions and expectations such that the patient can now have this experience – which he would hitherto not have dared tell anybody in the world because no one would believe him – knowing that now someone believes him and that he is not going to be harmed for having the experience?

B: One assumes it must be something like that; the patient can become so used to having some statement of his dismissed as 'an hallucination', 'a delusion', that it is clear to him that the doctor regards him as crazy; he will not therefore make those communications.

Q: If the patient knows what he is doing and you know why he is doing it, why interpret what he is doing other than asking him why he is doing it?

B: This is another mystery. Why not pass it over directly from himself to himself? Why is an external person necessary? Why can't the human being be like *lumbricus*? Why have a partner at all? Why not have a sexual life with oneself and no further bother? Why can't one have a relationship with oneself directly without the intervention of a sort of mental or physical midwife? It seems as if we need to be able to 'bounce off' another person, to have something which could reflect back what we say before it becomes comprehensible.

Q: It is an interesting fact that if you simply play back a videotape to a patient or a trainee without another person there to bounce off, it doesn't usually accomplish anything. If it does accomplish something it is negative. There is evidence to bear this out; patients tend to get worse when they are exposed to a videotape with no one else present.

B: That certainly points up the problem just mentioned: Why does the presence of a person matter? Why not just have a piece of machinery? If one could get near to being a dispassionate machine which simply reflected back what the patient says, I don't think the patient would get anything out of it at all. In fact, patients often try to assure themselves that you are capable of losing your temper and behaving badly. It is only when they find that you are capable of it – but don't do it – that it begins to mean something.

Q: Could you explain how the patient finds out that you are capable of losing your temper or behaving badly without your actually doing it?

B: I don't think I could, but I think the patient could, especially one who, as a method of trying to find out if you are really capable of being hostile or not, is extremely provocative for session after session, month after month. I don't think any patient is unaware of the analyst's ability to wear the correct 'uniform', the correct manners, the correct character, the correct qualifications – all that can simply be a cloak for the real person. Patients are not easily taken in by it – they may agree, they may feel capable of compromising as if to say, "I know you are paid to talk like this and learn all this stuff; I'll agree that you are quite a decent fellow". You enter into a collusive relationship. But the psychotic patient is somewhat exacting; an interpretation which is *approximately* right is not 'corrected' as a neurotic patient will do. A neurotic patient will help you, will allow you to be 'off the beam' and yet enable the beams to fuse.

Q: If the analyst's interpretation is not exact does the psychotic patient feel as if he were alone in the room?

B: The answer to that may depend on being able to differentiate one kind of psychotic patient from another. Some of these psychiatric diagnoses like the difference between 'schizophrenic' and 'manic-depressive' may refer to something which is so crude that it can actually be verbalized, conceptualized in this way. But these categories of

diagnosis which are at present available to us are not good enough to deal with the subtleties of the situation you are talking about. In fact nothing short of continual observation is going to solve these problems.

Q: There is a notion that there is nothing more to psychotherapy than that the patient goes to a therapist whom he respects, not feeling much respect for himself; that therapist communicates in some way over a long period of time his respect for the un-self-respecting patient who fights it every inch of the way, either by discrediting him so that he is less respectable, or discrediting whether or not he is truly respected, until finally the patient gives in, believes in the therapist's respect and ends up respecting himself. That's the grossest oversimplification one could come up with. What more do we know that could offset that as being the fundamental process?

B: The relationship with the analyst is only important as a *transitional* affair – it would be useful if the word 'transference' were used in this more polyvalent sense. Unfortunately patients can terminate the relationship because of one of these transitory cures. They get some relief and say, "Well, thank God for that", and pack it up at that point. They have so little experience of real relief that they are only too thankful to get anything at all and to call it a day – and to play on the fact that so is the analyst. "Doctor, you're marvellous. I feel a new man – good-bye." There you are – such a nice conclusion you might as well stop there.

Q: I have been thinking about your reference to answers being stop-gap measures in stifling curiosity and how difficult the resolution of the choices is when, as a parent for example, we give an answer like "No, you can't" but still want to foster the environment where there is self-respect in continuing curiosity.

B: It is so difficult to see what is the equivalent of 'full term' in mental development. What is the moment at which the patient can safely leave, as it were, the analyst's inside? In analysis, or in ordinary medicine for that matter, the doctor can be very cautious. He can lay down rules; the patient *must* go on with the treatment; or *must* stay in hospital; or must *not* start work yet, and so on. That can be carried to extremes if the doctor is unwilling to run the risk of being responsible for a failure. So he can hinder the progress of the patient towards independence. But there must be a right moment for leaving

hospital, or a right moment for leaving an analysis – being neither seduced into an early and premature termination, nor frightened into continuing further.

Another problem arises if the patient is extremely unaggressive and fears doing anything we would call 'showing initiative'. This makes me think that the full-term foetus has something to do with the time of delivery; it can get so frightened of precipitating a catastrophic or disastrous event that it initiates nothing. Later on the patient learns how to be independent, but this fundamental fear becomes established as an archaic fear, something which is unconscious, some-thing which is not known. Outwardly the person is brilliant, clever, so successful, so marvellous, until one day there is a disastrous outburst. The patient is alleged never to have shown the slightest signs of disturbance, so it is incomprehensible. There is no explanation for this extraordinary outburst which is particularly liable to take place at any of these times of 'turmoil' or 'turbulence'.

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Bion: Seeing patients many times as we usually do, it is difficult to achieve that degree of naïveté in which we can see them each time as if we have never seen them before. It is easy to think, "Oh, here's the same old stuff again – yesterday, the day before that, for weeks, months, years". It cannot in fact be so because tomorrow the patient we saw yesterday, or last week, month, or year, will not be the same person. We should get as near as possible to feeling that it is the first time we have ever seen that patient. It is difficult because we always feel that we ought to know his history and so on and so forth – a backwash of our own medical training. It is useful for two or three sessions, but after that this information which one has from hearsay is unimportant. From that time on we should be launched out into a different realm altogether – not the realm of the patient's history.

Questioner: You are really saying that you don't have to take notes. Each time a person comes in he is a new person and it is only what is being presented at this moment that is important.

B: Yes. As I said before, Plato pointed out that language is extremely misleading – it appears to be precise and exact, but in fact it is no more exact than painting or drawing. A painting doesn't tell you anything – it has to be interpreted. Charcot, by whom Freud was impressed, said you have to go on looking at a patient until a pattern begins to obtrude. In physical medicine a doctor's sense of touch, smell and so on, should be so acute that he doesn't read books but reads people. With regard to these mental symptoms, what can we say? Neurotic? Psychotic? It doesn't tell us anything. The difference between people appears to be so striking that it seems to demand a description; so we resort to this crude division. We have to make the

assumption that there is such a thing as a mind. I don't know what evidence there is for it – it may be completely erroneous. In Homeric times the mind was thought to be located in the *phrenes* – the diaphragm. It seems a sensible, scientific idea. It is obvious that if you start breathing deeply the diaphragm, working up and down, makes you breathe in and out. And if you see somebody else doing it you think, "What's all this about? Is he trying to come at me to knock me out? What's he up to? What's all this panting about?" Then Democritus of Abdera began to suggest that the mind had something to do with this useless mass, the brain, for which no function had been found. The idea that there is a mind still persists, but we go further. Freud suggested that when a person 'forgets', the gap – the empty space of our ignorance – is so disliked that it is filled with bogus ideas, paramnesias. But since we know nothing about the mind, why isn't the whole of Freud's work an elaborate paramnesia constructed because he couldn't tolerate being ignorant of it? I am trying to get back to the basics – even questioning the existence of the mind itself. Once we are convinced that nothing short of such a supposition is going to meet this puzzling situation, then we can start making distinctions about what appears to be the behaviour of the mind. Supposing there is such a thing as a disturbed or disordered mind, where does the illness come from? What is the 'focus of infection'? Is it helpful or reasonable to borrow that term from physical medicine? Does it give us a clue? Most people learn to behave as if they are well. They find some way of training their bodies so that they can become athletes, surgeons, dentists, and consequently nobody notices there is anything wrong with them. What would we think if we knew someone carved holes in human beings – if we could not excuse the behaviour on the grounds that he was a surgeon? How odd it would look to see someone drilling holes in people's teeth – unless there was some 'rational' explanation. It is possible to find a rational explanation for anything, but in contrast to that it would be helpful if we could see what was irrational. Then it might become easier to understand why a successful surgeon who has done surgical operations for years suddenly has what we call a 'breakdown' and cannot face the operating theatre. Is it breakdown? Or break-up? Break-in? Or break-out? Or breakthrough? In other words, what direction is the person going in? Is the surgeon seeing something he has never allowed himself to see before – how cruel, how brutal, how violent he

is? Using the analogy of ordinary medicine, it is as if there were some focus of infection which has now begun to emerge into the skin. The mind, unfortunately, has no skin as far as we know, although Freud talked about the id, the ego and the superego – a crude, but shrewd subdivision of the mind into various parts.

Q: As you have been talking I have been going over and over a session I had today, and thinking that I had very little idea of what was going on. I would rather do anything than acknowledge that.

B: Yes – so would the patient, and so would we all. It is a basic characteristic which probably helps to explain why we know as much as we do today – it is so difficult to tolerate being ignorant, and so much easier to scrape up an answer which is a more or less rational explanation of our behaviour in order to justify our title of 'psychiatrist' or 'doctor'. I don't think there is anything particularly wrong with it except that it is a nuisance to oneself. The moment somebody comes into your office you at once feel the pressure on you to be the person who knows the answers.

I mentioned before a quotation of Maurice Blanchot, *"La réponse est le malheur de la question"*, which I could translate – again a matter of interpretation – "The answer is the misfortune of the question". Putting it into different terms once more, "If you have any curiosity it is answers which put paid to it", or "knowledge is the disease of ignorance". In any of these situations where you are in a tight corner you always want to find a way out – and that seems perfectly reasonable. When you don't know the answers – a desirable state of affairs if every session is to be an entirely fresh one – you have to find new words.

Q: If you think every session is fresh and new, why bother with history taking at all?

B: I don't. I have kept notes from time to time, but when I have looked at them later what do I see? 'Tuesday – !' What on earth is it all about? I have no idea. I should like to take a note which at least reminded me of something. So the first requirement is to be able to see, hear, smell, feel something to be reminded of – but what notation to use to write it down I don't know. If I were an artist I might draw or paint it. If I were a musician I might compose a musical work. But what are psychiatrists to do about it?

Q: Why do we want to be reminded? Why does it seem important over a period of time to be able to remember?

B: It is hard to know. The most impressionable years of your life are devoted to trying to forget what you are really like. You are helped in this – "Don't do that", we say to the baby, and oddly enough the baby seems to understand. Don't do this. Don't do the other. Don't, don't, don't – that is the operative word. According to the psychoanalytic view there is some reason for remembering, but it goes against what has been learnt very thoroughly, at the most impressionable time of one's life. It may not be of the slightest importance that you wanted to suck your thumb some time in your life, but you can't forget anything which you can't remember. So before you can forget it, before you can discard it, you have to bring it up into consciousness again.

Q: Recently I have been thinking, reflecting after the analytic hour, sometimes during the hour, on how to direct the patient's attention simply to what he has said or the way he has said it. What are your thoughts about this?

B: In order to pick up these remarks, these signs of some mental archaic element, we have to be in a peculiar state of mind; the margin between being consciously awake, able to verbalize one's impressions, and being asleep, is extremely small. It is easy to be in a state of mind where you slip over into sleep, actually in the office when you are supposed to be working. It is equally easy to slip over into a state of being horribly intellectually awake. The border between the two, the correct state of mind, is very difficult to achieve; one is always oscillating above and below it. Being on the right wavelength, which has to be experienced to be recognized, is unfortunately comparatively rare. Nevertheless most patients are able to put up with the rarity of it on the off-chance that we may sometimes succeed.

Q: More and more pressure is being applied to the medical and mental health professions to provide evidence, to the various agencies that fund health care of quality, that there is some actual effect taking place from whatever we are doing for our patients or clients. Do you think we are ever going to reach the point where we can demonstrate in any objective way the effect of psychotherapy or psychoanalysis in the same way that people in other sciences are able to demonstrate effects?

B: I have great difficulty in believing that it will be so. It seems to me that the situation is so urgent that it is a matter of grave doubt as to whether we shall not destroy ourselves before we ever get there.

We think we can formulate the correct diet for the human being's digestive system. I don't think anybody has got anywhere near to prescribing what the mind ought to be fed on. I know of no book on mental dietetics; I hope there won't be until somebody knows something about it. But usually the book comes first and people find out about it later on – the premature and precocious theory or cure.

Q: I seem to recall some books from the early part of this century, religious books on spiritual diets, mental hygiene, prescribing rigidly what people should think about from morning to night in order to be healthy.

B: Yes; the idea that there are things about which we might have second thoughts is felt to be repulsive.

Q: What do you think of Skinner's idea of setting up a whole community?[1] From birth the child is taken over by the community?

B: If it is to serve as a method of watching and learning about the process of growth I would be in favour of that, but in so far as it involves imposing rules, it is like forming a shell which you then have to break through. We do form these shells anyway – and go on doing so. But the shell can become so thick, so strong, so powerful that the thing inside cannot develop. Any institution has this fault; any institution of human beings that I know of and of which I have some evidence could be regarded as dead. In so far as it is dead it is quite amenable to laws, by-laws, theories which are codified. These same institutions have inside them individuals who are not dead; they, the living objects, go on growing within the community which is rigid, dead, it obeys the laws of inanimate objects. The growth of these individuals inside the institution will sooner or later put pressure on it – it will start bulging out. Then the danger is a double one – either there is such a rebellion against law that the whole society becomes a lawless one, or it defends itself by becoming very rigid so that the growing individuals inside it cannot continue to live in that kind of dead institution. If this community of individuals is still alive then they increase the pressure on the institution which will then *have* to revise its laws or face disintegration.

Q: There is a community of people who are trying to be innovative, especially those in the arts. This incorporates a very large group,

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[1]The Utopian community described by the behaviourist and psychologist B. F. Skinner in his 1948 book, *Walden Two*.

because I feel that it includes professions such as yours as well as music, plastic arts and so on. Disregarding the dilettantes within that grouping there are some who feel uncomfortable within the 'dead' rules, as you call them, and find themselves in the position of breaking out. Art is called anything from regression in the service of the ego, to various neuroses. Adler calls it 'compensatory theory of creativity', the production of art, science and so forth to compensate for one's inadequacies. The fear of death, of wanting to gain immortality and all these other clichés sound very clever, but under careful examination they don't hold up. I would be interested to know how you feel about that as a means of communication and its validity.

B: It would be helpful if it could be recognized that all these various disciplines – music, painting, psychoanalysis and so on ad infinitum – are indeed engaged on the same search for truth. Talking as we are here, we can split it up as I have just done; it is very useful for purposes of verbal communication. If all we wanted to do was to communicate verbally that would be fine. We could stop there; we could say, if it can't be verbalized, out with it! Get rid of music; get rid of painting. But if you are tolerant then you have to see the possibility that the painter can make progress which is not possible for somebody who is capable of talking only one kind of language. The fundamental problem is, how soon can human beings reconcile themselves to the fact that the truth matters? We can believe whatever we please, but that doesn't mean that the universe is going to suit itself to our particular beliefs or our particular capacities. It is *we* who have to do something about that; *we* have to alter to a point where we can comprehend the universe in which we live. The trouble is that supposing we reach that point our feelings of fear or terror might be so great that we couldn't stand it. So the search for truth can be limited both by our lack of intelligence or wisdom, and by our emotional inheritance. The fear of knowing the truth can be so powerful that the doses of truth are lethal.

Q: You spoke earlier of the therapist missing cues given out by the patient. I have been thinking about the willingness of the therapist to be fooled or to escape this knowledge of what is about to happen. A lot of psychological autopsies have been done lately examining the actions of the patient, attempting to piece together what he has been doing or thinking. But I haven't seen any studies about the

overwhelming fear that may have been operating in the therapist at the time. We want to feel that everything is all right and may therefore be looking the other way.

B: That's right – "All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds" – Doctor Pangloss.

Q: Our fear may be just as great as the client's.

B: It certainly is. The only hope is that we may be capable of standing the stresses of it – nothing can demonstrate that except trying it. In analysis the important thing is not what the analyst or analysand can do, but what the *couple* can do. In marriage it doesn't matter how much the two individuals can do; there should be something the couple can do where the biological unit is two, not one. The two people who get together don't know anything whatever about marriage, nor about what sort of people they are going to turn into; it is another situation filled with the unknown. Can that marriage hold together long enough for the couple to learn a certain amount of wisdom? Analysis is an attempt to introduce something which is not so important, so fundamental as marriage but is an extension, shall we say, of playing games like 'Fathers and Mothers' which we hope has a value for the future.

Q: Could you talk about the three basic assumptions – dependency, pairing, fight–flight – in your group work.

B: They are crude constructions, generalizations. I think they have something in them because they are all basic, fundamental, primitive. For example, 'fight/flight' could almost be put in terms of the chemistry of adrenaline or glandular relationships; 'dependence' as that of the mouth on the breast and on sucking it. The general theory may be good enough for wide application, but in practice, in the world of reality, we are always up against the precise and particular instance, not the general. I am sick and tired of hearing psychoanalytic theories – if they don't remind me of real life they are no use to me. An application of a theory about dependence is no good to me unless it reminds me of something which I can see at any time in the world in which I live.

Q: I would like to hear more about what you call 'valency'.

B: That is borrowing a term from chemistry and physics. The relationship between two people would depend on their having various characteristics of which two or more came together – not

the whole lot because there would then be no valency available for relationships with people other than themselves; that would be a marriage so perfect as to be absolutely unstimulating. There ought always to be some valencies left over available for attachment to something that hasn't happened yet. In a situation where we are simply Mr and Mrs Know-all there are no valencies – nothing to catch on to anything that is unknown.

Q: Does the patient come to us saying, "Solve my problems"?

B: Of course; always this pressure on the analyst to know all the answers; always the pressure on the leader to know all the answers – which would seem to be the death of the community if it could be so. But that would carry with it revolt against the leader who knows everything and there would therefore be no chance for the exercise of curiosity. In the universe in which we live the opportunity for curiosity seems to be boundless – so much so that we try artificially to put a boundary round it. We try to stifle this curiosity by producing a boundless number of theories so as to be able to feel "This far and no further". Alternatively, there is a revival of thalamic fear – the fear which is so powerful that it makes thinking impossible.

FOUR PAPERS

1976/1979

Four Papers was first published in 1987 in *Clinical Seminars and Four Papers*, by Fleetwood Press, Abingdon. It was reprinted in 2000 as Part Three in *Clinical Seminars and Other Works*, edited by Francesca Bion (London: Karnac Books).

'Emotional Turbulence': from *Borderline Personality Disorders,* edited by P. Hartocollis (New York: International Universities Press, 1977).

'On a Quotation from Freud': from *Borderline Personality Disorders,* edited by P. Hartocollis (New York: International Universities Press, 1977).

'Evidence': from the *Bulletin of the British Psychoanalytical Society* (1976).

'Making the Best of a Bad Job': from the *Bulletin of the British Psychoanalytical Society* (1979).

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

These four short papers were published between 1976 and 1979. I shall make a few comments on the first of them, and on the last. The first of the four has the title 'Emotional Turbulence', a concept at the heart of Bion's ideas concerning learning and growth. In his 1965 book *Transformations* (see Volume V) Bion had linked emotional turbulence to the inevitable pain of inquiry. Bion wrote of column 2 of his Grid as specifying the acceptance of an answer known at some level to be false, in order to evade the pain of leaving the question open and allowing an evolution, with the possibility of disruptive growth of the mind.

He had written elsewhere – for example, 'São Paulo 1978' (Volume VIII) – about the 'emotional storm' resulting from the coming together of two personalities in the analytic consulting room,[1] and, like Grinberg (1957, 1962, 1979), he had emphasized a particular and clinically important aspect of countertransference induced in the analyst under conditions of intense, powerful projective identification stemming from the patient:

> As a result of the pathological quality of this mechanism, the patient is able to induce different roles, affects and fantasies in the analyst, who unconsciously and passively feels himself 'carried along' to play and experience them. [Grinberg, 1979, p. 226]

This harked back to Bion's clarification,[2] using the group situation, of the relationship between projective identification and countertransference.

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[1]Bion had been struck by Freud's use of the term in *The Interpretation of Dreams*: "all of this combined to produce the emotional storm which was clearly perceived in my sleep and which raged in this region of the dream-thoughts" (1900a, p. 481).

[2]See Volume IV (*Experiences in Groups and Other Papers)*, p. 213.

The last paper of the four – and Bion's final paper – had the apparently sombre title, 'Making the Best of a Bad Job'. The phrase is very Bion and is not as melancholic as it might seem to be when read out of context, as is also made clear in Bion's use of it in a response to a question about countertransference two years earlier, in New York in 1977 (see Volume VIII):

> My understanding of the correct meaning of the term 'counter-transference' is that it is *unconscious*; since it is unconscious, the analyst does not know what it is. So I have to put up with the fact; it is to be hoped that I am aware that I have there elements about which I can do nothing unless I go to an analyst myself and get them dealt with. It is a question of making the best of a bad job. The bad job happens to be me. I cannot get thoroughly analysed – I don't think there is such a thing. It has to stop some day; after that I have to make the best I can of who I am.

Near the beginning of this 1979 paper, Bion reminds us of something he had addressed before he became an analyst, in his 1940 paper, 'The War of Nerves' (see Volume IV). It is that in war the enemy has the intention to instil terror to prevent us from *our* objective, which is to continue to think clearly enough, no matter what disturbance comes our way. Bion was likening this situation – of which he had ample personal experience – to the anxieties inherent in scientific inquiry, including the analytic situation; he went on to claim scientific status for a series of statements for which he knew he could not provide convincing evidence. Bion begins with the fact that both the patient and the analyst have something called a Self, or a personality. He uses the adrenal glands to pursue an analogy concerning how physical structures may develop from the anticipation of having to provide mechanisms for necessary functions – and his list contains both the behavioural components of flight–fight, the basic sensory functions, and the ego-function of thinking: "a bodily anticipation making possible the later *functional* operation of a mind." The reader might like to compare this idea with Freud's pre-psychoanalytic account of the inception in the infant of a mental system, initially through the essential help of an outside object – the mother. This can be found in the 'Project for a Scientific Psychology' (Freud, 1950 [1895], p. 318).

Bion considered communication within the self from a non-Cartesian position. To glean what this might be, Bion made a plea for the analyst not to narrow his or her attention, but to be aware more of the totality of impressions. The concept of O is hidden in the folds of his

writing here. He cautions us to be oriented not just to the *content* of the communications, but also to the *process*, the 'music'.

The playwright Enda Walsh has expressed something almost identical: "A lot of the time I want to turn the volume down on all these words, and just trace the characters' emotional connection to what it is they are talking about."[1]

Clarifying what he means by the term 'scientific' in this context, Bion contrasts 'real-ization' (making real) with 'ideal-ization'. He brings out the difference clearly by defining the latter as: "the feeling that the world, the thing, the person, is not adequate unless we alter our perception of that person or thing by idealizing it". Real-ization, he writes, stems from a similar dissatisfaction, but in the opposite direction, "when we feel that the ideal picture which we present by our statement is inadequate". Therefore, argues Bion, we should consider that polarity as one of the dimensions of the way in which Self communicates with Self. That is to say, what pictures does it provide intrapsychically?

The paper takes more turns before ending with a warning about the hazards of the respectability and authority of knowledge. Bion suggests here that it is for each new generation to consider afresh the extent to which ancestor-worship is operating against exploring living personalities, serving instead to erect and strengthen barriers to new understanding. His final sentence, "That war has not ceased yet", preserves an echo of his final sentence in the *Memoir of the Future*:

> There are no labels attached to most options; there is no substitute for the growth of wisdom. Wisdom or oblivion – take your choice. From that warfare there is no release.

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[1]From an interview with *The Times* on 2 August 2008. Reproduced with permission of Curtis Brown Group Ltd, London, on behalf of Enda Walsh.

Four Papers

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the 1987 edition of *Clinical Seminars and Four Papers*, these four papers had not been published in a book of Bion's work. The first two, 'Emotional Turbulence' and 'On a Quotation from Freud', were included in *Borderline Personality Disorders*, a collection of papers given at an international conference in Topeka in March 1976 and published by International Universities Press, New York. The other two papers, 'Evidence' and 'Making the Best of a Bad Job' (the last paper Bion wrote), originally appeared in the *Bulletin of the British Psychoanalytical Society*. I am grateful to I.U.P. and to the Editor of the Bulletin for their permission to reprint.

Francesca Bion
Abingdon, Oxfordshire
August 1987

Emotional turbulence

1976

The entity known to members of the medical, psychiatric, and psychoanalytic professions under the usually adequate designation 'borderline patient' or 'borderline psychotic' is in no way familiar to laymen and workers in other fields. It therefore seems possibly illuminating to approach the conference's topic as it usually presents itself to the medically unsophisticated and to work from this to the medical definition.

We are all familiar with the term, 'latency'. I want, for the time being, to forget the customary usage because it is easy to focus on latency rather than *what* is latent. I find it useful to consider that, in latency, what is latent is *emotional turbulence.* When the quiet, cooperative, nicely-behaved boy or girl becomes noisy, rebellious and troublesome, the emotional upheaval rapidly ceases to be limited by the physiological boundaries of what we call John, Jack, Jill or Jean in his or her corporeal frame. Into this emotional field the psychiatric worker enters. His problem can be seen in its hideous, practical reality when he is called upon – usually too late – to pronounce on the admirable (though to exceptionally intuitive authorities *not* so admired), docile child, and strongly suspects schizophrenia; or when he must judge the depression (or admired liveliness) of a manic-depressive psychosis. In choosing 'emotional turbulence' I include its counterpart and opposite.

Leonardo's *Notebooks* contain many drawings of water swirling in turmoil, of hair in disorder. Milton, in *Paradise Lost,* writes in his invocation to Light at the start of the Third Book, 'Won from the void and formless infinite.' We can think of other works by painters, poets, priests, which call up similar pictures or thoughts from our own experience. It is not my intention to interpret, psychoanalytically or

otherwise, these instances of human creation. I wish to recall them so that you may invoke similar images from your own scientific, artistic, or religious inheritance – whatever is for you most evocative of a period of mental turbulence similar to that with which psychoanalysts deal. I do not stress adolescence because, for most psychoanalysts, that conception is too strong; latency is too weak. I would that analysts recall periods of mental turmoil that have evoked the most turbulence in themselves.

To clarify 'too strong', I take the term 'caesura' from Freud's *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926d [1925]): "There is much more continuity between intra-uterine life and earliest infancy than the impressive caesura of the act of birth would have us believe." Freud's summary can itself be described as one in which the 'impressive caesura' is *too* impressive to allow us to suppose that the foetus might have a proto-mind and personality, or could develop its proto-mind into a mind after birth.

Repression, said Freud, is *not* an event that takes place once; the caesura of birth, like the caesura of death, is impressive because it apparently takes place only once. It is hard to observe that repression is a kind of death. Breakdown, neurosis, psychosis may, in their turbulence, be difficult to discern, but they may be a birth inseparable from repression and death. In analysis we often have reason to think that we cannot penetrate the impressive caesura of resistance or its varieties.

Can any growth take place without repression? Is progress inseparable from repression of the previous state? Does any thought occur without resistance to the thoughts *not* selected? Is there any feeling or idea that is not subject to resistance as an inevitable part of choice or chance? Is anything separable from anything else in the way that one word can be separated from another, or one physical body from another?

The problems of decision are reactivated as emotional turbulence, and as a cause of, or precipitation from it. On occasions when the turbulence is great enough, it is dramatic, as at birth, death, adolescence, or the onset of senility. Decisions are evolved in the community, family, group and individual; people with a psychoanalytic vertex have committed themselves to thought and discussion. The decision, and the discussion of it, entails a considerable preceding process of maturation. A patient, whether a child or not, requires some degree of

precedent experience. There are limits, even if we do not know what they are, beyond which the analysand is too young or too senile, too retarded or too precocious. We consider only what lies between these somewhat shadowy precincts – the limits of wavelength that bind the polyspectral 'area'.

There must be choice; this entails being tolerant enough to view the emotional turmoil. The turmoil observed has to be split – artificially, verbally. Some individuals appear unable to make these verbal splits without feeling that they have in fact physically split. The next element in choice depends on chance, that is on some force other than the conscious human being who chooses. The matters dictated by chance cannot be discussed by us in advance because this is an open-ended problem confronting any group, any individual, any society. In analysis it is possible to discuss what is going on between the two people who are participating: the analysand can keep the analyst informed, and the analyst can do his best to interpret the information made available to him. The patient, who is usually in a state of turmoil, has first to decide what he will choose to talk about. Patients frequently say, "I can't think of anything to talk about today", or, "I have an awful lot to talk about, but don't really want to talk about any of it." These statements have their counterpart in a group where the members seem uncertain what to discuss. Sometimes one particular person is anxious to put forward his view; at other times nobody wants to say what he is thinking about, and the group becomes duller and duller, less and less communicative. The person leading the group must then consider what he should do with the situation which is unknown to him but which the chance of that particular session presents to his inspection. Here again there is chance, namely, events discernible in the turbulence. The individual in analysis may not be communicative, but he is nevertheless upset. It is wise for the analyst to assume that people do not spend time and money on analysis unless they are disturbed – no matter how smooth, straightforward, and apparently simple the view they present for the analyst's inspection. The same applies to the group; the individual members certainly have problems. But a group inspection provides a chance to see what interaction there is between the emotional situation that is apparently restricted to the individual, and the way it spills over and affects other group members.

One disadvantage of the group situation is that seeing, say, six or ten people at the same time leads one to suppose that there are six or ten discrete personalities present. In other words, the distinct physiology of the participants is so dominant that one is liable to assume that the personality is similarly bounded by physical appearance. The 'dramatic' effect of having the personalities present makes one suppose that the important thing is what any individual participant is saying or doing – another caesura. A similar situation exists with the individual who, it is assumed, has no problems dating from before birth – this dramatic event appears to present a caesura which cannot be penetrated.

In the Greek city state, where the numbers were small, democracy could operate; every individual was able to know sensibly what was going on. The people could collect in a forum and each individual could exercise his senses on material presented for his inspection. In small groups it is possible to be available to the forces that are operative; the reactions of the group can be seen. In addition to paying attention to what is actually said, we can be open to whatever else is going on – tones of voice, smiles, gestures, silences, and overt signals from one person to another. A wide spectrum of events is thus open to our inspection; there is a turmoil of communications. But, however chaotic the situation, however psychotic or neurotic the phenomena seem to be, the analyst must be sufficiently tolerant of them to be able to observe what is going on. He is then faced with the problem of what, if anything, he proposes to say – saying something involves choice and the events therefore have to be ordered. What takes place is an artificial splitting of the total situation into various elements, an ordering of these elements, and a reintegration to bring these perceptions together again.

The expectation of the group can be so intense that it can hardly wait to hear what is going to be said. This expectation stimulates a great many feelings which can be so intense that the group becomes resistant to any emotion and falls silent. Expectation has been overaroused (including expectation of disappointment or disillusionment); a barrier (resistance, prohibition, caesura) is erected to protect the solution of the previous problem, to separate the present from the past, the future from the present. This barrier can become impenetrable to further development, but on the other hand, the group *can* develop if the caesura is an illuminating idea.

This situation is inadequately described by terms like 'caesura', 'resistance', or 'cure'. A polyvalent word is needed to bring together the actual elements, or a representative number of them, involved in one caesura. What I am describing signals the cessation of an epoch; the patient feels 'cured' by an interpretation (or misinterpretation), or sees some point which hitherto has been obscure. The tendency is for the patient to want to say, if he can verbalize it at all, "That settles it now. I don't want it to be unsettled." Having achieved illumination, he does not want any more. This is more observable in a group when it is presented with an idea which it has not had before. If the members see the point, this stimulates closure, converting the open-ended problem into a closed solution, settled once and for all. But there is no solution once and for all; each solution opens another universe. The situation, except for that point where a breakthrough in analysis has occurred, is wide open again – a vast, open-ended problem. The individual is now free to learn more, but unless he wishes to do so it cannot from his point of view be regarded as a satisfactory 'cure'.

To turn to a few questions: without any suspicion of Socratic irony, I would make it clear that they are serious ones. And although I know they are simple questions, I am aware that the answers may be unexpectedly difficult.

As an example of the simple answer to a question, I offer a joke illustrated in *Punch* magazine. A small boy draws an adult's attention to a lark singing in the sky. He states, "Hi, mister, there's a sparrer up there an' 'e can't get up an' 'e can't get down an' 'e ain't 'arf 'ollerin'.' This discovery made by a small boy gives information which might otherwise escape attention.

Another anecdote taken from the same source: a small boy speaking to his father says, "What's that, Daddy?" The answer: "A cow." "Why is it a cow, Daddy?" Answer: "Because his Mummy and Daddy were cows." "Why were they cows, Daddy?" These three simple questions, asked one after another, take one directly into realms of complexity which include problems still unsolved. This is true not only of the questions but also of the answers, because like all really good answers, they stimulate still more questions. Any good solution to a problem causes the subject illuminated to reveal further questions and further problems.

A simple question: when is a human being born? Individuals may give me an answer in the particular instance of their own birth. I

would then ask: when was your personality born? When did you first see light? When did your optic pits become capable of seeing light? Were your optic pits susceptible to pressure, giving the impression of light adequate in the sense of stimulating the sensation of sight, inadequate in the sense that what you 'saw' was not what is called adult or mature sight? I could ask a similar question about the auditory pits.

Some more questions and answers: what are you doing? Thinking. How do you know that you are thinking? My phrenes are going up and down. That answer is plausible; anybody can see that when a person begins to breathe heavily, in and out, it is reasonable to suppose that that state is caused by the diaphragm, as we call it, or *phrenes*, as the Homeric Greeks called it. Like the lark, it has an obtrusive characteristic; the answer is comprehensible, it would seem to be correct. How does somebody think? Their phrenes go up and down. It is a good answer in this respect: it stimulates still further questions. In the time of Democritus of Abdera people began to suspect that the inert and somewhat useless mass of stuff they carried about in their skulls – the brain – was connected with thinking; thinking might be a function of that material which seemed to terminate the parasympathetic, sympathetic, and central nervous systems.

During the Second World War I encountered the Matrix Test, imposed on members of the British army. Men were expected to choose one pattern out of several to complete a page of incomplete patterns. The number of correct answers was matched against the number of failed answers, and it was thereby supposed that you had a rough-and-ready intelligence test. There were complications. One man, for example, was certain that the tests could not be so ludicrously simple, and proceeded to measure the patterns offered and the vacant spaces. Consequently, his score was zero. Theoretically this would mean that he had a very low intelligence. If this man's personality is assessed psychiatrically, the problem becomes more complex. He may not be stupid, but why is he so suspicious? Why can he not believe that a simple answer is the correct one?

Ignorance is filled with knowledge; there are numerous answers to the questions that arise if it is supposed that the human animal has a mind. Why is it a cow, Daddy? And why is Daddy or Mummy not a cow? As a psychoanalyst I could fall back on articles by Melanie Klein, Abraham, and others too numerous to mention. But I will

first fall back on a simple answer. People do not often deliberately and consciously withhold information when they are expected to provide it. That would be a conscious example of presenting the inquirer with a blank space. There are, however, certain failures to answer which Freud considers to be unconsciously withheld – that is, they are not deliberate attempts at falsification, deception, and evasion. There are other occasions when a person exhibits doubt, or presents an answer that seems to be unsatisfactory. Freud calls this false memory, intended to fill the space left empty by the amnesia. This suggestion is fruitful; it leads to more questions and inquiries which I would extend still further. If it is true that the human being, like nature, abhors a vacuum, cannot tolerate empty space, then he will try to fill it by finding something to go into that space presented by his ignorance. The intolerance of frustration, the dislike of being ignorant, the dislike of having a space which is not filled, can stimulate a precocious and premature desire to fill the space. One should therefore always consider that our theories, including the whole of psychoanalysis, psychiatry, medicine, are a kind of space-filling elaboration not in essence dissimilar to the belief that the lark in the sky is "a sparrer that can't get up and can't get down and ain't 'arf 'ollerin'." In other words, the practising analyst has to decide whether he is promulgating a theory, or a space-filler indistinguishable from a paramnesia.

Anybody who reminds the human animal that it knows very little is likely to be unpopular. Human beings clamour for some kind of authoritative statement to take the place of both ignorance and the exercise of curiosity; they hope, in that way, to put a stop to disagreeable feelings of ignorance and the repetition of the questions. The repeated questions may even be what is known as repetition compulsion. But repetition compulsion may in fact be a spark of human curiosity which has hitherto failed to be extinguished by any authoritative statements from whatever source.

We are familiar with being expected to provide the answers to questions. In examinations, as candidates, we are invited to provide answers to the questions asked, and our examiners are usually, and plausibly, thought to be entitled to fail us if we do not know those answers. But here again, one wonders whether this is a kind of disguise – anger at being frustrated, at being unable to be presented with a plausible answer to the question we ask and are asked by other

people. We identify both with those who ask questions, and with those who are supposed to know the answers. I mentioned that I did not wish to be suspected of Socratic irony, not least because Socrates came to an unfortunate end – a result of asking questions. It is possible that the same danger will arise if our answers make open-ended what appears to be closed.

In view of the advances made by the human monkey who has become powerful enough to blow himself off the face of the earth, the situation is urgent. It is a race between his capacity for inhibiting knowledge – his own and other people's – and his capacity for advancing his ability to make 'tricks'. Walt Whitman wrote, "I am the teacher of athletes. He who spreads a wider chest than my own proves but the width of my own. He best honours my style who learns under it to destroy the teacher."[1] Students may learn today not only through what they are taught by their universities, but also through themselves.

I should be sorry to give the impression that because I am not filled with panic I therefore tell a harmless bedtime story. I would, without alarm, draw attention to a situation which is now one of urgency. It is a question of whether the paramnesias, the answers that are immediately comprehensible, that can be used to fill up the space of our ignorance, mislead us into extreme danger; whether the powers of the human mind match its destructiveness. So far the human being has survived and preserved a capacity for growth.

The gifted person may be able to draw and thus communicate visual images to others, to those with less capacity to intuit. Leonardo's drawings of hair and water give a good idea of what turbulence looks like. Mental turbulence, whether one's own or that of the community in which one lives, is much more difficult to depict; its existence and significance cannot be understood if the turbulence is not observed. Today almost any newspaper displays signs of turbulence; it exists in areas which have hitherto been regarded as civilized. If turbulence is demonstrated, the reply is likely to be, "What about it? We all know this." That is an example of the caesura; it is hard to penetrate what we 'all know' and to suggest that there may be something that has

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[1][The lines quoted here are from Part 47 of Whitman's 'Song of Myself', an American epic poem with which Bion, as a strong athlete and swimmer himself, identified. *Ed.*]

not yet emerged from the turbulence, just as there may be something – we do not know what – that led to the turbulence. Are we then to inhibit the turbulence? Or are we to investigate it? From a certain point of view it would seem simple to answer that question. Universities and learned societies consider it wise to investigate, to exercise curiosity on the observed turbulence (the problem) *and* the theory believed to be a satisfactory explanation of the problem. Curiosity has itself to be under scrutiny while being exercised; we must not be directed towards understanding other problems by inhibiting observation of our own curiosity.

In a group with a diversity of opinions and views available, a diversity of characters we can observe and be observed by, what procedure should we adopt? All the members of the group represent different states of mind; each state of mind may be seen as an integer, an integrated whole, as something we might describe as human nature, human mentality, or human character. We could investigate it more easily by 'splitting' these different 'vertices' into states of mind corresponding to the anatomical structures of the individual human beings. But is personality bound by the physiology of the person, or is there an integration corresponding with the statement, *Vox populi, vox Dei*? If there is a cultural characteristic, it might express itself by favouring certain thoughts and disfavouring others. A caesura, difficult to penetrate, is created. (It is curious that this term, 'caesura', was misprinted in the original paper by Freud as 'censure', so that it was even then – accidentally of course – unconsciously described as a censor, an inhibition.)

Recently the primitive artist appears to have penetrated the caesura between cultivated and primitive; the cultivated artist seems prepared to learn, or allow himself to be aware of, the elements the primitive artist wishes to convey. Rimbaud was one of the early articulate people who listened to the inarticulate; Baudelaire, Shakespeare, and Homer formulated the states of mind of the people among whom they lived, and were able to penetrate states of mind which did not then exist – ours. Such persons find some method by which what they have to say is made available to those to whom they wish to say it. In the process of making it acceptable, what they have to say may be softened, made so tolerable and so bearable that its substance is lost to sight. Only the beauty of the work of art is seen: the *Odyssey, Iliad,* or *Aeneid* are mere poems. What lies behind the beautiful formulation,

drawing, painting, music, is lost; only the beauty remains. It appears almost accidental if something escapes from the prevalent force of the inhibitory authority. Instead of listening to music, someone listens to the radio interferences; there is a vast breakthrough of listening with more powerful instruments focusing on the interference; radio astronomy is born. Whether anybody wants to hear what they might hear thanks to increased powers of understanding, is an open question. The approach usually made by the combined wisdom of culture, the godlike omnipotence of the people, is to dismiss the newly discovered formulation as a construction – and then to erect a monument which it is hoped will be sufficiently weighty to keep the underlying corpse buried. The other procedure is equally efficacious – the deification or glorification of the person or thing disturbing the placid surface by saying, "Yes, you are a god just like us", and inviting the individual to join the Establishment. There are thus two means available to deal with the newborn idea or discovery, namely to bury it or to idealize it; to say the person is a genius – and therefore beyond us – or to say the person is crazy – and therefore beyond us. (The latter is safer locked in a mental hospital where the 'sanity' of the people cannot be penetrated.) Both mechanisms are discernible – but only at a distance. "These things happen – but not here. My colleagues and I don't behave like that." It is difficult to see that 'my colleagues and I' behave *just* like that. I can scrutinize myself as I am always available, whether awake of asleep; it is both difficult and unpleasant.

The escape from self-knowledge is easy and can be extremely violent – by self-murder. The group or society can, similarly, solve all its problems by killing another group or society or culture. These murderous impulses have so far not been adequate because the murderer is penetrated by the thing he murders, or the society is penetrated by the culture it is trying to destroy; the religion becomes impregnated with the religion whose place it is attempting to take.

On a quotation from Freud

1976

"There is much more continuity between intra-uterine life than the impressive caesura of the act of birth would have us believe." I don't know if I am misinterpreting this quotation, but I think it is not inappropriate that Freud says, "the impressive caesura . . . would have us believe", as if it were the caesura that governed us. This reminds me of the early Homeric description from which one gets the impression that the phrenes is really the origin of human thoughts and ideas – a very reasonable scientific conclusion because it is obvious that when a person expresses himself the diaphragm goes up and down. The diaphragm, the caesura, is the important thing; that is the source of the thinking.

Picasso painted a picture on a piece of glass so that it could be seen on both sides. I suggest that the same thing can be said of the caesura: it depends which way you look at it, which way you are travelling. Psychosomatic disorders, or soma-psychotic – take your choice – the picture should be recognizably the same whether you look at it from the psycho somatic position, or from the soma-psychotic position.

I want you to join me and try to achieve the same depths of ignorance I have managed to reach, to get back to a frame of mind which as nearly as possible is denuded of preconceptions, theories, and so forth. What I am asking is really something of a mental acrobatic feat. I can well appreciate that; it is not easy for people well versed in anatomy, physiology, psychoanalysis and psychiatry to get back to a state of primary ignorance.

I want to say something which sounds just like saying something for the sake of saying it; and perhaps it is. 'Bloody cunt'. 'Bloody vagina'. The first phrase is, I suspect, part of a universal language. It is not sexual; it is not physiological or anatomical, not medical; it is

something quite different. But 'bloody vagina' might be the sort of thing about which doctors talk, probably obstetricians or gynaecologists. What about the other one?

I am not going to try to produce the answer, not because I hope that the cure is ignorance, but temporarily, at any rate, I shall treat the answer as being a kind of disease of the question. (Doctor André Green once drew my attention to the quotation from Maurice Blanchot, "*La réponse est le malheur de la question.*") I want to draw attention to the sounds – bloody cunt. As I say, 'cunt' is not an anatomical or physiological phrase. What it is I don't know. Indeed, I throw it open to you, because if you investigate this question, you may find what this very primitive and archaic language is. 'Bloody' does not have much to do with the white cells, red cells, or whatever. It is, in fact, an abbreviated way of saying, 'By Our Lady'. So it is really part and parcel of what in more sophisticated terms we think of as being sacred.

This is very peculiar – 'cunt', and this sacred term mixed up with it. The sacred aspect of it would probably be much more meaningful to people familiar with the Roman Catholic religion. But I think one could find a similar sacred element without it necessarily having a Christian version. This is simply by way of introduction, to try to draw attention to the actual sounds of 'bloody cunt' and whatever its counterparts are. I do not, for example, know to what extent this phrase could be translated or recognized, shall we say, in Chinese or in Russian. The Chinese, at any rate, seem to be able to detect a difference in muscular movements of the face which are not the same among Russians as they are among themselves. The advantage of a conference of this kind is that so many different kinds of experience can be brought to bear on these matters.

The queer thing about this 'language' is that it seems to have an archaic quality which nourishes the more intellectual and less lively aspects of one's characteristic thinking, although without emerging to a point where one could verbalize it. A person, for example, who is very angry with somebody else might find that his intellectual and angry expression is nourished by these archaic factors which he cannot express but which do make the angry expression much more alive if he calls the other person a 'bloody cunt'. It will almost certainly lead to a great deal of turmoil of one kind or another.

Leonardo, in his *Notebooks,* has a great many drawings of water and hair. This seems to me to be an artistic delineation of this same

turmoil. When we disperse to the loneliness of our respective consulting rooms and offices, I suggest that what is there is turmoil. It may appear in a form revealed in verbal expression; it may appear in a form that would seem more appropriately called 'latency phase'. Palinurus is described, at the end of the fifth book of the *Aeneid*, as saying that Somnus must think he is very inexperienced if he can be led off course while steering his fleet on the calm and beautiful surface of the Mediterranean. This is something we should not forget; we should not be misled by the superficial and beautiful calm which pervades our various consulting rooms and institutions.

I would like now to indulge in some scientific fictions. I don't mean by that that I am not taking the problem seriously, but I know I shall never get anywhere nearer to a scientific statement. It seems to me that from a very early stage the relation between the germ-plasm and its environment operates. I don't see why it should not leave some kind of trace, even after the 'impressive caesura of birth'. After all, if anatomists can say that they detect a vestigial tail, if surgeons likewise can say that they detect tumours which derive from the branchial cleft, then why should there not be what we would call mental vestiges, or archaic elements, which are operative in a way that is alarming and disturbing because it breaks through the beautiful, calm surface we ordinarily think of as rational, sane behaviour?

A baby, quite satisfactorily born, cried and yelled at birth and could not be quieted; the more the mother soothed the child, the more it yelled. It became impossible for the mother to sleep because of this apparently indefatigable yelling. I suggest that this was a very late event in the story, hidden only because of the 'impressive caesura of birth'.

I don't suppose there will ever be any chance of knowing, so to speak, what a foetus thinks, but – to go on with my scientific fiction – I suggest that there is no reason why it shouldn't *feel*. I think it would be quite useful to consider that some stages of fear, of intense fear, are more easily visualized or imagined by us if we think of them as thalamic fear, or as some sort of glandular manifestation such as something to do with the adrenals, or what later on turn out to be the genital structures. You can look at this as you like, say as memory traces, but these same memory traces can also be considered as a shadow which the future casts before. I could say that this meeting

itself can be regarded as an expression, as a revision of such experience and knowledge as we have managed to pick up in the course of our lifetime, but it can also be regarded as showing the shadow of a future we don't know any more than we know the past, a shadow which it projects or casts before. The caesura that would have us believe; the future that would have us believe; or the past that would have us believe – it depends on which direction you are travelling in, and what you see.

It seems to me that there are certain premature and precocious developments that are too premature and too precocious to be tolerable. Therefore, the foetus, the id, does its best to sever that connection. At a later stage the individual can shut himself up. This happened with a man of thirty-odd years who drew the curtains of his room and as far as possible insulated himself from the universe in which he found himself. He objected to that universe, and at the beginning of the analysis objected to me sufficiently to bring his Smith & Wesson revolver to the sessions; he laid it ostentatiously by his side so as to have available the means of putting a stop to the interpretations. Luckily, or unluckily, having been an instructor in small arms, I paid a great deal of attention to that Smith & Wesson. It did rather distract me from paying attention to what the patient was saying, and I think the patient was similarly saved from having to pay too much attention to what I was saying.

Another patient was extremely sensitive to sight, so sensitive that it was difficult for him to wear ordinary clothes because their colours were intolerable. Another patient found it intolerable to listen to the Philharmonia Orchestra at a time when it was one of the supreme orchestras, because, according to him – and I believed him – the clarinettist played sharp; the problem then became how to shut it out.

A patient of this kind is very often intelligent, sometimes wise. I remember one poor wretch who had committed a murder, but his sentence was limited because it was discovered that he was of very low intelligence. Unfortunately for him, by the time he saw me, his intelligence was not low enough to be less than that required by the British Western Command which was anxious to punish him if he did not look after his rifle and bring it on parade. He said to me, "Sir, I am not fit to bear arms. I have been allowed out of gaol because they said I could be free if I would serve my country." Very difficult to do,

very difficult, especially if the country insists on giving him a lethal weapon which he knows he is not capable of carrying.

To continue with my science fiction, one cannot very well say this about a foetus, but I can imagine a situation in which, due to variations in pressure of the amniotic fluid, it could see light which might be intolerably bright, and hear sounds which might be intolerably loud. Is a foetus at full-term a character and personality, or not? When is that character or personality born? And when does that character or personality forget, get rid of, dispense with all that it has picked up in the course of existence in a liquid medium? In this liquid medium it seems to be possible, for certain animals at any rate, to achieve a kind of long-distance perception by being capable of smelling things; dogfish and mackerel congregate around some piece of decaying matter.

There appears to be quite an impressive change when this foetus changes to a gaseous medium, air, which is not liquid but is fluid. Therefore, once again there are oscillations and wave senses. I certainly do not see why there should not be a carry-over of extremely primitive sensitiveness; the foetus could be a healthy or sane object, and yet have been subjected to pressures communicated long before we would think there was such a thing as a personality, and long after it.

When I was a medical student, a small black cat used to appear at very regular hours in the forecourt of the hospital. It would 'do its stuff', cover it up neatly, and walk off. It was known as Melanie Klein – Melanie, because it was black; Klein, because it was little; and Melanie Klein, because it had no inhibitions. I have a feeling that this is repeated, as it were, on a rather different level of the heliacal progress of the human mind – borrowing from the molecular distribution of the DNA molecule. We come back to these same things, but on a somewhat different level. I think we are trying to get back onto the different levels without losing the vital contribution made by these archaisms.

Evidence

1976

The following free association was made to me by a patient in analysis. "I remember my parents being at the top of a Y-shaped stair and I was there at the bottom . . . and . . ." That was all; no further associations; finish. I waited, and during this time I, as usual, had plenty of free associations of my own (which I keep to myself because I am supposed to be the analyst). It occurred to me that this was very like a verbal description of a visual image, simply a Y-shape. The thing that struck me straight away about a statement that was so brief, so succinct, and stopped short at that point, was that it must have a lot of meaning that was not visible to me. What did in fact become visible to me I could describe by writing 'Y'. Then it occurred to me that it would be more comprehensible if it was spelled, 'why-shaped stare'. The only trouble was that I could not see how I could say this to the patient in a way which would have any meaning, nor could I produce any evidence whatsoever for it – excepting that this was the kind of image that it called up in my mind. So I said nothing. After a while the patient went on, and I started producing what seemed to me to be fairly plausible psychoanalytic interpretations.

Thinking about this later, I imagined a Y-shape which, when pushed in at the intersection of the three lines, would make a cone or a funnel. On the other hand, if it was pulled out at the intersection, then it would make a cone shape sticking out or, if you like, a breast shape. In fact it was an evocative free association on the part of the patient as far as I was concerned, but I was still lost because I had no idea of what I could say that would reveal an interpretation, and would also be comprehensible to the patient. In other words, could I possibly be perspicacious *and* perspicuous?

In the next session I seemed to be killing time with conventionally acceptable interpretations. Then I thought I would launch out on what I have been saying here. "I suggest that in addition to the ordinary meaning of what you have told me – and I am perfectly sure that what you said means exactly what you meant – it is also a kind of visual pun." And then I gave him the interpretation. He said, "Yes, that's right. But you've been a very long time about it."

Now the question is, what was the *evidence* that the patient was giving me, and what was the *evidence* that I saw, or thought I saw, for the interpretation? It is all very well for the patient to say, "Yes, that's right." I believe him. But I do not know why he thought it was right, or why it *was* right. In fact I don't know what the evidence is for that statement.

Freud, in his obituary notice of Charcot, lays great stress on, and obviously was enormously impressed by, Charcot's idea of going on staring at an unknown situation until a pattern begins to emerge and can then be interpreted. Charcot was, of course, talking about physical medicine, surgery and neurology. When it comes to psychoanalysis it is another matter; conventionally at any rate, we are not supposed to use our senses in physical contact with the patient. But we can attach enormous importance to the patient's presence – if he turns up. The problem, in a sense, is that of trying to make it worthwhile for the patient to come again another day. In theory there is no difficulty whatsoever; in practice it is very difficult indeed. So I think it is a matter of some congratulation if one retains the patient's curiosity or interest enough for him to come again.

There is still, however, this problem: what are we to say to people who are not psychoanalysts, or have not had psychoanalytic training, or, for that matter, if they have? So much of what we learn between the time we are born and the present is crudely perceptible through our senses; whatever else we learn is difficult to describe. Had I been able to verbalize it, I could have said what the evidence was for my supposing that this statement the patient made was a pun, but I still do not know what language to use if I am trying to communicate with somebody 'not me'.

Leaving that subject for a moment, I would remind you of Freud's statement, "There is much more continuity between intra-uterine life and earliest infancy that the impressive caesura of the act of birth would have us believe." He did not follow that up very far; on the

whole he seemed to dismiss it in the way that he says, "I learned to restrain my speculative tendencies and to follow the forgotten advice of my master Charcot, to look at the same things again and again until they themselves began to speak." That also seems to me to be very important; I have thought of it in terms of trying to dismiss memory and desire – memory as being a past tense; desire, a future tense. In other words, trying to start a session with as nearly blank a mind as one can get – which is not altogether very near because one has such an enormous past history between the time that one is born and the present day; such an extraordinary amount has been learned since becoming an inhabitant of a gaseous medium, the air. How much has been forgotten I do not know; indeed one of the revolutionary and disturbing theories in psychoanalysis is that it is questionable whether *anything* is forgotten in the sense of really disappearing. The important point about Melanie Klein's idea that at a very early stage the infant has a phantasy that it is able to split off what it does not like and evacuate it, is that it is an omnipotent *phantasy*; nothing happens, the situation remains unchanged, the personality remains unchanged. However, there is now an added layer of this phantastic belief that something has been got rid of. But suppose that it is not forgotten, that it simply becomes part and parcel of an archaic mentality, unconscious thought – in spite of the contradiction in terms – which is extremely active.

A surgeon is relatively lucky: he can say, "I think we could operate to relieve this pain that you are suffering in your back", because he has decided – although he doesn't say so – that the patient has a tumour in the form of a vestigial tail. Or, "Yes, we can operate on you." Again, he does not say why, but believes that the patient has a branchial cleft tumour. A surgeon would not be very popular if he behaved or talked as if he thought that the patient was a monkey or a fish or an amphibian. So it is not going to be popular if we psychoanalysts behave as if we think that the person of forty or fifty or sixty shows vestiges of states of mind that he thought he got rid of years ago. He prides himself on being grown up and on not believing that sort of psychoanalytic rubbish.

So we are back again to this same old problem: what are we to say? How are we to communicate to a patient? The surgeon can usually fall back on well-cared-for instruments that have been properly preserved and are already available in aseptic conditions. What we have

to use is articulate speech; the instruments with which we are to carry out *our* surgery are a sort of debased currency, words which are worn absolutely smooth till they are meaningless – terms like 'sex', 'fear', 'hostility' and so on. It is not surprising, therefore, that the patient thinks the analyst is talking the usual nonsense when we have to use words which are so debased – and which are pretty sure to get still more debased in the future. The alternative to that is to use technical terms, but that is just as bad because they are indistinguishable from jargon, just noises, 'learned' nonsense. For this reason I think that each analyst has to go through the discipline – which cannot be provided for him by any training course that I know of – of forging his own language and keeping the words that he uses in good working order. I do not think it has to be a particularly profound vocabulary, or particularly broad – it may be quite a narrow one – but it is very important that it should be the one that he chooses for himself. Nobody can tell you how you are to live your life, or how you are to think, or what language you are to speak. Therefore it is absolutely essential that the individual analyst should forge for himself the language which he knows, which he knows how to use, and the value of which he knows – knows so well that he can detect, when he gives an interpretation and the analysand repeats it with a slight change of intonation or emphasis, that although it sounds as if it is a repetition, in fact it is not. This is where the *practice* of analysis is so appallingly difficult: if you say nothing, you leave the patient to assume that he has correctly reported what you have just said to him; if you do draw his attention to the difference, you leave yourself open to the accusation that you are being pedantic and fussy, complaining about what he has said when he really repeated exactly what you said to him. You can point out, "You can't have repeated exactly what I said to you because this is about one and a half minutes later; time has been passing since I spoke to you, so what may *sound* just like what I said, in fact cannot be. You either understood what I meant – in which case there is nothing further to be said about the matter; either it was correct or it wasn't – or you are now saying something else."

If we attach so much importance to the caesura of birth, then we have to consider what language the full-term foetus speaks or understands. We are not so far called upon to analyse full-term foetuses, but we *are* expected to analyse grown-up children. People come to us, probably through despair because they do not in fact think that

much can be done for them, but they are in a state of turmoil. This state of turmoil is well illustrated by Leonardo in his drawings of hair and turbulent water, but it is not really made clear by him, nor even by Shakespeare. I think it *is* made clear by Francis Bacon who wrote, in *Novum Organum,* "There are two ways, and can only be two, of seeking and finding truth. The one, from senses and particulars, takes a flight to the most general axioms, and from these principles and their truths, settled once for all, invents and judges of intermediate axioms. The other method collects axioms from senses and particulars, ascending continuously and by degrees, so that in the end it arrives at the more general axioms; this latter way is the true one, but hitherto untried." To exaggerate the difference between Leonardo, Shakespeare and other artists, and what Francis Bacon is driving at in his statement here, I could resort to Kant's statement, "Intuitions without concepts are blind; concepts without intuition are empty."

Our problem is, how are we to introduce the intuitions to the concepts, and the concepts to the intuitions? Putting it another way, how are we to state, in conscious rational speech, something which can be recognizably married to a feeling? I sometimes think that a feeling is one of the few things which analysts have the luxury of being able to regard as a fact. If patients are feeling angry, or frightened, or sexual, or whatever it is, at least we can suppose that this is a fact; but when they embark on theories or hearsay we cannot distinguish fact from fiction. Or, as Freud put it, individuals suffer from amnesias, and then invent more paramnesias to fill the gaps. It would be so nice if it were only patients who did it. And so fortunate if *we* did not. It is just as well to bear in mind the possibility that we, as psychoanalysts, are dealing with a most extra-ordinary thing – a personality, a character. You cannot touch it, smell it, or feel it, and if you are at all tired and more than usually ignorant, it is useful to reach out for the nearest paramnesia that is handy, the nearest psychoanalytic theory that you find lying around. What if the whole of psychoanalysis turned out to be one vast elaboration of a paramnesia, something intended to fill the gap – the gap of our frightful ignorance?

To resort to yet another pictorial image, the comment by Beachcomber [J. B. Morton] on the Ship of State – and I must say it was a very eminent statesman indeed [Winston Churchill] who talked about "Sailing on the Ship of State". "It just shows that, whatever else may be wrong with the Ship of State, there is nothing wrong with the

bilge." In short, there is an inexhaustible fund of ignorance to draw upon – it is about all we do have to draw upon. But let us hope that such a thing as a mind, a personality, a character exists, and that we are not just talking about nothing. I must confess that I do feel, partly I suppose because of my prejudice, that in analysis we are dealing with *something*, something that is very difficult to describe. The artists have a great advantage because they can resort to the aesthetic as a universal linguistic. The defects of verbal communication were clearly discerned about two thousand years ago by Plato: in the *Phaedo*, describing the trial of Socrates, he points out what a great disadvantage it is that in spite of the fact that Socrates and Phaedrus can apparently talk very accurately and precisely, they are actually using extremely ambiguous terms. I do not see that we have made much progress in that regard in the last two thousand years.

If we consider that there is a thing called a mind or a character, is there any way in which we can verbalize it which is not a complete distortion? The mathematicians talk about 'quantum intermediacy', something unknown in between; we can imagine some sort of screen onto which these various elements project themselves. For example, Picasso paints a picture on a sheet of glass so that it can be seen from either side. Using my hand, I suggest something of this sort: look at it from one side; there is a psychosomatic complaint; turn it round; now it is soma-psychotic. It is the same hand, but what you see depends on which way you look at it, from what position, from what vertex – any term you like. But does one look at a character from any direction at all? I cannot see how this problem is to be solved except in the practice of analysis, and except by the particular analyst. It is no good anyone trying to tell you how you look at things, or from where you look at things – no one will ever know except you.

Let us take flight into fantasy, a kind of infancy of our own thought. I can imagine a situation in which a nearly full-term foetus could be aware of extremely unpleasant oscillations in the amniotic fluid medium before transferring to a gaseous medium – in other words, getting born. I can imagine that there is some disturbance going on – the parents on bad terms, or something of that sort. I can further imagine loud noises being made between the mother and the father – or even loud noises made by the digestive system inside the mother. Suppose this foetus is also aware of the pressures of what will one day turn into a character or a personality, aware of things like

fear, hate, crude emotions of that sort. Then the foetus might omnipotently turn in hostility towards these disturbing feelings, proto-ideas, proto-feelings, at a very early stage, and split them up, destroy them, fragment them, and try to evacuate them. Suppose this caesura takes place and the infant is subjected to the trauma of birth, and the further trauma of having to adjust to a gaseous medium. I can imagine the foetus being so precocious, so premature that it tries to get rid of its personality to start off with, and then after birth – still being highly 'intelligent', if that is the correct term – is able to learn all the words and phrases which people consciously use. In the very severe, very obtrusive situation such as the one I have in mind, that person learns well the difference between right and wrong; the M'Naghten Rules (the governing decision as to criminal responsibility of the insane) present no difficulty whatever. But as far as he is concerned he may preserve a mind at the deeper level which knows nothing about that, but which might nevertheless have well-established feelings of guilt. I have been amazed to see the way in which, if you make a faintly disapproving sound to a baby, it will wince as if it had been subjected to an almost intolerable accusation. Has the baby a kind of well-established 'conscience'? What is one to call it? I have invented terms for my own private purposes like, 'sub-thalamic fear', meaning the kind of fear that one would have if no check on it at all was produced by the higher levels of the mind. A patient may in fact be subject to tremendous feelings of fear. I remember one who was quite articulate, in fact articulate enough to make me think that I was analysing him rather well. Indeed the analysis did go extremely well, but I was beginning to think that nothing was happening. However, the patient checked all that. After a session he went home, sealed up all the crevices throughout his room, turned on the gas, and perished. So there was my highly successful analysis – a very disconcerting result indeed, and no way of finding out or learning for myself what exactly had gone wrong, excepting the fact that it had undoubtedly gone wrong.

Supposing we are in fact always dealing with some kind of psychosomatic condition. Is it any good talking to a highly articulate person in highly articulate terms? Is it possible that, if feelings of intense fear, self-hatred, can seep up into a state of mind in which they can be translated into action, the reverse is true? Is it possible to talk

to the soma in such a way that the psychosis is able to understand, or vice versa?

It would be useful if we could formulate our own impressions about this before giving them an airing. It is important to recognize that there is a world in which it is impossible to see what a psychoanalyst can see, although it may be possible for some of those who come for analysis to realize that we see certain things which the rest of the world doesn't see. We are investigating the unknown which may not oblige us by conforming to behaviour within the grasp of our feeble mentalities, our feeble capacities for rational thought. We may be dealing with things which are so slight as to be virtually imperceptible, but which are so real that they could destroy us almost without our being aware of it. *That* is the kind of area into which we have to penetrate.

Making the best of a bad job

1979

When two personalities meet, an emotional storm is created. If they make sufficient contact to be aware of each other, or even sufficient to be *un*aware of each other, an emotional state is produced by the conjunction of these two individuals, and the resulting disturbance is hardly likely to be regarded as necessarily an improvement on the state of affairs had they never met at all. But since they *have* met, and since this emotional storm has occurred, the two parties to this storm may decide to 'make the best of a bad job'.

In analysis, the patient comes into contact with the analyst by coming to the consulting room and engaging in what he thinks is a conversation which he hopes to benefit by in some way. Likewise the analyst probably expects some benefit to occur – to both parties. The patient or the analyst says something. It is curious that this has an effect; it disturbs the relationship between the two people. This would also be true if nothing was said, if they remained silent. I often do remain silent, hoping to see, or become aware of, or observe something which I could then attempt to interpret – I usually leave the initiative to the patient if I can. The result of remaining silent, or of intervening with a remark, or of even saying, "Good morning", or, "Good evening", sets up what appears to me to be an emotional storm. One does not immediately know what the emotional storm is, but the problem is how to make the best of it, how to turn the adverse circumstance – as I choose to call it at the moment – to good account. The patient is not obliged to do that; he may not be willing or able to turn it to good account; his aim may be quite different. I can recall an experience in which a patient was anxious that I should conform to his state of mind, a state of mind to which I did not want to conform. He was anxious to arouse powerful emotions in me so

that I would feel angry, frustrated, disappointed, so that I would not be able to think clearly. I therefore had to choose between 'appearing' to be a benevolent person, or 'appearing' to remain calm and clear-thinking. But acting a part is incompatible with being sincere. In such a situation the analyst is attempting to bring to bear a state of mind, and indeed an inspiration, of a kind that would in his opinion be beneficial and an improvement on the patient's existing state of mind. That interference can be resented by the patient whose retort can be to arouse powerful feelings in the analyst and to make it difficult for the analyst to think clearly.

In war the enemy's object is so to terrify you that you cannot think clearly, while your object is to continue to think clearly no matter how adverse or frightening the situation. The underlying idea is that thinking clearly is more conducive to being aware of 'reality', to assessing properly what is real. But being aware of reality may involve being aware of the unpleasant because reality is not necessarily pleasing or welcome. This is common to all scientific inquiry, whether of people or things. We can be in a universe of thought, a culture, or even a temporary culture, of such a kind that we are sure to suffer the pain of feeling that our universe is not conducive to our welfare. To dare to be aware of the facts of the universe in which we are existing calls for courage. That universe may not be pleasing and we may be disposed to get out of it; if we cannot get out of it, if for some reason our musculature is not working, or if it is not appropriate to run away or to retire, then we can be reduced to other forms of escape – like going to sleep, or becoming unconscious of the universe of which we do not wish to be conscious, or being ignorant, or idealizing. 'Escape' is a fundamental cure; it is basic. The infant, unwilling to be aware of its helplessness, ideal-izes or ignores. (I use 'ignores' as the process requisite to reaching 'ignorance'.) It also resorts to omnipotence; thus omnipotence and helplessness are inseparably associated. The tendency is to objectify omnipotence in the person of father or mother, or god or goddess. Sometimes it is made easier by a physical inheritance such as good looks: Helen of Troy could mobilize great powers through her beauty, as we know through Homer – "Is this the face that launched a thousand ships and burned the topless towers of Ilium?" Much the same thing can apply to the male who can be fortunate enough to be Paris or Ganymede, whose ability to achieve omnipotence was facilitated by their physical legacy, their

physical capital. The body can be brought in to redress the unpleasure of the mind; reciprocally, the mind can be brought in to redress the unpleasure of the body. The basic assumption of psychoanalysis is that the 'function' of the mind can be used to correct the fallacious solutions which I have briefly sketched. But sometimes a cosmetic power is not enough; the solution to which such a person has been tempted has not in fact been robust enough or durable enough to meet the further exigencies of existence. For example, if a soldier is given authority by virtue of his physical appearance, the facts of waging war may impose a burden on cosmetic beauty that it cannot carry.

I would make a distinction between existence – the capacity to exist – and the ambition or aspiration to have an existence which is worth having – the quality of the existence, not the quantity; not the length of one's life, but the quality of that life. There are no scales by which we can weigh quality against quantity, but existence is to be contrasted with the *essence* of existence. The fact that the patient, like the analyst, is still in existence is not adequate; this inadequacy is inseparable from the drive responsible for the existence of the two people, analyst and analysand, in the same room at the same time.

This paper I claim to be scientific, but I do not think you are likely to agree that it merits being so categorized, for I shall continue with a series of statements for which I have not a shred of factual support. They are these: the Self that the psychoanalyst observes – the analyst having the same characteristics – has, according to the embryologists, some growing objects which they call the cortex and medulla of the adrenals. Those names are given to these structures as soon as they assume a pattern that is observed in different individuals at different times and dates. These bodies in course of time become functional and produce a chemical substance which is concerned with aggression, or fighting, or flight. I prefer to be less precise and to exclude any element of direction by saying that the adrenals do not provoke fight or flight, but provoke 'initiative'. The terms that I use – fight, flight, initiation – would be appropriate if the object being observed had a psyche. To get over the difficulty, the obstacle to progress that is presented by my lack of intelligence or knowledge, I shall resort to imaginative conjectures in contrast to what I would call *facts.* The first and most immediate of these imaginative conjectures is that the adrenal bodies do not think, but that the surrounding structures develop physically and in physical anticipation of fulfilling a function

we know as thinking and feeling. The embryo (or its optic pits, auditory pits, adrenals) does not think, see, hear, fight, or run away, but the physical body develops *in anticipation* of having to provide the apparatus for filling the functions of thinking, seeing, hearing, running away, and so on. Since I cannot *know* – and am most unlikely to have the necessary intelligence in the course of my ephemeral existence – I try to convey to the body politic these gropings towards intelligence in case my own anticipations lead to the contagious and infectious communication of these conjectures which may in due course become real-ized.

So far I am only discussing the physical body as if it anticipated functions which would later on come to pass, but which would already have a bodily equipment suitable for serving the purposes of a particular function that we call 'psyche'. This is what I name a 'physical anticipation', a bodily anticipation making possible the later *functional* operation of a mind. I am borrowing from psychology in order to describe a physical matter; later I borrow from a physical matter to describe something psychological.

I now turn to the problem of communication within the Self. (I dislike terms that imply 'the body' and 'the mind', therefore I use 'self' to include what I call body or mind, and 'a mental space' for further ideas which may be developed. The philosophical statement of this approach is Monism.) When we are engaged on psychoanalysis in which observation must play an extremely important part – as has always been recognized in a scientific inquiry – we should not be restricting our observation to too narrow a sphere. What then are we observing? The best answer that I know is provided by the formulation in Milton's introduction to the Third Book of *Paradise Lost.*

> So much the rather thou Celestial light
> Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
> Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
> Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
> Of things invisible to mortal sight.

When the patient comes into the consulting room the analyst needs to be sensitive to the totality of that person; it should, for example, be possible to see a flush on the face as a physical manifestation of the blood system, as well as being able to hear the words which that person utters as a part of the operation of the vocal musculature – not

particularly emphasizing the activity of the voluntary muscles, nor yet particularly the sounds which are created by the vocal cords and the vocal apparatus, but rather the *total* thing. As Donne wrote in *The Second Anniversary:*

> Her pure and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
> That one might almost say, her body thought.

Or, putting it differently, the analyst needs to be able to listen not only to the words but also to the music, so that he can hear a remark which is not easily translated into black marks on paper, which has a different meaning when it is made in tones of sarcasm, or in terms of affection or understanding, or by a person who has actual experience of authority – though the words might be the same in each instance. For example, it might be possible to think in terms of an ideal world, a Utopia, as Sir Thomas More did, and to write it in terms which can still be understood by those who care to read his book. In the analytic session there is a difference when words are spoken by an analysand who is a man of authority, accustomed to wielding authority. When he talks about some ideal constitution, what he has to say will be different from the same words said by a person who has no such power and no such authority.

What I am saying may appear to be painfully obvious. My justification for saying it is that the obvious is so often not observed, namely, that which is the *difference.* So I think that it is worth while mentioning these obvious facts – otherwise they will not become the object of scrutiny on which any kind of scientific progress depends. When I say 'scientific' in this context, I mean the process of realization as contrasted with the process at the other 'pole' of the same concept, ideal-ization, the feeling that the world, the thing, the person, is not adequate unless we alter our perception of that person or thing by idealizing it. Real-ization is doing the same thing when we feel that the ideal picture which we present by our statement is inadequate. So we must consider what is the method of communication of Self with Self.

A great deal of work has been done in studying the central nervous system, the para-sympathetic and the peripheral nervous apparatus. But we have not considered the part that is played, if any, in the communication of thought, or the anticipation of thought by the

glandular system. As tuberculosis of the lung can be communicated, say, with the lymphatics of the lower limbs, so perhaps the thoughts which we are accustomed to associate with the cerebral spheres could likewise be communicated to the sympathetic or para-sympathetic, and vice versa. Such a conjecture could account for the peculiar state of affairs when a patient says that he is terrified or is very anxious, and has not the slightest idea what about. We are familiar with using free associations for purposes of interpretation; I wonder whether it is also possible to use or to tap these communications before they reach the cerebral spheres, before they reach the area which we regard as conscious or rational thought. Can any part be played in all this by what I have called 'imaginative conjectures'? I would also add 'rational conjectures'; that is to say conjectures which seem to be linked with reasonable activity or the activity which has a ratio. Compare this kind of thought with that which communicates itself in tossing and turning in bed when we are asleep and are having what we describe as a 'restless night', or with the patient who talks about having catarrh or rhinitis. Anatomists call a part of the brain the 'rhin-encephalon' – as if they think there is such a thing as a nose–brain. I understand from the embryologists and physiologists that the sense of smell is a distant receptor in a watery fluid – sharks and mackerel provide a model of that long-distance receptor. But the human being has to carry some of this intra-cellular fluid into the world after birth where the fluid is not watery but gaseous. The watery fluid, instead of being an asset, can become a liability; the individual can complain of rhinitis and difficulty in breathing. Or a patient may complain of an inability to stop the flow of tears – another excretion of fluid which has its uses; it can irrigate the eyeball and wash away dust and dirt, but an excess blinds the patient with tears.

At the risk of being monotonous on the one hand, and on the other of appearing to be changing the subject, I propose now to repeat the essence of what I have been saying. Suppose we regard being asleep as being in a particular state of mind in which we see sights, visit places, and carry out activities which are not usually carried out by us when we are awake – although there can be activities which we carry out when we are awake which are reminiscent of dreams; people say that they go to a place to which they have always 'dreamt' of going, speaking metaphorically. The change from the state of mind in which we are when asleep (S-state) to that in which we are when

awake (W-state) is reminiscent of the change from watery fluid to gaseous fluid, pre-natal to post-natal. We have a prejudice in favour of the W-state: people, without hesitation, talk about having had a dream, often meaning that therefore it did not really happen. But I would say that that is a prejudice of a person who is in favour of the voluntary musculature, who does not attach importance to where he can go unless he can do it by the use of his voluntary muscles. We do not hear much about the places we visit, the sights we see, the stories we hear and the information which is available when we are asleep – unless we translate it into being awake.

Who or what decides the priority of the W-state over the S-state? My question may appear to be somewhat ridiculous. But I shall exaggerate it by changing its form and saying: who or what decides the state of mind of a man who says, as reported by Hanna Segal, that anybody would recognize that the person playing the violin is really masturbating in public? That is a point of view; it is clear enough; there is not much doubt about its expression. Why is it that we take it for granted that a person is really playing the solo part in the Brahms violin concerto and that this view is the correct one, superior to the view of the person who knows that the soloist is in fact masturbating in public? From that vertex, can the psychotic patient put up a claim when opposed by the view of the 'sane'? Would it be possible for a psychotic to say, "Poor fellow – he thinks it is the Brahms violin concerto – a typically sane point of view. Quite wrong of course, but he is unfortunately sane"? This point is more obscure when I say that the W-state, and the story about what we did when asleep, is as depicted when wide awake. What of the psychoanalyst who thinks that the account of the story told by a person who is awake deserves interpretation in order to reveal a meaning other than the perfectly simple, straightforward account of the events if they are considered to be factual descriptions of factual events? After all, what is wrong with the factual event when the person is asleep? In what way is this the incorrect view? In what way should we throw our votes in the scale? For the W-state, when we have subjected the experience that we have when asleep to wake-work? Or for translating, according to psychoanalytic theory, the events of the day or the events of conscious thinking, into some other form of thinking which is done by the process of dream-work? In other words, what about the process done by the wake-work to translate the events, the places we have been,

the sights we have seen when asleep, into the language of a person who is awake? What work would be necessary to translate the state of mind of the person who sees that the violinist is masturbating in public into the terms used by the people who think it is a Brahms violin concerto? Is that work reasonably called a 'curative' activity? Certainly any work which was done to translate the state of mind of the person who thinks that it is a Brahms violin concerto into a state of mind of the person who thinks that the individual concerned is masturbating in public would not be considered to be a cure; on the whole the majority vote would seem to be in favour of the view that such a person had deteriorated, had suffered a misfortune as a result of his analytic experience.

If the S-state is regarded as being worthy of respect equally with the W-state – the arbitrium being impartial – then where one went, what one saw and experienced, must be regarded as having a value which is equally valid. This is implicit when Freud, like many predecessors, regards dreams as worthy of respect. So we can say that the wake-work should be considered as equally worthy of respect as is the dream-work. But why is the state of mind of being awake, conscious, logical, regarded as having 'our wits about us', but only if it is *half* our wits? How awful when you find a maggot in your apple! Not so awful as finding half a maggot in your apple. So we find that only having half our wits about us is a discovery that is most disturbing. It is one reason why there is a division of opinion as to whether to have *all* our wits about us, or to get back to having only one half – the wakeful, conscious, rational, logical. Only that kind of mathematics that is generally accepted by the majority, the prevalent culture, the social, civil, dominant fashion, is regarded as valid.

Suppose we respect equally both states of mind, or many states of mind whatever they are: then what state of mind shall we choose for interpretation? Verbal action? That is an everyday problem. In our present culture it is not thought correct to make a rhapsodic response, an immediate abandonment of the screen between impulse and action, translating the impulse direct into action without any intervening delay. It is considered to be equally incorrect to prolong thought to the point at which the action is so delayed that it either does not take place at all, or thinking becomes a substitute for action. When virtually instantaneous action is called for, it is likely to precipitate a response that is rhapsodic, impulse direct to action without any

intervention of thought. Freud described Two Principles of Mental Functioning; I suggest Three Principles of Living. First, feeling; second, anticipatory thinking; third, feeling plus thinking plus Thinking. The latter is synonymous with prudence or foresight → action.

A man has much muscular activity: when awake, he says he has had a restless night. Where did he go? What did he see? Who was he? What did he do? Should the W-state prevail and be accorded superiority? Should he respect the state of mind which was associated with so much physical activity? What is certain is that that physical activity which the patient has experienced is unmistakable whether he or his analyst recognizes it; he often admits, unwillingly, that he is tired.

Perhaps the problem can be approached more easily by projection. Let us consider it not in each one of us individually, but by regarding it as a problem of the body politic. Can we then locate in the community the origin, the source, the emotional storm centre? In my experience it is always caused, or associated with, or centred on a thinking and feeling person who can make his Self infectious or contagious. To take a gross example, Shakespeare; it is said that the English language has never been the same since. I have asked why we go to hear scientific papers. If you want to be reminded of people and the way they behave, do you choose a Shakespeare play, or do you come to an alleged 'scientific' paper by me? I will not embarrass you or myself by pressing such a question, especially as I do not have to pronounce a solution to that problem. It does, however, have a long history extending to periods before Shakespeare, or indeed before modern English existed. It appears to have agitated the Arians, though they were mostly concerned with the problems of material existence and conquest. I do not think it is oversimplifying to say that even from the earliest periods of human history of which we have any record – the Rig Veda – there appears to have been a need to develop what we now call a 'philosophy of thinking'. But a philosophical discussion about the ancient wisdom of the Rig Veda and the other Vedanta (ancient Hindu scriptures) became tainted with hostility, as did the philosophy of the Greeks in the time of Plato and Socrates.

> *Socrates*: My art of midwifery is in general like theirs; the only difference is that my patients are men, not women, and my concern is not with the body but with the soul that is in travail of birth. And the highest point of my art is the power to prove by every test whether the offspring of a young man's thought is a

> false phantom or instinct with life and truth. I am so far like the midwife that I cannot myself give birth to wisdom, and the common reproach is true, that, though I question others, I can myself bring nothing to light because there is no wisdom in me. [Plato, *Dialogues – Theaetetus*.]

It became so feared and disliked by the authorities that the Emperor Justinian closed the philosophical schools. But he was too late: a germ of philosophical thinking escaped to Edessa in Babylonia and was again suppressed. But then, owing to the spread of Christianity by virtue of the employment of the Greek language, the language of the philosophers began to be studied again as an incidental offshoot of the study of Christianity. To cut a long story short, it was again locked up in Byzantium until the fall of the Byzantine Empire and Constantinople. These lost wisdoms were then released and broke out to create the virulent emotional turmoil that we know as the Renaissance. Wisdom seems to have this capacity for survival by changing its route and then reappearing in unexpected places.

> Return Alpheus, the dread voice is past,
> That shrunk thy streams; Return Sicilian Muse . . .
>
> [Milton, *Lycidas*]

Galen established the rights of observation and became authorized, respectable – just as Freud is today – and an authority with which to suppress inquiry. Anatomy was not then studied by looking at the human body, but Leonardo, Raphael and Rubens studied the body, and as a result of this emergence amongst the artists, the anatomists too began to observe the cadaver, physiologists to study the mind.

Will psychoanalysts study the living mind? Or is the authority of Freud to be used as a deterrent, a barrier to studying people? The revolutionary becomes respectable – a barrier against revolution. The invasion of the animal by a germ or 'anticipation' of a means of accurate thinking, is resented by the feelings already in possession. That war has not ceased yet.

INTERVIEW BY
ANTHONY G. BANET, JR.
1976

‘Interview by Anthony G. Banet, Jr.’, first appeared in 1976 in *Group & Organization Studies, 1* (No. 3, September, pp. 268–285), published by University Associates Inc. It was subsequently published in 2005 as Appendix B to *The Tavistock Seminars,* edited by Francesca Bion (London: Karnac Books).

Interview by Anthony G. Banet, Jr.

Los Angeles, 3 April 1976

Banet: In *Experiences in Groups*, you allude to your wartime experiences. I'd like to hear more about that.

Bion: During the First World War, I went straight from school into the army and into the tanks because I wanted to see what a tank was. At that time they were still secret. I spent the rest of my time regretting it. It's very difficult to talk about the regret.

The military is a most peculiar business, because you are with a person only briefly, but you find that you get to know him quickly, very well, and in depth. There's nothing like this business of constantly being confronted with the probability of death. We had something like 700 officers come through our battalion in the short space of time in which we were in action – just about eighteen months. The result is that I knew individuals very, very well, but I would forget their names because I saw them so briefly. I remember coming across a fellow who wasn't in my company, but he recognized me. He was an AA scout – one of these people who go about on motorcycles. I recognized his face when he introduced himself to me, but I could not place him. But that's the kind of thing that helped me to see that I really felt extremely deeply about the people I knew.

Banet: It sounds like a very stressful time. Did these experiences contribute to your theoretical formulations about groups?

Bion: No, not really, but I suppose they had some influence. It is such a hard thing to describe. In my first combat action, I had the intense feeling that I must not get frightened – I must not run away. (Of course, you can't run away – it's impossible – you discover that.)

Another thing that you discover is that you don't settle anything in combat. You become more and more frightened, because you get to know more and more what the dangers are. That, I think, was a very unpleasant discovery. Mind you, I think that a good soldier, a regular soldier, can learn a very great deal. He doesn't become less frightened, but he knows how to look after himself.

Banet: The fear never leaves you.

Bion: Never.

Banet: Were you practising medicine or psychiatry at that time?

Bion: No, that came later. I was simply a combatant soldier. The curious thing was the great relief I felt when it was over, and then the discovery that, in fact, it had left very deep marks indeed.

I went straight up to Oxford after the war, and it was marvellous. Everything at the university was so exciting and so interesting, but it simply made it impossible to work out anything that had been simmering inside me. When I was at Oxford, there were a lot of tragedies of ex-service personnel. Another thing – the college authorities were surprised to find that virtually all officers were extremely well disciplined. There was no trouble whatsoever. A lot of people had expected a return of the "licentious soldier". We were seduced into a belief that everything was beautiful – as indeed it was. But it was very hard to realize why, while everything was so magnificent, we did not feel the privilege of enjoying it. Always, there was just a shadow of some kind – a frightful thing that never really left our minds. We simply attached it to new tasks like getting through finals, but I'm certain that the shadow of war was a background for all of us.

Banet: But the shadow was not talked about.

Bion: Not talked about, no. Evelyn Waugh described it, rather to my surprise, I must say, when he said what a relief it was to get rid of our whole crowd, because we simply put a damper on the whole university. The university was overshadowed, from his point of view, by the ex-servicemen and the war people who were a dead weight. You couldn't make progress; you couldn't get through this "crust". Of course, he was sitting on top of the university. From our own point of view, we rather resented the "kids", so to speak, who had no war service and who thought they were the big noises of the university. But that didn't matter, of course, because we had so much more

experience. I think that the university did suffer from having this great mass of ex-service people there.

There was the attempt to be very nice to the ex-servicemen, but the others didn't know what our problems were. All they could do was to give us comfortable rooms, good food and all of the creature comforts. From the point of view of the university authorities, there was very little that they could do about us. We were very pleased to plunge ourselves into all the diverse activities that existed. I was fortunate because I was a pretty good athlete. I was captain of the Oxford University Swimming Club. So I had plenty to occupy myself. I also played rugby for the university. I'm not sure whether it was really lucky or not, because it enabled us to cover over the terror, and we fell in with this idea that everything was so marvellous – as it was.

Banet: It was easy to forget the terror . . .

Bion: Yes . . . we just forgot it. A friend of mine went down to Manchester, and when he returned he said, "You know, the university is like a nightmare in reverse. You have no conception whatsoever of the state of affairs in Manchester: the misery, the unemployment, the total conditions. I walk in here – the rowing, the excitement, the races – and it's like coming into an utterly and totally unreal world of happiness, pleasantness, comfort – whereas when we go to Manchester we walk straight into this frightful state, which is actually the real one."

Banet: Margaret Rioch, in one of her comments on the Tavistock model,[1] points out its strong emphasis on the tragic aspects, the seriousness of life. Your story sounds like the same thing – that behind all this idyllic university scene you were being reminded by your friend that there were serious conditions in Manchester – world events that were causing people pain.

Bion: I don't think it is very unusual that one covers pain over with something that isn't tragic. If it's a nice day, you're jolly thankful it's a nice day; if I think back about England now, I always think of the weather as sunny. You just forget those vast spaces of time in which the fields are under water and that the springtime is cold and miserable and beastly. All you remember are the summer days – the

[1][Margaret Rioch was the founder in 1969 of the A. K. Rice Institute, which developed along group relations lines as the U.S. counterpart of the Tavistock Institute. *Ed.*].

summer weather and the summer conditions. You tend to concentrate on how magnificent everything is – how good life is – and to resent anybody who reminds you that, for most people, it isn't. Of course, nearly everybody learns the same trick – pretending to be more happy or fortunate than he actually is. Then you are taken by surprise if you happen to be taken ill. The illness itself is treated as if it were a fluke. I think that the more correct statement would be that the health of the individual is a fluke. For some reason, we've got this kind of apparatus up here in our heads which enables us to believe that good health – the kind of health you have at age thirty – is normal.

Banet: That viewpoint seems very much opposed to the human potential movement – the celebration of individuality, the talk about joy, about community. I'd be interested in how you view contemporary group movements that emphasize fulfilment and happiness.

Bion: I don't really know enough about any of these other movements to be able to say anything particularly knowledgeable about them, but I do know about psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is based on the premise that it is abnormal to be unhappy – to be anxious – but it seems to me that as one goes into the business of dealing with others, it's a very questionable premise indeed. The usual part of life is involved with tragedy, sadness and decaying health. After all, one's health decays from the moment of birth, and there are people who have never been well; in some ways I think that they could be saner than people like myself who've had good health and who have been good athletes. A healthy person just doesn't appreciate why on earth he should have anything else but health. I don't know how to rate the baselines, but perhaps we should consider that suffering and rivalries with other human beings are really the normal standard. The poor, those who are less well-off, or the unhappy would naturally covet the riches, the wealth and the comfort of those who are well-off. This would apply to nations just as much as to individuals. It might be quite reasonable to suppose that the natural thing would be for wealthy and successful nations or individuals to find that they are the target of hostility.

Banet: It was, I think, Melanie Klein who stimulated your interest in psychoanalysis.

Bion: Yes, Melanie Klein has certainly influenced me. Before that,

John Rickman, whom I liked very much, was also very influential, although it was clear later on that he had various personal difficulties. We have to use people who have these difficulties. They are the people who become our teachers; they are the people who make the advances. I certainly remember him with a great deal of affection.

Banet: Was he at the Tavistock Institute?

Bion: No. He was at the Institute of Psychoanalysis, but he was one of these "heretics" who had dealings with the Tavistock Institute, which was really considered to be grossly improper by the psychoanalysts.

Banet: Were you a heretic, too, at the Tavistock?

Bion: Yes, I was. But I was also a heretic in the other direction because, although a member of the Tavistock Institute, I made contact with psychoanalysis and wanted to be, and did become, a psychoanalyst. In those days the British Institute of Psychoanalysis was afraid of appearing to condone activities that were not psychoanalytic by cooperating with the Tavistock Institute. It is not unlike the situation in the United States when American psychoanalysts think that psychoanalysis will be undermined by sanctioning psychoanalysts who support the theories of Melanie Klein.

I think the Tavistock Institute was then afraid that the freedom of thought, supposed to be the hallmark of the Institute, would be endangered by the bigotry and rigidity of the psychoanalysts. Therefore, any interchange between Rickman and members of the Tavistock was regarded with suspicion by both parties.

Banet: A. K. Rice is often regarded as a primary pupil of yours. Do you see him extending the theory?

Bion: I don't really know enough of what he did. I was present with him only once at Amherst, when he took a small group (he didn't take the whole group), so I didn't really have a chance to get up to date with what he was doing. He happened also to be very ill, although I didn't know it at the time.

Banet: Your group theory emphasizes that a basic assumption of life exists below the surface of the group's work life. I'd like to hear your comments on how this operates in groups.

Bion: Both words – basic and assumption – are important. It seems

to me that it is not simply the assumption that is basic, but also that the thing that one's trying to talk about is basic. The difficulty is to know how to define or to detect this basic theory. You try to talk in as polite and civilized a manner as possible, but in the secrecy of your own mind, if you think of it, you're awakened by reality as you are jolted awake by an alarm clock. What language do you use about your alarm clock? How does language connect the basic, secret fantasy aspects of your mind with the realities of the outside world?

In groups, you have the opportunity to hear language that attempts to express these basic assumptions. Indeed, one of the points about groups is that they provide an opportunity to see things collectively. Instead of a line of thirty people, one after the other, you see the whole collection of thirty people together. I think the group is a distortion, but so is a survey map – where you portray mountains and valleys on a flat surface by using contour lines. The group approach ought to have its own methods of portraying its basic assumption of life. What that method is, is yet to be discovered, but it needs to be something that jams a whole lot of data together to portray the results on a flat surface.

Banet: Many people regard the notion of "basic assumptions" in groups as the key to understanding group process. But you're saying that the method to use that key needs to be elaborated.

Bion: Yes, I think the notion of "basic assumption" needs tremendous investigation. For example, we all know people with rheumatic pains. An ordinary general practitioner in England knows of people who have been bedridden twenty or thirty years. Cancer gets all the publicity because nobody can be bothered with a subject like rheumatic complaints that is boring and tiresome and won't go away. I think that this is the direction in which the investigation of groups could go. If you could persuade thirty people with rheumatic pains to meet together, you would learn something. You would have to have a group expert, because I don't think that you could possibly keep a collection of people like that together – they would hate each other so much. They'd dare to come once, but then they would find that somebody else was occupying the stage, and they could never get a real chance to say how terrible their pains were. I think that only a group expert could stand it, and if he could, then I think something would emerge from that pattern that couldn't emerge if the expert

saw those thirty people individually. I think that you can look at a group like a real cartographic map. The group theorist can learn to "read" the group.

Banet: In your book you use the analogy of a clock. It is possible to understand the individual parts of a clock, but you would not necessarily know that their function was to tell time until they all came together.

Bion: It's true. It's like the process of a group. It's more than likely that the group process will tell you all about something that your innards could tell you – such as hunger – something you don't know cognitively. I think that the person who takes a group, the group specialist as it were, should be able to detect a pattern that may not be obvious to the rest of the group.

Banet: I associate that expression – "taking the group" – with you. Other people speak of "doing" groups or "leading" groups, and it is very clear in your writing that you "take" a group. You are observing something that you didn't create.

Bion: One should always remember that, in fact, every member of a group "takes" a group if one could only see it in that way. The fellow who sits there and doesn't say a word from start to finish "takes" the group and exerts an influence on it. Sooner or later, somebody will notice: "You haven't said anything." Then he might ask, "If you come here week after week and don't say a word, what are we supposed to do?" But it is obvious that this person is in his own way taking a group – and yet he can say, "I've done nothing."

Banet: I have worked with groups in many different ways. When I am more personal and inviting, I'm pretty calm inside. But whenever I consult with a group in the Tavistock manner, I am frightened, especially at the beginning. It seems ominous – that perhaps something terrible will happen. It seems that in such a group there's always potential for terrible things happening.

Bion: In psychoanalysis, when approaching the unconscious – that is, what we do not know – we, patient and analyst alike, are certain to be disturbed. In every consulting-room, there ought to be two rather frightened people: the patient and the psychoanalyst. If they are not both frightened, one wonders why they are bothering to find out what everyone knows.

I sometimes think that an analyst's feelings while taking a group – feelings while absorbing the basic assumptions of the group – are one of the few bits of what scientists might call evidence, because he can know what he is feeling. I attach great importance to feelings for that reason. You as an analyst can see for yourself what a shocking, poverty-stricken vocabulary it is for you – I'm frightened, I feel sexual, I feel hostile – and that's about it. But that's not what it's like in real life. In real life you have an orchestra: continuous movement and the constant slither of one feeling into another. You have to have a method to capture all that richness. In a group, you are in the unfortunate position of having very little evidence. The physician, the physical person, can get physical evidence, or so he thinks, anyway. When dealing with physical things, you can touch, you can feel, and you can smell, but we who use our minds are really up against it, because we don't know what the mind really is capable of perceiving. Even senses that were available to us at some stage in life we have lost.

Some sea creatures retain incredible sense perception. Take the mackerel. Its sense of smell is long range, so it can collect food because it can smell decaying matter, whatever it is, wherever it is, and can close in on it. Our own sense of smell seems to have deteriorated very considerably, and in fact, in order to get any kind of acute smell, you have to live in a watery element.

When human beings are born, they change from a watery fluid to a gaseous fluid – the air. The person takes some kind of fluid with him in the form of mucus; the nose can still operate but on a greatly diminished level. Of course, if there is too much of it, then we have what we call a catarrh and the watery element drowns our sense of smell.

Banet: So the person who takes a group is sniffing out or relying on some special sense.

Bion: Well, I think it would be very wise to suppose so, and it might be possible to get more and more conscious of what this special sense is. Suppose you were observing a group of – say – Russians. You might say, "These Russians – they never smile, they never laugh." Well, if you're used to using these small muscles here around your mouth then you certainly notice it when another person doesn't use them. It may take you some time until you realize that they don't use their small muscles for smiling but they use something else – their

feet or something (they may be dancers) – and express a smile in that way.

Banet: A fantasy I had travelling here to meet you was that you would look like Basil Rathbone dressed as Sherlock Holmes – a detective, constantly alert to every minor cue. It sounds like the group consultant is a detective, skilled at being attentive to nuances.

Bion: Well, I think it is important to be able to develop that skill – to be able to sort out the information. Take a room like this. You can be aware of it, and if you're very observant you can have a pretty good memory of the things that are in the room. When you have masses of data, you can even say, "I went to their room, and I don't think that they are particularly aesthetic people." Well, that's an interpretation of these material objects. You've got to be a gatherer of your sense impressions, but it is fatal if you allow yourself to be drowned in impressions – so much mucus, so to speak, that you can't even smell – so that instead of your perception being an advantage, it becomes a liability. I think that this is the complaint that so many Frenchmen feel about Victor Hugo. When André Gide was asked who was his country's greatest poet, he said, "Victor Hugo, alas." Well, it's incredible – Hugo's observations; they're really extraordinary. The visual images he's able to carry off are impressive, but you don't get the impression of Hugo as a great thinker, because he doesn't seem to synthesize it. It leaves the reader to synthesize his observations.

Banet: That would be one function of theory – to provide that synthesis of impressions. I would like to hear you talk about large groups – institutions and organizations.

Bion: Institutions and organizations are all the same – they're dead. Let me put it this way. An institution behaves in accordance with certain laws and bylaws – it has to make them – and all organizational laws become as rigid and definitive as the laws of physics. An organization becomes hard and inanimate like this table.

I don't know of anyone who can say at what point animate changes into inanimate. Take, for example, a dung heap. It seems inanimate, and then maggots appear, and it becomes animate. The trouble about all institutions – the Tavistock Institute and every one that we have – is that they are dead, but the people inside them aren't, and the people grow, and something's going to happen. What usually

happens is that the institutions (societies, nations, states and so forth) make laws. The original laws constitute a shell, and then new laws expand that shell. If it were a material prison, you could hope that the prison walls would be elastic in some sort of way. If organizations don't do that, they develop a hard shell, and then expansion can't occur because the organization has locked itself in.

Banet: Currently, there's a lot of interest in trying to get organizations to be more responsive to human needs. Does that have some chance for success?

Bion: If the organization does not respond to human needs, either it or the individual will be destroyed. It's like an animal that protects itself by growing a hard shell. What's going to happen when the animal grows? What's going to happen to either the shell or the animal? The ordinary bird has sense enough to crack the shell and walk out.

The curious thing is that the mind itself seems to be able to produce a shell of its own. People say things like "I don't want to hear any more of these new ideas. I've been very happy. I don't want to have my ideas upset. If you start making me think of this and that, well then, I might have to bother about the troubles of Los Angeles. Why can't I live here in peace and quiet?" I think there is always a resistance to development and change and a tendency to think what a horrible thing this maggot is that tries to animate the dung heap.

Banet: Institutions that have been around for some time, like the United States or the Catholic Church, profess an interest in renewal and changing, but then it seems like perverse things happen. Either the leaders are removed or people become very pessimistic about the possibility of change.

Bion: I've often thought that the United States has an intellectual belief in itself as the "top" nation. There is a feeling, therefore, that the institutions that are all very well for an unimportant or beginning nation are no good at all to one on the top. I think that there will be a tendency to rebel against this restraining force, this invisible shell, which is so difficult to imagine – even to conceive of at all.

One just does not know what the restraints on a nation are. In the early stages, they were fairly clear. It was quite easy for Americans to see the British as the restraining force and to rebel against that. But then, this newly formed institution started growing a shell again. Its

new laws and Constitution were enshrined. Now a feeling has developed that the Constitution – which is the mental shell of the United States – isn't really adequate for the world as it is, because the nation is growing and is aware, therefore, of the pressure and the hostility that come from outside. The people of the United States may want to live in peace; they may not want to attack anybody; but then they find that they have to have a navy; they have to have an air force; they have to have an army – all of which they may hate having. Once again, a shell within a shell starts growing. They have to have a secret service. Then suppose they feel that the secret service and the police want to know what they're up to, but they don't see that it is anyone else's business. So they can be aware of the very shell that they're growing while it is growing. That is obviously a most uncomfortable proceeding, because you can hate the shell and yet believe that it is necessary. For example, I don't want to be invaded by some foreign country. All right, then I'll put up with the army, navy and air force, but then the army, navy and air force say they want me as a recruit and I must learn how to bear arms. I hate the shell but come to see it as necessary.

Banet: At the time of the political assassinations there was a lot of editorial comment to the effect that "we are all guilty", that an assassin has some valence with the rest of society – he acts for all of us.

Bion: I think that one needs to beware because that judgement can be made too prematurely and precociously. If one judges prematurely, then he clamps down on it – adds another shell. I can see this with myself. The more tired I am, the more quickly I give interpretations. It's such a frightful business to retain your freshness of mind; the mind goes on working even though you don't have the foggiest idea what's going on.

That's why one tries to learn and take some sort of scientific, religious or artistic approach to the problem of history – it's simply difficult to visualize what on earth the problem is in this country. One can only get these somewhat trivial models that one picks up from the past.

Banet: I know that you are concentrating on individual psychoanalysis, rather than on groups, and that you have written recently on the problem of knowledge and perception. What is exciting for you these days?

Bion: I'm working mostly with individuals now. The investigation of the individual still has a lot to yield. The advantage of the group is that you can see certain elements much more easily. With the individual, you may find it very difficult to see disturbance; the patient is so rational, so calm, so all right, that you are misled by this surface appearance. As Virgil described it in the *Aeneid,* Palinurus, although tempted by the God of Sleep, is not taken in by the deceptively calm and beautiful exterior. When the analyst allows himself to be deceived, he will say, "Well, this patient has never had any troubles, has never been any trouble, always got on well, is loved and liked by all of us, and is a very affectionate and charming person. I can't understand how or why he should commit suicide." That, of course, is a very dramatic thing – when a person brings his life to an end without anybody having observed what was going on. To see what's inside – that's the difficulty.

I am interested in the individual – in his struggle against the pressure from the shells built around him. We talked about the shells of organizations earlier. Well, individuals have shells too. When you are dealing with a mind, or a personality, then you get these same shell-building processes, but they're much more difficult to deal with because you can't fall back on physical observation. Perhaps if you were more sensitive, or you employed more sensitive instruments, you could do it, but not as things are at present.

If you have an active mind, it is pressing against the obstacles and restraints to its operation, and every activity, or your own personal fatigue, puts a restraint on you, so you can't even locate the shell. The inhibition of one's self produces difficulties. It would be so simple if one could say, "Oh well, you're suffering from these inhibitions, and we all know what Freud said about inhibitions." But that isn't all there is to say about inhibitions. We have this vast universe and we have various objects scattered about, but the outside world is out of our control. It is simply out there. However, we have some choice about what to pay attention to. This means that I have to split things up – table, lamp, and so on. If you think of it in slow motion, you have to choose the order of precedence. So when you choose to try to get out of your inhibitions and restraints you are up against a problem of splitting things up – calling this object a book and saying this is a table. I don't know that that would be agreed to by the person who has concentrated on the atomic constitution of the thing, because

where should the table end? Where can you say on the one side is a table and on the other side is air?

Banet: Well, it seems that I might come up with a practical solution. I might believe that the table is really a collection of molecules, but I expect something to rest on it if I put it there.

Bion: That's the point. One has to come to a practical decision; at some point we have to translate our thoughts and ideas into action, and, so far, we've been able to do that.

Banet: I'm interested in your thinking about the growing interest in Eastern philosophies in this country, It seems that we're departing from Western European traditions and adopting Eastern perspectives.

Bion: I don't think that we can depart from the Western European tradition, but what is so striking is that we've become aware that there *are* different methods of thinking. I don't know Sanskrit (I'm no good at languages at all), but as far as I can tell by translations, there is a most striking resemblance, say, between the *Bhagavad Gita* and Meister Eckhart – a resemblance between entirely different religions. Both of them are surrounded by this type of thinking – breaking out of one's shell – and it upsets a great many people. The *Bhagavad Gita* is still read after hundreds of years.

Banet: Eastern and Western mystical thought both suggest a reduction or destruction of the ego – that you can, in some way, break out of the shell of self.

Bion: Freud made a very illuminating observation about the ego, the id and the superego. It's only when one tries to contemplate it, tries to look at the human being, that he begins to see that these psychodynamic formulations, which are very fruitful, are really not quite good enough. But it's difficult, because one doesn't really know whether one's misrepresenting Freud or whether one's got onto the right track.

It seems to me that one could say that the mind has a kind of skin that is in contact with somebody else. For example, we are talking together. Why? How? I may quite mistakenly think I know what you're asking me and what you're telling me, but why? What are these senses? If it is a question of my sense of touch, I can say that it's the skin. But what is this mental skin that enables two people to

be (although it is a metaphorical use of the term) in "contact"? We borrow the term from the physical world, but it isn't touching. One can feel it; he can bring his mind (as Dr Johnson says) up against the other person, and he can be aware of a contact – something that he just has – with another. You have to use some words if you want to talk about it at all. This contact requires labelling.

Banet: I'm certainly aware when I'm not in contact with someone.

Bion: But it is very difficult to know why we know that.

Banet: The philosophical aspects of your work are really where a lot of your attention is. I can see you playing with concepts – putting things together. I'm interested in hearing more about that.

Bion: I'm not sure that I can find the passage. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates points out that language is extremely ambiguous, and therefore difficulties are produced when you have to turn your thoughts into action, which is unambiguous. The two of us (two entities, characters or personalities) meet – what are we to do? Usually it isn't an acute enough problem to be noticeable, because an attempt can be made to talk the same language. But supposing one found himself on a desert island with someone he'd never met and whose language he didn't know – what way would he bridge the gap? Sign languages are commonplace, but nobody has really studied how, in fact, contact is made.

Banet: I would put my money on some kind of collaborative action or work.

Bion: That's the important thing about the group approaches – it may be possible to detect what this work of making contact is. The group has to find some way in which it can meet again – some method of communication between the various members who are physically discrete, different people. It seems that you end where your body ends, but it's a very puzzling situation. People can meet and talk and extend themselves into one another. There even seems to be a kind of communicating that extends over the centuries between Plato and the *Gita* and Meister Eckhart and us.

Banet: Religion has some explanation for that – the spirit.

Bion: Because religious people have been at it a long time, they have a considerable vocabulary, although we could say that it isn't

adequate. You'd have to invent some sort of extension; you'd have to burst out somewhere. To me it appears that you would have to have this little pimple that you call psychoanalysis appearing at the surface. The trouble is that we are so limited – we analysts think that if we are a part of the pimple the rest of the body doesn't exist – that the religious world (whatever it is) has ceased to exist. Psychoanalysts have been particularly blind to the topic of religion. If we try to extend – if we happen to be at the edge of the growing point – it's absurd to imagine that there isn't anything behind that or that there isn't anything that we're pushing against.

This brings us to another point. If psychoanalysis is a kind of extension of the religious world, then the religious world would object to that extension. The Jew might wonder about this distortion of the Hebrew tradition called Christianity. You get the same thing over and over again. What are these newfangled ideas – psychoanalysis, psychology, groups, therapy? They're all fallacious. "All this has been known by the church for hundreds of years" would be a common reply. Alternatively, "This is dangerous and heretical. You'll destroy religion if you start introducing sex into things."

Banet: It seems that at a later stage the church somewhat embraces psychoanalysis and incorporates it into its training.

Bion: Yes, but it does seem to be the same process of getting a sufficient shell to be protected and then having to rebel against a shell because it not only protects you, but also can shut you up. The shell that protects also kills. Let me put it this way: individuals can be so rigid that they don't seem to have any ideas or they can be so free and so profuse in their outpourings of ideas that it really amounts to a pathological condition. But the same things seem to me to apply to the state or to any organization. People can't just easily escape and take up a new mission and still maintain that they're members of your organization. On the other hand, people outside shouldn't be allowed to say they are members of your organization and use you in order to gain a sort of cloak of respectability for their ideas. So there's the problem. How permeable are you to make this envelope of self, this shell? Or to get back to the Freudian phrase, how permeable is the ego to be? There are pressures from inside and, on the other hand, pressures from without. To what extent is one to allow any idea to come in? One feels that there's a need for a sort of discriminating screen.

If it were physical, one could try to invent some sort of sieve that sieves off what one doesn't want and allows in what one does want in. When it's the mind, I don't know how it could be done.

Banet: It sounds like you're regarding your work, especially your book *Experiences in Groups*, as just a beginning. Many other people regard it as a definitive piece of work.

Bion: That would be a great pity. The book is not the final view, and I urge people working with groups to make it out of date as soon as possible.

Banet: I have a feeling it's going to be a while before it's out of date.

Bion: I am sure certain basic things in *Experiences in Groups* are worth retaining. I hope that is true; otherwise, we could be leading people up the garden path. I hope that there are certain things that are still operative, but to allow "Bion's theory" to operate in a rigid way such as print would be ridiculous, because that puts a restraint on the growth of the individual and the individuals who make a group.

Banet: In the past few years, the A. K. Rice Institute and its centres have become more popular; there are more people going to group relations conferences and learning about groups and your theory. Is that gratifying to you?

Bion: It doesn't make much difference for me, in one sense, because I'm out of group work and I'm still working on individuals very much; but I certainly think the work of the Institute is very important. But, again, the Rice Institute must realize that it is not going to be exempted from the problems that confront the great organizations like the United States or the individual states.

Banet: It's subject to the same problems.

Bion: The same problems . . . You've got to have these rules – these bylaws. Of course, one can make new laws so there's got to be a certain flexibility, but, unfortunately for organizations and institutes, it's difficult to be flexible.

Banet: Are you going to write some more about groups?

Bion: I hope so, but, you know, one of the difficulties today is finding the time. At present, I am heavily committed to my work with individuals.

TAMING WILD THOUGHTS [II]:
UNTITLED
1977

The two untitled transcripts in ‘Untitled’ were first published in 1997 in *Taming Wild Thoughts*, edited by Francesca Bion (Karnac Books, London).

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Taming Wild Thoughts is a short book of just 56 pages, consisting of Bion's 1963 paper 'The Grid' and two untitled papers. The two transcriptions from May 1977 have been extracted from the original 1997 booklet and are published here to be together with the papers from the 1970s. Accordingly the parts of the original Foreword by Parthenope Bion Talamo have been divided between this volume and Volume V, in which the 1963 paper 'The Grid' now appears.

Taming Wild Thoughts [II]

Untitled

FOREWORD

Parthenope Bion Talamo

The two transcripts seem to have been intended as the first chapters of a book of which no more is known; the recordings were made on two consecutive days in late May 1977, when *A Memoir of the Future* (1991) was already finished and Bion was working on his autobiography, but they are different in kind from both of these. In the first 'chapter', he takes up the idea of stray and wild thoughts and how to capture them and introduces the concept of beta-element, in an almost whimsical fashion, as a 'box' into which to put one sort of captured stray. The discussion that develops links up with the Grid, as it deepens and develops the notions of alpha- and beta-elements, dream thought, and rhythmic, non-verbal communication. Bion goes on to show something of what he had in mind when he talks of language achievement, as a sort of high-point of sophisticated and efficacious communication, and then returns to the physical level, beta-elements, ending with a discussion of archaic vestigial aspects of the mind. The style is very discursive – conversational, almost – and might be thought of as rambling, but it is in itself a good example of the validity of the 'large circumference' of a circular argument, since the return to the theme of beta-elements towards the end of the chapter is notably enriched by all that has occurred 'on the way'. (I have often thought that Bion's concept of a circular argument was well illustrated by the circular form of Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*.)

The second 'chapter' takes up the problem of evaluation; starting again from sensorial data, beta-elements, which Bion seems to assume in a relaxed sort of way as a non-questionable 'given' on which to build his architectonics of thought, he moves on to the question of psychoanalytic supervision. Several points come up for discussion on the first section, which might be headed 'speculative

imagination' – another term for wild thoughts: the relevance of the past only inasmuch as it obtrudes on the present; the deep and profound respect for the patient's present, for his presence in the room, and for the experience of this, which the analyst can have if he allows himself to do so; the noxiousness of hopes and fears, tying up with memory and desire but from a slightly different angle; the minimum conditions necessary for analytic work to be done.

The second section takes up the theme of speculative reason – that is, the discipline that has to be applied to the speculative imagination – and is followed by a brief sortie into what Bion calls reconstruction, but which turns rather rapidly into a short essay on theory leading on to a discussion of unconscious thought that has never been conscious, dubbed the 'inaccessible state of mind'.

Turin
7 April 1997

INTRODUCTION

The following pages are transcripts from two tapes recorded by Bion sitting alone in his study, thinking of his forthcoming visit to Rome in July 1977, to give talks and hold seminars. (Those seminars were published in 1983 in Italian by Borla under the title, *Seminari Italiani*, and in 1977 by Karnac Books in London.)

He speaks in a relaxed, reflective, meditative way, though it is clear that he is not talking to himself but to an imaginary, attentive audience. He sees himself 'idling away my time', thinking in an 'almost thoughtless' way, and then looking to see what he has caught in 'the net of my idleness'. But these verbal cogitations are far from the lazy meanderings of a day-dreamer; they are clear, sharp, and disciplined and tinged with his individual quirky sense of humour. Wild thoughts are domesticated, and stray thoughts are found a home.

The themes are all familiar ones to be found elsewhere in his writings, but he seldom repeated himself word for word; there are variations, expansions, additions, and some vivid metaphorical passages.

Only minor editorial changes and corrections have been made, mostly with ease of reading in mind. Both days' recordings ended in mid-sentence; the tape ran out, not the speaker.

Francesca Bion

28 May 1977

If a thought without a thinker comes along, it may be what is a 'stray thought', or it could be a thought with the owner's name and address upon it, or it could be a 'wild thought'. The problem, should such a thought come along, is what to do with it. Of course, if it is wild, you might try to domesticate it. I shall consider later how you might try to do that. If its owner's name and address is attached, it could be restored to its owner, or the owner could be told that you had it and he could collect it any time he felt inclined. Or, of course, you could purloin it and hope either that the owner would forget it, or that he would not notice the theft and you could keep the idea all to yourself. If the owner is prepared to allow you to have it, or if it was understood that you were quite entitled to keep it, then you might try to train it in the way it should go and in a manner that would make it more amenable to the habits of your own resident thoughts and to the thoughts of the community of which you were a member, in such a way that it would gradually become assimilated and part and parcel of the totality of the group or person in whom the thought is to continue its existence.

What I am concerned with at the moment is the wild thoughts that turn up and for which there is no possibility of being able to trace immediately any kind of ownership, or even any sort of way of being aware of the genealogy of that particular thought.

First of all, it seems to me to be simplest to try to tackle the problem by considering what this strange thought is. We might get a clue to it by wondering in what frame of mind or in what conditions this wild thought turned up and became enmeshed in our method of thinking. It could be that it seemed to occur to us when we were asleep. I am using this expression, 'when we were asleep', because it

is a state of mind with which most people think they are familiar, so we can start with this somewhat familiar idea.

I want to consider the peculiar state of mind in which we are when we are asleep or, as is also frequently said and which has even become commonplace of psychoanalytic thinking, when we are unconscious, meaning by that when we are in a state in which we are not aware of our thoughts and feelings – or not quite. There are also some peculiar events that take place when we are asleep which are notorious and which are historically known to us, both in our private histories and in the history of the race. They are often said to be dreams. But I think it is as well to consider that it might be much more compatible with the events that take place if we could say to a person who reports that he has not been anywhere but has been in bed and has slept well and so on, that what we would really like to know is where he went and what he saw during those hours when, according to him now, he was asleep. It is more than likely that he would reiterate that he went nowhere – he simply went to bed. But it is possible that he might also say, "Well, of course, I had a dream – but then, it was only a dream".

Freud was one of these peculiar people who seemed to think that dreams are worthy of further consideration. This has often happened. In the Book of Genesis dreams have been reported, including what are supposed to be interpretations of those dreams. There are other similarly well-known reported events, for example in the Book of Daniel, in which actual figures have been reported – mina, mina, and half minas – which seem to be straightforward enough because they are applicable to weights and measures. However, there was something about them that led the dreamer – namely the person who picked up what I call this 'stray thought' – to feel that these words had some meaning other than the obvious one. Why he should think so, I don't know, and we never shall. But he actually found somebody who appeared to fall in with his idea and who gave the words an interpretation that, so it is said, turned out to be correct.

I want to leave it aside for a moment and not consider that matter any further than just to remind you of the existence of this peculiar state of mind where we see things and go to places which, when our state of mind changes because we happen to do what we call 'wake up', we then ignore these facts, these journeys, these sights, on the grounds that they are only dreams.

In case one of these strays comes along, I think I shall try to be

prepared for its reception by arranging certain categories that might be suitable for placing the stray in a temporary – what? It is difficult to find the word for it. I do not find that the vocabulary that is available to me is suitable for the purposes for which I want it just now, so I am going to call it a 'box'. The first box I am thinking of is really not suitable for anything so ephemeral as what I usually call a thought, namely, something that is physical; I shall call it a 'beta-element'. I don't know what that means and I don't know what it is, and as it hasn't turned up I am still ignorant. But anyway, there it is, in case that strange creature should exist and should it swim into my ken.

There is something a bit more sophisticated: that is to say a similarly physical creature, but one that arouses in me primordial thoughts or feelings, something that is a sort of prototype of a mental reaction. These I shall call 'alpha-elements'. I likewise don't know much about them, but I think I have been in states of mind in which I am aware of their existence. That is to say, I have what I call a stomach ache or a headache, or I am possibly told that I have been extremely restless and have been tossing and turning around. I remember this on an occasion in which I was amused to hear that in the school sanatorium I had been in a state that was really rather impressive; I was told I had been delirious after an accident. That gained me a certain prestige amongst my fellows that I had been so seriously ill. During this stage I had actually picked up a chair and hurled it across the room – luckily not hitting anybody.

There have also been these occasions when I have again fallen into the prevalent idea of saying that I had a dream, but I can only say that I felt physical pain – my arm ached; I even had some kind of reminiscence, after waking up, that my arm was stiff. That is the kind of thing, should it turn up, that I should like to put in this category.

There is another one in which I am nearly awake and nearly asleep; there I have certain ideas that are comprehensible to me when I am fully awake and of which I can tell you exactly, in terms of verbal formulations of visual images, what I say I dreamt or saw in my sleep. By this time I think I could consider that I am in a different state of mind, namely a conscious or waking frame of mind. Again I am in difficulties because I don't in fact know what to call it, but perhaps you might be able to grasp my meaning. Perhaps it would be better at this stage if I took the precaution of going back again and resorting to numbers, calling the beta-elements 1, the alpha-elements 2; these

pictorial images and so forth I could put into the category of 3, or C. It could be A, B, C; 1, 2, 3, and then D4, E5, F, G, H. . . . Becoming wider and wider awake, I hesitate, because I would like at the same time to have these boxes available for rather different, or apparently different, creatures, so that I could consider what could be called, mathematically, the negative versions of it. They could be marked H–, G–, F–, E–, etc. down to zero (0). In that kind of way one has room for quite a zoo, quite a number of strays and thoughts without owners or with owners . . . [*a temporary break in recording*]

The advantage of what I have said so far is that I think I can put this down, record it on a piece of paper on which I could make the appropriate marks. I can try to communicate it to you.

Thinking it over, I find I am somewhat dissatisfied, and although I also feel it is very unlikely that I shall ever be satisfied, I will attempt to put my dissatisfaction to some good purpose by considering one or two other possible methods of making provision for these strays.

It occurs to me that, in case they become visible to me, I might be able to put them into the appropriate colour; for example, taking the cue from dreams that I have had, colours like the blue of the sky, the red of blood, and the yellow of ochre, the colour that is made out of earth. They are primitive colours, these primary colours, and they might be very useful. When it comes to this sort of thing which I have called a beta-element, it gets more difficult; I don't know what to call that. Perhaps, provisionally it would do to say, 'gross darkness', which is different from darkness which has a certain amount of light in it; this would be with absolutely no light whatsoever, the sort of light verbalized by Victor Hugo as *"le néant"*, or by Shakespeare [*Macbeth*, V. iii] when he talks about "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" – zero, 0. I am not very happy about it because, thinking of it in a somewhat linear manner, I would like to start with these positive numbers and letters down to minus 1, 2, 3, 4, indefinitely. I think it would lead to infra-red and ultra-violet. If it were the numerological categorization, there I would have to use some term like 'infinity'. The worst of not being a mathematician or an artist is that I am very much in the position of the infant or foetus, which, I imagine, hasn't adequate modes of expression or communication, and in many ways hasn't a great deal to communicate. I suppose the infant might want to communicate that it was either lonely or hungry. And I, in this peculiar world in which I now find myself,

am both in need of nourishment and of somebody with whom to communicate, not because I have an awful lot to say, but because I find myself in the state of mind with which I am distressingly familiar – the state of mind in which I can only say I am abysmally, literally and metaphorically, ignorant. That is one reason why it is a matter of some urgency to me to be able to find some sort of network in which I can catch any thoughts that are available.

I think you can see I am already finding myself in difficulties, so I would like again to pick up some further tentative categorization that would be suitable for any thoughts. The nearest I can get to it is probably the sort of thing musicians know about and have developed very successfully. I remember seeing some kind of animal in a zoo when I was very small: it was rattling its horns on the bars of the enclosure. The peculiar thing about this creature was that it kept on entirely rhythmically. It was most extraordinary, so much so that I was able to draw the attention of a grown-up who was with me, who was himself a very perceptive man, and he agreed that this was remarkably and clearly an established rhythm that could be written down.

I am still stirred by these rhythmical communications. It is fascinating to hear a group of drummers performing; it has the same sort of effect upon me as is described by a poet when he talks about "the brave music of a distant drum" (*The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, Fitzgerald, 1859, p. xii). I remember in war being incredibly moved when I heard the distant music of the bagpipes of a Highland division that was to accompany us in battle. I have heard many different kinds of music since then, including that described by Osbert Lancaster as betraying the presence of the English army, namely, "snatches of tuneless song". When I first heard Stravinsky's music to *Petrouchka*, I thought it was somewhat incomprehensible and not very pleasing, but very sophisticated. I shall have occasion to refer to this again later on.

I have been idling away my time, thinking in this way – a way I could describe as being almost thoughtless. If, as a child, I had been caught at it, somebody would have said, "Why on earth don't you find something to do?" I would now like to have a look in case I have caught anything in the net of my idleness.

What is this first specimen? "Golden boys and girls all must, like chimney-sweepers, come to dust." This stray has a name and address attached to it – Shakespeare. ("Golden lads and girls all must, / As

chimney-sweepers, come to dust": *Cymbeline,* IV. ii.) The only address I know is Stratford-upon-Avon, but I gather he is dead anyway, so I'll adopt this piece of property that is in fact his.

I am afraid it seems terribly hackneyed to me. It is one of these things about which I could say, "Yes I know . . . yes I know", words I have learnt to regard with great suspicion and sadness. Whenever I hear the expression, "Yes I know" or "You know", repeated again and again, I find myself feeling sad, because I feel that it is going to be very difficult to get to, or to communicate, what I want to know or communicate – there's hardly room for it because everybody knows, including myself. It is almost an archaeological operation to excavate this knowledge in the hopes of finding a thought buried somewhere inside it, possibly even some wisdom.

In a way this is rather like experiences I have in psychoanalytic sessions. Patients who come to me have nearly all heard everything I have to say; they have read it in books, they have heard about psychoanalysts and psychiatrists and even cures. What they have to say to me is also deeply buried because they have become so used to saying it and knowing that it is a complete waste of time trying to find anybody who will listen to what they are saying.

The sort of excavation that would seem to be required to get through to a little bit of wisdom is so intimidating that one feels nothing short of a spade or a shovel, or nowadays even an atomic bomb, would ever get through to it. However, although I am sure that these forcible means of communication might sometimes expose something valuable, I don't think that I would advocate atomic explosion as a mode of archaeological exploration of the Ziggurat. As a matter of fact even extremely knowledgeable, wise people like Sir Arthur Evans [have been accused of being destructive] on the grounds that they have destroyed more than they have illuminated by their excavations and re-constructions. Just as the archaeologist has to be very careful when he thinks he has reached some potentially revealing object and has to resort not to a spade or a shovel but a camel-hair brush, so the analyst has to know when to discard these crude and violent methods and when to pick up something far gentler, far more revealing and less destructive than a shovel. It is difficult to know – and this is one, and only one, reason – why psychoanalysis needs to be carefully done, because the situation is so precarious and because it is so difficult to find the

minimum conditions for achieving wisdom either in oneself or in one's collaborator – namely the patient.

Let's go back to the find – "Golden boys and girls all must like chimney-sweepers come to dust", together with, "Yes I know, we all know that, and probably we are as sick to death of it as we are of other chunks of Shakespeare we have picked up in our time, or been forced to learn at school".

Hugh Kenner, by accident overhearing a Warwickshire yokel talking, discovered the further meaning, probably current in Shakespeare's time: 'golden boys and girls' could refer to the dandelion, which, when the petals have dropped, looks like a chimney-sweep's broom and is then known as a 'chimney-sweeper'. So from that point of view Shakespeare is able to use a simple phrase and simple language, which then communicates an idea hundreds of years later to people who have probably forgotten entirely the commonplace meaning of the words he used originally and which were commonplace when he used them, and transformed them into immortal phrases that last for hundreds of years and take their meaning with them. A similar state of affairs is produced by him over and over again, as we all know. "The raven himself is hoarse that croakes the fatal entrance of Duncan under my battlements" [*Macbeth*, I. v]. The most difficult and longest word in that sentence is 'battlements', and yet the total sentence conveys a meaning which is extremely depth-stirring and provokes profound feelings. What, then, is the language, the method of communication, that we are to employ when we want to describe, or when we want to formulate or capture, as it were, an idea that comes to us, maybe that is communicated by somebody else, but maybe comes to us in our dreams or in frames of mind with which we are not familiar whether we are awake or asleep?

What I want to express is some kind of experience that we are able to have if we are psychoanalysts and concerned with that area of thought. You might ask, what area of thought? We have to use words like 'psychoanalysis' – they are long words, ugly words, impressive words, and words that are devoid of meaning. I can only say, "You have to have an analysis to know what I am talking about, or you have to be an analyst", which is very unsatisfactory if I wish to communicate it or pass it on. We think that the analytic experience, the real thing, the basic thing, the fundamental thing, is worth preserving and therefore worth communicating to people next week, next year,

next century, and perhaps three or four hundred years later – not in order to inform them, but in order to let them see the sort of path of thought or being that stretched out in front of us, and will stretch out in front of us probably for a long time if there are any of us to see it. "They closed the road through the woods many years ago" – the ending of the poem where Kipling describes the sound of the horses galloping through the woods. ["They shut the road through the woods / Seventy years ago." – "The Way through the Woods".] We can talk about the woods that still exist, using the term metaphorically, meaning it as a method of talking about what we are concerned with now, tomorrow, and all the tomorrows, because the road through the woods is obscured by the trees and can even be obscured by the woods that spring up, so we are concerned with a very peculiar form of excavation. We occasionally come across a child who cannot learn the alphabet. Usually antagonism is aroused in the teacher because the child is so stupid, but it is forgotten that for many reasons the child may not see or understand why it should learn the alphabet. After all, I am familiar with the situation in which we have patients who cannot see the words for the alphabet, who cannot see the sentences for the words, and who certainly cannot see the spirit of man lurking somewhere behind this plentiful crop of jargon or verbal weeds that proliferate at an extraordinary pace, and in some climates flourish in such a way that it is difficult to believe there is any meaning in psychoanalysis whatsoever.

Freud was extremely impressed with Charcot's statement that when you do not understand a situation, when you cannot perceive what the diagnosis is, you should go on until the obscurity begins to be penetrated by a pattern, and then you can formulate what the pattern is that you see. With regard to ourselves, we are confronted with what seems to be a single individual. Our attention is usually focused on a recently developed capacity of the human being, namely his capacity to elaborate and use articulate speech. It is obviously a very powerful and useful achievement. But while we are in the frame of mind in which it is possible to command the use of relatively recently developed techniques like articulate speech, we also have to contend with the many obscuring words, thoughts, sounds, physical feelings, physical symptoms, in order to excavate the underlying, basic, and fundamental feature. Not so long ago doctors were very satisfied to detect the fact that a patient was suffering from a disease known as

dropsy. Having detected the disease known as dropsy, they find there isn't one: there are all sorts of diseases – heart failure and so forth. It is very discouraging in spite of the gratification that can be obtained by apparently getting that much nearer to the origin. What about the man or woman who presents himself in your office? This person is the most powerful, knowledgeable collaborator you are ever likely to find. In this lonely job one has to do all by oneself, alone, although at the same time in the room with somebody else, that 'somebody' is both the person who presents himself for assistance and the person to whom we look for the most powerful assistance we are ever likely to find.

If we are concerned with physical disease, we have to learn the language the body talks; we can look at the expression, the ruddy blush of health, 'rude' health, and distinguish that from an obscure blood disease, and so on. The human animal, unlike other species, can lie and has probably had a good deal of practice at lying and misinforming from a very early stage, because feelings of guilt precipitate a proliferation of a capacity to lie and deceive – both the person himself and whoever else might be able to detect the supposed crime that the infant does not know about, although the infant can show any amount of guilt. The question is, then, what is the mental counterpart of these lies, these statements, this deceiving blush of rude health, this appearance of athletic somatic health and capacity, the apparent facility with which a male body can display erectile tissue? Many people have been taken in by supposing that the boy or man is both potent because he has a penis and because it can become visibly erect. This is much more hidden with the woman in whom it may be more difficult to detect any signs of erection, but psychologically she may be very potent, much more potent than the boy or man to whom she looks, and from whom she expects sexual potency. We all know situations in which mothers have been shocked and frightened at discovering that their babies can cause their nipples to become erect and so find it difficult to feed the baby; the infant finds it difficult also to participate in the feeding because of the mother's dread of these peculiar sensations, which can also be aroused by supposing that the feeding baby itself shows signs of erection. Those are all physical – what the psychological or mental counterpart of it is I don't know. That is one reason why I think it is useful to consider keeping this box into which I propose to put my various beta-elements, situations that are not really thoughts and about which it is easier for me to say, "I think

I know what this patient is thinking, but I am jolly sure they would say they weren't – if they were thinking at all."

To return to a point I have already mentioned – I could say to a patient, "where were you last night and what did you see?" and they say they went nowhere and saw nothing – they were asleep, asleep in bed, and can hotly deny that they went anywhere or saw anything. I can see that if you restrict your vision or your topic of conversation or discussion to geographical movement, then it would be perfectly true that there are many places that could be said not to have been visited. What does Mandalay look like? Or Pondicherri? Or Samarkand? Or Jerusalem? Some people might give a description of it – they know what it looks like; they have travelled so much and know so much about these places and others like them that they cannot really answer my question.

What does 'sex' mean? What does 'Oedipus situation' mean? Look it up, if possible, in the position in which there are only two people, namely the analyst and the analysand. Where would you locate this story? And anyhow, what is the story? You can look it up in the dictionary of mythology if you like. I don't know why the Sphinx is so often not mentioned. Perhaps it is because the Sphinx committed suicide and we don't know whether to exercise our curiosity or whether to kill it off. We are so familiar with psychoanalytic theories that we tend to forget the basic points; so much so, that it is difficult to say what the fundamental points are. Free associations – sometimes we hear of analysis in such a way that we think what a wonderful time we are all having, wandering about amongst the weeds, plucking the wild and beautiful flowers, admiring the brambles, the bushes, and not getting anywhere near to disturbing the sleep of the sleeping beauty – the wisdom that lies fast asleep somewhere in the thickets; somewhere buried, not only literally under the mounds of the Ziggurat or the site of Ur of the Chaldees or Knossos, but what about the Oracle at Delphi? Is that voice in any way audible? Does this sound very romanticized when it comes to a question of Doctor X and this tiresome woman, or perverse man, to suppose that somewhere buried beneath these accumulations of knowledge there is some spark of wisdom that could still be blown into a flame? There are always people who say, "Yes it can. Don't do it. If you blow the sparks into a flame, you will start a conflagration, and goodness knows where that will end – don't do it." There are plenty of people who still will

say, "The world was all right till these awful Freudians and Kleinians came to it. They are the people who are responsible for all this sexual promiscuity and general disorder." As Freud himself pointed out, there is nothing new about the situation where people complain about doctors as always discovering and inventing new diseases and illnesses – they have a vested interest in doing so because, after all, they can get paid for curing them. There is a certain plausibility in it; there is plenty of room for corruption, dishonesty, fraud, but even so I think there is something to be said for what we call 'medical science'. These terms like 'science' are so debased; they are like coins in which the denomination is impossible to detect because it has been worn so smooth that it is no longer possible to distinguish the design that was originally marked upon it and that made it comprehensible.

What I want to do is to indicate the sort of area with which we are all concerned. Later I hope to consider how we are to turn our concern into activity that is worthwhile.

For the present we have to consider which of our capacities are of any value in this particular regard. We do not in fact know who the person is today, tomorrow, with whom we are meeting. What we already know and what the patient already knows is of no consequence or importance; the past is past, and anyhow that term is part of the convenience of articulate expression. The reason why we concern ourselves with things that are remembered, with our past history, is not because of what it was – although that might be quite important in its own right – but because of the mark it has left on you or me or us *now*. In what way are any of these things detectable? The embryologists say we can detect remains of a vestigial tail, branchial clefts, etc., seeming to suggest a fishy origin of a very primitive kind from which we have diverged. But if that is the case physically, I think it is possible that it might also be mentally; there might still be traces in the mind or character or the personality, *in the present*, of particles that have a long history, things that we would expect to be fundamental, basic, primordial.

Do any of these remnants betray themselves in what we can now observe in the human speech of the person we are talking to, as well as in ourselves who are doing the talking? That is what seems to me to be one of the fundamental discoveries of psychoanalysis: archaic states of mind, archaic thoughts and ideas, primitive patterns of behaviour are all detectable in the most civilized, cultivated people;

in more primitive people we would expect them to be less hidden. These archaic elements may turn out to be of some consequence today; suppose, for example, that the remnants of a branchial cleft could develop into a branchial cleft tumour. In this way there can be certain detectable archaic elements in our personalities or minds, which are really survivals and which are capable of proliferating in a beneficent manner, but also in a cancerous manner, a pathological manner. That is the only reason why it seems to me to be interesting to be seeing a patient today and tomorrow and in the future if he or she will submit to being observed again and also . . . [*tape ends*]

29 May 1977

Anybody reading this account so far in the first chapter can see that it is hardly what you would describe as 'scientific'; that is to say, it could be seen as something that, according to the individual who is reading it, can be assessed as imaginative, or fanciful, or imitation science. It is a matter of opinion. I mention this point because these opinions have to be entertained when one is attempting to evaluate – whatever it is: whether it is the physical appearance of a person, or whether it is his character that seems to be betrayed in what he says or writes or does. In short, we are making a kind of interpretation of what evidence is brought into us by our senses. There is still the fact that it would be helpful to know what the quality of the information is which is brought in, because we depend on evaluating that evidence. First of all we have to evaluate the value of the actual gathering mechanism. I, for example, have now a good deal of experience on which to base my opinion about how reliable I would consider my impressions to be, and how healthy I consider my ability to see, how accurately my eyes work, and so on.

Although it is possible to divide this discussion up when it is a question of talking or writing, making these verbal transformations, we cannot in fact divide up whatever it is we are in contact with and which we wish to assess and to understand; that is not divided up, not even in any way, although I suppose you could say you 'heard' it, or 'saw' it, or you heard somebody 'say' it. Those divisions are more applicable to the machinery, the personality and its equipment, which is gathering the information, than it is to the universe in which we exist. The universe does not obey the laws of articulate speech, or the laws of optics, although we consider that the laws are approximating to light itself. But it is questionable how much of the laws apply

to the actual objective phenomena and to what extent the laws only apply to, or are largely significant of, the human capacities. We shall see later that this is true of a number of different activities that we can talk about in the sense of our logical capacity as well as our capacity to feel and think and observe.

This introduction is itself a pause in which I am attempting to evaluate what I have already said in the process of continuing to talk, to think about this subject.

I am not really attempting to assess the nature of the information that is brought to me by my physical senses, what I would call the beta-elements, material that seems to be more physical than mental. I know nothing about it. I merely suppose that it exists; I merely suppose that it is on a structure of that kind that I have built up the whole system, architectonics of thought. So I shall go on from this point, which I could describe as an operation of curiosity, a fact-gathering tendency, to the nature of the facts I gather, and then to the communication of such information as I consider my activities have gleaned.

The point at which I am starting is what I could call speculative imagination and speculative reasoning. For the moment I would like to divide the two into categories that I could describe, borrowing from mathematics, as sub-sets of a main set.

First, I would consider speculative imagination. What sort of value is to be attributed to that? My own impression is that it is very important. When I have attempted to supervise people who want to come to me for analytic supervision – part of a learning activity – I suggest they should not bother very much about what I or anybody else might think about their contributions, but should proceed to say what their interpretation is of the material they have told me. I find they are invariably very suspicious and very anxious to give an interpretation that has the blessing of some psychoanalytic authority, or that they think I might approve of if I were a psychoanalytic authority of sufficient importance and consequence. I won't bother to consider the nature of that authority, because I know quite enough about myself to regard the tendency to believe that I am a psychoanalytic authority as very misleading indeed and obstructive to progress. I stress this point: "Please say what you like; please say what you think or imagine is the meaning of what you have told me." The reason why I say this is not because I am suggesting that all you have to do is to disconnect your mind from your jaw and allow your jaw and your

tongue to waggle. That is not my idea, but I think it is a preliminary; even before we are able to think very much, or have enough capacity to be able to think, we should learn to be able to let our tongue and our jaw waggle, as I put it; even if it doesn't make much sense, it may be a step on the way to articulate speech. Similarly, these speculative imaginations, however ridiculous, however neurotic, however psychotic, may nevertheless be stages on the way to what we would ultimately regard as scientific, psychoanalytic formulations. This idea may be quite erroneous, but I put it forward because you can test it for yourselves and come to your own conclusions. From my experience it seems to be very important. When you have, as honestly as you can, allowed your imagination to play on the material and allowed yourself to state it in such terms as you can, then you can assess the nature of the product. I would say, therefore, that it is a good thing to say what you think you have seen. Never mind what your state of mind is; let's forget all that, let's have respect for the information that you gather in that state of mind, no matter what it is – whether it is a state of mind that subsequently you can assess by saying you dreamt it, or you hallucinated it, or you just painted it, or you 'doodled' it onto a piece of paper when you weren't thinking about anything in particular, or that you might, if you were gifted in that way, actually compose it or play a tune or whistle or sing it. I have heard people say it is useful for a stammerer to try singing, and then he becomes able to articulate in the ordinary manner. I regard speculative imagination as worthy of concern – never mind whether you dreamt it, hallucinated it, or whether it is an object of delusion, or – I don't know what a drawing or painting is the product of. I take it that presumably the artist saw or thought he saw what he has drawn. If we consider renaissance art, for example, we can see plenty of pictures of saints, crucifixions, adorations; when did they see them? And how could they see them so clearly that they could even put a line around them and give them colour and form in such a way that I can look at one of those things now and say, "This man saw this three hundred, four hundred, four thousand years ago"? I was able to walk into the Lascaux caves and see on the walls various marks and signs of painting and drawing – somewhat distorted, it is true, because I see them with the aid of electric lighting, which reveals very clearly their shape and colour. I don't know what sort of light they were seen in when they were drawn. Similarly, I can walk into the Elephantine caves near

Bombay and once again see the carvings that were made; again, I do not know in what light or in what frame of mind. I guess that my frame of mind is rather different from the frame of mind of the artist who painted them, in much the same way as I *think* I can understand the verbal formulations of a Shakespeare play – at least I am helped to do so if I can get very capable actors who know how to translate a printed drama into the dramatic form. I say this because I think it is sometimes forgotten that nowadays we are already dependent on fine performances, even of a Shakespeare play, before we can say we really understand it. It depends very much on being able to trust the evidence of our senses, on being able to depend on the actors to make the play comprehensible. I have quoted *Cymbeline*: "Golden boys and girls all must, like chimney-sweepers, come to dust." I have to interpret that in a state of mind that is, three or four hundred years later, fully conscious, when I am wide awake; it is quite different from that state of mind of the person who wrote those lines originally. I do not know what the state of mind was; I do not know what the English was that was spoken in Warwickshire at that time. I can only marvel at the product of a state of mind like that, as I can marvel at the state of mind of a Leonardo who sees Saint Ann, the Virgin Mary, and can see them so clearly. The best I can do is to make myself available to learn whatever it is that they might have been able to communicate when they were alive and of which they have left a record that I can still see or hear for myself.

This somewhat long-winded description is to draw attention to the fact that when you see your patient tomorrow, I do not know whom you will see and nor do you. It might be anybody. I am sure we have to have respect for that mind or personality; that seems to me to be the most valuable thing about the whole of psychoanalysis – the suggestion that the human mind and its products are worthy of attention. I am not suggesting you are going to see William Shakespeare; I am not suggesting you are going to see the writer of the *Bhagavad Gita* or some famous painter or sculptor or composer, a Mozart – we don't know. But I do suggest that you will not know unless you are able to respect the actual experience made available to you when the patient goes so far as to spend time and money coming to see you. If you are not dealing with somebody who is worth all that scrutiny, all I can say is, it is possible that it may be worth while if we ourselves are sufficiently worthwhile to be capable of learning something from

the experience. So there is always a chance that the engagements you and I have made for the morrow could be turned to good account. It may turn out to be very worthwhile because the patient is a person of some importance or consequence and has gifts that have so far not been revealed or, if they have been revealed, have been dismissed on the grounds that he or she is stupid, or psychotic, or crazy. The same thing may apply, although it is now unlikely, to ourselves – unlikely because most of us have lived quite long enough for some sort of gift to have made itself manifest by this time. Let us hope that analysis has afforded us a chance, by becoming psychoanalysts, to betray such abilities as perchance we have. I am bound to say that I think it is a matter of optimism; I don't think a great deal of importance can be attached to any hope of that kind – not as far as I myself am concerned. But on the other hand I don't think that we should be obstructed either by hopes or fears. If hopes are dupes, fears may be liars;[1] so we have to have respect for ourselves and for the analysand.

The point is important because I find psychoanalysts have difficulty in realizing that there are minimum conditions necessary for the activity we call psychoanalysis. Some of those conditions lie within our own control; that is to say, we can avoid being in an unsuitable frame of mind; we can avoid being a prey to what I can most easily describe as a state of rhapsody, of being in such good humour that we allow all our emotions and wishes and desires full play. That is not much more use than it would be to arrive heavily drugged, literally with alcohol, or metaphorically with our optimism or pessimism or despair. In this respect it is therefore important to be rid of our memories and desires.

As regards supervision, it is a good thing not to look to the supervisor to give information or knowledge about psychoanalysis. In so far as it is possible to pick up an idea or two in a supervision, or even in analysis, it may be just as well to forget them when you are with the analysand because if you don't, then your mind can already be so filled with your wishes, desires, theories, expectations, that there simply isn't room for an idea; there are no interstices through which what is available to your senses can penetrate to your capacity to understand. I am not going to bother you at the moment with what this capacity to understand may be; that is another matter we have

[1]From Arthur Hugh Clough's poem, 'Say Not the Struggle Naught Availeth'.

to consider later. It is something that has been discussed and debated for many centuries, even before psychoanalysis was ever heard of.

The analyst needs to be divested or denuded of his memories and his desires so as to leave room for him to be open to the present – what I call the present. Psychoanalysis gives the impression, by which I think we are liable to be misled, that what is important is the past. The past is not important, because you can do nothing about it; the only things about which you can do anything are the remnants, the vestiges of the past, of past states of mind or archaic parts of our physical make-up – the branchial clefts, the vestigial tail, etc., our simian ancestry – but it is possible to make use of these vestiges that are discernible in the present if we allow ourselves to discern them. Even physically it may be useful to have some kind of remnant of knowledge about embryology if we are trying to assess a patient who comes complaining of some tumour of the neck or other physical symptoms that have begun to obtrude.

Our position, as I see it, is that although we tend to have shifted our observations away from the body to the sphere of the mind, the body has not ceased to exist. Because we try to make use of the facts that the patient reports by turning them into what we call 'free associations' that we can then interpret, it doesn't mean that the facts weren't facts. Patients sometimes say, "But isn't it reasonable for me to feel this when I told you what I have been seeing?" Of course I don't know whether it is reasonable or not – that is up to the patient. I am in no way doubting the accuracy, or that he is not sincere in believing that he has given me an accurate description of what he has seen, but I am disregarding those aspects of it because he knows more about it than I do. I am trying to look at something else, to hear something else, to be open to something else – vestiges, mental vestiges. I don't know where they come from; I don't know where the patient comes from. I don't mind whether he has given me his name and address and telephone number, because that is not of immediate consequence – it is important for obvious reasons, but because it is obvious it is not important – what is obvious is obvious, and there is nothing more to be said about it. The patient can have his own opinion of what he can see and know for himself; what is much more difficult for him is something he cannot see, and that is why he has come to me. Patients have difficulty in understanding that they

have *not* come to me because they know the answer, in spite of the fact that we often hear people say, "Yes I know . . . yes I know . . . yes I know", and "Well, I knew that anyway". That kind of statement is indicative, it is a sign, it is what we might call a symptom to which the analyst pays attention, not because there is any difficulty about the grammar or syntax being employed, but because it is revelatory, or could be potentially revelatory, of a state not so far discerned or of which the patient is not aware.

It is important that the embryo–analyst, the candidate, should dare to use his imagination and dare to try to articulate it in a supervision. That is one reason why I regard a supervision as being possibly valuable; if only those who come dare to say what they think and if only they will use that occasion as a way of practising trying to articulate what they think, either in verbal terminology or if they find any other, I am perfectly happy. A patient once said to me, "If you only had a piano here, I could play the thing to you; I can't talk like this to you." If I could understand music, I should be very glad for him to do so, but here again, there are these minimum conditions that are necessary for analysis. After a time I begin to know what the minimum conditions are for *me* to do analysis. The same thing has to be determined by any other analyst. It is a great mistake for an analyst to lose sight of that fact. You can make concessions if you want to; you can relax your own rules if you want to – temporarily, at any rate – but that is a matter of opinion and a matter of judgement. But generally speaking, what you have to know is what your minimum conditions are. For example, the patient may think he has the right to drag you out of your chair, or to wrestle with you, or even sometimes to use firearms against you to make what you have to say inaudible. The analyst must be clear in his mind where he draws the line, where the minimum conditions for him to analyse have ceased to exist because they have been so eroded by denial. This crops up with a child who does not know how to behave in the analyst's room, and the child's parents very often don't know how to behave with regard to the analyst who is trying to analyse their child. But the analyst has to be very clear and quite firm in stating his minimum requirements, without which it becomes impossible for him to do analysis. That is the only reason for exerting a certain discipline; not because we want to prevent anybody from doing whatever they like; we don't even

want them to come for analysis, necessarily. People are free to take up an analysis if they want to do so, but we are also obliged to say what are the conditions we have to have in order to be able to fulfil that aim.

The point we are discussing and to which this is relevant is this matter of speculative imagination. Unless the analyst allows himself the exercise of his speculative imagination he will not be able to produce the conditions in which the germ of a scientific idea can flourish. We have to bear in mind that even psychoanalysis itself is at the beginning of its career. It is only quite recently that the human race has learnt how . . . [*break in tape*]

There are many different kinds of language; some forms are hardly to be translated into articulate speech, because they are not really articulate forms of communication. Chinese, for example, has a great many hieroglyphic signs. Not only is it true of their language; I think there can be a conflict between, say, Chinese and Russians, although superficially there can be agreement, apparently, between their ideas of the way in which the human race should be governed. But the Chinese, with their hieroglyphic method of communication, also attach a lot of importance to the small muscles of the face and are prejudiced in favour of communications with people who allow themselves facial expression – muscular expression – when they talk. They don't like people whose faces are impassive. So there may be great agreement between the ideas of different races, but great differences that are not openly expressed because they are expressed in muscular ways, physical ways. In the famous guide book on Spain, Ford (1845, Vol. 1, p. 83) gives a good description of the gestures commonly employed – the gestures of the hand, etc. It is extremely informative and shows how much importance would be attached by two people, talking to each other, to what they say and how that is accompanied by movements of muscles – hands, face, etc.

The analyst has to be quite clear, or as near as he can get in the course of time, as to what are the minimum requirements on which he proposes to exist. For example, I feel that if anybody wants an analysis they will have to come to my consulting-room, because I have not the means by which I can get to theirs, or the time. It is not because that is a particularly good thing for the patient, it simply happens to be the limitation imposed on me by my own limitations. I have to say,

"I shall have to ask you, if you want to try this, to come to see me here at a particular time, for another session, or two more sessions." But of course it is nothing like as simple as that; there are so many things which are not easily formulated, and it is not until you know what the patient is capable of in the way of communication, obstruction, hostility, that you can be quite clear whether you can stand it or whether you can't. The reason for discussing the matter at all is because you need to be prepared to say to the patient, "thus far, and no further" – not because you want to stop him from doing anything he likes, but because you understand that he wants an analysis and you know whether or not you can do analysis in the conditions the patient is proposing.

On the way to being an analyst, you have to reserve the right to indulge your speculations, your speculative imagination. Perhaps you might want to sculpt, or paint, or draw, or compose music or fiction, in order to give your imagination an airing, to give it a chance to develop into something that might be scientific.

Another sub-set: speculative reason, similar to the other. Here again, you can give your reason for whatever it is. Reasons are extremely prolific, they flourish, they crop up like weeds. As I said earlier, they can be like brambles that proliferate so vigorously that they make cultivation impossible. This means that in the course of this speculative imagination, speculative reason, there is no particular reason to prevent – and I think every reason why we should not prevent – your speculation and your capacity for reason from exercising itself. But I think it should not be allowed for too long to be purely a sort of rhapsody, purely a state of affairs such as Valéry describes: it is imagined that the poet goes to sleep or indulges in a drunken orgy and wakes up to be able to write down a poem. He says that that is not the way in which poetry is written; in fact the poet has to be much nearer to being a mathematician. So while I say that it is extremely important to exercise your imagination, to let it go, to give it a chance to flourish, at the same time keep it under some sort of discipline.

At some point, while you are exercising your imagination, you are trying to imagine what sort of person this is that you are making contact with. When the person comes into your room, it may be possible to answer that question starting with the answer – the name and address and telephone number, etc., of that person. But you can

go further than that; you can see whether it is a man or woman, tall or short, covered up by the clothes or revealed by them. You have to interpret the clothes worn, the manners displayed, and wonder, "Can I imagine what a person is like who looks like X who has just walked into my room?" Could you ever have imagined that that person, who looks just like a man, existed? Or that that person who looks just like a man but has rouged cheeks, or is wearing sports clothes, could have existed? If you are frank, I think you have to admit you couldn't. The one thing that is really incredible is a fact. Conversely, when somebody comes into your room who looks just like anybody else, you still have to be able to retain your scepticism and say, "Could anybody who looks just like anybody else possibly exist?" You have to believe your senses and say, "Yes, apparently". The facts are incredible, but don't be beguiled into believing them because they are facts.

What do you believe, then? When you know what you believe, then you might think it useful to communicate it to somebody who isn't you. I can believe that it might be useful to try to communicate to people who are not me what I think psychoanalysis is, or how I should be a psychoanalyst. I don't know that it is really possible, but it *is* possible that other people might get an idea of how I do psychoanalysis if they are given a chance to find out. They don't necessarily have to rely on what I say is how I do it – they can form their own opinion. Even when you are not sure about this matter of soul and super-soul, a super-ego, an id, and an Atman, perhaps you can come to some architectonic, some idea of how you would describe the structure of the personality as a by-product of what you see when a person comes into your consulting-room and says, ostensibly quite truthfully, that they want an analysis. Speculative imagination, speculative reasoning – to put into pictorial terms, a new-born infant opening its eyes and staring at its mother. Imagine it or pictorialize it as you wish.

What next? What stage would succeed that of a speculation and imaginative reconstruction of this kind? Possibly reconstruction has something to do with it; possibly we do attempt to formulate a kind of architectonic, the building-up of a system of thought into a stable form. I can think of various versions of it, like Cantor's exploration of matrices. We are familiar with Freud's attempt to build up a system; we are also familiar with the fact that he felt that he had not completed his investigation, that his life was not prolonged sufficiently

for him to satisfy even himself that he had completed his system or what he was capable of. The problem has to be passed on, delegated to his survivors, the inheritance passes to others who might be called his professional family, his professional colleagues.

Recently even the mathematicians have considered theories like Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, the incompleteness theory; they indicate how the same awareness of incompleteness, uncertainty, has penetrated into things that have appeared to be so settled, so serviceable, such as mathematics, logic. Even a logical construction is criticized on logical grounds; this means that there is still some sort of logic but our understanding of logic has to extend – not that the logic is inadequate. This is what is happening with the Intuitionists – Brouwer, Heyting, etc.: they are investigating or proposing a mathematics that arouses a good deal of hostility on the part of the established mathematicians. In metapsychology Gödel's investigation, his theory about the Law of the Excluded Middle, also arouses curiosity. We could say that this exercise of curiosity, of speculation, extends even into the realms of speculation. To that extent we could say there is something that hitherto has not been revealed but has been sufficiently revealed to show the unknown even in psychoanalysis: the idea of there being *an* unconscious, as well as a *quality* of unconscious – things are unconscious, we have unconscious feelings and ideas.

It would be as well to consider an unconscious that has never been anything else, has never been conscious. I suspect that a clue to this is given by this theory of Melanie Klein's – projective identification. Even the foetus develops a capacity for what is later called projective identification. In other words, it has feelings or primordial ideas that it tries to deal with by evacuating them – a primitive mechanism derived maybe from the physical capacity for evacuation, literally, so that the amniotic fluid is polluted with meconium. I am suggesting that besides the conscious and unconscious states of mind, there can be another one. The nearest I can get to giving it a provisional title is the *inaccessible* state of mind. It may become inaccessible because the foetus gets rid of it as soon as it can. Whether it is an awareness of its heartbeat, or an awareness of feelings of terror, of sound, or of sight – the kind of sight experienced through the pressure on the optic pits by changes of pressure in the intra-uterine fluid – all that may never have been what we would call either conscious

or unconscious. It is difficult to contemplate because when we are contemplating it, we are in a conscious state of mind – like waking up and saying we had a dream. That is an elaboration in a state of mind appropriate to being what we call 'awake'. But the dream took place – if it was a dream – when we were asleep, and that is a quite different state of mind. So the conscious account of this event, these places we went to, these places we saw, is certainly erroneous. It is possibly rational – Freud claims that dreams are rational, that they can be given rational interpretations, which is perfectly true. But that is not of the dream itself. When someone who is wide awake has one of those experiences, we say that he is hallucinated or deluded; that state of mind has not been investigated because it is so much simpler to put that patient into a mental hospital or into an entirely different state of mind by the administration of drugs. And anyway it has to be investigated by somebody who is wide awake, fully conscious, and in possession of all his senses. When I say 'all his senses', I do not mean all of what my contemporaries and what rational and reasonable people call 'senses'; I include senses of which I myself may not be fully or particularly aware – the uncertainty principle, the incompleteness principle. So even the mathematicians cannot help me very much, because I think they themselves have reached a similar impasse in this problem of trying to elaborate what they call rigorous thought or rigorous thinking. I have already touched on this in talking about the fact that a state of rhapsody and expressions of rhapsodic excitement aren't good enough; we do need some sort of discipline, rigour of thought. I haven't said what kind of rigour; I don't think I could. Someday, perhaps now, somebody will be able to. But they have first of all to be acquainted with, and able to recognize, a state of mind that is not adequate. There is not much room for dogmatism or bigotry; that has gone too far; that seems to me to cross the point of no recall. Somebody who is that amount disciplined, or that amount rigorous, or that amount bigoted, is not within reach of the realms about which we need to know more.

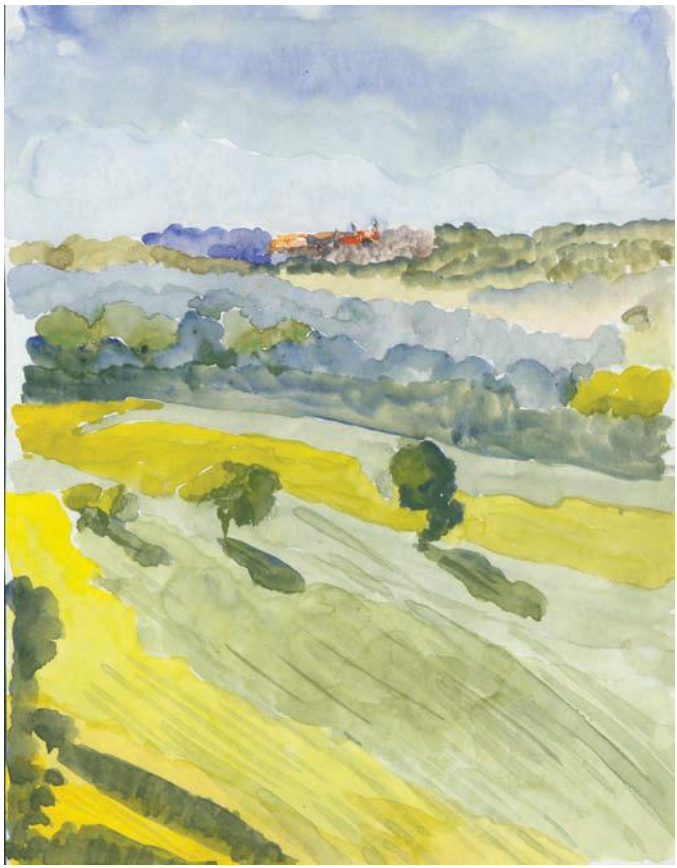
Since we are now embarking on a somewhat different theme, we would do well to consider what that theme is. It has a great deal to do with this matter of judgement because by this time we have a lot of information available on which to operate. If we consider for a moment what we gather, what we have the intelligence to be able

to gather, how are we to have the wisdom to know which part of this gathered information is worthy of further consideration at the *present time*? What is to put all this material into order – in order of precedence? Who or what chooses or decides or acts as the authority in the person? It may be possible that the matter could be illuminated to some extent by observing . . . [*tape ends*].

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME XI



La Borderie
Watercolour painting by WRB

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W. R. BION

VOLUME XI

Edited by Chris Mawson

Editorial consultant Francesca Bion

KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume XI): 978–1–78220–239–4

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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COGITATIONS

1958–1979

Cogitations, edited by Francesca Bion, was first published in 1992 by Karnac Books, London. A new extended edition was published by Karnac Books in 1994.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Cogitations is the name Bion gave to the occasional short notes he had begun to write in the February of 1958 in order to clarify his thinking about the difficulties of working with psychotic patients using an unmodified psychoanalytic method – work informed by and shared with his two closest colleagues (who, like Bion, were in analysis with Melanie Klein), Hanna Segal and Herbert Rosenfeld. That clinical work formed the foundation of the clinical papers reproduced in *Second Thoughts* and the formulations in the four books of the 1960s: *Learning from Experience*, *Elements of Psycho-Analysis*, *Transformations*, and *Attention and Interpretation*.

The notes cover the period before, during and after the production of those books and papers; they show in detail the evolution of his ideas and theories, and, as both André Green (in his review of *Cogitations*, which is included in this volume) and Francesca Bion have written, they clarify many of the obscurities in the books created by Bion's antipathy for supplying his preparatory and linking apparatus, which would have gone some way to providing bridges for his readers.

Cogitations comprises notes, edited by Francesca Bion, made between February 1958 and April 1979.[1] Notes that contained references to patients were omitted, although on later reading it seems clear that at least some of them might have been published with some disguising alterations. Some notes were judged to have been too personal to include. The 1994 extended version of *Cogitations* was compiled from Bion's notes together with the appended short report from 1967, 'Notes on Memory and Desire' (see Volume VI).

[1]The notes between November 1973 and April 1979 include transcriptions from tape-recorded notes.

Bion's notes – some short and epigrammatic, others extended over several pages – are an invaluable aid to understanding those of his ideas for which he had omitted many of the intermediate links in his thinking. As André Green has expressed it in his review, "the author's formulations are less condensed and . . . he makes us witnesses to the process of the unfolding of his thought. We literally follow him." These original notes have been augmented by the inclusion in *The Complete Works* of a set of more recently unearthed notes, published in Volume XV as 'Further Cogitations'.

In an undated note (but clearly from 1960) entitled 'Communication', Bion writes:

> Language has been invented; translation can be achieved; musical and mathematical notations exist; men compose and paint. And now psychoanalysis attempts to elucidate the barriers and links that hinder or promote the relationships that require a capacity for communication. Nevertheless, the success of psychoanalysis lies so far not so much in bringing communication nearer, as in showing unmistakably the feebleness of our methods of communication even in the communication of disagreement. But this does not touch a yet graver issue, namely the problem of communication with our successors, for it would appear on the surface that if we cannot communicate with our contemporaries, we are even less likely to be able to communicate with our successors. If this communication cannot be made, the future development of analysis is imperilled and the successful discoveries made so far could be lost to the world. [p. 168. this volume]

In this urge to put into writing his half-sketched thoughts, as well as his more complete formulations – for his own purposes – Bion was using communication in the service of preserving the links in his *own* mind. In *Cogitations* we find many of those which had been present in his thinking but omitted from the books and journal papers of the 1960s and 1970s. It bears a resemblance to the relationship between a discovery of half-finished sketches by a painter, and their better-known, completed oil paintings with which we might be familiar from galleries.

Cogitations

Thought is only a flash between two long nights,
but this flash is everything.

Henri Poincaré

FOREWORD

'Cogitations' was the name Bion gave to his thoughts transferred to paper. The physical act of writing was, he found, an aid to his thinking – typing would have been too noisy and 'fidgety'. He wrote slowly, neatly, with very few alterations, on loose sheets, most of which he subsequently fastened together in two lots (unfortunately not in chronological order). Many are undated, but I believe that the order in which I have arranged them is not grossly in error. They cover the period from February 1958 to April 1979. In addition to relating the subject matter to his published papers and books, I have applied some Holmesian detective work to variations in the colour of ink and paper, and to the style of handwriting, which he changed from time to time as he tried to improve his hand.

These occasional writings were his attempt to discipline, clarify, and evaluate complex ideas – both his own and those of others – by setting them out visually and by often addressing them to an imaginary audience. He never re-read them, but he must have thought them worth preserving because they escaped consignment to the waste-paper basket during gleeful paper-tearing sessions, especially before leaving Los Angeles in 1979. They will be of particular interest to those already familiar with Bion's work as an illustration of his doubts, his arguments with himself, and of how his initial ideas developed. They should not be read in isolation by newcomers, but as an adjunct to his published works, especially those of the 1960s.

The compilation of this book affirms my belief that it forms an essential part of Bion's work and that it would be a considerable loss to psychoanalysis if its contents were to remain imprisoned in filing cabinets.

Francesca Bion
1990

Comments in brackets [ ] were added by the original Editor of *Cogitations,* Francesca Bion. Those marked *Ed.* have been added by the Editor of *The Complete Works of W. R. Bion*.

Asterisks * * * indicate the passage of time between the writing of one section and the next.

February 1958

Psychotic mechanisms

At last I think I see daylight on a point that has baffled me for a long time: what does the psychotic patient think analysis is? Partly an activity that is followed by consequences such as those that attend on events in the realm of physical fact; partly a mental event in which consequences (as they exist in the world of physical reality) do not exist – there are only sequences. In a dream an act *appears* to have consequences; it has only sequences. What is needed is a spatial model to represent a dream. The verbal description would then be seen as an artefact in which certain elements, in an agglomeration that has no time component and no events that are consequent on other events, are highlighted by the imposition on them of causality and temporality. The capacity to impose on these elements both causality and temporality depends on the existence of a non-psychotic personality. This non-psychotic personality must be capable of (a) frustration, and hence awareness of temporality, (b) guilt and depression, and hence an ability to contemplate causality (since contemplating causes involves the possibility of having to contemplate one's own responsibility for certain events in the chain of causes). The capacity for verbalization is, as I have shown already, itself a function of the depressive position [*see* 'Notes on the Theory of Schizophrenia', read at the Eighteenth International Psychoanalytical Association Congress in London, 1953 (*see* Volume VI, pp. 73–84)].

One result is that verbal reporting of a dream is only possible when enough work has been done for the patient to be able to tolerate temporality and causality, i.e. frustration and guilt-depression, and the patient is therefore able to produce the artefact we call 'a dream' from the 'agglomeration' of mental urine and faeces [*see* 'Attacks on Linking', Volume VI, pp. 142–145].

10 January 1959

Scientific method

The patient said he couldn't find a pot to harmonize all the things in his studio. This would be a vagina or womb; an object like that sought by Poincaré [*Science and Method*, p. 30] which

> must unite elements long since known, but till then scattered and seemingly foreign to each other, and suddenly introduce order where the appearance of disorder reigned. Then it enables us to see at a glance each of those elements in the place it occupies in the whole. Not only is the new fact valuable on its own account, but it alone gives a value to the old facts it unites. Our mind is frail as our senses are; it would lose itself in the complexity of the world if that complexity were not harmonious; like the short-sighted, it would only see the details, and would be obliged to forget each of these details before examining the next, because it would be incapable of taking in the whole.

He adds the opinion that "the only facts worthy of our attention are those that introduce order into this complexity and so make it accessible to us".

How can something people 'feel' be measured? By postulating temperature after ridding oneself of prejudice of pairs of opposites. Then it is found that things, inanimate objects, are sensitive to temperature though they do not feel 'heat and cold'. What about love and hate? Are they not 'prejudices'? Should it not simply be 'x' – the amount of x, like the amount of temperature? Then one might be able to measure x even if one cannot measure love and hate, or heat and cold.

Braithwaite talks about scientific deductive systems in his *Scientific Explanation*. He says, "A scientific system consists of a set of hypotheses which form a deductive system; that is, which is arranged in such a way that from some of the hypotheses as premises all the other hypotheses logically follow." These are arranged in an order of levels such that the hypotheses at the highest level are those that occur *only as premises* in the system. Those at the lowest

level occur only as conclusions in the system. Those at intermediate levels occur as conclusions of deductions from higher-level hypotheses, and serve as premises for deductions to lower-level hypotheses [p. 12]. He gives as an example the deductive system associated with the theory of falling bodies. He then says that in most deductive systems each deduction requires more than one premise, but that in his example just given there is only one higher-level hypothesis, used as a premise, from which deductions to lower-level hypotheses are made. But is this really true? Implicit in it are many hypotheses thus: "Every body near the earth, freely falling towards the earth, falls with an acceleration of thirty-two feet per second per second". Surely in this is brought together in the one sentence a hypothesis about bodies near the earth, about bodies falling freely, about bodies falling towards the earth (unlike, for example, a rocket going into the sun's orbit), about distance, and about time.

All this is reminiscent of Bradley on causation [*The Principles of Logic*, Vol. I, p. 211]. Is a hypothesis the meeting of mental events which, in a moment of union, begin a process that issues in the change we call the depressive position? Bradley says,

> We should do better to call the cause the meeting of elements which, in the moment of their union, begin a process which issues in the change we call the effect.

He continues,

> An actual union of actual elements is the cause. Each element by itself and apart from this union is not even a condition. It becomes a condition when you place it ideally in union with others. But in order to do that you must make it an idea. In its character of condition it must so far cease to be fact.

This sounds as if there is a factual situation of multiple causes, a unification in a moment of time, leading to a change that issues in the effect *and* an ideational situation in which the 'elements' need to be made into 'ideas' via symbol formation, so that the ideas can be unified at a moment that then issues in a change we feel as the effect. It is not possible to do this if you cannot tolerate depression, because this ideational counterpart (the same as the 'scientific deductive system'?) is the process Melanie Klein calls the synthesis of the depressive position. And this would mean that the breakdown in symbol formation

is the inability to transform an actual union of actual elements into an abstraction, i.e. a scientific deductive system or calculus.

But it is probably necessary to make a distinction between two related processes. Assuming the factual situation of multiple causes (of which Bradley speaks and which I shall later regard as being none other than the elements common to all scientific disciplines, the elements that are also the feature of the paranoid-schizoid position and are synthesized in the depressive position) that have to be transformed into 'ideas' so that they then become part of an ideational system, it is evident that it would be useful to know how this transformation is brought about.

One can regard it psychologically as a process of hypothesis formation; that is to say, elements that appear to be constantly conjoined are implicitly stated to be so by being associated with a word, the word itself then having some of the characteristics of a hypothesis that states that such-and-such experiences and an external event in the world of fact are constantly conjoined.

But for our purposes we need to consider how the ideational system develops into the scientific deductive system. The ideational system I shall regard as relatively primitive and belonging principally to the mental dynamics by which ideas, related to objects, are formed. The scientific deductive system I regard as more sophisticated and related to permanent establishment of knowledge, or to the establishment of knowledge in a form that is permanent and indestructible.

The problem may be most easily broached (though not necessarily most accurately in the sense of being most closely approximated to the facts of development) by considering the groups of senses as the route by which awareness of external fact is acquired. I group them thus: (a) touch and smell, (b) sound, (c) sight.

Group (a) is essentially non-verbal, comprises all elements of what is later called sexual, and is expressed best by sexual acts and various peripheral manifestations of sexual acts. These peripheral acts often have the characteristics of (b) and (c) but are in essence sexual acts, and only (b) and (c) in outward appearance. Thus words are employed in love-making but are then actions and not conveyors of ideas except incidentally. This is made obvious in certain analytic situations, particularly in the analysis of the psychoses, where the patient clearly reacts to words as if he had experienced a sexual

approach by the analyst. Group (b) is verbal and musical, but the verbal characteristics that are relevant are not those of content so much as those that are related to the establishment of patterns of sound. Group (c) is essentially verbal and pictorial, or ideogrammatic.

What does the psychoanalyst do? He observes a mass of "elements long since known but" – till he gives his interpretation – "scattered and seemingly foreign to each other". If he can tolerate the depressive position, he can give this interpretation; the interpretation itself is one of those "only facts worthy of our attention" which, according to Poincaré, "introduce order into this complexity and so make it accessible to us". The patient is in this way helped to find, through the analyst's ability to select, one of these unifying facts.

The fact that I here equate with what Bradley calls "the actual element" is in a sense in no way different from the facts or actual elements that are the objects of curiosity, elucidation, and study in any science whatever, although this fact may be obscured because it is a 'fact' or 'actual element' of the kind that the analyst is inviting the patient to study – namely, the patient's own.

It will be observed that in the theory I am putting forward I am postulating a phenomenon with three facets:

1. what Bradley would call 'actual elements in an actual union', which is identical with what the scientist would call 'observable data' in a relationship with each other that is equally observable,
2. an ideational counterpart of the above, which is dependent upon the individual's ability to translate an 'actual element' into an idea. (The psychotic fails to do this, and even when he verbalizes still thinks that words are things.) This operation depends on the individual's capacity to tolerate the depression of the depressive position and therefore to achieve symbol formation. This phase is identical with the scientist's ability to produce a scientific deductive system and the representation of this, which is called calculus [Braithwaite, 1955, p. 23],
3. a mental development that is associated with an ability 'to see facts as they really are' [Samuel Johnson to Bennet Langton, *see* p. 112, this volume, for details] and internally with a sense of well-being that has an instantaneous ephemeral effect and a lasting sense of permanently increased mental stability.

The peculiarity that distinguishes the psychoanalyst from his analysand is that the analyst is able to select the worthwhile fact, produce the deductive system and its associated calculus, experience the moment of union when the elements meet to give rise to a feeling that the cause has been found, and begin a process that issues in a change that produces a feeling that an effect and its cause have been linked [Poincaré, 1914, on defect of logic, p. 126; Braithwaite, 1955, p. 24].

The analysand, on the other hand, is made aware of an hypothesis in a deductive system which he may or may not be able to use as a premise for further deductions. The deductive system thus formed may enable him in his turn to select one of these unifying facts of which Poincaré speaks.

At this point it is necessary to review what I have already said from a somewhat different angle: if we are to assume, with Bradley, that there are elements in actuality that come together at an actual moment to initiate the process of change that leads to what we call the effect, those elements and that moment must be determined ideationally by the selective process through which, according to Poincaré, the individual picks on 'worthwhile facts'. I would therefore suggest that in the description of elements in actuality of which Bradley speaks, he is not really accurate in supposing that they unite at an actual moment to produce an actual process of change that issues in an actual event. Rather, it is true to say that in actuality a stream of elements exists, some of which are *seen* to unite at a moment that, like the elements themselves, is selected *by the predisposition of the observer* and are seen to issue in a process of change and its attendant effect – events that are a peculiarity of the observer's outlook. I suggest then that the stream of elements remains constant in actuality, but the union of those elements and the choice of the elements that are supposed to unite, together with the choice of the moment at which the union is supposed to be effected, depends upon the observer and in particular on what we should call the observer's disposition (if we are analysts) or scientific discipline. If a steel ball drops on a marble floor, the elements that are seen to unite at a particular moment to initiate the process of change will differ if the observers are, say, a physicist, an astronomer, or a philosopher addicted to Berkeley's new theory of vision.

The question that arises now is this: how far is the scientific outlook, the attempt to understand, a compromise between the

necessity, imposed by the compulsion to survive the 'reality principle', of knowing the facts of external reality, and the necessity, imposed by the psyche's intolerance of the paranoid-schizoid position or the depressive position, to move freely from one position to the other and back without depressively coloured persecutory feelings on the one hand, and depressive feelings untinged with feelings of persecution on the other?

The quotations on scientific method which I have cited from Poincaré and on causation from Bradley are open to the objection that they are expressions of the inner tensions of the personalities of their authors, and in view of the subject matter of this paper cannot be taken as valid descriptions of scientific method. Since it is my object to show that scientific method itself lacks the 'objectivity' that is widely attributed to it, and may indeed spring from very deep-seated elements in the personality which seek fulfilment, it is obvious that the very thesis of this paper may be taken as a refutation of its premises.

To this I can only reply that I am aware of the objection and have therefore devoted considerable thought to using only such descriptions of scientific method as appear to me to be unsurpassed for clarity of expression and the authority that their writers may be held to have as exponents of scientific thought. I have carefully excluded quotations that display illogicalities or evidence of any weakness that would invite criticism on scientific grounds by those accustomed to scientific method.

It is commonly held that the function of a science is to establish general laws covering the behaviour of empirical events or objects in such a way that it becomes possible to make reliable predictions of events as yet unknown [Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation*, p. 1]. Braithwaite points out that once a generalization is formulated that all whales are mammals, it enables us to predict that the next whale we meet will be a mammal. He goes on to hint, however, that many questions that science is expected to make answerable are historical, and in particular such questions as are directed to the elucidation of causation. Leaving aside for the time being the impingement of this aspect of the problem on the discussions by physicists and philosophers, I wish to emphasize the fact that the historical question may be regarded as the reciprocal of prediction in that the function of the scientific generalization is to make it possible to summarize past

experience in such a way that when, as it were, a whale turns out *not* to be a mammal, it will at once become clear either that an error has been made in the original formulation of the hypothesis, or is about to be made. It follows that the scientific law is closely related to, and an epitome of, experience; that it has relationships with memory, and that a capacity for the formulation of scientific generalization must be an essential function of any personality if it is to be capable of learning by experience (i.e. storing experience in an epitome and comparing a fact with the expectation engendered by the 'law'). In essence those postulates remain true even when we deal, as analysts, with primitive and rudimentary manifestations of this capacity far removed from the sophisticated demonstrations of the capacity evident in the best work, say, of modern physicists.

Most of Braithwaite's introductory discussion of what can be considered as legitimate material for scientific study – as data on which scientific law can properly be formulated – shows that what is at issue is really a matter of choice. He himself makes the choice when he says that he concerns himself with "the relationship of public scientific laws to public facts of observations" [*Scientific Explanation*, p. 6] and eschews consideration of the problems involved in the transition from private knowledge, as the phenomenalist would regard it, "to public knowledge of the material objects of common sense". Whatever choice is made, it is to be expected that it brings its own problems with it, and this point is well understood by the student of scientific method. What is not so easily appreciated is the immediacy of the impingement of the problems with which the philosopher of science is familiar on the mental phenomena that modern psychoanalytic methods make overt. Braithwaite's decision so to limit his field as to exclude the problems that confront the philosopher of perception [p. 6] involves using "the observations which form the basis of scientific laws as being observations (as common sense understands the word) of material objects and their properties" [p. 7]. This at once raises the question, what is common sense? – a problem that has received inadequate attention because without modern psychoanalytic technique and theory it is not possible to make any useful approach to the question, or perhaps even to realize that a most significant phenomenon lies embedded in the term, which is itself a striking emanation of common sense.

Let us approach it clinically: a patient enters the consulting room, notices that the couch is in some disorder but, making only a minor adjustment, lies on it and proceeds with his associations. In due course evidence from his associations indicates that at this particular juncture, and taken with sundry other facts not germane to this discussion, he is experiencing an increase in anxiety and, furthermore, that the anxiety has as its ideational content the disordered couch as part of the furniture of a scene of parental intercourse. This conclusion, and the interpretation that is the psychoanalytic act by which it is expressed, is arrived at on the basis of observed facts seen in the light of a psychoanalytic hypothesis. But common sense tells this patient that he is lying on an ordinary couch and that ordinary people, as he himself might say, would know that that is what it is and that its disorder was due to the movements of the previous patient upon it.

To prevent too minute a discussion, I propose that we may now say that common sense is a term commonly employed to cover experiences in which the speaker feels that his contemporaries, individuals whom he knows, would without hesitation hold the view he has put forward in common with each other. Common sense, the highest common factor of sense, so to speak, would support his view of what the senses convey. Furthermore, he has a feeling of certitude, of confidence, associated with a belief that all his senses are in harmony and support each on the evidence of the rest. In this sense also, private to the individual himself, the term, 'common sense', is felt to be an adequate description covering an experience felt to be supported by all the senses without disharmony. As contrast, I may cite the experience in which a tactile impression of, say, fur – sudden and unpredicted – gives rise to the idea of an animal, which then has to be confirmed or refuted visually; and so, it is hoped, the common-sense view is achieved.

But there is a difficulty. So far one might say that the patient's view is essentially at one with the strictly scientific view that Braithwaite investigates after limiting the scope of his survey in the way I have shown above. The analyst, however, is also able to claim that his interpretation is based on common sense; but it is common only to some psychoanalysts who may be presumed to witness the same events and make the same deductions.

The analyst's problem is not associated with the objection that the phenomenologist might raise, although it can be argued that an awareness of the phenomenological philosopher's criticism of scientific theory is implicitly supported by the analyst's view that all analysts should be psychoanalysed. The phenomenological philosopher's objection is obviously not met by the psychoanalyst's procedure, and for the time being we shall discuss this problem by relegating it to the sphere concerned with the transformation of private knowledge to public knowledge.

The serious problem can be emphasized if I maintain that the hypothesis on which I base my interpretation is itself an embodiment of common sense in the sense in which I have already described the term. The hypothesis purports to be a generalization from 'common sensations' applicable on an occasion when there arise again 'common sensations' that appear to lend themselves to generalization in the same hypothesis.

It may be argued, and in fact is argued, that these are not common sensations and that the generalizations from them cannot be attributed to the dictates of common sense. As Hanson[1] has pointed out, such an argument levelled at a physicist who says he is measuring a wave length justifies the demand that the questioner should be acquainted with the discipline of electricity and magnetism as it is investigated by the techniques of modern physics. These techniques may be said to have two components. The first is dependent on mechanical aids that multiply the number of sensory perceptions. (I exclude considerations of what appear to be transformations but are not, such as when an impression of weight is conferred not by direct imposition on the hand but by the visual image presented by the pointer of a scale.) This multiplication of sensory experiences provides a field in which common sense can operate to determine what is the 'common sense' of the available sensory experiences now they have been augmented. Clearly I am attributing a very important position to whatever it is in the psyche that is ordinarily called common sense whose function it is to determine the 'common sense' of the sensory experiences. Furthermore, it may seem that a certain minimum of sense experiences is necessary before it can be reasonably

[1][See N. R. Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery* (1958) and 'Notes toward a Logic of Discovery' (1965). *Ed.*]

said that common sense can determine what is the sense that is common to all of them. This is a folklore version of the sophisticated scientist's need to establish adequate correlations (cf. A. D. Ritchie on the inadequacy of 'the far-off stars are redder' as a basis for the red shift and the expanding universe). [*Studies in the History and Methods of the Sciences*, 1958, p. 215.]

The second component is dependent on the mental equipment of the observer. The philosopher of science concerns himself, as is already apparent from the brief survey I have made of Braithwaite's demarcation of the area that he wishes to discuss, with a limited aspect of the observer's mental equipment. Even the phenomenological philosopher of scientific method intends to restrict his field, though it is doubtful whether he means to restrict it so severely as in fact it is – thanks to the lack of the psychoanalytic discoveries that could have given greater freedom. The psychoanalyst, as is to be expected, excludes no part of the mental equipment from his survey except in so far as his knowledge and capacity by their own limitations forbid automatically the fullness of inquiry he would desire. His investigation of scientific technique has been imposed on him first by Freud's impulsion to investigate the human mind scientifically, and second by Freud's realization that his discoveries compelled suspicions of the mental equipment of the investigator – Freud himself in the first instance.

The exigencies of psychoanalytic history have forced this investigation into a somewhat limited channel: the scientists investigated are predominantly psychoanalysts, which means that their grasp of methodology may be rudimentary in the extreme and lacking in even the elementary sophistication that could be expected, say, of a physicist who came for analysis. The weight of the investigation has perforce been directed to elucidation of what we now regard as the psychopathology of the psycho-neuroses. These limitations are, however, not as great as might be supposed, and are certainly not, in my opinion, as great as my own description makes them appear to be. For this reason I am persuaded that much psychoanalytic work done has been an investigation of the scientific technique or mental component, but not under that name. One has only to consider Freud's theory of the reality principle and its dominance to appreciate that he is describing a development that must include in its more sophisticated manifestations the elaboration of what we now call scientific

techniques of – or techniques known to science as – deduction, induction, hypothesis, etc.

Although I expressly disclaim anything new in what I have to say here – precisely because in my view psychoanalysis has all along concerned itself with and elucidated these problems – yet I believe that there may be something novel in the juxtaposition of the facts which will serve to focus psychoanalytic attention more directly and purposively on elements that have still not been sufficiently regarded.

This brings me to the difficulty that I have had to approach through this long digression. The individual whose development has allowed the establishment of the reality principle to take place has established – with varying degrees of sophistication – a vast mass of hypotheses in the course of his life. Most of these have some degree of justification both in the external circumstances of the period in which the formulation occurred, and in the quality and degree of mental equipment available to the individual at the time. In other words, we do not need to assume that they were unjustified, although, as with the case I have mentioned, the patient is not slow to say that the *analyst's* reconstruction of what he believes to be the patient's original but still current hypothetical formulation is unjustified. So it is – on the level of mind on which the patient is at his most adult, most sophisticated, most scientific.

I shall return later to further discussion of common sense, but for the present I propose to leave this subject to carry further our investigation of the scientific hypothesis.

Braithwaite favours the view that the scientific hypothesis consists of a generalization and nothing else. He admits that Hume's formulation of the theory of constant conjunction is open to grave criticism and that it has done much to obscure the value of the view that he (Braithwaite) puts forward, though with important modifications. In particular he stresses the close connection that exists between Hume's view of constant conjunction, and Hume's view that there is no element beyond a generalization in a scientific hypothesis except a psychological fact about the association of ideas or beliefs in the mind of the person believing the law. It is evident to Braithwaite that there is a desire to find something in a hypothesis which goes beyond a generalization abstracted from facts observed by common sense, whether aided by mechanical apparatus or not. As an instance he cites the desire to believe that a scientific law asserts, in addition to

the generalization, that there exists some kind of relationship between the facts about which the generalization is made which is analogous to the logical relation holding between premise and conclusion in a deductive inference. Further instances of this tendency, cited by him, are the desire to believe in the existence of a relation of activity analogous to that occurring in volition or, finally, a quite specific relation not analogous to anything else.

To a psychoanalyst it is clear that the demands that could be made on any scientific law are endless and need be by no means be restricted to the few Braithwaite mentions [in *Scientific Explanation*, p. 10]. The point to which I would draw attention is the scientist's view that the scientific hypothesis is a generalization abstracted from the fact that certain facts have been found to be constantly conjoined – the constant conjunction theory. The complication is that clinical experience shows how strong is the desire to formulate a hypothesis that will state that certain events are constantly conjoined and that therefore we must regard the relationship to the facts from which it is supposed to be educed as a generalization, as being two-way; that is to say that the hypothesis may be regarded as (a) educed from constantly conjoined facts, and (b) designed, however it may be derived, to affirm that certain facts are constantly conjoined. It will be observed that the latter view is quite compatible with the former – incompatibility of the two views is not the point. But, assuming both views are correct, we may say that the scientific hypothesis fulfils the following three functions:

First, a private experience is transmuted into a public communication (whether it is in fact made public or not).

Second, the types of certain experiences, facts, or events are stated to be agglomerated, articulated, or integrated in time (past, present or future), the hypothesis being thus associated with memory and prediction. This function is intrinsically related to reality and cannot without deliberation be divorced from reality testing, that is, experiment and practical application; e.g. 'red sky at night, shepherd's delight' has to be tested out if it is to retain its vitality, even if the testing jeopardizes its existence.

Third, the mental bringing together of mental elements corresponding to Bradley's "meeting of elements which, in the moment of union, begin a process that issues in the change we call the

> effect" (I refer, of course, not to any supposed meeting of elements in external reality, but to the ideational counterpart of such an event; my comparison is between this ideational counterpart and the hypothesis as the ideational counterpart of the particular events to which the deductive system may be applied), and the selection of certain mental elements analogous to those mathematician's facts that, in the words of Poincaré, "unite elements long since known but till then scattered and seemingly foreign to each other", so that we can see each element in the place it occupies in the whole.

It will be appreciated that in the whole of this discussion of the nature of the scientific deductive system, the hypothesis embedded in its framework, and the calculus which is its representational counterpart, I have accepted as scientifically sound the idea that common sense may be, and should be, accepted as the arbiter that decides what are the facts in external reality to which these mental activities relate. The philosopher of science has always been brought to a standstill at this point, caught between the logic of the idealist philosopher on the one hand, and the feeling of unreality to which an acceptance of such logic would expose him on the other. There is essentially no difference between the reactions of Braithwaite and Doctor Johnson to the demands of the idealist.

It is possible that the scientist's dilemma, and therefore our own, may be seen differently if we now return to clinical psychoanalysis for the light it may throw on common sense and on that particular instance of scientific hypothesis and deduction known to us as a psychoanalytic interpretation.

Description 1 (D.1). Let us consider the following episode taken from the analysis of a psychotic patient. The patient, who is used to lying on the couch, looks apprehensively and cautiously about him, finally seating himself precariously on the very edge of the couch. His survey is perfunctory, as if confirming some preconception; his expression changes to one of dejection. After some minutes he has become established in his posture; he does not move, he does not talk, he is no longer apparently even anxious – just dejected. I draw his attention to his behaviour and to my presence, of which he seems to be only vaguely aware, by saying, "You are not lying down today".

He replies, looking at the couch, "There is blood everywhere". His tone implies distaste, and his reply carries the suggestion that it is the presence of blood everywhere that makes him unwilling to lie down.

I maintain that the description I have given is a common-sense one; I am not in two minds about any of the statements I have made, and I believe that any ordinary human being of my acquaintance would agree that the account is an accurate description, even when I employ terms such as, 'as if confirming some preconception'. Such a phrase is sanctioned by usage and may be expected to convey an impression with which the reader could match his own. Unfortunately, in this instance the reader can have no impression of the episode of which I speak other than that conveyed by me. But he can have impressions of what he may regard as similar experiences of his own. It therefore seems fair to say that I have given him an opportunity for the exercise of his common sense so that he can decide for himself whether or not his common sense tells him that an event such as I describe actually took place or not. In short, I am saying that it is common sense to say and believe that the facts were what I said they were.

To begin with I propose to maintain, with Braithwaite, that it is legitimate for my present purposes to ignore the problems that are associated with the phenomenological scientific philosopher's outlook, and to consider as facts those events that my common sense tells me are facts. The justification for this lies in the experience of scientists that it is conducive to a growth of knowledge to behave as if events that common sense says are facts provide adequate material for the formation of contingent propositions on the one hand, and objective tests of a hypothesis on the other. There is also a historical justification in such a procedure, for common-sense synthesis has always been the precursor of a scientific ordering in a scientific system. I repeat, therefore, that common sense declares that the facts are as I have stated them and thereby provide a basis for scientific work.

From this premise I select the possible trains of thought that I might pursue: one touches the nature of the common sense to which I appeal and to which, in conformity with the views of a powerful school of philosophers to which I adhere, I accord an extremely important role. For the time being I shall leave this thought in abeyance, merely contenting myself with a partial limitation of the term to cover that aspect of the personality which is a compact of a component of the senses, common to two or more of the senses, and which in

my belief has a social component analogous to that which Freud supposed might be the case with the sexual impulses, and which appears to me to be true of all emotional drives [Freud, 'Instincts and Their Vicissitudes', 1915c]. This train of thought I leave for discussion later.

The second train of thought following my premise that I have made a common-sense observation leads me to put two questions. Where is the patient's common sense? What has happened to it? I shall later consider the reciprocal of these questions starting from the point of view that the patient's description of the facts is the common-sense view, but for the present I consider only these two questions.

Description 2 (D.2). Is there any reason to doubt that the patient's judgement that there is blood everywhere is in his opinion a common-sense view? There are the following reasons for doubting it: he has shown in previous similar situations that he does not believe I share his view; the readiness with which he volunteered his explanation for not lying on the couch is an expression of confidence that I shall tolerate his opinion, not that I shall share it. He is even, at this advanced stage of the analysis, quite capable of making no response, because he knows that his view is not the 'common' sense one, and he prefers that the difference in outlook should not become public. He may be supposed, therefore, to feel that his sense of 'blood everywhere' is not common sense, is not in accord with the 'common' view demanded of him as a price of his membership of the group.

One answer to the question, 'Where is his common sense?' is therefore that it is where it always has been; it is still a part of that non-psychotic part of the personality which I believe, together with Mauritz Katan (1954) and other observers, always to remain in existence. None the less, the question still stands because from one point of view the patient does not behave as if he has any common sense or, if he has any, that it could be of any use to him. I am not, of course, suggesting that this is deducible from the one instance I have attempted to describe; it is a deduction from many similar episodes. Indeed, it is arguable that the patient has no conceivable interest in common sense, still less the question that I have put to myself about it. And yet the patient appears to feel that he has some identity of interest with me as the analyst, or he would not keep coming for analysis.

But now I think I see the answers to my two questions. Where is the patient's common sense? Obviously, it is 'everywhere'. What has

happened to it? Equally obviously, it has been turned into blood – 'blood everywhere'. If I am correct, then the patient and I are well on the way to establishing a 'common-sense' view, that is to say a view common to him and to me. But it is equally clear that my interpretation of the facts I mentioned in *D.1* involves me in having produced a new description, *D.2*. The description, *D.2*, of the facts owes its difference from *D.1* to the new hypothesis in the light of which I now regard the episode. I argued that I am entitled to regard *D.1* as common sense: I am prepared to argue that *D.2* has a sense common to me and my patient. But can I now maintain that *D.2* is a common-sense description in a wider, extra-analytic context, and if so, in what way?

Let us first turn to discuss the idea that *D.2* is a common-sense description in the limited field of that which is common to the patient and me. It is evident that even in this limited respect the interpretation of the patient's behaviour that I have proposed cannot, on the facts I have given so far, be regarded as a 'sense' common to the patient and myself. It is an idea selected or accepted in a penumbra of circumstances which suggest a resemblance to the new fact for which Poincaré says the mathematician seeks – "the link that unites facts which have a deep but hidden analogy" [*Science and Method*, p. 27]. For if it is indeed a fact that the blood which the patient describes as being everywhere is the transmuted common sense for which I am looking, then this fact does link a number of other facts in a way that demonstrates a deep but hidden analogy. Thus the patient, as I know, believes he is mad and has always felt himself to be unlike others, to have a feeling compatible with that of having no 'sense' felt in common with others, and no senses that appear to have a factor common to each other. This he often expresses (as do two other patients) in a reiterated plaint about almost any feeling he has – "I don't know why". I know that if he saw blood everywhere, and then also felt the blood everywhere, and furthermore thought he smelt it everywhere, then he would think he knew why – it would just be common sense to see blood everywhere because his common sense told him it was everywhere. Since, however, his common sense does not tell him so, it may be a matter of some interest and significance to consider *what* sense has told him so. *D.2* has thus served to point one possible direction for further inquiry, and at the same time to link the present fact, his statement about the blood, with previously observed facts touching his profound sense of isolation and uniqueness. I know,

furthermore, that this patient considers the sight of blood to be significant; it is felt to be something that has been lost, and the loss is felt to be associated with disaster for the object that has lost it. In the episode I have recounted, its presence was associated with feelings of depression and persecution (these last being observations of my common sense). I know the patient's hatred of reality is strongly coloured by the feeling that a sense of reality carries with it a stimulation of the socially polarized aspect of his emotional drives, and that this stimulation is felt to menace the ego-centric aspect of his emotional drives and therefore his narcissism, thus increasing his fear of annihilation. I know, therefore, that a belief that his common sense has been lost, destroyed or alienated is quite compatible with, and illuminant of, his previously expressed hatred of reality, or the mental apparatus that might link him with it.

It may be supposed that I am arguing that my interpretation is based on previous observations, that it is a scientific hypothesis in the sense that that term is used by those who consider a hypothesis to be a generalization from a number of particular observations of fact. But I no longer feel that this view is adequate, although it still seems to me to have substance. I do not wish to exclude from debate the influence exerted by numerous stimuli, subliminal or overt, which are received over a period of psychoanalytic experience. I think it would be misleading to suggest that the interpretation, *D.2*, owes nothing to the stream of stimuli which I, as analyst, have received. But I consider it to be equally misleading to say that *D.2* is 'based on experience'. Such a description should be reserved for beliefs, interpretations, hypotheses, which have demonstrably undergone what common sense would recognize as reality-testing. (Once more I appeal to common sense, that is to say a group or socially orientated sense whose 'purposes' go beyond the individual. I, as individual, need to consider what the 'group' will accept as reality-testing before I can feel that my view has the sanction of 'my' common sense.) I shall therefore suggest that *D.2* has, as one of the components to which it owes its emergence, the influence of external events on the analyst's psyche both in shaping the form the interpretation takes as a crystallization of experience, the memory component, and as a compendium facilitating prediction, and by virtue of that, reality-testing.

There remains the element whose existence was suspected by Hume and classified by him as 'psychological'. This element is most

obtrusive before the point at which the common-sense synthesis of experience becomes a scientific ordering in a scientific system. It is worth remarking at this point Braithwaite's comment:

> There is no hard and fast line at the point at which the common-sense synthesis of experience becomes a scientific ordering in a scientific system. Just as, in tracing back common-sense thought either in the individual or in the race, there is no point at which there were no generalizations believed, so in the history of a science there is rarely any one historical date at which it is possible to say that the first hypothesis was adumbrated. [*Scientific Explanation*, p. 28]

To this I would add that the same holds true of the history of an analysis – there is rarely a precise moment at which it can be said that a particular interpretation was first enunciated. Nevertheless, even though it is in fact difficult to say that a given moment is *the* moment, we may yet suppose such a moment to exist, and it is before this point is reached that the so-called psychological factors are suspected of playing a dominant role in the scientific activity. In other words, there is reason to look to the mentality of the analyst himself for the major contribution of elements in the totality of elements which issues in the interpretation *D.2*, namely that the patient feels his common sense not as an integral part of his personality but as blood, dangerous and persecuting, lying about him everywhere. Before Hume's insistence that there is nothing in a scientific hypothesis but a generalization – and that any added element does not belong to the scientific generalization properly speaking but is only the psychological factor in the observer which he recognized as a tendency in the human mind for certain ideas to be associated together – philosophers of science were not prepared to admit either that this something extra to the generalization did not exist, or that its existence lay in the personality of the human being. It was supposed that this something was analogous to the logic of the human mind. My view diverges from the view that the scientific hypothesis or law includes more than a generalization and that that something is a function of external reality. It approximates to the views of those epistemologists – Kant, Whewell, Mill, Peirce, Poincaré, Russell and Popper – who tend to the beliefs compatible with the idea that scientific knowledge is the result of the growth of common-sense knowledge. My agreements – and disagreements – with these epistemologists are a direct consequence of a psychoanalytic

investigation of the phenomena known to all of them under various synonyms for scientific common sense. It is my view that the impasse in which the scientists and philosophers of science find themselves is not capable of further adumbration, let alone resolution, without the employment of psychoanalytic research, and more precisely research into the phenomena collectively called common sense which are the main theme of this inquiry. I say the main theme, but in fact I propose to make it so only because its data, elusive though they are, are none the less more accessible to preliminary investigation than phenomena associated with intuition, the first hypothesis, the inspiration (Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, pp. 31, 32). If I do not elucidate this last, it will be because I cannot. In fact I do not consider that the elaboration of a deductive system from facts declared by common sense to be so, can be separated from the earlier phenomenon which is a precondition for the elaboration of a deductive system, namely the inspiration. I propose, therefore, to make no strenuous effort to separate the phenomena from each other.

I shall first consider the opposite of the hunch. "I don't know why", says the patient. "I don't understand", replies the patient to a particularly clear interpretation I have just given him. By 'particularly clear' I mean one that has, in my opinion, drawn together a number of apparently unrelated facts in a way that demonstrates their relationship, and does so in terms so precise that the expression of the interpretation does not vitiate the deduction that is intrinsically dependent on its mode of expression. These two statements, 'I don't know why', and, 'I don't understand', are as active, as affirmative as 'I know', or, 'I understand'. In effect my interpretation has said, 'This is why . . .', and, 'Listen to what I am telling you, and you will find I have made you understand . . .'. Both statements are implicit declarations by me that the relationship between the patient and myself is an analogue of the relationship that might exist between his capacity for inspiration, whatever that is, and the ideational counterpart of apparently unrelated elements scattered and apparently foreign to one another. I have in effect said, 'I know why . . .', i.e. I unite elements. The patient has in effect said, 'I, unlike you, do *not* know why . . .'. My point is that this statement is a declaration of equality with me; not simply rivalry, but equality of status. 'I unite . . .' is one statement. 'I disunite . . .' is the antiphonal reply. I propose to clarify my point in a series of formulas thus:

1. I unite ↔ I disunite;
2. I synthesize ↔ I analyse;
3. I metabolize ↔ I catabolize;
4. I analyse violently ↔ I split;
5. I synthesize violently ↔ I fuse.

Analysis and synthesis are both involved in understanding. If the act is carried out lovingly it leads to understanding; if carried out violently, i.e. violently with hate, then it leads to splitting and cruel juxtaposition or fusion.

16 May 1959

Common sense

On Friday X's anxiety was far more marked: he hated me, or felt I was not what he thought me; he was disillusioned; my practice had gone; I was ill or dying. But these disjointed scraps were at least *possible* interpretations about a real man; I could see that he *could* hold such a view about facts that *might* be observed by him. Why was this?

It was a kind of disjointed rage, a fragmented hatred, but said with fear. This is the importance of the father, and this is the importance of the mother. He can get inside her as a tank from which the father can be attacked. The patient retreats into a state of mind, e.g. insanity, from which he can launch his attacks.

Where then is his common sense? Why blood? Blood is not faeces. It is essential to his life – like common sense. It has become bad *outside* him; not turned to faces inside him, but bad and dangerous outside.

The blood – common sense – the semen in which he sits, is dangerous and bad. It is laughter, sexual laughter; noise, horns, drills, banging. It is all the bizarre objects. It is a kind of orgasm that cannot be contained within a disciplined framework. The disciplined framework is reason, mathematics, logic. The analyst becomes a very frightening, aggressive object who takes control of the genitalia so as to give effect to, to fulfil a violent oedipal assault of a murderous kind on the father *and* mother. "I am going to make you shoot your mother. Look what I've got! The penis and balls with which I shall make you shoot your mother!"

The violence seems to be related to a kind of greed in which no choice can be made because nothing can be discarded. This operates against any advance in analysis; no cure can take place because no infantile mechanism is to be given up. And nothing can be taken in because of the conflicting aim to take something else in. Cigars *and* breast milk, pap *and* caviar. Projective identification of food: asceticism and gormandizing.

Megalomania. A matter of having to *be* as well as *have* everything. Common sense produces, from this point of view, a restrictive state

of mind; it conflicts with megalomanic narcissism. Without common sense, phantasy can be felt as fact.

Indolence can be the need to remain free to indulge phantasy: again, common sense is the obstructing force.

Public-ation is an essential of scientific method, and this means that common sense plays a vital part. If it is inoperative for any reason, the individual in whom it is inoperative cannot publish, and unpublished work is unscientific work.

* * *

The individual analyst has two main contacts: his patients and society. In the first certainly, and in the second probably, he will have it brought home to him how little he knows and how poor his work is. In this respect his position is not unlike that of the soldier in war who is aware of his own troubles but not of his enemy's. It must therefore be borne in mind that the fundamental importance of our work demands that kind of fortitude and high morale which places the welfare of the analytic group and its work before the welfare of the individual analyst, and sometimes before the welfare even of a particular patient. This, taken in conjunction with the isolation in which analyst and patient work, means that the analyst must, in addition to the commonly recognized equipment, possess a social consciousness of a very high degree – common sense must never be allowed to become dimmed, even when work is concentrated on the more arcane and narcissistic attributes of the analyst's patients. In other words, when concentration is focused predominantly on psychotic mechanisms, the non-psychotic aspects of the work must be as present to the analyst's mind as his awareness of the nonpsychotic aspects of the psychotic patient's personality are in the analysis he is conducting. Or, to put it another way, the analyst must never cease, even in the midst of his analytic work, to be a member of one or more social groups.

12 July 1959

I am nonplussed yet excited, as if on some important trail I cannot get hold of. X is not random reconstruction: then what does he do? Could it be logically or mathematically described? If he is saying something apparently insignificant, he can produce coherent, recognizably coherent, speech. Then he may become vehement and speak emphatically. "Then we went down the road. It was" (persuasive and confidential) "just a quite ordinary road. And I said to him, "This won't do" (quietly emphatic and faintly reminiscent of the "I said it very loud and clear" verses of Lewis Carroll). I just made it obvious to him that it just *would not do*", the last three words spoken quietly but each one separately emphasized. Has it any meaning for me? And if it has, what is that meaning? And is the meaning it has of any importance except as an indication of my personality and how it reacts to a particular form of stimulus? Yes, obviously it has, because I have just spoken of a 'particular form of stimulus' and this at once suggests (a) it *is* a stimulus, and (b) it has a particular form.

14 July 1959

It is clear that if the search is for the harmonizing fact that marks the transition from the paranoid-schizoid to the depressive position (Poincaré, *Science and Method*, p. 30, and Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation,* on causation), then much depends on the nature of the elements that are seen to be harmoniously coherent on the discovery of the harmonizing fact, and on the mental make-up of the investigator who discovers, or (according to Poincaré) selects the harmonizing fact. To a religious such a fact might well be quite different from that selected by a physicist. The fact or formula discovered by a mathematician would differ again. The reader of the works written by such pioneer discoverers would have an experience similar to the emotional experience of the discoverer; he would discover the discovery, or the book, or the sentence, or the phrase in which the selected fact was embodied. But – and here lies the central fact – in all these instances, as I have already shown, a series of facts out of an infinitely larger totality of facts is given coherence by the selected fact, and that is all; not only is *the fact* selected, but all the cohering facts also are a selection. Thus one fact is observed to 'explain' a great number of other facts, which facts may be considered to belong to the domain of Physics. But this is no more than saying that all the facts that are not given coherence by the selected or discovered fact are either unknown, ignored, or regarded as belonging to some other discipline or system. A result of this is that some kind of objective reality is attributed to the coherent system of facts, whereas there is no evidence to suppose that such a system, say physics, is anything more than an appearance artificially produced by the limitations of the human mind unable to do more than see a tiny fraction of the totality of facts, and prone to attribute to that fraction of facts a relationship intrinsic to itself, while the supposed relationship between the facts is only a relationship that each fact has to the capacities of the human observer.

This argument can be extended further by considering not physics but the whole of what we call a scientific outlook, the outlook and

methods common to all the sciences, as being a peculiarity of the human mind analogous to that peculiarity of human visual capacity which makes it sensitive to a comparatively small range of wavelengths.

The supposition that man's mathematical ability receives (from the apparently endless series of discoveries that have in the past two thousand years been associated with the application of mathematical techniques to physical and astronomical phenomena) some kind of title to be considered as itself an intrinsic objective quality in the universe it has helped to illuminate, can now be seen as open to question. It is arguable that it is simply a peculiarity of the human mind which tends to illuminate just those phenomena that lie within its powers of illumination, and so does not prove that the universe has mathematical qualities, any more than the eye's sensitivity to certain wavelengths proves that there is in the universe an objective essential quality which can be called 'visibility'.

* * *

The reason why a mathematical statement is given such importance by the scientist is that the deductions made from it appear to correspond with the parallel developments in the scientific deductive system which it represents, and in the corresponding world of empirical data. But this may merely mean that mathematical logic is the expression of the ultimate limits of human mental capacity – that an appearance of finality is observed in a mathematical statement of natural phenomena which in reality belongs to the inability of the human mind to go further, and not to the exhaustion of the natural phenomena under observation.

This is the reciprocal of my reply to Prichard (*Knowledge and Perception*). That is to say that just as it is idle to deny the title of 'knowledge' to what a human being knows because it is possible to imagine that another being might know more, so is it idle to suppose that because some mathematically precise behaviour appears to be observed, say in astronomical phenomena, this mathematically precise behaviour is any more than that aspect of the behaviour which we as human beings are capable of observing.

15 July 1959
(4.30 a.m. Blast it!)

X said . . . well, what? He used words in such a way that they seemed to indicate that his mother or relatives had cut off supplies; that he could sell out £500 of shares and go to the cottage, in which case there would only be £50 and that just could not buy food. "That's all there is to it." I attempted to draw attention to the fact that even while there was an opportunity for analysis, he could make no use of it. He defends by taking this as an accusation in which he is to blame and thus denies the existence of a very bad obstructive object. The rational comes in, therefore, not as the product of an elucidation, but as a defence against the elucidation. If I put to him that his mother is a very dangerous object denying him food, then I am giving him material to defend himself against the common sense view, and am myself felt to be disturbed to an extent which makes me unable to see the common-sense view.

There is something curious about this kind of defence which is analogous to an interpretation in which the elements are so ordered that the narcissism of the patient is spared. But I have already said that narcissism, apparently primary narcissism [Freud, 'Instincts and Their Vicissitudes', 1915c], is related to the fact that common sense is a function of the patient's relationship to his group, and in his relationship with the group the individual's welfare is secondary to the survival of the group. Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest needs to be replaced by a theory of the survival of the fittest to survive in a group – as far as the survival of the individual is concerned. That is, he must be possessed with a high degree of common sense: (1) an ability to see what everyone else sees when subjected to the same stimulus, (2) an ability to believe in survival of the dead after death in a sort of Heaven or Valhalla or what-not, (3) an ability to hallucinate or manipulate facts so as to produce material for a delusion that there exists an inexhaustible fund of love in the group for himself. If for some reason the patient lacks these, or some similar series of capacities for attaining subordination to the group, he has to defend himself

against his fear of the group – which is known to be indifferent to his fate as an *individual* – by destroying his common sense or sense of group pressures on himself as an individual, as the only method by which he can preserve his narcissism. In the extreme form of defence in the psychotic the result of these destructive attacks appears as a superabundance of primary narcissism. But this is an *appearance* – the supposedly primary narcissism must be recognized as secondary to a fear of 'social-ism'.

This digression brings me back to the psychotic defence against interpretation which I said was analogous to the analyst's attempt to evade any conveyance by the interpretation of an element which constitutes, or is felt to constitute, an attack on the patient's narcissism. In practice this means evading the elucidation of illusory, delusory, or hallucinatory mechanisms for making the patient feel loved, lest such elucidation should show him that such love as he wishes to feel that he receives does not in fact exist. This in turn means that he analyst has to convey by various means that he loves the patient, and that in this respect he is a representative of the common sense of the patient's social group which loves the patient more than it loves itself. This latter belief can of course be supported by the patient by his believing that analysis itself is an expression of such group love for him. Or, in early infant terms, that the breast is a gift to him from the family group.

In so far as the patient is successful in evading the attacks on his narcissism, he experiences a hallucinatory gratification of his craving for love. This, like all hallucinatory gratification, leaves the patient unsatisfied. He therefore greedily resorts to a strengthening of his capacity for hallucination, but there is naturally no corresponding increase in satisfaction.

18 July 1959

(An inability to dream and hatred of common sense) implies
(destructive attacks on all linking and anti-social acting out)

[*see* p. 61, discussion of symbol for 'implies', –❩–].

The anti-social acting out is an attempt to destroy the common sense which the patient cannot get rid of. In analysis it contributes to the danger of murderous attacks on the analyst. The analyst's common-sense interpretations are attacked by being seen and felt as sexual assaults. But does the patient really feel them as sexual assaults, or is this an instance of anti-social (i.e. anti-common-sense) attacks on common sense; a sort of 'You're another' retort to someone who is felt to frustrate?

Social-ism versus Narcissism = Frustration of all instincts.

The aimless wandering is described in terms such as, 'down the road' and, 'I don't know why'. But these terms also give a lively impression of the protesting and bewildered parent who is suspicious but can get no relief for anxiety either through confirmation of anxiety, or final or even temporary dismissal of doubts. Is this his conscience playing up both him and me by being delinquent, by being a delinquent super-ego which knows just how to produce the maximum anxiety?

How does this link up with the common sense? The most obvious would be Freud's early super-ego which he equated or associated with social guilt. If this is so, Freud's denial of guilt before the Oedipal situation, except for social guilt, is a more fruitful theory than Melanie Klein's.[1] But splitting attacks on the super-ego, common sense, would lead to a mass of super-egos – the bizarre objects I spoke of in 'The Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-Psychotic Part of the

[1]Klein et al., 1952, *Developments in Psycho-Analysis*, p. 272 et seq.

Personality' (1957 [Volume VI]). It is a murderous super-ego. He rebels against it but it is itself delinquent.

What is the relationship between common sense, super-ego, narcissism?

The super-ego is certainly opposed to his existence: it is opposed, *a fortiori*, to his living. It is opposed to morals, e.g. his dream: his father makes a sexual approach to his wife while he (the patient) looks out of the window helplessly.

* * *

The idea (Prichard, *Knowledge and Perception*) that we come to wonder if we can learn anything at all if we start inquiring how we come to know anything is fallacious in that it depends on the supposition that someone exists who knows more than we know, that what we know is not knowledge because in the eyes of this other person's supposedly superior knowledge what we know is inaccurate. But even when in fact someone else exists who knows more, or even when we know better ourselves – for example when we say we know the sun rises when in fact the earth rotates – that does not invalidate our claim to have a particular piece of knowledge. There is a sense in which it is true knowledge that the sun rises and not accurate that the earth rotates, depending on the context of the phrase.

24 July 1959

The suspicion that the actual events of the session are being turned into a dream came back to me today with X when at one point I suspected that my interpretation was being made into a dream. Thus, he sees a tunnel with a train in it. The train stops. "Won't be able to get cured. Too early and since I just missed it there will not be another for a long time. Minute fragments like faeces . . . two chairs and the three-piece suite; stool-chair. I can't talk properly." Then he started on the 'dream'. It was clear to me that a distinction was being made between talking 'properly' and some kind of talking in visual images.

In an attempt to see how these elements were put together, the first difficulty was that the terrifying super-ego would be put together. When it came to synthesis, after this interpretation, the problem was to see how elements were combined. I suspect that Freud's displacement etc. is relevant; he took up only the negative attitude, dreams as 'concealing' something, not the way in which the *necessary* dream is *constructed*.

[Undated]

The tropisms

The tropisms may be communicated. In certain circumstances they are too powerful for the modes of communication available to the personality. This, presumably, may be because the personality is too weak or ill-developed if the traumatic situation arrives prematurely. But when this situation does arise, all the future development of the personality depends on whether an object, the breast, exists into which the tropisms can be projected. If it does not, the result is disaster which ultimately takes the form of loss of contact with reality, apathy, or mania. And in this context I include in mania feelings of depression that must be distinguished from the depression of the neuroses. In extreme cases it is an agitated melancholia, but it need not be extreme; the maniacal quality may be so slight as to be recognizable as an obsessive depression, but its essential quality is aggressiveness and hate.

If such an object exists, a breast capable of tolerating projective identifications that are thrust into it (for it is to projective identification in relation to the breast that I have now returned), then the outcome may be supposed to be more favourable, or at least in suspense.

Associated with the strength of the tropisms, but probably secondary to it, is an intolerance of frustration. Psychopathologically this has not the fundamental importance of the tropisms; clinically it presents a grave problem as it jeopardizes the analytic approach since frustration is essential to it – not extrinsic.

The action appropriate to the tropisms is seeking. I have so far considered this activity as it might be thought to relate to murder, parasitism, and creation – the three tropisms. Thus, considered individually, the tropisms are seen to issue in seeking (1) an object to murder or be murdered by, (2) a parasite or a host, (3) an object to create or by which to be created. But taken as a whole, and not individually, the action appropriate to the tropisms in the patient who comes for treatment is a seeking for an object with which projective

identification is possible. This is due to the fact that in such a patient the tropism of creation is stronger than the tropism of murder.

Suppose that the search ends in the discovery of the object, but the object, the primitive breast, is found to be intolerant of projective identification. For the sake of simplicity in exposition I shall suppose that this intolerance shows itself in two main forms: anxiety (persecution) and hate, or apathy. It is these two classes of response that contribute the environmental component in the development of the psychotic part of the personality. Ultimately both lead to the rejection of the tropism which, it must always be remembered, is a part of the projecting personality. But there are important differences in the rejection: the persecuted object causes the personality partly to reintroject the tropism, now exacerbated, and wholly to introject a peculiar form of primitive super-ego hostile to projective identification even as a method of communication, and so, by extension, to all forms of communication. But, as I have said, the tropism has only been partly reintrojected. For the most part it is felt to exist not in the primitive breast which has refused it admission, not in the immature psyche which dare not take it back, but enclosed within the vehicle of communication itself, be that sound, sight, or touch. Thus enclosed, the tropism and its envelope become persecuted and persecuting.

The tropisms are the matrix from which all mental life springs. For maturation to be possible they need to be won from the void and communicated. Just as a breast, or its equivalent, is necessary for the infant life to be sustained, so it is necessary that a mental counterpart, the primitive breast, should exist for mental life to be sustained. The vehicle of communication – the infant's cry, tactile and visual senses – is engaged in order not only to communicate but also to control the tropism. If all goes well the communication, by projective identification, leads (as Melanie Klein has described) to the deposition in the breast of the tropisms that the infant can neither control, modify, nor develop, but which can be so controlled and developed after they have been modified by the object.

If this breaks down, then the vehicle of communication, the contact with reality, the links of every kind of which I have spoken, suffer a significant fate. This applies particularly to the communicating particles that are felt to lie with their enclosed tropisms, rejected by psyche and object alike.

25 July 1959

I shall assume that the patient's fear of the murderous super-ego prevents his approaching the Positions [paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions]. This in turn means that he is unable to dream, for it is in dream that the Positions are negotiated. He therefore postpones this experience till the analytic session in which he hopes he will have support, or perhaps, feeling he has support, dares to have the dream he cannot have without the consciousness of support.

He has to dream – the important thing here is not the content of the dream, but his having to 'dream', a positive transitive act for which a transitive verb is necessary. Not only the creative person needs to dream to accomplish the act of creation involving experience of the Positions, but also the lesser mortal who needs to do it to 'understand' the interpretation, each good interpretation being, as I have said before, an event that is, or should be, significant as one of the selected facts to which Poincaré draws attention. The patient who consistently 'cannot understand' may not simply be resisting, but resisting in a particular way. Indeed it may be that here lies the essential difference between the resistance as something peculiar to the neurotic and relegation to the unconscious, and psychotic destruction of the means for understanding which is associated with an apparently full consciousness of what is ordinarily the furniture of the unconscious. "I do not understand", or, "do not know why", or "do not know how", etc. may be taken either as a *positive* statement of *inability* to dream, or a defiant assertion of a capacity for *not* dreaming.

If this is so, psychoanalytic use of the dream as a method by which the unconscious is made conscious is an employment in reverse of what is in nature the machinery that is employed in the transformation of the conscious into material suitable for storage in the unconscious. In other words, the dream-work we know is only a small aspect of dreaming proper – dreaming proper being a continuous

process belonging to the *waking* life and in action all through the waking hours, but not usually observable then except with the psychotic patient. The possibility of observing it in the psychotic depends on some peculiarity which makes his unconscious observable. Is this peculiarity the dispersal of the ego, 'common sense', the links with reality, leaving the id exposed? At any rate the hypothesis that in an analytic session I can see the patient dream has proved to be very valuable especially with its counterpart of seeing the contrasting activity of hallucination.

To return to the patient's fear of the Positions and the potential emergence at that stage of a murderous super-ego: the patient tries to cope with this by dreaming with the analyst – or does he just continue what he does all the time? He may then be so afraid that he produces an artefact that is not a dream but a hallucination, and then can make no use of it because he can get no more from a hallucination than he could get milk from an imaginary breast.

Or he may 'dream' (a) introjectively, (b) projectively.

[Undated]

The Dream is an emotional event of which we usually only hear a report or have a memory, although as we shall see it is a matter of some doubt what we mean when we think, or say, we remember a dream. I wish now to extend the term, 'dream', to cover the kind of events that take place in an analysis of a schizophrenic – events that appear to me to merit the description, 'dreams'.

One of the points I wish to discuss is related to the fact that the actual events of the session, as they are apparent to the analyst, are being 'dreamed' by the patient *not* in the sense that he believes that the events observed by him are the same as the events observed by the analyst (except for the fact that he believes them to be a part of a dream, and the analyst believes them to be a part of reality), but in the sense that these same events that are being *perceived* by the analyst are being perceived by the patient and treated to a process of being dreamed by him. That is, these events are having something done to them mentally, and that which is being done to them is what I call being dreamed – subjected to a process which I hope to describe in more detail.

[Undated]

Schematic presentation of dreaming

Murderous super-ego: therefore avoidance of the depressive positions is achieved by not dreaming, or by dreaming with precautions, e.g. of being with the analyst or, like Y, only allowing the dream to develop when he knows someone is there; instead of quietening down when his mother arrives, his dream appears to become *more* vivid and *worse*. It also explains why X seems to cling so tenaciously to my badness in the session.

First Stage

a. No dreams (in the ordinary sense of night-time phenomena).

b. Dreams suppressed and has hallucinations as a substitute. These hallucinations are excretory, projective.

Second Stage

a. No dreams.

b. Dreams suppressed but has hallucinations as a substitute. These are *intended* to be introjectory, but because of fear of the super-ego and, paradoxically, creating the super-ego by synthesis, it is not rewarding as the true dream would be, and in any case the hallucination cannot yield the free associations etc. which are what make a true dream yield its meaning. So: no free associations and no development of personality is possible. The patient cannot get sustenance from a hallucination.

Third Stage

a. Dreams reported. No free associations and not easily distinguishable from hallucinations – "I was standing at the window as usual." Dream seems to be excretory in function.

b. Confusion. Projective identification – splitting almost exclusively with 'dreaming the session'. That is to say, the session is dreamed; my interpretations and all other events of which he is aware, are not seen, listened to, heard in the ordinary way but are subjected to 'inaccessible-ization'. Thus: train stuck in tunnel – two chairs and a three-piece suite – a stool-chair. Mostly excretory to deal with the ego qualities of the interpretations by dispersal.

Fourth Stage

a. Dreams, more frequent but lacking associations and mostly excretory – arm drops off when he gives a traffic signal, thus indicating uselessness of attempting to warn because parts of the body persist in wanting to be destructive. It lies on the grass – in a tantrum? – but there are no associations. Does the analyst know the meaning, or is it obvious?

b. Introjective and projective. The dream-work intended to convert material into a form where it is compact and can be stored – an important function because of memory. His mind being a kind of 'gut', mental storage seems to mean that the dream is a mental digestive process. The nature of the dream and its function vary according to stimuli. The week-end break seems always to lead to sessional dreaming – I think of the excretory kind, but in later stage perhaps more introjective and retentive.

27 July 1959

I think the fear of dreams must contribute to making the patient anxious to avoid the dream-work of the conscious state. Should it simply be introjection that is avoided? No: because according to me the process of introjection is carried out by the patient's 'dreaming' the current events. Introjection –)– Dreaming, would be the formula [*see* p. 61].

Anxiety in the analyst is a sign that the analyst is refusing to 'dream' the patient's material: not (dream) = resist = not (introject). It may be worth considering, when a patient is resisting, whether the resistance bears characteristics relating it to phenomena Freud described as 'dream-work'. But *Freud* meant by dream-work that unconscious material, which would otherwise be perfectly comprehensible, was transformed into a dream, and that the dream-work needed to be undone to make the now incomprehensible dream comprehensible [*New Introductory Lectures*, 1933a, p. 25]. *I* mean that the conscious material has to be subjected to dream-work to render it fit for storing, selection, and suitable for transformation from paranoid-schizoid position to depressive position, and that unconscious pre-verbal material has to be subjected to reciprocal dream-work for the same purpose. *Freud* says Aristotle states that a dream is the way the mind works in sleep: *I* say it is the way it works when awake (*New Introductory Lectures*, pp. 26–27). Freud says the state of sleep represents a turning away from the world, the real external world, and "thus provides a necessary condition for the development of a psychosis". Is this why X talks of losing consciousness? It follows on dream-work which is intended to be destroyed, or has been destroyed, as part of an attack on linking.

28 July 1959

The dream

The dream is the mechanism by which

1. the ego links the sense data of external experience with the associated conscious awareness of the sense impression;
2. the stream of unconnected impressions and events are made suitable for storing in memory;
3. these stored events are reviewed and one is chosen which enables facts already 'known', i.e. stored, to be harmonized so that the relationship between them is established and the place of each element seen in its relationship to the whole;
4. the interplay between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions is made possible by a selected fact which is known as the 'harmonizing or unifying fact' spatially, and the 'cause' temporally, or when time is an essential element in the relationship between the elements.

The dream, therefore, is the mechanism by which there comes into operation,

(a) the social conscience, associated with splitting of the super-ego and retreat from the depressive position to the paranoid-schizoid position. This seems identical with the social guilt and true super-ego which can only come into being with the Oedipus complex, but which I think is a highly persecutory super-ego which becomes more persecutory since it is split up. Each split itself becomes a complete super-ego and this leads to further splitting, the fragmentation becoming progressively more minute. This contributes to the state where dreams are 'invisible', wet, and being awake is 'dry';

(b) the individual super-ego, a murderous object, which becomes manifest if synthesis of the fragments of the paranoid-schizoid

position is effected by dream-work bringing the depressive position into being.

Social and individual super-ego both contribute by their fearfulness to patients' need to make destructive attacks in dream mechanism. When this happens in the session, the patient will show fear that he is dead or has lost consciousness, because the dream is that which makes available, as part of the personality, both the events of external emotional reality and the events of internal pre-verbal psychic reality. If the dream-work capacity is destroyed, the patient feels dread which is peculiarly terrifying because it is nameless, and because the namelessness itself springs from the destruction of the patient's capacity for dream-work which is the mechanism responsible for naming.

The domain of the dream

Into the domain of the dream flow the sense impressions associated with the coming into being of the reality principle and the pre-verbal impressions associated with the pleasure-pain principle. None of these can be associated with consciousness, memory, recall, unconsciousness, repression, or suppression unless transformed by dream-work. The domain of the dream is the storehouse in which the transformed impressions are stored after they have been transformed. Dream-work is responsible for rendering pre-communicable material 'storable' and communicable; the same for stimuli and impressions derived from the contact of the personality with the external world. Contact with reality is *not* dependent on dream-work; accessibility to the personality of the material derived from this contact *is* dependent on dream-work. The failure of dream-work and the consequent lack of availability of experience of external or internal psychic reality gives rise to the peculiar state of the psychotic who seems to have a contact with reality but is able to make singularly little use of it either for learning by experience or for immediate consumption.

In this respect the dream seems to play a part in the mental life of the individual which is analogous to the digestive processes in the alimentary life of the individual. Why?

The domain of the dream must be seen as containing an amorphous mass of unconnected and undifferentiated elements. These will

be felt by the patient to be dangerous and bad, or potentially good, according to factors in his personality with which I cannot at present be engaged. In so far as this is clinically recognizable, the form in which it manifests itself is a nameless feeling of dread, but there may be others. In so far as dream-work is operative, the course of events in the vicissitudes of these elements can be seen to take different forms: visual, auditory, haptic, olfactory . . . .

* * *

An example of what I mean by 'dreaming' the environment in which the individual finds himself may be found in the group in the elaboration of a myth such as the story that Newton, seeing an apple fall, discovered the Laws of Gravitation. The statement is the outcome of the dream-work, and its object is the embodiment, in a pictorial symbol, of facts which the individuals in a group need to transform so that they can be stored and recalled at will. The pictorial symbol, once formed and stored, can then be recovered and interpreted by the individual to yield the contents that he has felt he needed to store. A peculiarity of psychoanalysis is that the scientific deductive system is a series of hypotheses about hypotheses about hypotheses . . . (e.g. Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams* [1900a], p. 16), a neurological hypothesis about the individual's hypothesis about himself. Also X's alimentary hypothesis about his hypothesis about his persecuting authority. Also my Kleinian hypothesis about X's hypothesis about his hypothesis about his persecuting authority.

This deserves comparison with the physicist's quantum mechanics hypothesis about basic data which in fact are statistical hypotheses [Northrop, 'Introduction' to Heisenberg's, *Physics and Philosophy*].

1 August 1959

Freud says,

> It is easy to see how the remarkable preference shown by the memory in dreams for indifferent, and consequently unnoticed, elements in waking experience is bound to lead people to overlook in general the dependence of dreams upon waking life and all events to make it difficult in any particular instance to prove that dependence. [*Interpretation of Dreams*, 1900a, p. 19]

My belief is that the dependence of waking life on dreams has been overlooked and is even more important. Waking life = ego activity, and in particular the play of logical thought on the synthesis of elements, i.e. particles characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position. The function of the dream is to render these elements suitable for storage, and so to constitute the contents of what we call memory. Waking life = ego activity = logical operation. This in turn is essential for synthesis and communicability or public-ation.

"The way in which memory behaves in dreams is undoubtedly of the greatest importance for any theory of memory in general" [*Interpretation of Dreams*, 1900a, p. 20]. In my idea above, the dream symbolization and dream-work is what makes memory possible.

2 August 1959

Vomiting and greed as most recalcitrant symptoms: the intense desire to chew and then to feel it going down; the movement of the jaws, the biting is very satisfactory. Some feeling of rebellion likewise – a kind of "Why-should- I-be-denied-the-good-things-of-life?" attitude. The good things are denied because the desire is to chew, and the object is only within visual grasp. But then the destructiveness is transferred to, and is consequently felt to impregnate, looking itself.

Much the same is true of smell as of sight, in that with neither sense must the object be in the physical contact necessary for biting and chewing. Good smells are felt to be turned into bad by the destructiveness with which they are savoured.

This frustration carries over into a relationship with the man's anus because he is predominantly representing the cruelly destroyed breast. Or, rather, the masculine anus represents it, and is itself a cruelly destructive mouth 'producing' bad smells and bad food.

Stammering is also most recalcitrant. Intolerance of frustration leads to intolerance of stimulation.

* * *

Dreams

> We close our most important sensory channels, our eyes, and try to protect the other senses from all stimuli or from any modification of the stimuli acting on them. . . . The sensory stimuli that reach us during sleep may very well become sources of dreams.
>
> Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, 1900a, p. 23

Then why is it that dreams we report, or have reported to us, are so often in terms of visual images?

Is it not a 'modification of the stimuli' reaching us? And could this be something to do with the dream-work as an attempt to achieve 'common sense' as part of the synthesizing function of the dream? It may be an aspect of 'linking' one sense to another; the transformation of tactile stimuli into visual excretions as in hallucination. If this is so, it would fit in with Freud's idea that sleep is to be preserved. [*Interpretation of Dreams*, 1900a, p. 573 et seq.]. The hallucinated patient then *would* be doing what I said he was doing when I described him as taking in the interpretation and evacuating it as far as possible away from himself by 'seeing' it, i.e. visually evacuating it as a hallucination. If this is so, the dream proper may be an attempt at visual and flatus-like evacuation.

Calculus formation notes

There is a need for a sign for 'contributes to' = 'adds to' = 'augments'.

Thus: greed, frustration 'augments' envy.

Also a sign for 'initiates' = 'generates'.

Thus: greed, frustration 'generates' hallucination. Or, frustration, intolerance 'generates' hallucination.

Also a symbol or sign for 'of', meaning 'associated with', so as to express frustration 'of' sexual desire in the sense of the frustration being particularized as to the stimulus involved.

3 August 1959

A dream can be concerned with evacuation of an undesired thought, feeling, image, or with its storage. In either instance it must convert either an empirical external fact or an internal psychic reality into a form that renders it suitable for storage or evacuation. In this respect, too, it seems analogous to a digestive process. But is it? Or is it not that the 'name' of the process is similar to the 'name' of the digestive process? From where does this seeming similarity arise?

4 August 1959

One way of dealing with the problem of scientific evidence for dream theories would be to restrict the search for data to experience shared by analyst and patient, or at which analyst and patient are both present. Such occasions might be all those on which the patient said he had had a dream, or all those on which there appear to be events taking place, e.g. the patient sits up and looks around in a dazed way; the analyst, identifying himself with the patient, feels that the experience the patient is having would be more understandable if the patient were asleep and dreaming.

'More understandable.' Why? Because it is more appropriate to the facts as the analyst sees them. But this means that if the analyst were feeling what the patient seems to be feeling, then he, the analyst, would be disposed to say, "I must have been dreaming".

Just then I found I had been asleep; just before I woke I seemed to be saying to F that I was feeling I was going mad because I could not sort out the feeling I was having in the dream about having a dream and who I was. The dream seemed to be that I was trying to solve the problem I am in fact trying to solve, but with the addition of the fear of going mad – a sort of mental disintegration.

Last night, as I was trying to understand a passage in Quine's *Mathematical Logic* [p. 31] in which 'negative' occurred, I had a dream – having fallen into a sleep or doze – in which a negro appeared. The dream, I thought as I wakened, was associated with 'neg' being both negro and negative. But why did I not write it down then? And now I think of negative and native: 'natives' is associated with memories of India, my mother, and natives as being coloured people like Indians who were 'inferior'. Also 'dative' as being a present, and dates which I liked. 'Ablative', to lift off or take away. Negro, as he appeared in the dream, now seems to me to be not a real person but an ideogram. My theory is that this ideogram has enabled me to store all these ideas which I am now producing – maybe because I am a dreamer. Perhaps there is a class of persons, or a class of dreamers, to which it

might be useful to say some people belong. If so, and if it is true that schizophrenics cannot dream, it would need to be stated that they were not members of that class (a point to remember in the elaboration of a theoretical deductive system for the schizophrenic patient).

What do I mean by saying that the negro in the dream was not a real person? Of course he was not. But I suppose that while I was asleep and in that part of mind, if any, in which I am still asleep, he must have been thought of as just a real person, a fact, what I have called an 'undigested' fact. But now I regard him as an ideogram, and this means that some fact has been 'digested' and that the visual image of the negro, which I am now recalling, is a significant element in the process of (the mental counterpart of) digestion. Are 'undigested facts' then used in the process of 'digesting' other facts? Is their 'indigestibility' a quality that renders them useful for this function, as if it were some kind of container for an eroding liquid which must be able itself to resist the erosion by its contents?

On this basis there is always some 'undigested part' of a dream-product ('dream-product' is usually called the dream itself), although my point is that if the person can dream, then he can 'digest' facts and so learn from experience. Obviously what is needed is to consider what 'digesting' facts consists of in detail.

5 August 1959

α

Frustration, according to Freud, enforces the installation of the reality principle ('Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' [1911b], pp. 218–226). But the psychotic with his hatred of reality evades the installation of the reality principle. His intolerance of frustration makes for intolerance of reality and contributes to his hatred of reality. This leads to reinforcement of projective identification as a method of evacuation. This in turn leads to dreams that are evacuations, not introjectory operations – hence 'dreams' of the psychotic, which are really evacuations of such *α* as he has been unable to prevent. The dream-elements in the psychotic dream are really the discarded residue of *α*-elements that have survived mutilations of *α*.

Thus, in the psychotic we find no capacity for reverie, no *α*, or a very deficient *α*, and so none of the capacities – or extremely macilent capacities – which depend on *α*, namely attention, passing of judgement, memory, and dream-pictures, or pictorial imagery that is capable of yielding associations.

But this in turn means that he destroys the capacity for thought which is essential to action in reality and which makes bearable the frustration – an essential concomitant of the interval between a wish and its fulfilment. So the psychotic's attempt to evade frustration ends in producing a personality more than ever subject to frustration without the softening or moderating mechanism that would have been available through *α* and thought. In consequence he is more than ever intolerant of a frustration that is more than ever intolerable. And thus a self-perpetuating situation is created in which more and more frustration is produced by more and more effort devoted to its evasion by the destruction of the capacity for dreaming which, had he retained it, might have enabled him to moderate frustration.

* * *

How does a dream evade frustration? By distortion of facts of reality, and by displacement of facts of reality. In short, by dream-work

on the perception of facts – not, in this context, dream-work on the dream-thoughts except in so far as the dream-thoughts are thoughts portraying the facts. Freud attributes to dream-work the function of concealing the facts of internal mental life only – the dream-thoughts only. I attribute to it the function of evading the frustration to which the dream-thoughts, and therefore the interpretation of dream-thoughts, would give rise if allowed to function properly – that is, as mechanisms associated with the legitimate tasks involved in real modification of frustration. Consequently, since such legitimate tasks always carry an element of frustration, excessive intolerance of frustration short-sightedly leads to the attempt at evasion of the frustration intrinsic to the task of modification of the frustration.

α is concerned with, and is identical with, unconscious waking thinking designed, as a part of the reality principle, to aid in the task of real, as opposed to pathological, modification of frustration.

* * *

Freud, approaching the problem as one of interpreting the dream [*Interpretation of Dreams*, 1900a, p. 136], regards the dream-work as 'distorting' the wish-fulfilment. The α approach regards the wish-fulfilment ≡ frustration-avoidance, and the distortion as being of the *facts* – notably a distortion of the fact of frustration. [≡, the sign for 'equivalent to'.]

But it must be noted that I make a distinction between α which is essential to attention, storage of memory, thinking, the positions, consciousness attached to sense organs, notation, passing of judgement, motor discharge (what about sleep-walking?), and the use to which this developing form of thinking ('originally unconscious', as Freud says, and according to me still unconscious) is put – particularly in its use 'to support increased tensions' or, as I would say, in frustration-avoidance or frustration-evasion.

6 August 1959

α

The waking unconscious thinking. Does this have the function I attribute to α, or does α carry out the transformation of sense impressions which makes these storable in such a form that they are available for waking unconscious thinking? When Y winces at each word said, it seems clear that the words are not, outwardly at least, being transformed by α into a form, 'notation', that makes the experience of the analysis available to him.

But the transformation by α is not all by symbol formation. For example, it is clearly of consequence to know from a particular transaction in which the individual possessor of two apples, when given two more, ends up having four apples, that this peculiarity applies always, namely that if two things of any kind whatever are added to two others of the same kind, the result will be a total of four such objects.

That $2 + 2 = 4$ is sometimes said to be self-evident, an axiom. But it is by no means clear that this is or always has been so, any more than it has always been obvious that if I want something in my room which is out of reach I shall have to leave my chair, walk over to it and fetch it. At some point even the process of walking required thought, probably conscious thought. My suggestion is that it still requires thought, but that it is now waking unconscious thought which has been made possible by α. And it is similarly thanks to the operation of α that it seems obvious that $2 + 2 = 4$. If α has not operated, it is probable that it would not be 'obvious' at all.

At first sight it seems that the mathematical capacities of the individual must depend on an α-operation which effects abstraction or generalization, but as usual these convenient simplifications are, by their nature, only approximations, and in some instances the approximation is found not to be sufficiently close. It is probably more true to say that concretization, pictorial or otherwise, may be inseparable from the faculty of abstraction or generalization. Let us then consider this from a new angle.

Let us first suppose that 2 + 2 is established in the individual's mind as = 4. Let us then remember that it is notorious that the mathematicians have never been able to advance their science with sufficient rapidity to be of service to the biological scientist (Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation*, p. 49) and still less to the psychoanalyst. (It is usually put the other way round – the psychoanalyst is censured for being unscientific because he cannot produce a calculus which is the counterpart of the scientist's deductive systems, e.g. Eysenck.) Let us then transfer the statement, 1 + 1 = 2, to the field of biological science by considering what happens if 1 rabbit (male) is added to 1 rabbit (female), all enclosed in a suitable hutch. In this instance 1 + 1 may easily be found to make quite a considerably larger number than 2 rabbits. Such a fact, thanks to *α*, may not present any great difficulty. But there are situations in which waking unconscious thought is not enough, and these situations demand a change in mathematical outlook which may be as revolutionary and arduous as the elaboration of a positional geometry from a foundation of Euclidean geometry.

* * *

The Interpretation of Dreams [1900a, p. 54]

Most of the criticisms cited are hostile and indicate the need in a waking state to disparage the dream. This is compatible with the *α*-theory that there is a failure of 'digestion mentally'. It would explain partly why the 'facts' and their ideational counterpart had not been digested if the rational conscious attitude was so hostile to the ideational counterpart of the stimulus, wherever in reality it originated. For such hostility would be likely to inhibit dream-work-*α*, and in so far as the inhibition failed – for after all the patient has dreamed – the hostility now extends to the product of the dream-work.

* * *

Logic and dreams

Logic is possibly that element by which it is hoped to establish coherence between elements that otherwise remain separate and persecutory, as in the paranoid-schizoid position.

8 August 1959

In what way does logic show itself? What signs betray its presence or absence? How can it be seen that the signs employed in logic, whether peculiar to logic or not, are being logically employed? In view of Quine's criticisms (*Mathematical Logic*, pp. 31, 32, 33) of Whitehead and Russell (1927), it seems evident that even the best logicians have great difficulty in being logical.

Is it possible that there is no necessary, inescapable deduction from any premise that is not merely a repetition of a definitory formula? For example, if 'two' means two, and 'and' means and, and 'two' means two, and 'equals' means equals, and 'four' means four, then two and two equals four.

In the instances quoted by Quine it seems as if the symbol or sign, –❩–, has been so abstracted that it has lost precision necessary for the purpose for which Quine wishes to use it. What is the relationship between 'implies', '–❩–', used by Whitehead and Russell, and '–❩–' used by Quine? By what process is 'implies' denuded of its ordinary speech meanings so that it becomes precise? How is it determined when the sign has been sufficiently abstracted from its ordinary speech meanings to give it the required precision, yet not so much that it has become too generalized and so open to Quine's kind of criticism when scientifically employed? It looks as if the ordinary meanings of 'implies' have crept back into Whitehead and Russell's use of the sign, –❩–. If this is so, then the fault does not lie in the sign but in the fact that the sign has to be employed by human beings who are governed, obviously, by the limitations of their mental equipment. This is similar to the situation with other tools. The tool can be made, be it bomb or –❩–, but there still remains the problem of the use to which it is to be put and the motives impelling the person who employs it.

Why have ordinary meanings (if ____ is true then ____ is true; ____ is false or ____ is true; ____ implies ____; if ____ then ____) crept back into the symbol, –❩–, employed by Whitehead and Russell? Or,

alternatively, by what process has Quine stripped off all meanings from '–⊃–' other than some counterpart of 'if ____ then ____'? Consciously one might say that he is in process of stripping it off in the discussion in *Mathematical Logic* (pp. 31–33) and that there it is done by showing that the use of '–⊃–', as Whitehead and Russell use it, can give rise to different trains of deduction all in themselves correct, but leading to deductions that are either contradictory or absurd. (Northrop, Introduction to Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*, pp. 26, 27 on complementarity and contradiction and Freud.) Could this be related to juxtapositions in α of contradictions and absurdities? But the contradictions or absurdities of dreams are different. And the concretization that is involved in verbal images or ideograms may be very important for preserving precision. How do you abstract the generalized idea of 'table'? How do you concretize and keep precise 'implies'? Is it achieved by dream-work similar to the process of abstraction in *Euclid* I.1, or I.5, or I.47?

* * *

X

His statements that he feels anxious – "I don't know why" – may, in addition to being denials, support very strongly, in view of their constant reiteration, my idea that there is a breakdown of dream-work-α, which makes it impossible for the feelings to be ideogrammaticized and so verbalized. This breakdown is due to the need to prevent the synthesis, in the depressive position, of a frightening super-ego.

9 August 1959

Heisenberg: Physics and Philosophy

p. 32 "Influence of physics on the general situation."

No: the influence of physics has simply been to modify the potency of the man with power to use the atomic bomb. It has no political aspect, but advances in physics have had political *consequences*. But Heisenberg shows that his meaning is not properly expressed by his first paragraph when he goes on in the second to show "that every tool carries with it the spirit by which it has been created". And here I think of the theory I put forward that man's tool-making capacity is hypertrophying as the defensive armour of stegosaurus hypertrophied and led to its extinction.

p. 32 "What will be the outcome of this impact of a special branch of modern science on different powerful old traditions?"

I prefer, 'What will be the impact of powerful old traditions on this special branch of modern science?' as alternative reading.

p. 36 "Light could either be interpreted as consisting of electromagnetic waves . . . or as consisting of light quanta, energy packets travelling through space with high velocity. . . . Einstein . . . was not able to dispute the complete contradiction between this wave picture and the idea of the light quanta."

Is it possible that the explanation fundamentally has to be in terms of primitive phantasies? – e.g. elementary particles (paranoid-schizoid), or wave theory (depressive) – because these are limitations in the human mind which cannot be transcended?

p. 37 "No planetary system following the laws of Newton's mechanics would ever go back to its original configuration after a collision with another such system."

The collision and return to normal fit in also with the primitive primal scene.

p. 43 "Instead of asking: How can one in the known mathematical scheme express a given experimental situation? the other question was put: Is it true, perhaps, that only such experimental situations can arise in nature as can be expressed in the mathematical formalism?"

Or can only those phenomena be seen which lie within the scope of man's mathematical capacity? Or can maths and fact come together only if dream-work is available to make abstraction and concretization possible?

10 August 1959

Dream-work-α

Under the title dream-work-*α* I propose to bring together a number of mental activities all of which are familiar to practising psychoanalysts, although they may not have previously associated them together in this way and may not indeed feel the need or value of associating them in the way I propose after they have familiarized themselves with what I am about to say.

The title, 'dream-work', has already a meaning of great value. I wish to extend some of the ideas already associated with it and to limit others. It has seemed to me least likely to cause confusion if I group my ideas under a new title which indicates the affiliations of my ideas and yet makes clear that a distinction is being proposed from the theories already grouped under the term, 'dream-work'.

The main sources, other than the stimulations of psychoanalytic practice and historical affiliations of these grouped ideas, are threefold:

1. Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* [1900a] and especially the elaboration of his theories of dream-work.

2. Freud's paper, 'Two Principles of Mental Functioning' [1911b] and his *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* [1933a]. Essential to this orientation are the views he expresses on narcissism and the future development of that concept in his paper, 'Instincts and Their Vicissitudes' [1915c].

3. Melanie Klein's theories of splitting, projective identification, and the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. In one very important respect I have made extensive use of her description of the difference of her views on guilt and super-ego formation [*Developments in Psycho-Analysis*, 1952, p. 273 et seq. and p. 281 et seq.] from those of Freud in what I want to say about the nature of social guilt, acting out, and delinquency in the psychotic patient.

I shall now set out the characteristics of dream-work-*α*, or, for the sake of brevity, *α*.

Dream-work-*α* is continuous night and day. It operates on the receipt of stimuli arising within and without the psyche. It operates on the mental counterpart of events of external reality, or on what Bradley calls the ideational counterpart of external fact. This ideational counterpart on which *α* operates appears to be the consciousness associated with certain sense impressions, that which Freud calls the consciousness attached to the sense organs [1900a, p. 615]. What this is I am not able to suggest. I have no clinical experience that I feel would be valuable to differentiate from other clinical experiences and label as a part of that which constitutes the consciousness attached to the sense organs. There have been occasions when a patient has spoken of a sensation in a way that made me think it might be an example of a mental phenomenon before it had been transformed by *α*. There have been instances, as I shall show, where the patient speaks of, say, a table in a way that makes it clear that he is not meaning or expressing what is ordinarily meant or expressed when the word is used. The difference usually lies in the fact that for different people the same words have, in addition to their common meaning, a different penumbra of associations. But in the instances that I have in mind the difference lies in what seems to be a *lack* of associations. It is as if the word were a counterpart of the pure note in music, devoid of undertones or overtones; as if, meaning nothing but 'table', it came near to meaning nothing at all.

There are other experiences that appear to be those of emotion, fear, anxiety, dread, to which the patient seems unable to attach either a name or an image, or to recognize them as corresponding to any verbal expression he has ever heard or uttered. In so far as he realizes that the experience is one that he wishes to associate with a cause, he can only say that he has such-and-such a feeling but does not know why. These experiences also appear to be untransformed by *α*. The table is not a memory; it is an indigested fact; it has not been 'dreamed'; it has not been transformed by *α*. The same is true of the emotional experience.

Is it possible to get nearer to describing what *α* does? It pays attention to the sense impression. But in order to do this the impression must be made durable. It must be transformed so that it is suitable

for storage and recall. In short, it has to be submitted to α-activity, and that is impossible unless durability is conferred on the impression and is itself a part of the process by which durability is conferred. The impression must be ideogrammaticized. That is to say, if the experience is a pain, the psyche must have a visual image of rubbing an elbow, or a tearful face, or some such. But now there enters a new feature depending on whether the pleasure-pain or the reality principle is dominant. If the reality principle is dominant, then the object of the ideogram will be to make the experience suitable for storage and recall; if the pleasure-pain principle is dominant, the tendency will be to have as the object of the ideogram its value as an excretable object.

Freud has pointed out that under the dominance of the pleasure principle the object of action is excretion of accumulations of affect (changes of mien etc.), in contrast with action under dominance of the reality principle when its object is to effect changes in environment. In accordance with this, the nature of the visual image will be different if the pleasure principle is dominant from what it would be under the dominance of the reality principle. The grimace of pain or the elbow-rubbing, under pleasure-pain, will be the end-product of a mechanism designed to relieve the psyche of an emotional experience in such a way that the emotional experience can be felt to have been not only excreted but evacuated into a container. In practice, such an omnipotent phantasy can most easily be given the appearance of reality if its expression is not limited to the formation of an ideogram within the psyche, but is expressed through the musculature in an actual grimace of pain or an actual rubbing of the elbow. Muscular action of this kind in the consulting room may sometimes be distinguished from the action designed to change the environment by the peculiarity of the emotional reaction engendered in the beholder. If it is an evacuatory muscular expression of an ideogram, the analyst is aware of having feelings aroused in him which have no component appropriate to action to satisfy those feelings – the evacuating patient's aim is to ensure that the unwanted feelings are inescapably contained in their new receptacle. If the act is carried out under dominance of the reality principle, then the ideogram – whether retained within the psyche or externalized by the musculature – has as its aim a subsequent alteration of the environment. This means that the ideogram expressed by the musculature is felt by the analyst to be by way

of a communication and an invitation to do something – not, as is the case in the contrasting state of expression of an evacuatory ideogram, to be an intrusion into him to which he feels he is passively to submit.

In addition to the effect which depends on the dominance of the pleasure-pain or of the reality principle, there is the effect produced by the degree to which the personality is characterized by an excessive tendency to splitting and projective identification. If the tendency is excessive, then the value of dream-work-*α* is at once altered, for clearly its operation will not aid in the storage of experience if the psyche makes use of experiences that might otherwise be stored in a fund we usually know as memory. But the part played by projective identification is of such wide significance that we shall have to refer to it frequently in other contexts, and I therefore do not propose to elaborate points here which will become clear later.

So far I have had to confess that I cannot really do more than indicate the kind of material that is worked on by *α*. Perhaps the fact that, according to the theory I am attempting to adumbrate, the expression of these very views depends on the operation of *α* and that these views cannot be expressed (according to the same theory) until they have been operated on by *α*, means that there is no way of making a more precise approach verbally. Various kinds of tic, including a stammer, reports of supposed dreams in which there is apparently no content but a powerful emotional experience, reports of dreams in which visual images are devoid of associations of emotion – these for the present appear to be as near as we are likely to get to an understanding of the mental material on which *α* works. To some extent it will be possible to supplement this if we can get to know what the reality is of which the material on which *α* works is the counterpart. The experience that offers most hope of this is the situation in analysis in which it is possible for the analyst to see for himself the current facts on which *α* is operating then and there as the facts unfold.

For the present I must turn to consider further the relationship of *α* to the mechanisms of projective identification and splitting. I shall have more to say later about its relationship to the pleasure principle and the consequences for the wish-fulfilment aspect of dreams. The immediate point is the adverse effect on the personality when the dream-work-*α* is associated with the pleasure principle and excessive projective identification. X's dream of 'looking out of the window as usual' while his father interferes with his wife becomes an evacuatory

process, an attempt to get rid of 'those feelings' by projection of them into me. But do not visual images symbolize or represent in some way? And if so, has no dream-work-*α* taken place? Probably it has; it seems likely that certain feelings have been ideogrammaticized, but *not* for purposes of digestion mentally – only as receptacles to contain, to imprison the idea or feeling and then to eject it. In that case the visual image itself is used as the target for projective identification and then is used as a missile container for further projective identification. If so, perhaps the visual element in dreams is significant because it is felt that the feeling can be excreted further and more effectively if it is put into an object *seen*, perhaps in a hallucinatory manner, because such an object does not need, as with other senses, to be at close quarters for contact. Therefore, in a projectively identified dream, the dream itself is felt to be analogous to a hallucinated object, not for hallucinatory gratification of ingestion, but for hallucinatory excretion. Then the next step – the ejection by the eyes of the hallucination containing the undesired emotional experience.

These feelings preclude the possibility of regarding the dream as a real 'object' – as indeed is the intention – and so preclude the possibility of feeling the dream experience to be potentially effective in its proper function. It is suspect as being only the *appearance* of a life-promoting phenomenon, and so the patient's sense of being unable to dream is unaffected. For the true dream *is* felt as life-promoting, whereas the dream employed as a container for projective identification is felt to be an artefact, as deficient in life-promoting qualities as a hallucinated breast is felt to be deficient in food. But its very function as a container for the unwanted would make it suspect in any case.

The fact that the dream is being employed in an excretory function contributes to the patient's feeling that he is unable to dream or, rather, his thought is far less exact than the phrase, 'unable to dream', would suggest, and does nothing to decrease his feeling that he is lacking in an essential mental capacity.

So far this discussion suggests that a dream exists and that it is characterized by visual images; further, that the dream-work and its production can be employed for two dissimilar purposes. One is concerned with the transformation of stimuli received from the world of external reality and internal psychic reality so that they can be stored (memory) in a form making them accessible to recall (attention) and synthesis with each other.

The other purpose, with which I am here predominantly concerned, is the use of the visual images of the dream for purposes of control and ejection of unwanted (pleasure-pain-determined want) emotional experience. The visual image of the dream is then felt as a hallucinated – that is to say artificially produced – container intended to hold in, imprison, inoculate the emotional experience the personality feels too feeble to contain without danger of rupture, and so to serve as a vehicle for the evacuatory process. The dream itself is then felt to be an act of evacuation in much the same way as the visual hallucination is felt to be a positive act of expulsion through the eyes [*see* 'On Hallucination', *Second Thoughts*, Volume VI, p. 114].

If one kind of patient feels he cannot dream, what does the other kind of patient feel – the kind that feels he *can* dream? I propose to limit the term, 'dream', to the phenomenon as it appears in the light of the common-sense view that we all have dreams, know they occur when we are asleep, and know what they are when we have them. This dream is popularly believed to be due to indigestion: I suggest that the belief expressed in the aphorism, '*in vino veritas*', should be extended to expressions of popular common sense, at least in this instance. In short, I suggest that what is ordinarily reported as a dream should be regarded by us as a sign of indigestion, but not simply physical indigestion. Rather, it should be taken as a symptom of mental indigestion. Or, to phrase it more exactly, as a sign – when a patient reports a dream to us and we are satisfied that he means by this what we all ordinarily understand by a dream – that there has been a failure of dream-work-*α*. The failure may of course be due to precisely such causes as the use of visual imagery in the service of projective identification which I have just been describing, but there are other more common causes of failure of dream-work-*α*, and there are also degrees of frequency with which the patient resorts to the use of dream imagery in the service of projective identification. Investigation of the dream as a symptom of a failure of dream-work-*α* means that we have to reconsider the series of hypotheses that I have grouped together under the heading of dream-work-*α*.

The first cause of breakdown in capacity to dream is associated with the synthesizing function of *α* in relation to the super-ego.

11 August 1959

One of the dangers of the failure to dream α in the session is that the patient then splits the murderous super-ego and evacuates it. He is now surrounded by murderous fragments of super-ego, each of which immediately develops into a super-ego. These, being externalized, are not seen in the real-life objects with which he is surrounded, and a situation is produced similar to that described by Freud as typical of 'social guilt'. Since the patient not only fears but wishes to be re-united with his murderous super-ego fragments, the danger is that he now acts out. And he does this in a way calculated to make the social forces of reality harbour murderous wishes against him. Hence the danger that he will force this by actually committing a murder.

21 August 1959

α

There is a great difficulty in making the step between the scientific deductive system and the low-level hypothesis that is susceptible of clinical verification. The gap between the actual clinical (experimental) data and the theory that is being tested and is to contribute to the formation of an interpretation, seems to me to be very big; it is not only the 'size' of the gap, but the actual dimension in which it exists, which is so difficult to determine. Once the two have been brought together, it becomes simpler.

It is very important that the analyst knows not what *is* happening, but that he *thinks* it is happening. That is the only certitude to which he lays claim. If he does not know that he thinks such-and-such is happening, he has no grounds for making the interpretation. This may help to bridge the gap. The theory that is being subjected to empirical test must be related to its power to enable the analyst to feel certain that he *thinks* that *x* is the case – not to its power to make it certain that *x* is the case. The fact susceptible of empirical test is the certainty, or the degree of certainty, that the analyst can achieve about what he thinks is going on. He could say, "I quite realize that my view may be entirely wrong, but I do know that I am certain at any rate that *this* is my view".

8 September 1959

α

The inability of the psychotic to 'digest' his experience mentally because of his lack of capacity for *α* contributes to the situation with which most observers are familiar, namely the easy accessibility to the *observer* of what should be the psychotic's unconscious. These elements remain detectable because the patient cannot make them unconscious. They are therefore also, as I have shown, not available to *him* because there has been no dream-work-*α* done to make them unconscious and therefore available to him. He is a man both unable to make these elements unconscious and unable to profit by experience, for profiting by experience means being able to make the material consciously perceived into material that can be mentally stored in such a way that it is susceptible of both concretization and abstraction.

A child learning to walk is engaged in attempting to make conscious material unconscious; only when this is done can it walk. The same is true of every piece of learning ever done – its success depends on the central operations by which dream-work-*α* is able to transform conscious material into unconscious material suitable for unconscious waking thinking.

The non-psychotic, and the non-psychotic part of the personality, is afraid of making something conscious – the typical neurotic fear in psychoanalysis – because making it conscious is feared as being the same as 'bringing it out into the open'; this in turn is felt to be the same as evacuating it and making it conscious in such a way that it can never be made unconscious again, and therefore unavailable ever again for unconscious waking thinking. And this in turn is felt to be indistinguishable from being psychotic. This is one of the reasons for the neurotic's fear that successful analysis will make him mad.

The psychotic fears *α* partly because its operation is felt to bring in the super-ego, and partly because making something unconscious is felt to be equivalent to losing it and consciousness for ever, i.e. death.

The neurotic fears interpretation partly because making something conscious is the same as making it unavailable for unconscious waking thought (equivalent to insane state). Unconscious waking thought is occupied with transitions from paranoid-schizoid position to depressive position (Poincaré, *Science and Method*, p. 30).

12 September 1959

In 'Two Principles of Mental Functioning' [1911b] Freud speaks of a capacity for *attention* as associated with the development of the reality principle; he did not follow up this theme. The name seems peculiarly appropriate to a phenomenon I wish to discuss, but I am loath to take over and possibly distort any scientific term already serving a useful function. For this reason I have discarded the term, 'dreamwork', which in some respects covered a number of phenomena bearing an apparent similarity to those I wished to discuss. I considered employing some term such as 'dream-work-*α*', or simply '*α*', but the first only obviated some of the objections implicit in the use of 'dream-work', and the second, though avoiding too strong a penumbra of already-existing associations, erred on the side of being too abstract. The term, 'reverie', had many virtues but carried an implication of divorce from practicality or action, which was alien to my purpose. I hope to avoid a greater number of the possible objections than is possible in the use of any other terms I have considered by using the term, 'attention'. The word does not seem to have been used sufficiently by Freud to make my use of it liable to debase a meaning it already has and so to destroy precision. At the same time it is possible that my use of it may be a legitimate extension of an opening for investigation which Freud made but did not follow up.

13 September 1959

The contact with a psychotic patient is an emotional experience, presenting some precise features that differentiate it from the experience of contact of a more usual kind; the analyst does not meet a personality, but a hastily organized improvisation of a personality, or perhaps of a mood. It is an improvisation of fragments; if the impression is predominantly of friendliness, there will nevertheless be easily discernible fragments of hostility embedded in the conglomerate that has been assembled to do service, for the occasion, as a personality. If the impression is predominantly of depression, the mosaic of fragments will reveal incongruous bits of a smile without context other than a kind of contiguity with surrounding fragments; tears without depth, jocosity without friendliness, bits of hate – all these and many more fragmentary emotions or ideas jostle each other to present a labile façade.

But at once the question arises: is it a façade? If so, what lies behind it? Or, if it means that this improvised personality is all, or nearly all, there is, who or what is responsible for the improvisation? If it is a façade, what does it conceal, and to what end?

The encounter is not unlike the more everyday event of a face-to-face conversation with someone who has a marked squint: at which eye does one look? For the analyst the problem is central, not peripheral. He must decide whether he is speaking to the apparently improvised personality, to the improviser who has had the improvisation forced upon him so as to effect a meeting with the analyst, or to an improviser whose improvisation is one behind which he wishes to remain concealed.

Suppose the patient to be, or to have been, capable of normality: the conglomerate of fragments of personality which serves the patient for a personality can only be regarded as evidence of a disaster. The discussion of such a case is difficult because we are concerned not with the ordinary structures of

the human personality for which terms such as ego, id, super-ego have been made available by Freud, but with the shattered fragments of these which have now been reassembled but not rearticulated.

19 September 1959

Scientific method

Heisenberg shows (*Physics and Philosophy*, p. 89) that a set of concepts has a limitation that is not obvious from the set of concepts itself. The 'set' of relativity and the 'set' of Newtonian mechanics approached each other within the limit where velocities in the system are very small compared with the speed of light.

Similarly it may be true that a scientific deductive system is valid in a certain limited system that is not deductive from the scientific deductive system itself; moreover, that two separate scientific deductive systems approximate to each other in a certain limited system whose limits are not deducible from the concepts of either of the two scientific deductive systems.

In Freud's work the social field in which the individual works is taken as 'given', but now it is essential that the environment must become the object of further theoretical studies. Only in this way can narcissism and the narcissistic psychoses be understood.

* * *

Cogito ergo sum

I am, therefore I think: I think, therefore I am. If α is destroyed, thought becomes impossible and the personality ceases to exist. The schizophrenic's fear of annihilation may be associated with an experiencing of his non-existence as a personality. It raises the question: what is the personality? What is the limiting field for the concept of personality? There can be no personality if there is no thinking, no self consciousness. There may be persons, but not personality unless there is a function of self consciousness. Self consciousness, the function, is the *sine qua non* of personality. To say someone has personality is to mean that he is aware of himself, not sporadically but permanently as a continuous phenomenon.

The stammer is a repudiation of awareness, an evacuation of awareness of what is currently taking place; it is the antithesis of *α*. It is therefore incompatible with a state of self consciousness. And therefore, and to that extent, the stammerer has no personality?

This is not true; any stammerer would I think be said to have a marked personality, often irascible.

26 September 1959

The patient's relationship is, tenuously, with the analyst as analyst; it is predominantly with the couple in the room – any couple, but most obviously the couple formed by the analyst and himself; it is with himself only in a somewhat peculiar manner in that he is either identified with himself or with the couple.

The relationship is not so much with the couple as with the couple as two objects linked together. The predominant element in the relationship between the patient and the couple is that aspect of the relationship which is formed with the link between the two objects. The most obvious link is that provided by his free associations and the analyst's interpretations.

The link changes in character. For my immediate purpose we may suppose that the analyst feels called upon to give a sexual interpretation. He may say, in response to previous material and in accordance with psychoanalytic principles, "You are showing that you feel I am a man doing something sexual to a woman". This statement turns the relationship between analyst and patient into a sexual relationship, and the verbal exchange has become a sexual link.

The patient does not subject this interpretation to α except tenuously and in non-psychotic aspects (parts) of his personality, but of that I do not wish just now to speak. Instead he subjects it to splitting attacks that are destructive in intent; it is taken in only to be subjected to splitting and ejection.

For this purpose mechanisms exist to carry out the double function. The splitting is carried out by some part of the psyche which is symbolically or pictorially represented by teeth, typewriter (working in reverse as it were – the words are taken in aurally, broken up into letters of the alphabet, and thus not only fragmented but transformed from sound into visual objects and ejected through the eyes to become further mutilated, so that they are now minute, unrecognizable shapes at a distance), gramophone (also working in reverse), and so on. The sensory apparatus employed for ejection is related to the distance to

which the fragmented objects are propelled. Visual apparatus is used for distant ejection; tactile sense carries no further than the skin in one direction, and to various organs of the body in the other.

Owing to the conflicting reparative and creative drives, this evacuatory process may not reach the extremes that are represented by invisible visual hallucinations that are the outcome of transformation into pictorial images, extremely minute fragmentation, and ejection by the eyes to a great distance. Some degree of pictorialization and other transformations take place to form the (from the analyst's point of view) bizarre, hallucinatory objects.

This situation which has now developed in the consulting room must be distinguished from that of which I shall treat in the scientific deductive system entitled Hallucination and Dream, dealing with the problem of transition from one position to another when the depressive position is indissolubly linked with the materialization (realization) of a murderous super-ego. For the present I want to consider the fate of the content, the characteristics, of the link between the analyst and patient which has been thus subjected to splitting and evacuation.

"Well then, if you want to know", he said, becoming confidential, "last night I had a most enjoyable evening. People smoking: intelligent, friendly atmosphere, and *then . . .*", becoming indignant, in a noisy voice, "the waitress brought me only half a cup of coffee, and that ab-so-lutely finished it". Dropping his voice, "I couldn't do a thing after that. Not a thing." Almost whispering, "That finished it."

* * *

The schizophrenic's relationship is not with the analyst predominantly but with the analyst + himself. That is to say, it is predominantly a social transference – dualism to narcissism.

The persecutors are products of the *immediate* destruction of the conversation. That is to say, if *a* + *p* are talking sexually, then *p* evacuates as he destroys as he hears the sexual pair. At the same time he reconstructs; his verbal meaning etc. is the reconstruction, and that is audible in the form of his description of the persecutors.

27 September 1959

X has feelings of persecution about various sensory impressions he receives. Are all these sense impressions indications of a process of mental digestion? When he hears banging, is it because he has to get into a state of mind appropriate to being in a mother's inside to spy on her digestive processes – a kind of sexual intercourse in which she (I, in the analysis) is digesting him by banging him to bits, clicking (his frequent complaint) him to bits, just turning him not into a person but a conglomeration of bits of faeces, a stool? In this case his attempt to get into the analyst is identical emotionally with getting 'deeply' into parental sexual intercourse – digestion of one parent by the other. ('Deeply' here means multi-dimensionally extreme – in space, in time, in 'thoroughness', in emotional involvement. A mathematical symbol is required for this concept, or something similarly exact yet abstract.) He has to see the supposed parental intercourse in minute detail and to the bitter end. But as he proceeds, he loses touch with his 'base'.

29 September 1959

Today X was anxious to insist that my voice was stronger and better – that I had got it back again. And as a corollary, that it had been very weak. Obviously the idea was that *he* had put me right – not that he had damaged me. Only if he is allowed to be the analyst can the analysis proceed. But all this is an acting out of phantasy. It differs from normal analysis in which the phantasy has to be interpreted; here it is acted, and the analyst has to agree that the phantasy is a fact.

Drowsiness is coming to me; it is part of the relaxation I have to achieve if my ideas are to be accessible. I must *dream* along, but then I risk going fast asleep. I have had to shut my eyes because they sting. Then I nearly went to sleep. "Watch the wall my darling, while the Gentlemen go by." [Rudyard Kipling, 'A Smuggler's Song'.] A smuggling process I must not know anything about. A wrapping up and packing of the goods I wish to remove from the environment. Does this mean that α is to *hide* things from the conscious? If so, it is nearer to Freud's view of dream-work. The conscious is the servant of the unconscious. It is the conscious whose job it is to lie and deceive and protect the unconscious in its activities.

2 October 1959

X

When I begin to think of an unusually full session, I can remember nothing. This makes me wonder if my wish for his co-operation leads me to exaggerate what he did.

He came into the room handing me his cheque. He lay down from the end of the couch. He speaks. "I wondered whether to write it standing up. I couldn't find a lavatory or a train in which to do it. If I did it downstairs it would keep you standing." Now I am not sure that he did not say, "If I wrote it in the waiting room it would keep you standing", or if it was that if he wrote it downstairs it would keep me waiting. The point is that I suspect that from time to time he speaks with, from his point of view, great precision, and that if I treat it conversationally I am guilty of splashing the good food about, as it were.

Perhaps I should consider schizophrenic precision – a meticulous accuracy – and schizophrenic destructiveness.

4 October 1959

In spite of the advances of science in recent years, the methods employed in scientific work are under critical scrutiny. The moral questioning amongst scientists themselves of the use to which scientific knowledge is being put is scarcely relevant to discussion of the methods themselves, yet it has contributed to that discussion.

In philosophy the question is not new though it is unnecessary to go back earlier than Hume to find the origins of the present controversies. The problem as it appears to the philosopher has been stated by Prichard (*Knowledge and Perception*, p. 69). He says,

> Though we are aware that any knowledge at which we arrive is the result of a process on our part, we do not reflect on the nature of the process – at any rate in any systematic way – and make it the object of a special study. But sooner or later knowledge of our mistakes and the desire to be sure that we are getting the genuine article, i.e. something which is really knowledge, lead us to reflect on the process . . . in the end we find ourselves having to ask whether we are capable of knowing at all and are not merely under the illusion of thinking that we can know.

In the natural sciences the quantum mechanical theories have disturbed the classical concept of an objective world of facts which is studied objectively. And the work of Freud has at the same time excited criticism that it is unscientific because it does not conform to the standards associated with classical physics and chemistry; it constitutes an attack on the pretensions of the human being to possess a capacity for objective observation and judgement by showing how often the manifestations of human beliefs and attitudes are remarkable for their efficacy as a disguise for unconscious impulses rather than for their contribution to knowledge of the subjects they purport to discuss.

But, it may be argued, do not the facts discovered as a result of the application of scientific methods constitute a proof that the methods employed – for example mathematical formulas in the prediction

of astronomical phenomena – have a validity independent of the observer who elaborates and employs them, that the methods belong to ontology, not epistemology, and are 'objective', not 'subjective'? Unfortunately not, for as Heisenberg has shown through the interpretation of quantum mechanical theory made by himself, Niels Bohr, and others of the Copenhagen School, no single fact is unrelated to and uninfluenced by the totality of facts, and that totality must remain unknown. Even the concept of space may have only a very limited application because there need be no reality corresponding to the concept. As Poincaré has pointed out, our methods of mensuration, which have played and still play a considerable part in the concept of space, are clearly related to man's awareness of his own body (*Science and Method*, p. 100), and can in fact be ignored, just as they are in the positional geometry of Riemann. No psychoanalyst would be surprised at the attribution of the origins of mensuration to the experiences of infancy and childhood.

Since the philosophy of modern physics – the most successful and most rigorous of scientific disciplines – can be seen here to be quite compatible with a philosophical view of unco-ordinated and incoherent elements similar to the mental domain of isolated elements from which Poincaré describes the mathematician as attempting to escape by his discovery of the selected 'fact', and since moreover the mental state described by Poincaré is quite compatible or even identical with that described by Melanie Klein in her discussion of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, it is reasonable to suppose that the investigation and explanation of these unco-ordinated elements will be dictated by the impulse described by Poincaré and investigated in detail psychoanalytically by Melanie Klein and her co-workers, and limited by the mental capacity which in the final analysis is the tool by which the investigation is carried out. This in turn means that of the totality of facts, only those will be investigated which are illuminated and rendered comprehensible by existing mathematical calculi. If they lie beyond the scope of such methods, they will not be discovered; if they are discovered, then obviously they will be such facts as conform to, and so appear to confirm, the mathematical calculi that have been employed. There is no reason to suppose that the totality of facts, or even any considerable proportion of them, support the view that there is a realization (Semple and Kneebone, *Algebraic Projective Geometry*, 1952, p. 4) which corresponds to the mathematical calculi

and the scientific deductive systems they represent. For the psychoanalyst there is every reason to regard mathematical phenomena as belonging to the domain of epistemology, and therefore as a matter for psychoanalytic investigation, and in particular that mathematics should be regarded as having, as Heisenberg says of "every word or concept", "only a limited range of applicability" (*Physics and Philosophy*, p. 111). As he says,

> When we represent a group of connections by a closed and coherent set of concepts, axioms, definitions and laws which in turn is represented by a mathematical scheme, we have in fact isolated and idealized this group of connections with the purpose of clarification. But even if complete clarity has been achieved in this way, it is not known how accurately the set of concepts describes reality. [p. 96]

In short, mathematics must be regarded by the psychoanalyst as one of the limiting classes that belong to psychoanalysis in so far as it attempts to be a coherent system of concepts, and in particular as one of the methods by which the paranoid-schizoid and depressive systems are brought into a dynamic relationship with each other, and therefore as an aspect of those mental phenomena that are concerned in the achievement of mental development by facilitating that dynamic relationship. It will therefore be seen that from a psychoanalytic point of view mathematics does not belong to the realm of ontology nor yet even of epistemology, but rather to that class of mental functioning which, since transition from paranoid-schizoid to depressive positions and back is essential to mental development, is essential to sanity itself.

This is not to belittle mathematics but to show how fallacious is the view that pre-eminent importance in any one sphere, however important, confers some universally equal significance in all – a fallacy that has tended to make some observers suppose that failure to produce calculi representing the deductive system of biology, and in particular of psychoanalysis, is necessarily a condemnation of the subject for which no calculi exist. Mathematics may have a very important role as an object of study psychoanalytically, and at the same time and for the same reason be an important element in the mental processes of the individual which makes it possible for him to be a psychoanalyst.

6 October 1959

X

"Have got paint onto my sleeve." He went on and on about this; he couldn't get it off; it might injure my "new couch"; complaints of noises.

Some of the session was explicable in terms of being right inside the mother and witnessing sexual intercourse from there; some in terms of a sexual relationship with me which was achieved by sexualizing a miserable relationship. He spoke of smoke coming from top-storey rooms – two rooms; a fire-engine going to a house where only a week before there had been a fire. These I interpreted as primal scene. But I felt it was more free association on my part to stimuli produced by him. The session had a certain coherence – as interpreted by me. It is extraordinary how little I can have any confidence in the work done; so much seems to be done by myself that any 'result' in the session is open to the objection that it is achieved by the analyst out of his own mind without any element of real contribution by the patient. Yet he criticizes as if any departure from an exactly correct interpretation is an inexcusable imprecision. It is far easier for me to recall an interpretation of mine than the material on which it was based. But nevertheless there were interpretations today which felt right. One touched on the fact that he behaved and felt like a baby – either D or the unborn one – so that the baby would not envy him as the parent. In this way the parent was not allowed to have anything the baby could not have.

The relationship with me is governed by the same watchfulness towards a murderously envious force which appears to be somewhere about. It is often as if material produced for inspection and interpretation is removed in the very act of interpretation. I showed him that a miserable relationship with me was made tolerable by being sexualized.

7 October 1959

X

The pullover which is beautifully knitted by his wife but not suited for the baby's cold. Trains that did not behave as they should (not as frustration-evading dreams). "Had a dream; remembered it as I got off the couch last time. I had painted a picture; stuck on to one corner of it was the payment for it. I don't know how it got there." (Frustration evasion.) He had been talking of his wish to earn a living by painting.

How much should I interpret on classical lines? He showed he did not think it a dream by the way he said, "I don't know how it (the payment) got there". It was therefore quite likely to be more of a hallucination than a dream. And I had been able to show him, with the dream and the two trains, how he expected the trains to act as frustration-evasion items, and not as frustration-modifying 'facts' – real trains which took you somewhere at the cost of tolerating frustration.

This session seems to me so exciting in bearing out, together with previous sessions, the theory of α and the theories about frustration evasion and frustration modification that I can hardly trust myself to bring any kind of reasoned criticism to bear on the matter. Further, there is no doubt of the very great improvement that is taking place.

11 October 1959

Resistance

What is being resisted? The investigation? The interpretation? The emotional experience of investigation? The possibility of the discovery of something? The arousal of emotions? The elements of the paranoid-schizoid position? The junction of paranoid-schizoid with depressive? The onset of the depressive position?

While I write this, considering it is probably all of them, I find myself thinking with hate and fear of Z: a pictorial image of myself standing up at a meeting and attacking him for being a disaster to his profession. And it occurs to me that it is this visual image of which I am frightened. I do not want the experience of the visual image. A fear of this kind, carried far enough, would inhibit or destroy α – the process by which immediate fact is transformed into 'storable' material and not just introjected as undigested fact. Visual image of myself being expelled from the meeting and making a noble, impassioned plea.

The elements are then fragments of the destroyed 'couple', and this fits in with observation of X.

But what of mathematics and music? Geometry is a kind of visual image; music can evoke visual images.

* * *

This question was followed by a long digression of thought and physical activity. Why? Partly because I could not see any further, but partly because I felt I was confronted with unknown elements that do not fit into my scheme or any scheme. Any synthesis always involves more unknowns appearing – that is to say, the appearance of a whole mass of more 'elements'. These presumably require a new deductive system, a new theory, or a part of a new but unknown deductive system. At this point it is clear that the objection to the depressive position is not only the emergence of the object synthesized, but of a whole mass of more unsynthesized objects. Thus one reason for the fear of the synthesized punitive super-ego is that its emergence is

inseparable from the emergence of more 'elements' which are seen, partly in the light of the recreated punitive super-ego, as being fresh evidence of the destructiveness of the personality. It is a revelation not only of past destructiveness but of new destructiveness freshly wrought. A creative act is felt to be the signal for the discovery of a revelation of further and greater tasks of reparation. This contributes to the sense of overwhelming fatigue that some patients experience.

What then leads to resistance in music or maths? To my mind it is the sphinx, the plague (of 'elements'?), the dread of the experience of the paranoid-schizoid/depressive position interplay. Why are the 'elements' so deadly? The animal that goes on four legs, two legs, three legs seems related to the three-kneed thing with equal legs [*see* p. 195].

* * *

The task confronting the analyst is to bring intuition and reason to bear on an emotional experience between two people (of whom he is one) in such a way that not only he but also the analysand gains an understanding of the analysand's response to that emotional situation, and does so through an appreciation of the evidence to which the analyst is drawing attention in the course of his interpretations. It is not enough for the analyst to be convinced that there is evidence for the truth of his interpretations; he must have enough evidence available to afford the analysand the opportunity of being persuaded, by his reason, of the cogency of the interpretation.

Such is the ideal; in fact the analyst's environment, in which I include his state of mind whatever the elements are that contribute to it, and the disturbed mental state of the analysand introduce hazards that make an analysis relate to this ideal with varying degrees of approximation.

The analytic experience is a complex of many experiences, which individually are familiar both to analyst and analysand and therefore tend to give a deceptively simple appearance to a situation that has, by bringing these familiar experiences together, become unique. Everything that happens in a consulting room has happened quite commonly to both participants before, but never in quite the same way. The behaviour that is under observation is in detail the behaviour of ordinary human beings, and even the interpretations given are no different in essence from the kind of interpretations that in ordinary

life we have been used to give and receive throughout our lives, even though we have not so much as heard of psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, the interpretations appear to a layman to be far-fetched and bizarre, a quality they owe to the extension that ordinary interpretative capacity receives through development of the analyst's intuition and the aid he obtains from the body of psychoanalytic theory with which he is familiar.

These theories are always a matter for some degree of controversy even among psychoanalysts, partly because development of the subject means that there are always some theories that are under trial, partly because there are some theories that, though long accepted, seem to require revision, and partly because the application of a theory, perhaps sound in itself, has been defective and so has led to suspicion of the theory.

The theories of psychoanalysis are peculiar in that their use in the consulting room emphasizes, in a manner rare in other sciences, their function as actual tools which the analyst has to use in his practice. In other sciences the theories inform the use to which various tools and appliances are put: in psychoanalysis the theory is the tool itself.

16 October 1959

Various forms of dream manifestation

1. *Organic*

(a) The patient may be concussed – an unlikely contingency but one to be borne in mind in view of the patient's disturbed condition, and therefore the possibility that he has been in an accident.

(b) He may be drunk.

(c) He may have taken some other drug – cocaine, barbiturates, etc.

2. *Psychological*

(a) *α* is in progress. That is to say, he is attempting to transform immediately current events in the room into assimilable form. This pre-supposes that his *α* capacity is rudimentary and is being expressed aloud presumably to get the analyst's help. But it may slide off into

(b) dreaming. This is the emergence of an activity which the patient dare not allow himself out of the analyst's presence through dread of the dream's *manifest* content, and in particular destroyed objects, un-*α*'d objects *and* super-ego.

(c) An artificially contrived dream or a hallucinated dream – the latter must be distinguished from the hallucination. Without this distinction the inability to produce associations cannot be properly understood and there is blurring of the distinction between the process intended to evacuate (hallucination) and a process concerned with a need to introject. The artificially contrived dream *sounds* what it is; it is consciously fabricated, and that, I think, must be taken as the distinction from the hallucinated dream. The hallucinated dream is one produced under duress; the patient *must* dream, and it is this compulsion which leads to an uncontrolled hallucinated dream.

(d) Hallucination: olfactory, auditory, visual. The function is evacuatory, and it is stimulated by immediate events. If the analyst knows the content of the hallucination, then he must see it as an immediate situation not transformed (digested) at all. Thus the patient starts up, pointing and saying, "My wife, it's my wife! She's coming for me! Stop her!" This is a visual image – he is evacuating it through his eyes. It might be argued that this is how he sees me and that I must therefore be transformed mentally into a visual image of his dead wife. In fact it is a view that is plausible but untenable for reasons I shall give later. He does not in any true sense see me or have any other sensory perception of me. I remain an undigested fact because his very partial sensory awareness of my presence has acted as a stimulus to his projective mechanisms and he has ejected an old, undigested fact. I shall not for the moment consider the nature and origin of the visual image of his dead wife, which is here a fact undigested in the past, except to say that it is probably a past dream fragment which he did not originally digest, that it dates from a time when he could dream and that it therefore has great prognostic significance. Indeed it could be taken as a sign suggesting the possibility of psychoanalytic repair and cure because it indicates that there is something to repair. For the moment I want to consider only that, excluding any effect interpretation may have, the original undigested fact, the image of the dead wife, remains undigested; in addition there is a new undigested fact, namely my presence and intervention as the analyst. There is every reason to suppose – again excluding the effect any interpretation may have – that the new undigested fact, in addition to the old one, will at some future date reappear.

17 October 1959

The dream

The term, 'dream', I shall always use for the phenomena described by Freud under that term. The dream is an emotional experience that is developmentally unsuccessful in that it is an attempt to fulfil the functions which are incompatible; it is in the domain of the reality principle and the pleasure principle, and represents an attempt to satisfy both. That is to say, it is an attempt to achieve frustration evasion and frustration modification and fails in both. In so far as it is an attempt at modification of frustration, it requires an interpretation; as an attempt at frustration evasion, it has failed to satisfy because the wish-fulfilment element in it leaves the personality aware that the wish has not been fulfilled in reality. The dream thus occupies a conspicuous role in treatment; it contains, and is itself a manifestation of, painful stresses. But for this same reason its importance is less central amongst the processes involved in the maintenance of smooth development; the crucial mechanisms are those associated with rendering the perceptions of experience fit for storage in the psyche, namely α, and for making these stored transformations of experience available again when the psyche needs them. The problem is, what are these crucial mechanisms? It may be that we can never know, that we can only postulate their existence in order to explain hypotheses that are capable of translation into empirically verifiable data, and that we shall have to work with these postulates without assuming that corresponding realities will at some time be discovered. I regard α as a postulate of this nature.

* * *

α-*destruction*

One consequence is starvation of the psyche in its supply of reality. There is therefore nothing that can be opposed to phantasy. This is

an additional reason for failure to wake up; there is not enough 'up' to wake up to.

Two conditions need differentiation:

1. a feeling that he cannot dream; this is so strong that it inhibits realization that he is dreaming;
2. an actual inability to dream.

The appearance of dreaming that the patient then presents can be due to phenomena that look alike but are actually different, according to whether they are associated with (1) or (2). If (1), then the disjointed elements are *α*-elements that the patient cannot synthesize, e.g. through fear of super-ego, or hatred of reality, or dread of depression. If (2), then the disjointed elements are *β*-elements.

* * *

The aftermath of the destruction of α

The patient is now enclosed in a state of mind that is no longer adequate for his needs. He is mentally and psychically starved of matter necessary for his development. In short, his attempt to evade frustration has, by cutting him off from reality, produced a frustration more intense than any he has tried to avoid. He is 'imprisoned in psychoanalysis'.

The attempt to escape involves the restoration of *α* which has been destroyed by splitting and projective identification; the fragments have to be recovered and reunited. In addition to the difficulties incidental to this, especially great when the fragmentation has been into extremely minute pieces, is the danger I have indicated which is anticipated from the restoration of an extremely destructive super-ego, which restoration is unavoidable if any restoration at all is attempted. Therefore the process of repair is constantly hampered by a coincidental destructive procedure.

The result is a complex and confusing clinical picture in which the analyst must attempt to demonstrate the fragments that the patient attempts to juxtapose. During this process the destructive super-ego emerges, and contemporaneous destructive attempts are made, at the instigation of the super-ego, to undo the attempts at juxtaposition and repair.

Thus the patient will produce a fragment of a visual image. Another fragment will be produced, perhaps many sessions later. If all goes well, more fragments are produced, perhaps with decreasing intervals of time, until at last it becomes possible to indicate the relationship of some of these fragments of visual images to each other. The reaction will show that the dreaded super-ego is discerned by the patient in the shadowy lineaments of the juxtaposed fragments. This is the signal for splitting attacks on the super-ego and further dispersal of the fragments. But the fragmented super-ego engages in destruction on its own account and splits itself in the process of splitting the ego. The mutual destruction conflicts with the still proceeding reparative efforts.

But we must now consider another consequence of the destruction of *α*. Since its destruction makes it impossible to store experience, retaining only undigested 'facts', the patient feels he contains not visual images of things but things themselves. Reciprocally, things themselves are regarded by him in the same way as non-psychotics and the non-psychotic part of his personality regard 'thoughts' and 'ideas'; they are expected by him to behave as if they were visual images in his mind. I have described some of the consequences of this elsewhere; the result I want to consider here is the patient's inability to dream and its exacerbation of the frustration, and its contribution to the frustration that the destruction of a was intended to evade but which has been intensified instead. The starvation of the psyche of all elements needed for growth and development gives extreme urgency to the patient's inability to dream. But this activity is extra-sessional and impregnated with the dangers incidental to a restored super-ego. The fear of this conflicts with the necessity to restore the capacity to dream, for the fear is of nothing less than annihilation. Consequently the patient, as we have already seen, needs to restrict these attempts to sessions. Then, and only then, is he sure of the external aid that the presence of the analyst affords. It is this that leads to the events I have already described in which the patient strives to dream in the session. But, in the instance I am giving, the patient cannot dream. The combination of incapacity to dream with the urgency imposed by psychic starvation gives rise to the phenomenon I have described as the hallucinated dream which affords no associations – associations being equated with sustenance.

25 October 1959

Truth – need for, and need to keep maladjustment in repair

Psychoanalytic procedure pre-supposes that the welfare of the patient demands a constant supply of truth as inevitably as his physical survival demands food. It further presupposes that discovery of the truth about himself is a precondition of an ability to learn the truth, or at least to seek it in his relationship with himself and others. It is supposed at first that he cannot discover the truth about himself without assistance from the analyst and others.

It is likely that this belief has an empirical foundation in that all are familiar with the fact, probably learned very early in life, that a mistaken idea leads to mistaken action, which leads to frustration and other forms of suffering. But a true view can do the same, and on the choice that is made depends the nature of the suffering experienced. The choice is really a choice of method; the essential difference for our purposes in the nature of the choice made is that one is in favour of the method of frustration evasion, and the other in favour of the method of frustration modification. Freud's pleasure principle would seem to tend in the direction of frustration evasion, his reality principle in the direction (in his view) of frustration modification. But in fact, as Freud saw, the impulse to pleasure is not absent under the domination of the reality principle, nor is the reality principle absent under the dominance of the pleasure principle. Much depends on the fact that the choice is influenced by what is, and what is conceived to be, the reality when the choice is made. But the decision is seriously affected by the individual ability or inability to tolerate enduring frustration. If the patient is unable to endure frustration – that is, frustration over a period of time – he will lean towards the methods of frustration evasion.

Whichever choice is made, work has to be done – a point that may escape the attention of the patient, and of those on whom he depends in the most severe cases of all, namely psychotic patients. For the apparatus of denial, endopsychic and social, is formidable indeed if it

is to be as effective as it in fact is. The scientifically minded individual has to be what is ordinarily called well-adjusted, but it is equally true that the individual who is dominated by the goal of frustration evasion has to be what is ordinarily called maladjusted and is under compulsion to keep his maladjustment in constant repair – a point that becomes increasingly clear in the psychoanalysis of the psychotic patient. Nor can his labours cease at the borders of his own personality; as the scientist has to seek the aid of groups, institutions, elaborate apparatus, and social support as well as maintain his mental acumen, so the individual oriented to frustration evasion has to enlist the aid of, or actually initiate, social institutions to help in the task of denial of reality. The actual social institutions need not differ: those used by the scientifically oriented and by frustration-evaders can be the same but used differently. It is obvious that a psychotic will use the institution of marriage, the family and the state differently from the frustration-modifier. What is not sufficiently appreciated is that it is purposive; this becomes clear to the analyst who has to deal with a psychotic patient and his various groups, such as his family. The analyst who is oblivious of this fact and imagines that he can enlist the aid of the family to produce the conditions in which treatment is possible, is ignoring the patient's belief that *he* can enlist the aid of the family and his other groups to produce the conditions in which evasion of frustration is possible. In extreme cases, where murderous destructiveness is directed against the sexual parents and their offspring, the original frustration is of the impulse to murder the parents and commit suicide. This impulse is frustrated by the helplessness of the patient as an infant. With growth this helplessness is removed, but psychological development introduces new barriers to the satisfaction of murderous envy and destructiveness. This struggle between life and death instincts informs the operation of all the complex mechanisms that are demonstrated in the course of an analysis of a psychotic patient. It also contributes powerfully to the patient's need to preserve his psychosis as a complex of methods of frustration evasion, which in turn is felt to be a method by which his murderous impulses are satisfied, and by which he can also satisfy his need to preserve his objects. Both impulses are frustrated, but he strives to evade awareness of either frustration – a goal that cannot be achieved by frustration modification.

30 October 1959

X

He looked clean and cool, rather than sweaty and scruffy as he usually does, then began with the usual evocative associations – evocative *and* provocative, so as to ensure either reassurance of love or reassurance of hate. He was more coherent. *Yet it is hard to recall anything he said*. This is typical even though something is said. I was able to show him that by taking a minutely fragmented view he could avoid feeling the seriousness of the situation, which was revealed if all the minor statements of dissatisfaction were added up. This I think suggests splitting attacks on the depressive position. Thus the depressive stupor becomes a mass of tiny persecutory depressions: the door slams; singing in his head; a pain in his ankle; "I don't know why; I'm sorry; the waitress brought some coffee; only half a cup"; and – despairingly, "*I could not go on*".

This can be regarded as a splitting attack on depression, or an attempt to bring the fragments of persecuting depression together in a creative way, i.e. to form a whole; or a series of pictorial images, ideograms, which will not coalesce; or 'undigested' fragments, i.e. not proper pictorial images but facts sensually perceived yet remaining as bits of sensory awareness that have not been rendered fit for storage and are therefore not memories proper.

This explains my being the person who is dead, who, as he said, has "had it". In other words, if the pieces are brought together and *do* coalesce, it is seen that the fragments are really me, only in pieces. And since I cannot exist like that, I must be dead.

[Undated]

I am reminded of the Millais Culpin case: the patient committed suicide after an interview when Culpin told him that analysis was not suitable for him. Culpin was blamed by the coroner and attacked in *The Times*, which suggested that an end should be put to psychoanalysis.[1]

With this patient it is essential never to forget that one is dealing with a schizophrenic. That is to say that one should never forget that the patient is both murderous and irresponsible, and that 'common sense', i.e. the common sense of the society, dictates a particular diagnosis and a particular attitude of individual members of the society to the patient. Resistance to this dictation carries the penalties which the group always threatens to exact from those who resist its dictates. The 'common sense' of the patient, however invisible and undetectable it may seem to be, tells him this, for he *has* common sense though he makes uncommon use of it.

Although the analyst must never cease to be a member of his group, and must be correspondingly sensitive to its dictates and the risks his ignoring of these dictates carries, neither must he ever permit the 'socialism' of his orientation to obscure the immediate vivid reality that confronts him in the consulting room. The patient knows this too; he is prepared to play his part in exacting a heavy penalty if the analyst does not behave with the perspicacity that is not only demanded by the work, but also by the patient's determination that the analyst should support, by his conduct in devoting his exclusive attention to the patient – no matter at what cost to himself – the patient's narcissism against his 'socialism' (and also be as socially ostracized).

The analyst is thus forced to experience the split which the patient himself suffers between his narcissism and his socialism. That this

[1] [See Culpin (1926a, 1926b). *Ed.*]

split exists is made apparent by the patient's reaction to the analyst's ministrations to his narcissism. We have seen that the patient resents the analyst's awareness of social pressures and obligations, but he equally resents the pressures that originate in the exactions of his narcissism and does so by exploiting the interest the analyst shows in his welfare as a failure on the part of the analyst to show the common sense which everyone, except the analyst, might be supposed to possess.

* * *

The super-ego

The mirror image in time and space, as it appears in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*, is a version of a psychotic state that bears much the same relation to the psychotic state as do the events in a dream to the anxieties the dream expresses. That is to say, it is a version that makes the intolerable tolerable. The patient who looked at the blood mounting up his sleeve was experiencing murder, or rather being murdered, in reverse. At the point when his blood will be fully restored to his circulatory system he will experience being murdered. And then he will be all right.

Yet this is not quite right. It is far more than a mirror image – perhaps an inverted mirror image, such as might be obtained through a focal point of a lens.

I am not able to co-ordinate what I said about the bizarre objects as being pieces of super-ego or containing pieces of super-ego, with common sense as being the sense of the group and therefore its moral sense. Yet there is some point of intersection (certainly: because the group and its common sense is felt to be indistinguishable from particles of his destroyed common sense).

It may be that the point of entry is the Ps → D, the search for the significant unifying fact which is called 'the cause' when time is a component. It is the synthesis of the murderous super-ego (which takes place at the moment when all other syntheses take place) that makes Ps → D so hazardous.

But in postulating socialism as the other pole of narcissism, I had in mind the idea that the patient's socialism menaces his primacy as an individual, and the group demands of him subordination to aims

lying outside his personality. This is especially true with regard to aggression. Is it also true of morality? Is there a moral instinct which is also bi-polar, one in which the patient is impelled in conflicting directions because his individual moral view conflicts with the moral view he holds as a member of the group?

The conflict in the individual between socialism and narcissism

In his paper, 'Instincts and Their Vicissitudes' [1915c], Freud makes the suggestion that the relation between the ego and sexuality may be regarded in two apparently equally well justified ways. In the one, the individual is regarded as of prime importance; in the other, as a transitory appendage to the germ plasm bequeathed to him by the race. He postulates, expressly disavowing any greater authority for his statement than that appertaining to a postulate, that the conflict is between sexuality and the ego instincts. He suggests that study, particularly of the schizophrenias, might require modification of the theory.

I agree that one side of the conflict is associated with the ego, but it seems to me that difficulties are caused by making a division between ego instincts on the one hand and the sexual instincts on the other. A more fruitful division is one between narcissism on the one hand, and what I shall call socialism on the other. By these two terms I wish to indicate the two poles of all instincts. This bi-polarity of the instincts refers to their operation as elements in the fulfilment of the individual's life as an individual, and as elements in his life as a social or, as Aristotle would describe it, as a 'political' animal. The exclusive mention of sexuality ignores the striking fact that the individual has an even more dangerous problem to solve in the operation of his aggressive impulses, which, thanks to this bi-polarity, may impose on him the need to fight for his group with the essential possibility of his death, while it also imposes on him the need for action in the interests of his survival. There need be no conflict, but experience shows that in fact there is such a conflict – not between sexuality and ego instincts, but rather between his narcissism and his socialism, and this conflict may manifest itself no matter what the instincts are that are dominant at the time.

The ego is involved, for the ego is that which establishes a connection with internal and external realities. It is therefore within the ego that the conflict between narcissism and socialism has to be fought out. This struggle contributes to the forces that lead, in certain circumstances, to the splitting – and in extreme cases the weakening and finally the destruction – of the ego. But the ego is also under attack because it is the part of the personality that leads to the awareness of the conflicting demands of the group and the individual and is therefore felt to be the cause of the pain the individual experiences on account of the ego's contact with both external or group realities, and internal or ego-centric realities – i.e. because of its contact with the demands of narcissism and socialism. There is, therefore, in extreme cases, a weakening or even destruction of the ego through splitting attacks that derive from the primitive instinctual drives which seek satisfaction for both poles of their nature and turn against the psychic organ that appears to frustrate both alike. Hence the appearance, noted by Freud, of hatred of reality – now hatred of the ego which links with reality – characteristic of the severely disturbed patient seen in the psychoses.

It will be remarked that this view demands a revision of our ideas of the narcissistic neuroses and psychoses: they must be considered as cases in which primary narcissism is matched by an equally strong 'socialism' or group membership.

[Undated]

No free associations

When the patient talks about blood, I know what it means and I can produce plenty of associations, but the patient produces none. So I can either let an association of his pass without proper interpretation, and so feel an opportunity is lost, or I can use my own associations and give an interpretation that, in my giving of it, makes me abandon my position as an analyst and become a participant in *his* game – a game played according to rules of which I am not aware. But I do this if I do *not* give an interpretation.

From this point of view it might be put thus:

P: Blood. Now it's your turn to play.

A: (silent)

P: (to himself) What! Doesn't know what blood is? He must be mad.

A: Blood is your common sense which you feel is seeping away.

P: Yes. (And then follow more remarks which are in fact not comprehensible to me, but are to him because they are part of a game which only he understands. This game is a sexual one – sexual, that is, in the eyes of someone.)

[Undated]

The super-ego

The patient is gay, debonair. What has he to be so cheerful about? He is happily married, has a little son to whom he is devoted; his wife, like himself, is wealthy and devoted to him; his home is charming and – what makes it better – he has done much of the carpentry himself; they have both decorated the rooms. Their friends are many and influential, also interesting and creative; a few are artists whose names are known. All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds – the quotation would be known to him. God, likewise, is in His Heaven, all's right with the world. What then is the matter?

But who said there is anything the matter? The patient certainly has not said so – quite the contrary. The summary of his circumstances that I have given is not only obtained from him but is, as I know, the theme on which he is about to embroider as he comes into the room, the theme and its variations to which I have listened for three years in every session he has attended. His analyst and his response to his analyst's treatment both fit in with the rest of his good fortune; it is a pleasure for him to be treated by so brilliant an analyst as myself, and naturally a pleasure for me to have such an agreeable and rewarding patient.

Occasionally there seems to be some discordant note, an interpretation that, after I have given it, seems not to have been quite happy. The patient is, however, able to pass it off with the kind of easy tact with which an accomplished host or hostess – perhaps the latter conveys the more accurate impression – might pass off the solecism of one of the less sophisticated guests. The surface of urbanity, temporarily almost ruffled, is restored, and we return to 'the analysis'.

I said the patient has not mentioned that anything is the matter, but this is only partly true. At times he reports, somewhat whimsically, experiences, say at a party, which are less than agreeable. A woman, ill-tempered and known to be unpopular, has spoken to him impatiently, harshly almost. I am reminded of the lines,

> The good are so harsh to the clever,
> The clever so rude to the good.
>
> Elizabeth Wordsworth, *St. Christopher and Other Poems: Good and Clever*

Sometimes he has spoken as if the other guests too were hostile. None of the episodes he reports appears by itself to be of any consequence, but the effect of these scattered reports could be cumulative. I assume, of course, that as analyst I am able to be sufficiently sensitive for such impacts to influence me. The wide dispersal of such reports itself plays a part in producing the cumulative effect on me. I am given the impression that the actual events are of infrequent occurrence. But suppose they are not: is it possible that in fact this man is really hated?

The facts, as I know them, are that he reports such trivial episodes about once a fortnight. They are minor elements in the analytic material of the sessions in which they appear – minor, that is, if one accepts the balance of significance that the patient by intonation and emphasis imposes on his material.

Let us suppose that the reports correspond to the actual events the patient experiences both as to character and frequency. In that case, I wonder whether he is not perhaps somewhat naïve and oversensitive, perhaps even persecuted. He may simply be conceited, as I know he is, and incapable of judging his importance, or lack of importance. Certainly this view would be quite compatible with his capacity for exploiting the indulgence that is extended to him to produce a conviction of his own worth as the central factor in the agreeable episodes of his life.

My description makes it appear that there are two alternatives: either that the patient is hated, or that he is overindulged, naïve, and persecuted. But in fact there is no reason why these views should be regarded as alternatives.

[Undated]

α

The elements to which the student at the Pons Asinorum says goodbye [Euclid 1.5] have their counterpart in other mathematical situations. Thus there are the elements that are combined in a particular way to form the notation employed in determinants. But even when the mathematician does not employ the term, there are situations in which it is possible to see that what in fact could with justification be called 'elements' are being combined according to certain rules to produce formulas. These elements seem to vary considerably; it may be interesting to collect them together for investigation.

There are numbers; there are letters of the alphabet; there are points, lines, circles, angles; there are signs such as <, +, –; there are letters of the Greek alphabet, capital and lower case. All without exception are written, and though the marks that the writer makes have names – such as 'greater than', 'plus', 'minus', 'alpha', 'beta' – in fact mathematicians do not appear to use these signs for talking in the way that words are used in conversation. It must be supposed, therefore, that the object in synthesizing these elements is different from the object in verbalization, though the synthesizing process seems similar.

Why do not mathematicians speak mathematics? Is it that a string of mathematical formulas cannot be made to say, "It's a nice day"? Is the vocabulary not big enough? No: it must obviously be that its primary purpose is not conversational, although it is clear that one of the functions of mathematics is public-ation.

We shall have to consider three points: (1) the nature of the elements, (2) the nature of the methods employed to bring them together, and (3) the nature of the objects that are created by the syntheses of the elements (Poincaré, *Science and Method*, p. 30; *The Thirteen Books of Euclid's Elements*, I.1, I.5, I.47).

It may appear that I am suggesting that synthesis must be associated simply with a bringing together of the elements according to some known rule to form, say, a polynomial or a determinant. But we

cannot assume such a restriction and exclude the bringing together of these elements in a quite different manner; for example, in such a way that would issue in a dream, or in some structure such as that suggested by Stendhal's description of a painting as, "*de la morale construite*".

Certainly with the psychotic personality there is a failure to dream, which seems to be parallel with an inability to achieve fully the depressive position. It may therefore be said that the capacity to synthesize issues in two main events: (1) the logical construct, a mathematical formula, sentence, etc. and (2) a dream.

The inability to dream: I leave aside for the present the minute fragmentation etc. that may be associated with an inability to dream or, as I think, with dreams that are devoid of sense impressions, i.e. visual impression, auditory, olfactory, maybe tactile and taste impressions that are felt to be a kind of urination. I concentrate on the situation itself in which the patient has dreams devoid of sensory impressions, or all sense impressions and no dreams. If such a patient reports a dream, I suggest he is really reporting a hallucination and that he always feels it to be a 'queer dream'. I suggest that an inability to dream is itself so serious that the patient is compelled to have a dream, a 'queer dream' that is a counterpart, on the level of dream thinking, of the hallucinatory gratification experienced in waking life when true gratification is impossible.

Seen in this light, X's objection to noise may be his objection to a sense impression as well as to the thing his sense impression conveys to him. The deprivation of sense impression must then lead to an inability to dream and a need to hallucinate sense impressions as a substitute for the dream.

But (and it is striking that I am having great difficulty in remembering or seeing the relationship of each bit of this with the bit that has preceded it or that is coming next) this lack of sensory experience must be related to my theory about 'common sense'. And equally, my theory that his dream is a hallucination will explain adequately (?) why he has no associations. A hallucination of a dream can no more yield associations than a hallucinated breast can yield milk.

This failure to dream is felt as such a grave disaster that the patient continues to hallucinate during the day, to hallucinate a dream, or so to manipulate facts that he is able to feel he is having a dream – which is the daylight counterpart of the night-time hallucination of a

dream. But it is also the attempt to suck a dream out of an experience of reality or actuality. And in this respect the dream that yields no associations and the reality that yields no dreams are alike; they are similar to hallucinatory gratification.

Apparently X can get nothing from analysis. In feeling it is a hallucination in which he cannot have either love or hate, I am an object manipulated – like a masturbatory object – to obtain gratification but which yields none. Why is this? Does it mean that envy is primary and precludes the possibility of any gratification, even hallucinatory gratification?

I cannot be satisfied that this is so. I suspect any 'explanation' of which a 'cause' is an essential part; it seems open to the criticism I have made of the theories of causation, namely that there is no actual cause and that the appearance of one is due to the 'realization' of a scientific deductive system, perhaps a premature or hallucinatory 'realization'.

* * *

[*Later addition to this page*]

24 February 1960

It may be worth considering the attempted transfer of the dreaming function to conscious rational levels of mind instead of the levels, now out of action, on which they usually occur.

January 1960

α and objects

In today's session there were clearly brought together two sets of objects:

1. One set is similar to, if not identical with, the bizarre objects: the woman with freckles and red hair was felt by him to be part of his personality, a 'thing', an undigested object. This and similar objects, or fragments of objects, can be brought together, but cruelly to each other; or in combination, dangerously to him. They are also useless for dream thoughts, for storage as memory, or, as Freud said, for notation, and therefore no good for unconscious waking thinking. Furthermore, they are feared as evidence of the disintegration, under destructive attack, of his personality. They are feared as hostile to him because they have been destroyed so that they now exist only as fragments and not as wholes. They are felt as an internal or external *social* conscience of a hostile and murderous kind because of what he has done to them.
2. The second set, the *α*-objects, the red-haired, freckled woman, are felt to be visual images and to be capable of association. But it is felt that these visual images, by virtue of their suitability for dream-thought, make imminent the depressive position. This carries with it the danger, the certain danger, of the emergence of a murderous super-ego ('brutal'); and also the problem of the onset of the depressive position, namely depression, a synthesis that reveals the enormity of the destruction already done, and the illimitable vista of the yet unintegrated elements that have *not* been synthesized.

[Undated]

> Let us endeavour to see things as they are, and then enquire whether we ought to complain. Whether to see life as it is will give us much consolation, I know not; but the consolation that is drawn from truth, if any there be, is solid and durable; that which may be derived from errour must be, like its original, fallacious and fugitive.
>
> Samuel Johnson,
> in a letter to Bennet Langton, 21 September 1758
> (*Boswell's Life of Johnson*, 1934, vol. 1, p. 339)

I assume that the permanently therapeutic effect of a psychoanalysis, if any, depends on the extent to which the patient has been able to use the experience to see one aspect of his life, namely himself as he is. It is the function of the psychoanalyst to use the experience of such facilities for contact as the patient is able to extend to him, to elucidate the truth about the patient's personality and mental characteristics, and to exhibit them to the patient in a way that makes it possible for him to entertain a reasonable conviction that the statements (propositions) made about himself represent facts.

It follows that a psychoanalysis is a joint activity of patient and analyst to determine the truth; that being so, the two are engaged – no matter how imperfectly – on what is in intention a scientific activity.

But not at all, it might be objected by a painter; why should the two not be engaged in an artistic activity? An analysand who is a painter or a musician may indeed be hostile to the dominant role played by speech in analysis, and the hostility may include amongst its complexity of component strands some that could be related to a belief in the intrinsic superiority of art to science.

I shall exclude this problem because I wish to limit this to that aspect of the psychoanalysis which can be made explicit verbally – although I may on some other occasion investigate the implications for psychoanalysis of the artist's claim to be concerned with truth,

including the claim of the artist in words. I content myself with the observation that the analyst is only concerned with the truth of a particularly limited area of knowledge.

If a psychoanalysis is indeed a scientific activity, it should, in proportion as it is properly conducted, display logical features common to all the sciences, and in so far as its conduct is imperfect will display phenomena of illogicality, irrationality, unscientific conduct, some of which are already well known to psychoanalysts, and all of which must be present in every attempt to establish facts scientifically – no matter in what field of human knowledge, and no matter how great a degree of success is obtained in achieving a properly scientific conduct of the investigation. The awareness of the pressure of these illogical elements has led those whose work forces upon them the recognition of the need for the establishment of the truth, to define rules of such a kind that obedience to them might lead to the exclusion of these irrational elements. The wish to establish effective rules of this kind has contributed much to the adumbration of a scientific method and to its continuing discussion and formulation.

The discussion may for convenience be regarded as centring on what is, or should be, the scientific method, and on what are, or should be, the aims of those who employ such methods. One attitude expresses itself in a need to declare what the rules or laws are that have to be obeyed if a scientific investigation is to be carried out. Indeed, if there is to be a scientific method, it is the rules of the method which constitutes the qualities that make it appropriate to call it a method. But why should there be a scientific method at all? Why not call it 'science'? The answer is twofold:

1. In the pursuit of a science, thought has to be translated into action; something has to be done. And it is this fact, often unrecognized, that limits the freedom of thought and imposes the need for rules to give effect to the limitation. This same feature, the need for action as an essential characteristic of scientific activity, constitutes the main source of all the differences that have been noticed to exist between science and mathematics. Science is about something, purely by virtue of the fact that something has to be done, that thought has to be translated into action, and it is the action into which it has to be translated that the scientific thoughts are about. But mathematics do not have to be translated into action;

the mathematician can elaborate his system of logically necessary propositions, but it is not about anything unless someone chooses to use it as a subsidiary to his scientific system – and even so it cannot with reason be said even then to be 'about', say, chemistry or physics or a bank balance, any more than a gearbox can be said to be 'about' a motor car. But though the very nature of scientific method (as intrinsically bound up with the translation of thought into action) exacts the promulgation of rules, this is not the only element from which the pressure to regularize springs.

2. I have already spoken of the phenomena of illogicality, irrationality, and unscientific conduct that obtrude in human activity – as anyone, even without psychoanalytic experience, knows. These elements, whether they are discerned in the observer or in the environment, arouse pain usually of the mental variety known as anxiety, and in certain people impel them to embrace a scientific outlook and to give effect to their cravings in the production of a scientific method with the characteristics I have adumbrated, and designed to produce results of a kind that seem to earn for themselves the title, 'laws of nature'. The use of the term, 'law', like many others employed, is intended to satisfy two classes of conditions. First, the emotional state of the individual who wishes to foster, against his sense of internal disorder, a feeling of predictability and memorable experience (and the stability that flows from a conviction of these two) and a belief in the existence externally of a similar situation – one that is felt to support experience remembered and to develop in a manner that is predictable. The second class of conditions belongs to what common sense declares to be a world independent of the observer which has characteristics of its own, notwithstanding any that may be attributed to it by the observer or any that might, through oversight or otherwise, be subtracted from it. Amongst these characteristics there may be relatedness of one element to another, either of the kind adumbrated in the so-called scientific law or of some other to which the scientific law is an approximation.

But here I have introduced the idea that there might be kinds of relatedness, and this will certainly need very thorough investigation by anyone whose work is so closely concerned with relationships as is the psychoanalyst's. It is a matter I shall investigate further when I

discuss the function of words as hypotheses. For the present I wish to emphasize the significance of the two classes of conditions to which the scientific statement must apply: its significance as a member of the class of elements associated with the mentality of the beholder, and as a member of the class of elements assumed by common sense to exist independently of the observer. It is this that leads me to say that there is a sphere of human thought and activity that can be embraced by the title, 'The Science of Psycho-analysis and the Psycho-analysis of Science'. It is within this area that this discussion finds its subject. The subject has no beginning or end, and it is therefore accidental that I commence by stating two hypotheses, both possessing the high degree of generalization common to high-level hypotheses that are being employed as premises in a scientific system.

In accordance with my aim to attempt to conduct a psychoanalysis on scientific principles, I propose the following hypotheses, which are to be the premises for further hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1. No cure can be permanent or have the qualities essential for permanence unless it is based on what reason and common sense alike tell both analyst and analysand is the truth about the personality and mental mechanisms of the analysand, and so make it possible to attempt a scientific view or truthful view of external reality – partly because a false view leads to mistakes potentially fatal, but also because a false view, e.g. psychotic, needs a great expenditure of effort and the construction of elaborate social apparatus.

Hypothesis 2. The truth about the personality and mental mechanisms of the analysand, as demonstrable by the analyst to the analysand, leads to a permanent cure – as that would be understood by analyst and analysand taking a common-sense view of the results of such a demonstration.

From these premises it should be possible to deduce secondary hypotheses of such a kind that they lend themselves to verification empirically in the way that is familiar to all those who employ scientific methods, no matter what discipline they pursue.

This, however, is not my aim here. The introduction of these two primary hypotheses is a part of my attempt to demonstrate how the general principles of all sciences can be particularized when

applied to psychoanalysis. Therefore, though I may find it necessary to deduce hypotheses that are empirically verifiable from the primary hypotheses, I shall do so not with a view to verifying the hypotheses, primary and secondary, but for the purpose of psychoanalysing the unsolved scientific problem that this scientific procedure brings in its train.

Thus: suppose that I have, in the course of my work with the patient, deduced certain lower-level hypotheses, which, in the manner of such hypotheses, are of decreasing generalization. As a result, I am now in a position to test and verify these hypotheses.

The patient comes into the room, sits on the couch and . . . I have already carried my description far enough for present purposes. I have said that we are concerned to establish the truth, but the philosophers who concern themselves with the validity of perception, and psychoanalysts who have an intensely practical interest in this matter, will already have their problems. How do I know it is a patient? Or a room? I have no doubt about these sense impressions, but they are private to myself. How can I claim that my senses have, in the world of external reality, a factual counterpart – a real room, a real patient?

It is perfectly legitimate to deal with this as Braithwaite has done by limiting the discussion to a problem that (even excluding the problems of the phenomenalists) is, as he says, quite enough for one book. And for the time being I shall follow his example. But only for the time being. I shall therefore assume that I may use such data for my investigation as common sense tells me are facts in the world of external reality. By these means I limit the area of discussion to that part of the subject which is concerned, as Braithwaite says, with "the relationship of public scientific laws to public facts of observation". By this he means that he is excluding all problems that arise through the fact that sense impressions, on which all scientific work ultimately comes to rest, are private to the beholder and cannot become a matter for scientific investigation until they are made public, i.e. undergo transformation in the observer that enables them to be communicated to another. As will be seen later, this process, which I call public-ation, is in my opinion no different from the process involved in the individual who has to transmute pre-verbal into verbal thought if what is implicit is to become explicit, or what is unconscious, conscious.

In the psychotic, what is unconscious is not the material ordinarily associated with the repressed, but the ownership of the material. He remains unconscious of this by virtue of continuous projective identification, which takes the place of repression. But the projective identification *is* unconscious; therefore the material remains conscious, but the projection of it is unconscious.

[Undated]

Disorder of thought

To call an affliction a disorder of thought is to shift the emphasis away from what is thought – the content of the thought – to that which contains the thought; on the other hand, from the architecture to the theme is to shift the emphasis from the container of what is thought, to the content of the thought.

* * *

Envy contributes to the belief that external objects are the patient's thought. Since he cannot admit dependence on an external object, he claims (in order ultimately to escape feeling envy) that he is, like the breast that feeds itself, the producer as well as the consumer of that on which he depends for this life.

How to keep awake

Since it is essential that the creative worker should keep his α-function unimpaired, it is clear that the analyst must be able to dream the session. But if he is to do this without sleeping, he must have plenty of sleep. The need for this now becomes apparent as a way by which α-function can be preserved for the sake of analysis, i.e. neither for waking up nor for going to sleep, but for a special and entirely new function, and not – as has hitherto been supposed – because the capacity for judgement is peculiar in being easily and rapidly fatigued. It is because α-function is by nature intended to make sense impressions or an emotional experience available either to the unconscious or to the conscious, *or* to make wakefulness or consciousness available to the emotional experience – as, for example, in learning a skill, from walking to fighting. Making oblivion available is not the same as repressing, but if the analyst has not had enough sleep, α-function may produce oblivion.

Time, cause, and Oedipal situation

Provenance: guilt related to the Oedipal situation. The idea of cause belongs to criminal investigation. In its simplest form there are:

1. feelings of guilt, passive and active – i.e. I am guilty of . . . You are, or someone is, guilty of . . . ;
2. someone must have done something, i.e. caused it;
3. the person or thing that caused it must be antecedent to it;
4. the denial that the guilt caused it.

In other words, these ideas (of causation + time) derive from very early experiences, just as 'foot' derives from early references to the body in the exploration of what we call space. In 'time', one thing is before (antecedent), the other after (subsequent); but in 'space', does the infant have a left or right, before or after, or what? If it sees its foot and then its hand, does it feel its foot caused its hand?

31 January/1 February 1960

Narcissism and social-ism

These two terms might be employed to describe tendencies, one egocentric, the other socio-centric, which may at any moment be seen to inform groups of impulsive drives in the personality. They are equal in amount and opposite in sign. Thus, if the love impulses are narcissistic at any time, then the hate impulses are social-istic, i.e. directed towards the group. And vice versa; if the hate is directed against an individual as a part of narcissistic tendency, then the group will be loved socialistically. That is to say, if A hates B, as an expression of narcissism, then he will love the society. "I hate B because he is so harmful to the society that I love", might be an assertion symptomatic of what I would call a state of narcissistic hate of A for B. I maintain that in a narcissistic statement there is always implied a social-istic statement. The two *must* go together: if one is operating, so is the other.

It follows that if narcissistic hate is felt for A, then social-istic love is felt for B. If A is one person, then B will become a *group* of people all possessing the admirable characteristics that distinguish B from A who lacks them. Put in still other terms: if one group of impulses is dominated by narcissistic trends, then the remaining impulses will be dominated by social-istic trends. Let X be a person: if his hate impulses are social-istic, his love impulses will be narcissistic. But suppose his impulses towards himself, say love impulses, become narcissistic, then all his other impulses will become social-ized, and he will split himself up into a 'group'. Love of self need not be narcissistic; love of the group need not be social-istic. At one pole is one object: at the other pole an infinitude of objects. At one pole there will be one object to which one group of emotions will be directed: at the other pole a number of emotions will be directed to the infinitude of objects that owe their numbers to a splitting of one object.

6 February 1960

Beset as he is by the examples in history of the many occasions on which men of great ability and integrity have been unable to maintain a grasp of the truth about the phenomena that they wish to investigate, and made further aware of the pitfalls attending his search by the fact that his study is itself an investigation of a most serious source of errors in human judgement, the analyst's problem is to find a method – if there is one – by which he can be aware that he is falling into error, and even (if possible) of what kind of error he has become the victim. The search for this method constitutes for the psychoanalyst the search for a scientific method. For him the scientific method is that procedure, or series of procedures, by which error is made to declare itself.

As we have seen, one area in which a solution might be sought is in situations in which common sense can be brought to bear. One of these situations is in analysis itself in so far as a personality is observed in changing conditions of mood, circumstances, and time. Features that appear constant amidst the changes may be accorded a certain degree of probability. What meaning we are to give such constant features, what use we are to make of them, and how we are to use them, must be debated further.

It must be noted that unfortunately it may not be the features that are remarkable for their constancy amidst change that are the analytically significant ones; it is likely that it is those phenomena we most wish to investigate (and are therefore associated with the observations, the truth of which concerns us most) that least lend themselves to the check of common sense. The other situation in which common sense is brought to bear is in the situation produced by public-ation. As we have already seen, this involves recording and communication, both of which are consequently seen once more to be matters that deserve serious study and constant work devoted to their improvement. Presumably no safeguards exist against the eroding effect of connotation and communication that is exerted by changes in the

cultural atmosphere of the group, but the fact that these changes render communication precarious adds force to the need for elaboration of rigorously accurate methods of record. Furthermore, the fact that the communication that Bach wished to make when he inscribed his score may not be that which his audience received, and the fact that the communication that his audience received may not be that which some present or future audience may receive, need not be inimical to the search for truth by the group in history. For the continued existence of the communication, its preservation by the group may be interpreted as a sign that the group continues to receive something from the communication. What is it that inheres in the communication that causes it to be meaningful in what appears to be so many different ways to so many different people?

11 February 1960

Compassion and truth

1. Compassion and Truth are both senses of man.
2. Compassion is a feeling that he needs to express; it is an impulse he must experience in his feelings for others.
3. Compassion is likewise something that he needs to feel in the attitude of others towards him.
4. Truth is something man needs to express; it is something he needs to seek and to find; it is essential for fulfilment of his curiosity.
5. Truth is something he needs to feel in the attitude of others towards him.
6. Truth and compassion are also qualities pertaining to the relationship that a man establishes with people and things.
7. A man may feel he lacks a capacity for love.
8. A man may lack capacity for love.
9. Similarly, he may feel he lacks a capacity for truth, either to hear it, or to seek it, or to find it, or to communicate it, or to desire it.
10. He may in fact lack such a capacity.
11. The lack may be primary or secondary, and may diminish truth or love, or both.
12. Primary lack is inborn and cannot be remedied; yet some of the consequences may be modified analytically.
13. Secondary lack may be due to fear or hate or envy or love. Even love can inhibit love.
14. Applying (8) and (10) to the Oedipus myth, the death of the Sphinx is a consequence of such lack, as the question posed was not intended to elicit truth, and consideration for itself could not exist to erect a barrier against self-destruction. Tiresias may be said to lack compassion less than regard for truth. Oedipus lacked compassion for himself more than he lacked regard for truth.

12 February 1960

> All our ideas are reducible in the long run to the data of sense-experience.
>
> F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 6, p. 8

Montesquieu's theory [Copleston, p. 11] is not simply an empirical generalization but deals with ideal types of government. This raises an interesting possibility: if there are theories, e.g. quantum mechanics, in which there is no level of empirically verifiable data but a level of statistical hypotheses that take the place of empirically verifiable data, could one have a theory in which the place of empirically verifiable data was taken by hypotheses of ideal types analogous to statistical hypotheses? And if so, what is the relationship of the hypotheses of ideal types to premises or high-level hypotheses of increasing generalization? Are generalization and idealization the same thing? If not, in what way do they differ? There may be a place for three types of hypothesis that need to be distinguished:

1. high-level, generalized and not empirically verifiable, therefore
2. statistical hypotheses, taking the place of empirically verifiable hypotheses and embodying a probability statement. This involves the question: *how* does the scientist use these probability statements?
3. ideal-type hypothesis, which says that in a given state (which in fact will never be found) there does exist a state of ought-to-exist-ness of whatever it is that the hypothesis is referring to. For example, take the statement that 'excessive splitting and projective identification lead to a disintegration of the personality'. 'Excessive projective identification' is an ideal state and not an empirical generalization. The hypothesis asserts that in so far as this ideal state is realized, a disintegration of personality ought to be found. Is this a probability statement in a statistical hypothesis? No: but

> I suspect it is a statement that is 'understood' when a statistical hypothesis is used, and this is the clue to the problem posed by Braithwaite (*Scientific Explanation*, p. 124) as to *how* a scientist uses a probability statement in a statistical hypothesis. The ideal-type hypothesis may be regarded as a primitive non-mathematical probability statement, what Braithwaite would call "reasonableness" (p. 120). It should not, as far as I can see, ever embody in itself a probability statement. In any case, I consider the probability statement is often employed as an assertion of a measure of certitude. But if I do not regard the ideal-type hypothesis as identical with a statistical hypothesis, I also cannot regard it as a high-level generalization, for clearly it is used in psychoanalysis as a low-level hypothesis.

In place of the level of empirically verifiable data, there is no step as yet between the statement, 'excessive projective identification leads to disintegration of the personality', and perception of sense data in the empirical experience of analytic treatment.

If this is so, then in psychoanalysis the hypotheses of a scientific deductive system may be hierarchically arranged, not with high-level hypotheses of increasing generalization and low-level hypotheses of increasing particularization, but with high-level hypotheses of increasing idealization and low-level hypotheses of increasing realization. Or it may be a special kind of scientific deductive system in which generalization and idealization are combined, and realization and particularization are combined. How does this compare with the realizations of mathematical formulas?

Before attempting an answer to this, we must consider certain similarities and contrasts that emerge by comparing mathematical formulas with dreams. The elements of a dream, by being used as the starting point for a series of free associations, can be made to yield thoughts and ideas coherent with each other and displaying in their integrated form a construct (Freud's latent content of the dream) that seems to show a great expansion of meaning compared with that displayed in the dream from which it has been derived. Certain algebraic formulas, treated according to rules laid down in advance – not free associations – similarly yield an expansion that is coherent within itself and, like the latent content of the dream, is often found to be applicable to data of an empirically verifiable

kind that, in the coherent form that the mathematical expansion has revealed, provide a realization for the system of formulas that make up the original algebraic calculus. By analogy, the latent content of the dream is employed by the psychoanalyst to 'interpret' empirical data presented by the patient, and so reveals a coherent form that may be regarded as a 'realization' of the latent content of the dream.

In both these instances the 'realization' has been sought in the domain of phenomena considered to exist independently of the observer. In some sense the algebraic calculus, like the latent content, may be regarded as an attempt on the part of the individual to produce a mental apparatus as well adapted to comprehension of his environment as the visual sensory apparatus is well adapted to sight of his environment. The latent content of the algebraic calculus can so far be treated, for purposes of comparison, as parallel. It is necessary to observe, if confusion is to be avoided, that the latent content is being used to achieve comprehension of data deemed to be independent of the observer, even though the latent content is a product of the mind of the observer and the data to which it is being applied are facets of the observer's personality. This independence would be challenged if the latent content was applied, or deemed to be applicable to, the problem associated with the production of itself – in short, if it were felt to be a latent content relating to a dream of which it was the latent content. Similarly with the algebraic calculus: the selected fact of Poincaré would ordinarily be expected to apply to data independent of the observer and to be designed to give order and coherence to these phenomena. But I have suggested that the selected fact – latent content, or algebraic calculus in this instance – is itself an attempt to deal with the internal psychic incoherence (shown in the Kleinian theory as the paranoid-schizoid position), at least by an externalization in which, and through which, the individual is able to offset internal feelings by a sense of external achievement. Is it possible that there could be a latent content relating to a dream of which it was the latent content? Is it possible that there is an algebraic calculus, or that in any algebraic calculus there is a facet, such that the coherent whole expressed by the calculus found its realization in the realm of elementary mental phenomena from which it originated, as well as in data independent of the observer?

14 February 1960

Fundamental, basic, inborn character disorder

There are occasions when it is important to know what are the fundamental characteristics of the patient with whom we are dealing. By this I mean that there are certain qualities of personality – a capacity for loving is one – which are of great importance in determining the nature of the person and of his behaviour. We would like to know what are the patient's fundamental characteristics, but curiosity on this topic is hampered because the questions that are the tools of curiosity are often ill-suited to the investigation we have in mind. The vocabulary that we employ to frame our questions has been elaborated to serve purposes that are often very different from those of the psychoanalyst; we are hampered, in a manner with which we are already familiar, in our attempts to frame theories and solutions of problems. But we give insufficient attention to the obstruction of the formation of the question. For example, I have said we would like to know the fundamental characteristics of the patient, but this question as it stands does not provide the emotional experience of the analysis with sufficient precision to admit of an answer. I do not suggest there is any question that does, and if I now propose some elaboration of my question it is not to solve a problem but to propound it. The question, 'What are the fundamental characteristics?', I shall replace by two others:

1. What are the characteristics that are inborn and irreducible by any means (short of a physical disaster of the kind experienced in certain forms of physical illness or brain damage) that have been shown to be associated with character change?
2. What are the characteristics, which an answer to the first question would specify, that occupy the dominant executive position in this man's psyche? That is to say, if a capacity for love is one of his main inborn characteristics, does it in fact inform his outlook and behaviour?

It now becomes clear that the two questions multiply. Thus, taking question 2, what is the 'executive position'? Is there such a thing? Or does it simply depend on how strong are his feelings of love? And if so, is 'How strong?' a question we can ask, or is there some other more apposite? And so I could continue the elaboration of questions. But that fact itself shows no useful purpose is served by an attempt at abstract systemization, and at the same time that such elaboration is necessary at some time and somehow. I shall show that the essential point is that such questions should be given a chance to proliferate in the analyst's mind, and that this chance should occur in the analytic session itself. If induction means anything, it should mean 'producing questions'. This and *α* should be the supreme mental activities of the analyst – not theorizing, though he must express theories. The interpretations themselves, which are acts, must not be confounded with theorizing; theorizing must not become an activity of the analyst when analysing; it is, as Darwin pointed out, inimical to observation.

17 February 1960

Animism, destructive attacks and reality

In the earliest phases of development objects are felt to be alive and to possess character and personality presumably indistinguishable from the infant's own. In this phase, which may be considered as anterior to the development of the reality principle as Freud describes it, the real and the alive are indistinguishable; if an object is real to the infant, then it is alive; if it is dead, it does not exist. But this 'it' that does not exist and is not alive – why is it necessary to talk about it or discuss it? The problem is to give an answer *verbally* about objects in a *pre-verbal* state. The difficulty will constantly crop up in what I have to say, and my solution of it will constantly demand indulgent understanding from the reader.

In this instance it is necessary to talk about this object which should be non-existent and therefore impossible to discuss. Its importance lies in the fact that the infant, if enraged, has death wishes, and if the object is wished dead, it is dead. It therefore has become non-existent, and its characteristics are different from those of the real, live, existing object; the existing object is alive, real, and benevolent. (I propose to call the real, alive objects α-elements; the dead, unreal objects I shall call β-elements.) In order to distinguish the distinction between real and unreal that I am making here, from the distinction between real and unreal which is appropriate to Freud's description of the interplay between pleasure principle and reality principle, I shall call these objects proto-real objects belonging to the domain of proto-reality. The infant, in all the early phases of its life, is dominated by the pleasure principle. It is therefore, in so far as it feels pleasure, surrounded by these proto-real objects felt to be real and alive. But should pain supervene, then it is surrounded by dead objects destroyed by its hate, which, since it cannot tolerate pain, are non-existent. But ordinarily they continue to exist because the sense impressions still operate. Should intolerance of these objects grow beyond a certain point, then the infant commences attacks on the

mental apparatus that informs it of the reality of these sense impressions and of some object that is felt to be beyond the sense impressions. The existence of the real objects can be denied, but the sense impressions persist, e.g. after the eyes have been shut. It is therefore felt that the real objects have now forced their way into the personality. The next stage, imposed by yet more powerful intolerance, is the destruction of the apparatus that is responsible for the transformation of the sense impressions into material suitable for waking unconscious thought – a dream-thought. This destruction contributes to the feeling that 'things', not words or ideas, are inside.

Excess of death instincts for whatever reason or duration, in addition to contributing to an excess of dead objects – painful and proto-unreal – means that animism (an animistic view) cannot develop. The need to placate contributes to a complex state in which the dead object has to be re-animated and worshipped. These objects are then not so much gods and idols that are believed to be alive and endowed with human attributes, as objects chosen specifically and precisely because *they are dead*. Contrary to common observation, the essential feature of the adored or worshipped object is that it should be dead so that crime may be expiated by the patient's dutiful adherence to animation of what is known to be inanimate and impossible to animate. This attitude contributes to the complex of feelings associated with fetishism.

The breakdown in animism affects the capacity of the individual to transform sense impressions into material suitable for use in dream-thoughts. Objects sensed are felt to have life and personality, to be capable of combination and interaction. Thus dream-thoughts and dreams become possible, thereby making it possible to learn from experience.

The dead, non-existent objects are products of murderous hate; guilt invests them with attributes akin to those associated with conscience, omnipotence, omniscience, but not the qualities necessary for employment in dream-thoughts.

18 February 1960

α

The occasions when the patient expresses a number of feelings verbally – "I am anxious, I don't know why." "I am feeling a bit better, I don't know why." – may be an expression of an experience such as I suggest takes place when he has a dream. That is to say, he has an emotional experience on which dream-work-*α* is done so that the emotional experience can be made available, stored for use in consciousness. Ordinarily *α* operates to enable a conscious emotional experience to be stored in unconsciousness; it just occurs to me that this may be very like the function performed by logic in the elaboration of a scientific deductive system in which premises and derived hypotheses are so arranged that they follow each other.

But how is *α* related to logic? There are logical dreams, but on the whole they would seem to be rare. Yet the ordinary dream has a logic; it is 'narrativized'. The patient today said he had had a dream, but in fact could only report disjointed fragments in a way not unlike the ordinary session. (He said, incidentally, that in twenty years' time a new patient might be cured by psychoanalysis in half the time that he is.)

But what else can one say about the construction? Freud assumed that the interpretation, the latent content, was the origin of the dream, and that it had been worked on by the dream-work to produce the dream. I say that the origin is an emotional experience – perhaps even an experience that is emotional and nothing else – and that this is worked on (rationalized?) to produce the dream, the manifest content as we know it, and that it is the *analyst* who then does the *interpretation* to produce the so-called latent content. Then what validity or significance is to be attached to this product, the latent content?

20 February 1960

Attacks on α

The patient has the capacity to exact an emotional relationship from the analyst, and to reject it. A state is produced in which one cannot 'remember' what has happened in the session. Some points are clear: (1) The patient denies information to the analyst. (2) The patient arouses 'inevitable' emotion and denies any material that would allow *α* to operate and therefore the analyst to profit by the experience for the patient's benefit. Is this not unnecessarily elaborate? Why not just deny information? Because it is essential for there to be an *experience* from which no benefit is to be obtained. (3) The patient has the occasional vivid experience, e.g. he is loathed by his family. (4) The patient denies *α* and so loses a sense of reality, e.g. he is not able to see the irresponsibility of continuing the analysis. The prevention of visual imagery makes the experience not storable or usable either in conscious waking thought, unconscious waking thought, or in dream-thought.

February 1960

Displacement

Painful feelings related to a situation that has immediately arisen are displaced – for example, feelings of rejection, i.e. of rejecting and being rejected. The true self is felt not to be wanted nor yet to want the other true self; something must be done with these feelings. They are entertained, but the subject of the thoughts is no longer felt to be the person, someone in the past, who has immediately stimulated them, and around that person there is spun out a web of hostile reverie. Such past objects are carefully preserved; maybe they are specifically created for that purpose in the first instance. Note that the painfulness of the feeling is largely increased by the feeling that the rejection is of a true self and cannot therefore be assumed to be capable of resolution.

What seems to have happened is that the immediate cause is suppressed, perhaps before it has become clear to the patient that he has been stimulated at all. And at once the old 'memory' is substituted for the awareness of the current event. The subject of the early story becomes the main character, after the patient, in the current daydream, which has been drawn across to shut out the thinking proper to the immediate reality situation. Is not this account sufficient?

Another version: the feelings of rejection and hate are split off from the personality and are felt about someone absent in time and space.

To what extent are the mechanisms of dream-work evident elsewhere? For example, can all cruel and hostile feelings be displaced into a stammer? Or are they all condensed? In short, is it not possible that the mechanisms that Freud describes as peculiar to dream-work are in reality found to be operating over a wide area of the psyche and in a great number of different functional fields?

* * *

(I need to work out displacement condensation etc., and the relation to context and therefore changes in meaning.

Also need to work out relations of bizarre objects to animism; in particular the fact that they have character only because they are ghosts. In this way they differ from inanimate objects that are felt to have life and independence – the ordinary characters associated with an animistic view.

Also work out the theory that interpretation is an attempt to relate an individual's peculiar and particular characteristic to the social group, because the analyst who makes it is a member of a group and so associates the individual with himself, and because interpretation is into the language of the group.)

22 February 1960

It is curious how much anxiety I feel about following up my views. Today's session with X made me feel more than ever that not only my theories but my practice also are on the right track.

Why cannot X wake up if he cannot 'dream'? It must be for the same reason that you cannot let something become unconscious if *α* is not done to that something. The inability to have visual images of what is taking place means that the emotional experience cannot be preserved either in the conscious or the unconscious. (In this I have equated *α* with having visual images – this is not so, I think.)

How important is attention? And is it the same, as I think it is, as 'dreaming' what is going on?

Paying attention to what is happening here and now involves:

(a) respect for the truth,

(b) respect for myself,

(c) respect for my objects.

But

1. I have just displaced this by thinking I was giving a paper to the Society.
2. I have emotionalized it by making it an occasion where I am loved and admired.
3. I have replied to a hostile criticism from X with a moderation that does me credit.
4. In short, my mind is wandering, and I am transforming the task, which I have already put off for an hour, into an event that is pleasing and successful.

Is this not very like a dream, wish-fulfilment and frustration-evasion and all? (And may not all this be 'digestion', a way of fixing an experience in mind?)

I am not in bed asleep and a prey to emotions, but I am sitting up at a table on a not-so-soft seat. The experience I am having is perhaps painful, and pleasant only in so far as I am able to transform it – Freud's idea that the dream preserves sleep. What is the painful fact I am denying? That it is difficult to write, that no one loves me, and that I have to work? Perhaps my denial of these painful emotions has the effect that I then have a painful sleeping emotional experience on which I then again have to do *α* dream-work to produce the manifest content of the dream.

If this is the case, the dream-work-*α* may have as its function the exclusion of material that would otherwise distract from the main task in hand – the actual conscious object of my writing. But my idea is not that – it is that the dream-work-*α* transforms this experience so that I can store it and remember it. This may be too simplified, and yet it seems to fit some important facts with X.

24 February 1960

α

There are the following states that need to be distinguished:

1. genuine 'dream', but carried on with the analyst for fear of annihilation if 'dreamt' elsewhere (this is an attempt to make a current emotional experience available for dream-thought and conscious thought; it is a definite and desperate attempt to make external reality and internal psychic reality available to thought, and therefore to usher in an ability to learn from experience);
2. hallucination of a dream, forced by the inability to dream and incapable of yielding associations (no associations, as with hallucinating the breast that yields no milk; starvation of reality means there is nothing to set against phantasy);
3. artefact; a try-out but inevitably failing to yield associations of any value or reassurance against the dread of hallucination, the superego and annihilation (related to fear of annihilation);
4. confusion due to excessive projective identification (not relevant to this situation).

* * *

"I feel there is something I have forgotten. It's a ridiculous idea and no grounds for it that I know of, but there it is. My apparatus is not working properly. Dr C thought it should be ten times more efficient; only doing one tenth of one in the States, but he forgets it is quite a difficult matter. But it's very interesting having to do it. I think it is a half only. Dr C is a very clever man, but he is wrong about this. The Z-chamber – it holds me up a bit." (This apparatus is what you feel you have forgotten.) "It is a matter of research; it holds me up. Letter from D. I was delighted to have it." (Stammering very badly all the time.) "Kept thinking about it all day. She's a nice person; not very interesting and a letter really just like a man. Keep having lots of dreams but I can't remember them." (Lack the apparatus that makes

it possible to 'remember' and to do research.) "A dream that was horrible, though I can't really see what was horrible about it. A woman – and I was in an old-fashioned bus in which there was a lot of woodwork. The windows were shut. I asked if we could have them open so as to have more air. A surly kind of man who reminded me of you was very hostile, and I don't remember what happened next." (Inability to remember and feeling you have forgotten, associated with feeling of not being able to emerge from a state of mind – inability to get 'air'.) "Had lots more dreams." (Either none or I'm to be overwhelmed by them. Inability to dream.) "A dream without associations is not very much use." (Like the research, it reveals disjointed bits that have 'no associations'.) "Another dream in which I was stammering and it made it difficult to talk to the girl." (Not really felt to be dreams at all, and this feeling goes towards producing a feeling of 'impotence' – inability to dream.)

This session increasingly gave me the feeling that he was having, or was about to have, a psychotic breakdown. Everything pointed to the idea that he felt as if he could not breathe, that some man was refusing to let him get air in; and he was swearing and attacking the man with his oral flatus – the stammer. His attitude was euphoric, perhaps megalomanic. I drew attention to what seemed to be evidence that he felt unable to learn from the experience he was having with me.

The session seemed to be very important because it bore out my theories. It is evident therefore that I should want it to bear out my theories, and that I should regard it as important if it appeared to do so. So far, so obvious. Other sources of distortion involve deeper and deeper analysis for their discovery. He said something about research always leading to an infinite number of unknowns. But I cannot be sure how he phrased it. But how he 'phrased it' is very important; what did he *say*? I am pretty certain that that was what he meant, but when I interpreted it I was saying in effect that he felt that whenever he learnt anything, it revealed by that very fact the great number of disjointed elements that remained incoherent.

What I have said is that I do not know precisely what he said, and that I do not know precisely what my reply was. I thought he said approximately *Y*, and that I replied that what I thought was approximately *Y*, had a meaning that was approximately *Z* – which

I now assume I have rendered approximately. Well, either this means that in my view and with my personality it is impossible to have any but the most tenuous contact with someone, or that for some reason much fuss is being made about an experience – contact with another – which is quite ordinary and taken by most people in their stride.

No: it may also mean that the ordinary view, or lack of it, is not good enough for psychoanalysis. But the view I am putting forward can hardly be regarded as an improvement on the ordinary view. It is destructive and only suggests that we cannot 'know' what happened in an analytic conversation. What I am trying to say is that I can give a description that pulls together all the scraps of ideas that I associate with the session, and make them cohere in a way that gives them meaning. I can then feel the session was a meaningful experience. But I am also wanting the analysand to say it was meaningful. He might say it was, and that for him its meaning was that he had a psychotic breakdown. This would not satisfy me; I need to believe that it was meaningful for him in a sense that he has 'felt better' for it. And *I* want to be able to 'feel better' for being a psychoanalyst, i.e. for having such experiences. This means one wants to believe that everyone, including one's self, feels better for attempting to 'understand' one's self and others. But 'understanding' here means being able to do dream-work-α, to allow α to operate during one's emotional experience of another person. This reminds me of 'reality starvation' in the extreme case of the psychotic. The need to know the truth then becomes a matter of psychic need. And the α operations need to be investigated to see what they are – the mental 'digestion'.

This seems to throw light on the function of the intellectual leader. He is someone who is able to digest facts, i.e. sense data, and then to present the digested facts, my α-elements, in a way that makes it possible for the weak assimilators to go on from there. Thus the artist helps the non-artist to digest, say, the Little Street in Delft by doing α-work on his sense impressions and 'publishing' the result so that others who could not 'dream' the Little Street itself can now digest the published α-work of someone who could digest it. Vermeer was able to digest the facts in a particular way, or perhaps they were particular facts. The same presumably is true of the scientist. But why did the work done by Aristarchus not have any impact for close on two thousand years? And why did Kepler's work succeed relatively

quickly? It may be that it was less a matter of concern at the time of Aristarchus. Is opposition necessary? Must the reality view be opposed before it can flourish?

Note the difference between the leader who is to show the *way* to thinking, and the 'mother' on whom the psyche is to be allowed to be parasitic – projective identification, psychotic dependence.

27 February 1960

Mathematics

1 + 1 = 2. But suppose we sexualize the plus sign: then 1 + 1 = 3 presents no difficulty. But it does not mean that 1 + 1 *must* = 3. For that, it would be necessary to do more than sexualize the plus sign. It would be necessary to make it at least ♂ + ♀ = 3. It would probably be necessary to make the plus sign mean 'sexual intercourse with intent to procreate children in adequate conditions between adequate people'.

What is happening here is that the plus sign is being treated as a variable as well as the terms of the expression. What mathematics can evolve if all the signs and terms in an expression are variables? There would seem to be nothing but chaos possible, but it is not so. For example, 1 + 1 = 3 has a meaning if I say 1 = a man, and 1 = a woman. In this case the 'value' of the plus sign has been affected 'contextually'. This reminds me of 'contextually' contingent propositions (Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation*, p. 112).

28 February 1960

The scientist's mistrust of human intellectual effort tends to make him look longingly at the machine that can so often be made to appear the ideal recording instrument, a matter of rigid scales, pointers, unchanging weights, and so on. This attitude, which has something to commend it, yields matter for speculation if one considers it as betraying suspicion of anything that possesses life. How are we to find the truth, to gain knowledge, if facts can be recorded only by an object incapable of judgement or anything we regard as thought on the one hand, and on the other if thought is possible only by an object incapable of recording facts?

The difficulty may not be real in any significant way, but seems so because the method of formulation, in terms of knowledge, truth, and reality, leads to fallacious exaggeration of some elements of the problem, to the exclusion of others. Progress is less impeded if we consider 'know' to refer to a relationship, and reality and truth to refer to qualities of mental phenomena necessary to sustain mental health.

[Undated]

Need for a scientific method

Preoccupation with the psychology of the philosopher might lead to disregard of the truth or falsity of his ideas taken in themselves (F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 9). Similarly, it is presumably true that in addition to distortion produced in the analyst by his own conflicts, there must be other elements that might contribute to his failure to be scientific, e.g. insufficient knowledge of the subject. We may too easily assume that *all* difficulties can be dealt with by more analysis. The subject of this discussion is how to determine, elaborate, and display the procedures that constitute correct analysis, or that conform to standards that at least avoid methods that could not possibly be scientific in any circumstances. And, reciprocally, how to see that findings allegedly psychoanalytic cannot possibly be scientific even if true.

The first requisite is a means by which one could tell that one was going wrong; the second, a means by which one could rectify the mistake.

I think I was wrong with X. I object to this after years of experience. My objection is based on a feeling that I have tried hard and made endless efforts to be on the right tack. But this is my avowal. I know the criticism and can be critical because I have a picture of myself as a sulky man, feeling very sorry for myself in the plight in which I have been pleased to depict myself. The view that I have 'tried hard' and 'made endless efforts' is flattering to my esteem, but it is a view set in a moral outlook in which 'trying hard' is a virtue that will be rewarded. And if it is not, I have a right to be annoyed with someone – fate or X perhaps.

It occurs to me that I may be going wrong because I don't please myself. That is to say that it is a sign I am going wrong if I am not pleasing myself in the sense of making myself pleased, and in the sense that I am not pleased with and by myself. But am I stating a symptom or a cause? And doesn't this mean that I believe something

has caused 'this', or that 'this' is causing something? I am caught in a web of my own devising.

It means that I have not the ability, character, or personality that I conceive to be pleasing. But who is the 'me', the character who thus passes judgement on whether or not such characteristics as I have are 'pleasing'? And to whom are they, or are they not, pleasing?

I have a picture, a visual image of someone who is loved by all. But this also sounds like a state I once believed to exist, say when I was a baby, and it further sounds as if I had never got over it. This would mean that the ambition is not suitable to my present age, just as my capacities are not suitable to or matching my ambition – which may also have been true of infancy or childhood.

It looks as if the need was to reconcile my awareness of my character – that is to say, my character as I think I know it – with my conception of a desirable character. But 'desirable character' is merely meaning a character that would be desired. And the character that is desired turns out to be a character that is desired. In short I must feel loved by myself and others.

Here I think I see I have linked up with the discussion of socialism and narcissism [*see* 31 January/1 February 1960, p. 120]. I wish to feel that when I love and admire myself I am also loved and admired by the group. Well, why not?

I now have a picture of myself called on by the chairman to say something in the Society. But I decline, as I have nothing to say. And everyone thinks how modest I am – except a few people, who are puzzled. This is probably what is called a day dream, but it might be called a night dream with greater approximation to descriptiveness of its content. In fact I think this is what I mean by an α-element. If this is so, and the visual images and pictures I have mentioned so far are examples of them, then the dream-work-α may be a more stately process than I realized, and the α-elements are more slowly produced.

But I think there may be more. I noticed just now that I had a vision of Mrs A unable to have visual images while doing her auto-analysis; I might easily have failed altogether to notice it. In that case, the α-elements may be produced far more rapidly and incessantly than I realize. I wonder if dreams, i.e. the actual emotional experiences, are not the emotional experiences I do not have, or cannot allow myself to have, during wakefulness. They then have to be retained, if I am to learn from the experience, by being converted through dream-work-α

into α-elements, and then these α-elements are combined according to certain rules to make them approximate to what in daytime wakefulness would be narrative of the event in which I am participating and which I need to record.

I could schematize it thus:

Emotional experience → dream-work-α → α-elements → rationalization and 'narrativization' → dream
Sensation of waking event in which personality is participating as in an unfolding narrative → dream-work-α → α-elements → dream-thoughts

A comparison of the two levels suggests that some kind of approximation is being attempted between an awareness of an external event and an internal process of manipulation, 'digestion', of the same event. In the first case the origin can be taken to lie in an emotional experience, associated with dream-thoughts, leading to an awareness that then has to be dealt with (like any other emotional experience, no matter what the origin) by dream-work-α which converts it into α-elements; these then undergo a process of 'narrativization' to make them approximate to the emotional experiences of waking life in which the personality is participating in a temporal sequence that accordingly has a narrative quality, so that the emotional experience originating in dream-thought is rendered suitable for storage and waking conscious thought. In the second case the emotional experience in which the personality is consciously participating as a temporal sequence in which one event succeeds another (thus having a narrative quality) is being worked on by dream-work-α to convert the sense impressions of the external narrative experience into α-elements that are capable of storage and lend themselves to use in dream-thoughts; these, though unconscious, proceed equally whether the personality is asleep or awake. One of the reasons why sleep is essential is to make possible, by a suspension of consciousness, the emotional experiences that the personality would not permit itself to have during conscious waking life, and so to bring them into reach of dream-work-α for conversion into α-elements and a narrative form, consecutive and dominated by a causation-theoretical

outlook, suitable for being worked on by conscious rational processes of thought. Dream-work-*α*, and its product of *α*-elements, is therefore an essential link between dream-thought and conscious rational thought, and the raw material on which both have to work.

Free-floating attention, regarded as necessary in analytic work, might then be described as that state of mind in which the analyst allows himself the conditions in which dream-work-*α* can operate for the production of *α*-elements. The psychotic patient knows this and sets himself out specifically during the sessions to attack anything and everything that makes the production of *α*-elements possible either in himself or the analyst, or, for that matter, anyone else.

[Undated]

Need for study of scientific method

> Though we are aware that any knowledge at which we arrive is the result of a process on our part, we do not reflect on the nature of the process – at any rate in any systematic way – and make it the object of a special study. But sooner or later knowledge of our mistakes and the desire to be sure that we are getting the genuine article, i.e. something that is really knowledge, lead us to reflect on the process. We do so, prompted by the hope that we can discover the proper process, i.e. that in which we shall be safe from error, or at least to determine within what limits we can carry out such a process. But in the end we find ourselves having to ask whether we are capable of knowing at all and are not merely under the illusion of thinking that we can know.
>
> Prichard, 'History of the Theory of Knowledge',
> from *Knowledge and Perception*, 1932, p. 69

Prichard points out that in ordinary life when we are seeking knowledge, our interest is chiefly absorbed in the nature of what we are trying to know, and not in the process by which we try to get to know it. It is probably true that most psychoanalysts are similarly absorbed in psychoanalysis rather than in the process by which we arrive at a knowledge of psychoanalysis. This preoccupation with the subject, to the over-shadowing of the study of the process by which it is learned, is excusable; for the subject is vast and there is much to learn. And yet one may permit oneself some surprise at this imbalance, for psychoanalysis itself may be seen as born of a doubt about the realities of the knowledge we have, and of the processes by which we obtain it. The central feature – the analysis the aspirant has to undergo – is imposed because it is supposed that without that experience the candidate's inadequacies relate to and prejudice the mental processes by which he acquires knowledge of his patient. Furthermore, psychoanalysis is itself a technique for the investigation of the human mind,

and it can be said to have discovered – in the course of the work that culminated in Freud's paper on the 'Two Principles of Mental Functioning' [1911b] – the origin of the elaboration of psychoanalysis itself, namely the pressure of inner needs that demand more than hallucinatory gratification. [*Marginal comment added later*: The demand is for the *reality*. A parallel quotation from Freud to balance Prichard would help.]

Nevertheless there has not yet been much work done relating psychoanalysis to the general body of scientific history, or its methodology to the elements common to the methodologies of all scientific discipline.

Criticism of psychoanalysis also applied to other sciences

It has been a common criticism of psychoanalysis that its methods are not scientific. It is therefore with some surprise that the student of psychoanalysis who turns to the study of scientific method in order to learn of the respects in which psychoanalysis, and his own method of practising it, falls short in scientific rigour and precision, finds that the scientific defects that are charged against psychoanalysis are observed by the more self-critical scientists in the practice of their own disciplines. It might be said that the history of mankind is full of instances of the kind of experience described in the quotation from Prichard [Ibid., p. 151] – instances, that is to say, of the falsification of a theory followed usually by the questioning of the theory, but sometimes by the questioning of the methods by which the supposed knowledge was obtained. Plato's well-known description [*Republic, Book VII*], in which he likens mankind to men in a cave seated with their backs to the light, is a famous instance of overt expression of suspicion of the validity of knowledge based on the perceptions of men held in the cultural framework of a group. In more recent times, Hume's attack on the idea that the scientific hypothesis is based on anything other than the tendency of the human mind to associate various elements, did much to prevent the growth of an almost mystical belief that a 'natural law' was the statement of a truth that various elements were constantly conjoined because their conjunction was a function of some linking force parallel with, but independent of, the

human tendency to see them as conjoined. Despite the somewhat way-ward approach that Hume made to the problem, his insistence on the part played by association as a function of the human mind carried enough weight to be disturbing, notably to Kant who felt impelled to refute him. Yet despite the vulnerability of Hume's attitude it is doubtful, in the opinion of some philosophers of science, whether Hume has ever been really answered (cf. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*).

At the moment I do not wish to go into this subject further than is necessary to indicate that historically there are two elements in what we now call scientific methodology that have a very considerable ancestry. One is recognizable today as the philosophical problem of perception centring on the difficulty of knowing what validity is to be attributed to our belief in the real existence of an entity that in fact can only be seen to be a deduction from sense data. The other is the belief in a contribution made to any hypothesis by some force variously though vaguely adumbrated, yet having enough precision to make a not wholly hazardous guess at its nature – as I hope to show. It is these two elements that make it appear to me to be worthwhile to approach phylogenetically a subject of which the psychoanalytic discussion by Freud provides the ontological counterpart. A further reason for making this twofold approach will, I hope, become apparent in my discussion of narcissism and the social component of the individual's instincts; for I want to show the great importance that the political nature of man (in Aristotle's sense) plays in all scientific methodology, and in human personality problems as they are investigated through the agency of psychoanalysis in its operational conformity with scientific methodology.

This is perhaps the appropriate moment to draw attention to the fact that this discussion may be regarded throughout as the scientific methodology of psychoanalysis *and* the psychoanalysis of scientific methodology; my preference, in the interest of accuracy, is for it to be seen as both simultaneously.

I shall commence by making the phylogenetic approach. I prefer the term, 'phylogenetic', because I wish to avoid any suggestion that this is an historical summary. What it is will emerge in the course of the exposition, but I may say that my main object is to point to certain phenomena in the social history of the subject because they are germane to my argument, and not for any other reason.

The fate of the heliocentric theory

First I must draw attention to the uncertain fate of various ideas often well expressed and established in their time. Such a one is the heliocentric theory of the earth's movements, which was put forward by Aristarchus of Samos and attested by Archimedes and Plutarch. It appears to have 'disappeared' – as far as any practical influence it had – until it was put forward again nearly two thousand years later by Copernicus. This fact merits attention by any scientist: here we have a hypothesis that we now suppose to be true because it is attested by the correlation of many findings. It could have been verified by observation, yet it was completely displaced by another hypothesis. It is true that the equipment did not then exist for any profound verification, but this does not explain the establishment of a geocentric theory unless we assume the importance of a phenomenon to which I shall draw attention later, but which I shall not anticipate now. (The observational equipment lacking telescopes meant that verification was carried out by techniques that favoured the geocentric view and did nothing to support the heliocentric view in a way that made public-ation possible, and so denied the heliocentric view the support of 'common' sense.)

Relationship between cosmology and phantasy

The lack of means for establishing the reality of the earth's movement round the sun as a factual counterpart of the heliocentric theory meant that there was freedom to entertain views that appeared to be supported by the observations available to the ordinary individual, and at the same time enabled those observations to correspond with certain classes of internal phantasy, and for certain classes of internal phantasy to be externalized to the exclusion of others. Or I should say that certain phantasies could then be externalized by virtue of the geocentric cosmology, leaving others to be given some different outlet. This state of affairs is common to all cosmologies and not simply to those existing during the dominance of a particular school of thought. I wish to emphasize that while it is true that internal phantasies play a very big part in supporting a given scientific view, or even in precipitating its adumbration, the traffic is two-way, and the view

that the community holds on what it quite reasonably regards as scientific grounds dictates what phantasies are to be externalized in the prevalent cosmology, and what phantasies are to achieve some other outlet. A little thought will show the seriousness of this situation.

Consequences

Let us suppose – and what follows is only intended to be a postulate – that the geocentric view makes it easier to externalize a phantasy of the superiority of the all-providing breast or mother. Then the phantasy of the dominance of the male would need to find a means of externalization in some activity – scientific, political, aesthetic or religious – that lent itself to such externalization.

My object in making this postulate is not to establish a hypothesis that lends itself to particularization and thence to formulation in terms that make empirical verification possible; the time is not ripe for that. My object is to indicate that in addition to the obvious importance of establishing correct methodology (because only in that can we approximate to confidence in the kind of knowledge our methods win for us and so achieve a corresponding and proportional freedom from errors that might be disastrous) there is the fact that our methods are prey to forces derived from a class of phenomena of which little is known but which it is very much the business of psychoanalysts to study. I refer to the phenomena associated with the need to establish a particular scientific view for the greater ease in externalization of one particular class of phantasies, and the further associated phenomena that derive from existent cosmology (those to which it allows an outlet in externalization) and the phantasies which its existence compels to seek some other outlet of externalization. I suggest that there is a vested interest in the maintenance of an existent cosmology, or for that matter any existent scientific deductive system, which derives from manifold sources but with only two of which I wish to concern myself here. One is scientific and realistic – for example that seen in the maintenance of Newtonian Laws even after the behaviour of Mercury's perihelion had shown them to be inadequate, but there was no Einstein to propound a relativity theory to take their place – and the other is emotional and relates to group and individual phantasies. It is notorious that there is the strongest resistance to the

upsetting of an established scientific deductive system, even though that system was itself feared, hated, and opposed at its inception.

The meaning of 'scientific deductive system'

By the term, 'scientific deductive system', I mean one in which certain hypotheses occupy a high level in the particular system, and are used as premises from which lower-level hypotheses are deduced. Lower-level hypotheses are of decreasing generalization until the lowest level of all, which have a degree of particularization that makes them suitable for verification by empirical experience such as scientific experiments, or, in the case of psychoanalysis, clinical experience. Although it is not a matter of immediate moment, I consider it of great importance that there should be established a calculus that represents the scientific deductive system, and in all cases where the scientific deductive system is represented by the associated calculus I include calculus and scientific deductive system as essential to each other; unless otherwise stated, I wish it to be assumed that when I speak of a scientific deductive system I refer to it and the associated calculus that represents it.

[Undated]

Commentary on the scientific deductive system

1. Destruction of the capacity for assimilation of sense impressions is not total in any analysable patient. The non-psychotic part of the personality is associated with the continued functioning of the capacity for assimilation of sense impressions.
2. The word, 'assimilation', is not employed as a technical term.
3. 'Sense impressions' here bears the ordinary meaning, but without the implications that the term carries in everyday use, and which will be seen to be specifically excluded by the theories concerned with the psychotic part of the personality.
4. 'Phenomenon' and 'thing-in-itself' are terms used in the Kantian sense to mean things as they appear to the observer, and things as they might be supposed to be in reality without an observer.
5. 'Things-in-themselves' has much the same meaning as Bradley ascribes (in *Principles of Logic*) to the term, 'things in actuality'.
6. The term, 'object', is chosen partly because it carries a sense of concreteness, partly because it is sufficiently abstract to allow me to invest it with a special meaning. Yet this special meaning is difficult to convey. The patient uses a word, but his word does not name the same thing as is named by the same word used by the analyst, or even as used by the non-psychotic part of the patient's personality. He appears to feel that the word is not the name of a phenomenon nor yet the name of the thing-in-itself, but is *identical* with the thing-in-itself. Unfortunately, this is further complicated by the fact that the thing-in-itself seems to be regarded by the patient with the same expectation that we entertain for an idea. Thus, if someone moves a table, it is to him as if someone had interfered with his mind. It is for a word thus used that I reserve the term, 'object'; it is identical with bizarre

objects, but I mistook their origin (*see* 'The Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-Psychotic Personalities', 1957).[1]

7. The essential point of this hypothesis is made by the words, 'as words are ordinarily articulated'. The statement can be made to appear almost tautological if it is remembered that the words are, as I have said, objects and therefore do not lend themselves to procedures appropriate to the ordinary use of words. The essence of 'articulation', as used here, is that it is a name for the process of bringing elements together, integrating them, so that the combined parts form a complex whole. The meaning I attach to the word will be clearer if its use is contrasted with that of 'agglomeration', which I discuss below. The further problem of the justification for such a view will also be discussed in the usage of the term, 'agglomeration'.
8. The words used as those objects that are ordinarily called feelings are those terms employed in ordinary speech that the mathematical logician, J. H. Woodger (in *Technique of Theory Construction*, p. 10), calls "statement-forming assignatory functors" and includes amongst the class of logical constants. But the mathematical logician is attempting by abstraction to gain in precision a method of communication that is more exact than that of ordinary speech. This hypothesis, on the contrary, is concerned with a method of communication and thought that is quite different from that of ordinary speech and employs words incidentally, not essentially.
9. Intensity is expressed proportionately to the violence of the muscular movement. Verbal expression is incidental to the central feature, which is the change of musculature evidenced by the tongue and vocal cords in movement; for this reason a stammer cannot be interpreted without reference to the muscular movements that give rise to the sounds. The sounds are important, but they are incidental to the movement of tongue, lips, and vocal cords. For this reason the analyst is well advised, in attempting to interpret a stammer, to intuit the muscular movements involved and to ask himself what they portend; he should not be misled by the

[1][In *Second Thoughts*: see Volume VI. *Ed.]*

sounds made into devoting his exclusive attention to them. The whole topic of muscular movement under the dominance of the pleasure principle, as it is described by Freud (motor discharge), is apposite in this discussion.

10. The use of the term, 'agglomeration', is liable to give rise to misunderstanding, unless it is remembered that it is appropriate to a particular situation when that situation is viewed by the light of a particular hypothesis and during the time it is so viewed. For since the analyst is concerned to find a fresh standpoint that affords him a hypothesis giving meaning to the phenomena presenting themselves to his scrutiny, in so far as he is successful in doing this he will be successful in making what (from one point of view) seems to be an agglomeration into what (from the point of view of his new hypothesis) is seen to possess a kind of integration. This in fact is what happens if the theory I am here propounding is applied to this very phenomenon of agglomeration.
11. The emotions and feelings may appear to have a direct relationship to the analyst. An angry patient mentioning the words, 'train' and 'policeman', may at a superficial view be angry with the analyst. In fact the anger joins the 'train' and the 'policeman'. The relationship with the analyst is as described in (9) above.
12. Projective identification is the name given by Melanie Klein to her discovery of a mechanism by which the patient splits off a part of his personality and projects it into an external object. The part may be regarded as good or bad; it retains its identity in its new habitat and is felt to control the person or thing into which it is projected; the part thus rejected by the patient is felt now to be persecutory to him. At the same time the mechanism – in so far as it is felt to be actual and not an omnipotent phantasy – leads the patient, being still identified with the split-off part, to feel confused with the person or thing into which he has projected this part of himself. This very brief summary is intended to be a reminder only: the full meaning of the term can only be sought by reference to the totality of Melanie Klein's work in which the theory and its implications are worked out.

* * *

Unassimilated sense impressions (Phase D)

i. The destruction (1) of capacity for assimilation (2) of sense impressions (3) does not impair retention of the sense impressions. They are stored and are available; but they are felt by the patient to be indistinguishable from phenomena (4) or things-in-themselves (5). They are devoid of relatedness to other retained sense impressions.

ii. The stored unassimilated sense impressions appear in the patient's communications to the analyst as objects (6) which are given a name, the name usually being a word in common use.

iii. These objects cannot be articulated (7) as words are ordinarily articulated.

iv. The intensity of the patient's feelings appears in the analysis as muscular movements, changes in mien, changes in posture, attitude. The feelings are contained in words; the words are not names of the feelings, but are felt to be the feelings themselves. The words employed for this purpose are those in articulated speech to suggest relatedness, such as 'and', 'with', 'in', 'outside', and all verbs (8).

v. Changes in musculature and varied expressions discriminate intensity of feeling, but not one feeling from another (9). They are intended to effect evacuation of accretions of stimuli.

vi. The feelings are objects no matter in which guise they appear in the analysis.

vii. What appears to be an articulated sentence is an agglomeration (10) of objects, and is therefore not to be distinguished from the agglomeration manifest to the analyst as apparently inarticulate or incoherent speech.

viii. All emotion, however expressed, whether in words or changes in musculature – such as is evidenced by a smile or stammer or attitude – is the link (11) between other objects, and has no reference to an external person or thing.

ix. The analyst remains as real and not an aspect of the patient himself, only as a necessity demanded by the exigencies of projective identification (12).

x. The agglomeration (itself a whole object but differing so fundamentally from what is usually subsumed under the term, 'whole

object', that it is undesirable to use it in this context) is intended to be a vehicle suitable for conveyance by projective identification and is correspondingly amenable to the process of return to the personality ejecting it, either because he wills it or because the person or thing intended to harbour it forces it back into its owner.

xi. The objects formed by the process that excludes assimilation are amenable to the usages of a personality employing projective identification and its introjective counterpart, but do not lend themselves to any function other than evacuation and return.

xii. An object is useless except for its employment in projective identification.

xiii. Evacuation of emotion, evidenced by the absence of all connections that *are* emotions, leads to disintegration of the patient because that which holds the objects together is no longer available. This differs from splitting in that it is a passive falling apart of the objects.

* * *

Repair of capacity for contact (Phase L)

1. Increasing strength of the ego leads to an increase in strength of the imprisoning capacity of the word which is the manifestation of the object that is a part of the ego contained in the word.
2. Because of 1, objects cannot fuse.
3. Because of 1, objects cannot link.
4. Owing to dominance of 2, objects cannot be agglomerated or articulated.
5. Failure of agglomeration and articulation increases sadism and thus initiates Phase D.
6. Phase D is suffused with frustration modification so that Phase L is reactivated.
7. Objects can now link.
8. The links are Death instincts and Life instincts.
9. Objects join destructively.
10. Objects join in sexual intercourse.

* * *

Repair of capacity for assimilation (Phase A)

a. Repair of the capacity for assimilation is manifested in analysis by verbal statements that appear superficially to be disjointed free associations.

b. Though expressed verbally, they are a method of communication of visual images, auditory impressions, olfactory impressions, emotions.

c. The verbal statements are evidence of the production of material suitable for employment in dream-thought by a process analogous to dream-work in reverse.

d. The material for which these statements are the evidence has the character of the objects of Phase L, but they are capable now of articulation with each other to form complete wholes, of storage and the concomitant notation, and of reproduction. They are consequently not suitable for projective identification.

e. These verbal statements are devoid of any element of personality; thus they contrast with the objects of Phase D which are indistinguishable from parts of the personality with which they are impregnated.

f. These verbal statements are transformations, still in the process of further transformation, of immediate sense impressions of immediate events. In this respect they are similar to the objects of Phase L, but differ in that they are in process of change associated with assimilation, whereas the objects of Phase D are in process of being ejected unchanged, or destroyed by splitting.

g. The dream-thought material represented by these verbal statements may be distinguished from the objects of Phase L by the fact of their integration one with another.

h. The integration is betrayed by the emergence of feelings of hate and fear of the analyst as super-ego, and trust in and affection for the analyst as a loved object.

j. Projective identification is seen to be employed in the conveyance of whole objects – not simply fragments.

k. The dreams that are reported carry associations that the patient can communicate.

* * *

A. The destructive splitting of the super-ego involves destruction of the capacity for assimilation of all phenomena of internal and external reality.

B. The projective identification of the phenomena leads to an impoverishment and weakening of the personality to a point at which annihilation of the personality is felt to be imminent.

C. The destruction of the capacity for assimilation leads to a deprivation of the personality of all elements necessary for development, thus producing a mental state analogous to the physiological state of starvation, and an augmentation of fears of imminent annihilation.

D. Dread of annihilation forces an attempt at repair of the capacity for assimilation and, *pari passu*, an increased impulse towards destruction of the capacity for assimilation, since such increased capacity is associated with the production of material for dream-thought (Phase A, b. & c.) and therefore of awareness of the super-ego (Phase A, h.).

E. Predominance of life instinct over death instinct leads to dominance of the impulse to repair the capacity for assimilation (Phase A).

F. Similarly, should death instincts predominate, the destruction of the capacity for assimilation becomes dominant (Phase D, i.).

G. In so far as life instincts predominate, Phase A comes into operation.

H. In view of the fact that Phase A involves the restoration of the super-ego (Phase A, h.), the attempts at repair of the capacity for assimilation only take place in the presence of the analyst who, as the trusted object brought into view by the presence of predominant life instincts, is felt as a barrier against annihilation – despite fear of him induced by reparation of the super-ego associated with the sub-dominant death instincts.

I. Following H., the phenomena of Phase A, f. become evident – that is to say, the transformation of the patient's sense impressions of the events currently taking place in the analysis.

J. A. and C. lead to an inability to dream.

K. The dominance of life instincts (E.) forces the use of dream-thoughts (D.) for the production of dreams.

L. For the reasons given in H., the patient is able only to dream in the presence of the analyst, and so there come into operation sessions that are indistinguishable from dreams from which a person is unable to awake; or, alternatively, sessions in which the patient resorts to the forced rationality of wakefulness.

M. Should the patient's fear be too intense, or his capacity for tolerating it be too small, he will compromise (K.) and produce, instead of an actual state of dreaming, either a consciously contrived dream or a hallucination of a dream.

N. The contrived or hallucinated dream is a compromise between K. and c.

O. The contrived or hallucinated dream can yield no associations, in this respect appearing to be defective in the domain of mental life in a manner analogous to the defects of the hallucinated breast in its inability to supply what the real breast supplies.

P. In contrast with the dream of L., the contrived or hallucinated dream of O. can be interpreted to display its qualities but not its content, for it has none that can be elicited.

Q. In contrast with the contrived or hallucinated dream of O., the dream of L. can be interpreted to display its content as well as its characteristic peculiarity distinguishing it from non-psychotic dreams.

R. Both the dreams of L. and O. must be distinguished from dreams reported as such by the patient.

[Undated – 1960]

Analytic technique

More than one patient has said my technique is not Kleinian. I think there is substance in this. I would put it as follows: I consider that the behaviour of the patient is a palimpsest in which I can detect a number of layers of conduct. Since all those I detect must, by that very fact, be operating, conflicts are bound to occur through the conflicting views obtaining contemporaneous expression. In this way, the conflict that is so important to the patient's sufferings and to theories of dynamic psychology is, according to me, accidental and secondary to two different views of the same situation.

Winnicott says patients *need* to regress: Melanie Klein says they *must not*: I say they *are* regressed, and the regression should be observed and interpreted by the analyst without any need to compel the patient to become totally regressed before he can make the analyst observe and interpret the regression. But by itself my theory will not do. That is to say that the patient feels he gains by being able to say, for example, "I am only a junior analyst". It seems to me that as I have stated it, it does not give due weight to the transference – and this is the objection that would be made. But it could, I think, easily prove only to be a matter of adjustment.

27 March 1960

Technique: meaning and interpretation of associations

There is a value, when listening to the associations, in making a mental distinction between the *meaning* of the associations and their *interpretation*. The patient says, "I went on Hampstead Heath yesterday and did some bird-watching".

Taking the meaning first:

1. Does he mean he was scrutinizing their sex life?
2. Or is it an attempt to describe getting into the hands of the police by behaving in a suspicious way?
3. Or does he mean he has at last taken some exercise?

And so on with other speculations. Then, having decided that point, what is the interpretation?

In conjunction with the rest of the analysis together with current transference, the preceding associations and the meaning as decided above, you finally produce the interpretation.

[Undated – 1960]

Scientific deductive system

How would a s.d.s. be produced for analytic theory? Can there be anything analogous to the 'law of gravitation'? It seems possible to produce a series of formulas that might succinctly express schizophrenia. Let us try it in the way that Braithwaite did it:

First, I think, must come the rules of the 'game'. But do the rules then come from the nature of the subject? Yes: that would seem to be the common sense of it. What are the rules of psychoanalytic schizophrenia? I jot down a few at random as they occur to me.

1. The patient always attends at the stated time and place. Analyst like-wise – or is it so? Sometimes it sounds as if that is not so. Perhaps in this respect the analyst is free to do just what he chooses.
2. The patient pays his fees regularly.
3. Analyst and patient are freely interchangeable.

These seem adequate for a start, but I could add two more.

4. The patient can do what he likes.
5. The analyst must give only strictly accurate interpretations.

But these are rules of the psychoanalytic game. We want rules of a s.d.s. Are they the same? Should the rules relate instead to Kleinian theory? There is no reason why they should not relate to any or all of these things.

[Undated – 1960]

The painful component

The solution of any problem must be regarded as having been faulty in the first instance if the consequence is neurosis. And yet the solution was a victory for right, moral right; and the victory consolidated the 'rightness' and morality of the part of the personality that triumphed. The triumphant part is included in the super-ego; it is the morality of the super-ego that is challenged, just as it is the 'id-ity' of the id that is challenged by the super-ego. The pain of readjustment consists in having to admit that the 'unworthy' part of the personality was right. The 'wicked' triumph – but make things worse by triumphing on the home ground as it were, in the realm of morality itself. The victorious aspect of the personality writes the history books, but the victorious side varies considerably from time to time. Unsaleable books, unreadable and unread papers do not constitute a social component; the thinker *must* be a man of action. The physical act of writing and carrying through all the other acts, up to and including public-ation, constitutes being a man of action *for the writer*.

[Undated – 1960]

The synthesizing function of mathematics

If a formula, or rather a calculus, is available, it may bring order to events that otherwise appear to lack any relationship. Thus a patient makes two remarks, and then makes two more; they appear to be entirely without any connecting link. It could be said that the two remarks, together with the other two remarks, make four remarks, and therefore that these facts could be seen to be related to each other in that together they made four facts. But it would be very unlikely that the mathematical application had served to effect the illumination of a relatedness of any consequence. Nor is it easy to see how, as things are at present, any calculus that has been constructed, or is likely to be constructed in the near future, would illuminate the relatedness of a series of disjointed associations of the kind with which we are familiar in analysis, particularly perhaps in the analysis of a psychotic patient. Moreover, it has to be remembered that we are always concerned with seeing the relatedness of the apparently disjointed and unconnected aspect of the elements in the analytic situation; the observation that two remarks and two other remarks make four remarks produces no flash of recognition because it effects no illumination of the point of intersection between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions.

I use this phrase deliberately so as to emphasize a peculiarity in the use I am making of these two Kleinian concepts. I am here regarding them as comprising classes of events, and I am suggesting that no interpretation is of value unless at the moment at which it is given it involves, partly through the element of contrast which is inseparable from the juxtaposition, the illumination of the disorder of scattered, familiar, and apparently unrelated elements, and the order, cohesion, and relatedness of those same elements. Furthermore, this interpretation is not psychoanalytically effective unless, when given, it is common sense, i.e. one that involves agreement in two or more senses in the analyst and the patient, and between the analyst and patient in whom these senses are in accord. Judged by these criteria,

the suggested 2 + 2 interpretation can be seen to break down because it is so unlikely that it will serve the function of intersection between the two classes represented by the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions.

* * *

Causation

The cause is that fact which is selected to give coherence to elements whose relationship to each other is either not perceived, or else seen to be such that it is irrelevant or inimical to the scientific deductive system of the beholder. In particular, the hypotheses that act as premises to the system, together with the beholder's common sense and the elements for which a cause is to be found, are brought together so that time is shown to link the elements to each other and not to separate them. It is intended to refute or deny the idea or possibility that time separates one element from another, just as in other contexts it may be desired to find a fact that demonstrates the coherence of elements that otherwise might be supposed to be separated rather than linked by space.

It is not, therefore, that there are many different opinions as to the cause of a certain event, but many different scientific deductive systems and therefore many different elements that can be selected as the intersection of the class, 'cause', and the class, 'effect'.

[Undated]

Communication

I Importance of communication as a link between related objects

> Knowledge of modern discoveries relating to logic would dispel a good deal of the prevailing confusion (which shows itself from time to time in controversies that disfigure the pages of Nature) concerning . . .
>
> [J. H. Woodger,
> *International Encyclopaedia of Unified Science, Vol. 2*, No. 5, p. 3]

The complaint is as old as the story of the Tower of Babel, and so is the wish that the problem might be solved, if in no other way, by divine intervention (as in the 'Acts of the Apostles', II, v) or by simultaneous translation (as at international congresses), or by a discipline of rigorous mathematical logic (as is proposed in the article from which I have taken my quotation).

Psychoanalysis does not allow one to suppose that the mechanics of communication operating through a universal language – whether that language is a universally known natural language, or an artificially produced language such as Esperanto, or the formulations of mathematicians, or the notation of musicians, or even the 'universal linguistic' of art itself, the content rather than the vehicle of the content – will be likely to rid us of disfiguring controversy in our attempts to co-operate in scientific achievement. But psychoanalytic experience shows that even the attempt to deal with individual tensions has not been, and is not likely to be, successful in abolishing this controversy.

If the major problem were only the 'disfiguring' nature of controversy, the matter would be painful and worth investigation, but in fact far more serious issues are involved than the emergence of phenomena that disfigure the image that men wish to have of those of their number set apart as leaders of scientific and intellectual ability

and integrity. So many controversies are wasteful and manifestly, from the outset, unlikely to issue in any clarification of the matters in dispute; the feature of almost all scientific controversy is the impotence of the disputants who show an inability to meet each other's contentions because they cannot communicate thesis or antithesis.

Language has been invented; translation can be achieved; musical and mathematical notations exist; men compose and paint. And now psychoanalysis attempts to elucidate the barriers and links that hinder or promote the relationships that require a capacity for communication. Nevertheless, the success of psychoanalysis lies so far not so much in bringing communication nearer, as in showing unmistakably the feebleness of our methods of communication even in the communication of disagreement. But this does not touch a yet graver issue, namely the problem of communication with our successors, for it would appear on the surface that if we cannot communicate with our contemporaries, we are even less likely to be able to communicate with our successors. If this communication cannot be made, the future development of analysis is imperilled and the successful discoveries made so far could be lost to the world. That this can happen is evidenced in the fate of the heliocentric theories of Aristarchus which seemed to be so clearly propounded that there could be no reason for their disappearance. As surprising and as inexplicable is the apparent disappearance of the meaning of a whole culture when the Bulgar state was captured by the Grand Duke of Moscow in 1431.

I hope I have made clear the central importance of communication in scientific method, and why there is prima facie reason to approach scientific method by this channel; the investigation will involve discussion of the psychology of the individual as an individual and as a member of a group. It will also involve appeal to many facets of human endeavour with which I am not competent to deal; but I hope that I may make sufficient headway to indicate the nature of a problem that others may be able and willing to investigate.

II Does such a link exist in mathematics or music? The problem created by change of environment

How is it that mathematics and music are able to find a method of communication? Or is it illusory in the sense that we can reproduce

the sounds the composer intended to hear, and yet do not in fact experience what he and his contemporaries experienced when they heard the same sounds, so that the disappearance – through inability to record the essence, only its outward trappings – is as complete in the music of Bach as it is in the culture of Byzantium or in the recorded history, say, of Hubert de Burgh, of whose actions and sayings we may know all we need, but of whose thoughts and spirit we know nothing? [Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward*.]

It seems hardly possible: at least one feels that even if such a loss is admitted, the mathematician and musician yet preserve far more than the psychoanalyst is able to do, or likely to be able to do, unless he can effect some radical change in his methods of communication.

It may be that the difficulty lies in a failure to grasp what are the features it is essential to communicate. Even if the analyst is fully possessed of material that he wishes to record because it is to him essential, it may be true that the material he fails to record, because to him it is obvious and axiomatic, is in fact only so because it is a part of his cultural climate and is therefore taken for granted. But suppose the cultural climate changes; then what he has recorded may well become meaningless because the key to it has gone with the change that has over-taken his civilization; regarding the cultural atmosphere of that civilization as permanent, he will have failed to pass on any record. Theoretically, I suppose he could record something that in his epoch was essential and meaningful, but which would be banal and unimportant to his successors. Suppose the god of the Christian religion came to be explicable – in all the manifestations attributed to him – as some perfectly satisfactorily demonstrable phenomenon of physical science, without the need of any mystical suppositions: would it be possible for those living under dominance of such cosmology to understand the religious music of Bach? In what sense could it be said that a Bach cantata had been adequately recorded and transmitted to the members of the new culture and civilization? It is clear that we may gain something from studying the means by which mathematicians and musicians and artists communicate, but not all that we could wish.

III What should be the content of the psychoanalytic communication?

Such vicissitudes as are secondary to unpredictable changes in culture we cannot guard against, but there still remains the lesser but important obligation to be sure that we are recording and communicating the essentials of our work, and not simply peripheral or accidental elements that we have mistaken for the essential. And here arises the problem: what in fact does happen in correct analysis? What is correct analysis, and what is the essential germ without which we have recorded virtually nothing? This is a grave problem and one that probably requires a concept of methodology to which science is a stranger. All existing concepts of methodology are already shaken by the advances of quantum mechanics, and it appears certain that methodology will in future have to reckon with a lowest level of hypotheses in a set – that is to say, a level formerly occupied by empirically verifiable data which consists of statistical hypotheses. I think it very doubtful that such a revolutionary change in outlook is revolutionary enough to meet the needs of scientific psychoanalysis. The only course open to us is to pursue the inquiry and see where it leads.

The first point to be decided is what it is that the psychoanalyst is to communicate, i.e. to embody in a notation that is precise and permanent. (I am not here considering the communications that are made in a session by the analyst's interpretations.)

Two people are in a room together, usually for fifty minutes at a time and for five sessions a week. We are concerned here with the account that is to be given of these proceedings by one of them – the analyst. What ought he to report? Can he know to whom the report is to be made – in the sense that he will have to vary his exposition to suit the needs of his audience and therefore should know what those needs are? Or is it possible to make a communication that will have value (by presupposing an abstraction, a conventional formulation that remains constant) for those to whom the communication is addressed? In the analysis of the psychotic it has been found valuable to suppose that all interpretations are addressed to a non-psychotic part of the personality even though there may appear to be little or no evidence for the existence of such a part. The navigator is able in certain circumstances to make use of an artificial horizon; can the

analyst, communicating to other individuals, do the same? And if so, can he give a scientific description of the artefact that he proposes to use in this way? The artefact should be such that the formulations that are stimulated by a belief in its existence are lifted out of the vicissitudes suffered by any communication through the changes in convention and culture to which I have referred. This artefact (receptor) must be composed of characteristics that we assume to be immutable and outside the play of forces such as changes of civilization. I believe this artefact receptor will be found to be not very different from the 'non-psychotic part of the personality'. Certainly it would save trouble and confusion if it turned out to be the fact that the same hypothetical construct could be used in analytic practice as in a communication to an extra-analytic audience, and vice versa. For the present it is necessary only to consider such a constant in order to realize that the answer to the question, 'What is to be communicated?', cannot be considered without reference to such a construct. Superficially this can look like a demand for an answer to a question that depends for its answer on another question that has to be answered after reference to the answer to the first question. But this kind of dilemma is one to which we shall have to grow accustomed until a methodology is produced which releases psychoanalysis, and probably all other sciences, from the restrictions of a classical scientific method that is as inadequate to psychoanalytic needs as classical wave mechanics are to the needs of the quantum mechanical physicist.

IV What is the content to be?

Let us suppose that the receptor characteristics have already been elaborated and are known to us. (I shall later educe arguments showing my justification for such a procedure when I describe the α-function of dream-work, and the way in which α-elements are employed in dream-thought.) What is to be recorded and communicated? The answer is deceptively simple: the analyst must record and communicate what he has recorded and communicated. That is to say that if my intention is to record and communicate, then I have no choice in my subject matter; any departure in my report from what I have recorded and communicated makes my report a link in a relationship that is not scientific but belongs to some other category – not

what I later call a K-link, but one belonging to a different class. Furthermore, it is addressed to the psychotic part of the personality by the psychotic part of the personality, however much this fact may be disguised by the employment, or the apparent employment, of non-psychotic mechanisms. Even a verbal statement that bears the stamp of rational persuasiveness will be found to be the vehicle for projective identification and to obtain any force and significance it has from its being so employed, and none – save deceptiveness – from its rational form and characteristics.

I am aware that my statement of content for the communication and record must seem to be either question-begging or platitudinous, but I believe that this will be seen not to be the case when we have penetrated more deeply into the subject.

Suppose now the receptor *and* the content of the communication: how is the record, and communication of the record and communication, to be effected? Before attempting any answer to this, we must note an ambiguity that has crept in. 'Record' has two different meanings: in one sense it means 'to receive a communication', and strictly speaking should refer to the way in which this is done; but it also means 'to store the communication received' in such a manner that it is available first of all when I want it, and secondly when (in this instance) the reader is ready to receive it.

V α-element

But I seem to have involved myself in some kind of contradiction. This is intended to be a scientific communication, and I have already expressed the view that as such it should be addressed to a hypothetical concept, the non-psychotic part of the personality which is endowed with certain unspecified immutable characteristics. I feel I am addressing it to an actual person – intelligent, friendly, engrossed in what I am writing and, to be frank, quite warmly appreciative of my effort. Analytic experience tells me this is really myself and that I shall be in for a rude awakening when I find out the real response. 'A rude awakening': am I then asleep? By no means. But this figure, these characteristics with which I have endowed it and you, might very well exist in a dream.

I propose to call this image an α-element. (This does not refer to its function as part of a phantasy; it applies only to the visual image itself.) The hypothetical concept, the 'non-psychotic part of the personality', I consider to be a version of the α-element which belongs to a level of increasing generalization in the hierarchy of hypotheses that form the theory to which both the α-element and the hypothetical concept belong. Conversely, the α-element approximates to a level of decreasing generalization, or increasing particularization, thus having a relationship with the hypothetical concept somewhat similar to that which exists between the level of empirically verifiable data and the hypotheses of the scientific deductive system related to it.

Can the relationship of the α-element to the hypothetical concept be described as more than 'somewhat similar' to that which exists between empirically verifiable data and the generalized hypotheses representing them? Could it be described as identical? For the present I think we are justified only in noting a certain similarity. The same similarity must likewise be noted, but left for later treatment, in the resemblance that the relationship between the α-element and the hypothetical concept of the non-psychotic part of the personality bears to the relationship between the hypotheses of quantum mechanical theory and the statistical hypotheses that appear, in this theory, to take the place of empirically verifiable data.

We must consider the possibility that in a scientific deductive system the appearance of bi-polarity that is presented by the hierarchical arrangement of a theory (with premises and high-level hypotheses of high generalization at one end, and low-level sets of empirically verifiable data of high degree of particularization at the other) must be replaced by something far more complex in which what I later call 'a selected fact' has grouped about it a constellation of elements in sets that are determined only by the nature of the link and its characteristic of being attached to the selected fact. In such a system the scientific deductive system would form only one set of elements, linked by the logic of the deductive system, and possessing the selected fact as one of its elements. But I feel that we must not attempt to proceed further before examining in greater detail some of the statements I have made, and the concepts that I have been compelled to introduce without adequate explanation.

VI Dream-work-α

Psychoanalysts, and Freud in particular, have described how the dreamer compresses, distorts, displaces and disguises the dream-thoughts in such a way that the manifest content of the dream bears little apparent resemblance to what he calls the 'latent content' of the dream, namely that content which is revealed by interpretation. This transformation of dream-thought into manifest content is, Freud says, brought about by dream-work. I wish now to employ this term to describe a related but different series of phenomena. To avoid confusion with the concept already established in psychoanalytic usage, and to avoid inventing a term that introduces – by virtue of its penumbra of already existing associations – implications I would prefer to exclude, I propose for my purposes to modify Freud's term by calling it 'dream-work-*α*'. What I propose to designate by this term I shall now relate.

In the state of mind of relaxed attention necessary in making observations, the individual is able through his senses to establish contact with his environment. He is aware of his sensations and could, if required, describe what they are – as I, for example, can describe the colour of the paper on which I write, my hand holding the pen, and so on. Similarly you, the reader, can make observations of your experience as you read the word printed on the page. I shall not in this inquiry consider the individual who had a defect that prevents his experiencing even this degree of contact with his environment, but I shall consider the individual who is able to make sensory contact and yet seems quite unable to learn from the experience; for such a patient enables me to observe, by contrast, a more usual chain of events of which I might otherwise remain unaware. This chain of events, as far as I am able to tell, is something like this: suppose I am talking to a friend who asks me where I propose to spend my holiday; as he does so, I visualize the church of a small town not far from the village in which I propose to stay. The small town is important because it possesses the railway station nearest to my village. Before he has finished speaking, a new image has formed, and so on.

The image of the church has been established on a previous occasion – I cannot now tell when. Its evocation in the situation I am describing would surprise no one, but what I now wish to add may be more controversial. I suggest that the experience of this particular

conversation with my friend, and this particular moment of the conversation – not simply his words but the totality of that moment of experience – is being perceived sensorially by me and converted into an image of that particular village church.

I do not know what else may be going on, though I am sure that much more takes place than I am aware of. But the transformation of my sense impressions into this visual image is part of a process of mental assimilation. The impressions of the event are being re-shaped as a visual image of that particular church, and so are being made into a form suitable for storage in my mind.

By contrast, the patient might have the same experience, the same sense impressions, and yet be unable to transform the experience so that he can store it mentally. But instead, the experience (and his sense impressions of it) remains a foreign body; it is felt as a 'thing' lacking any of the quality we usually attribute to thought or its verbal expression.

To the first of these products, that of dream-work-α, I propose to give the name, 'α-element'; to the second, the unassimilated sense impression, 'β-element'. It may be wondered why I should need to consider β-elements at all in an inquiry into scientific method if they are a characteristic of a disturbed personality. My reason is that while I have been led to observe β-elements through treating disturbed patients, their occurrence is by no means restricted to their use by disturbed individuals – as I hope I shall presently show.

If my contention is correct, the production of α-elements is of the first importance: on an adequate supply of these elements depends the capacity for what Freud calls 'unconscious waking thinking', the ability to entertain and use dream-thoughts, the capacity for memory, and all the functions of the apparatus that Freud tentatively suggests come into existence with the dominance of the reality principle ('Two Principles of Mental Functioning' [1911b]).

The β-elements are characteristic of the personality during the dominance of the pleasure principle: on them depends the capacity for non-verbal communication, the individual's ability to believe in the possibility of ridding himself of unwanted emotions, and the communication of emotion within the group.

The α-elements may be presumed to be mental and individual, subjective, to a high degree personal, particular, and unequivocally belonging to the domain of epistemology in a particular person.

The example I have given of the visual image of the church is to a high degree particular, and must be regarded as belonging to the lowest level of empirically verifiable data. In the context in which I have cited it, it is not even a symbol, although once the individual has experienced such a visual image there is nothing to prevent its appearance in other contexts fulfilling the functions usually associated with symbols. What I wish to emphasize is that its character as an *α*-element is its suitability for employment in dream-thought and unconscious waking thinking, and not the way in which it may be employed. I may have more to say about the characteristics of the *α*-element that make it suitable for use as a symbol or an ideogram, but for the present I emphasize its character as an element – an irreducibly simple object.

I may make my point clearer by drawing attention to the last sentence in which I have had to call an *α*-element an irreducibly simple 'object'. The term, 'object', carrying with it the association of a subject, and being in any case a word referring to a word, is more complex and less elemental than the *α*-element. It is as if, in order to state how simple, lacking in complexity and elemental (not elementary) an *α*-element is, I had to say it was something far more complex which is derived, through a process in the mind, from *α*-elements. The impasse is similar to that of the quantum mechanics physicist whose knowledge of elementary particles depends on methods too gross to detect them. In this instance the verbal description perforce employs terms that are too complex and refers to ideas when the discussion is of something altogether simpler.

The function of dream-work-*α* is to produce something that bears a relationship to an idea analogous to the relationship that an elementary particle bears to an atom in physics. The function of the *α*-element with which we are concerned in a discussion of scientific method, is its key position in the apparatus by which the individual learns anything. Similarly, the function of the *β*-element which concerns us is in communication within a group.

Without *α*-elements it is not possible to know anything. Without *β*-elements it is impossible to be ignorant of anything: they are essential to the functioning of projective identification; any unwanted idea is converted into a *β*-element, ejected from the personality, and then becomes a fact of which the individual is unaware, though he may be aware of feelings of persecution stimulated by it.

I reserve the term, 'knowledge', for the sum total of α- and β-elements. It is a term that therefore covers everything the individual knows and does not know. As I use it, the term must not be supposed to imply the existence of a thing in itself called 'knowledge'; it is a name for a postulate that has no actuality; there is no corresponding 'realization' in the sense that abstract mathematical systems may have one or more concrete realizations. 'Knowledge', in my sense, will thus be seen to appertain purely to the realm of epistemology. In my use of the term it is nonsensical to talk of knowledge of astronomy, or of there being any actuality corresponding to a term, 'astronomical knowledge', other than in the sense of α- and β-elements employed by the individual in his relationship with a domain of facts.

We have now approached this difficulty: the α-elements are, by definition, indispensable to the apparatus that enables the individual to know something. But they are also what he knows in that they are elements of assimilated sense data; they are his knowledge. This may not appear to be a difficulty if we state it in some such terms as, 'We use our knowledge and experience to gain more knowledge and experience'. But there is a difficulty that I wish to make apparent, and I can do this best by supposing a phase to exist – if we go back far enough in the individual's life – in which there is no knowledge, i.e. no α-elements or β-elements.

It may well be that this early learning, or first stage of any learning, is effected by dream-work-α on the one hand, and the mechanism of projective identification on the other. This supposes that the β-elements can be employed when α-elements do not exist, and the α-elements are a later stage of β-elements – that is to say that dream-work-α operates on β-elements and not directly on sense data. There is also evidence to support a theory that β-elements are employed, or felt to be employed, as projectiles so that they are planted in an object which perhaps submits them to a transformation by its dream-work-α apparatus before the projecting personality re-introjects them. But although these possibilities offer a way out of the difficulty – and indeed are, I believe, more than possibilities – they do not cover a mechanism in which the α-element is used to explore the emotional experience in which the person finds himself.

August 1960

α

It is advisable to revert to the patient's dream over and over again – elaboration 1, 2, 3 . . . *n*; but not simply as dreams to be interpreted and related to a stimulus. *They must be related to the dream-work that the stimulus has stimulated*. How is this to be done? It may be easiest with the psychotic patient, for with him there is more chance of being able to see the stimulus, i.e. the consulting room scene itself, and his dream-work reaction to that situation. In particular it would seem necessary at first to make a distinction between α and projective identification – or at least to show that 'excessive projective identification' means projective identification to the exclusion of other methods of dream-work-α. The methods of dream-work-α are not the same as those of dream-work which is related to interpretation of dreams, but are the *reciprocal* or dream-work and are related to the capacity to dream, i.e. to transform into dream, events that are grasped only on a rational, conscious level. In this way α is the reciprocal of dream-work. Furthermore, it suggests that the element of 'resistance' in dream-work, as elucidated by Freud, is a compound of two elements: resistance, as described by Freud; and a felt need to convert the conscious rational experience into dream, rather than a felt need to convert the dream into conscious rational experience. The 'felt need' is *very* important; if it is not given due significance and weight, the true dis-ease of the patient is being neglected; it is obscured by the analyst's insistence on interpretation of the dream.

[Undated – 1960]

α
and paranoid-schizoid position

To what extent is the constant transition from paranoid-schizoid to depressive position and back again the essential mechanism of learning throughout life? As I listen to a patient, am I not all the time thinking that I see 'the point', and then rejecting it to reassume paranoid-schizoid? And is this not a kind of regurgitation? A chewing of the contemplative cud? Should that not be the visual image – a cow, milk-and-calf producer, chewing the cud? It means then that in the chaos of unconnected incoherent facts I see 'the point' – the selected fact. If I am wise, I reject it and reassume chaos. I select another fact, or the same one. I reject it and reassume paranoid-schizoid position. And may not this also give rise to situations in which the patient appears enviously to reject an interpretation that he accepted the day before? (Melanie Klein, 'Envy and Gratitude', pp. 183–184.) That is to say that as well as envy it may be an example of failure to return to paranoid-schizoid, and a wish to make the *analyst* do so; *he* has to feel that the whole of the mass of discrete objects has again lost its coherence and cohesion.

The difficulty that the schizophrenic patient has in extricating himself from a state of mind means that he tends to have great difficulty in the rapid change from Ps to D that is necessary for *α*. This contributes to the analyst's impression of lack of progress because the slowness of oscillation hinders realization of oscillation. That is to say that the successful interpretation brings relief but takes the patient into the depressive position and confronts him with yet wider vistas of uncoordinated elements. In the next session he starts where he left off – he can do nothing towards returning to Ps and back to D. In other words, he is displaying a slowness of reaction comparable with the slowness of change at the beginning of analysis when the same mood may remain unchanged for months.

[Undated – 1960]

Dream-work-α

To what extent is myth-making an essential function of *α*? It may be that the sense impression has to be transformed to make it suitable material for dream-thought, but that it is the function of dream-thought to use the material put at its disposal by *α*, the units of dream-thoughts so to speak, in order to produce myths.

Myths must be defined; they must be communicable and have some of the qualities of common sense – one might call them 'common non-sense'.

Dream-work and α

The episode of the rain storm has emerged at different times in fragments. Rain – without a raincoat – taking the only taxi – pneumonia feared for me – self in rain at my house.

Then there was his account of the baby with a horn on its nose – some cowl on its head – his wife and blood – shambles.

There was his dream of his other self. This was coherent and might be an account of what I had said to him in a session. If so, it is almost accurate, but I am his other self and it is called a dream.

What do I know about all this? Virtually nothing. It is hardly even true to say that I know he said it, because although I was present and heard him talking and saw him lying on the couch, there is little I can do to digest it. In other words, I do not *know* what took place – I *suspect*. The conditions do not exist for me to have the experience of knowing, but the conditions do exist for me to be suspicious. I can only pile one hypothesis on another. Taking the view that I need to be able to operate *α*, I find in fact that I cannot.

The obvious explanation is that I know of no theory and can find no selected fact that makes the facts cohere. What theories are there? The following occur to me:

1. He is aware of reality and delivers splitting attacks on it so that the elements appear as elements.
2. These elements are scattered in time.
3. The elements are sometimes conjoined, e.g. my house and my being wet through. But these elements were not thus joined in the episode.
4. Usually the elements are widely separated, and the matter intervening seems intended to isolate each element from another. It might be said that a kind of mental faeces links, or separates, the elements.

In all this I have described some facts (2, 3, and the first line of 4) as theories; this gives a measure of the uncertainty. Can any scientific theory be produced to meet such a position – a theory of improbability? An uncertainty principle perhaps?

[Undated]

Splitting of the breast enables the infant to take the milk without understanding its dependence on the breast and the indulgence it extends to him. Such understanding involves hate and envy, and these impel attacks on the apparatus of understanding to prevent the stimulation of envy – envy thus destroying envy. The attacks mean that *in effect* the breast as a source of understanding, the 'mental' breast, is felt to be destroyed since no apparatus to understand it means no understanding of it, and so no 'it' to understand. That leaves the sucking breast only as a 'thing' incapable of loving and understanding, and incapable therefore of endowing something else with understanding.

[None of the entries on pages 182–270 was dated, but it can be assumed that they were written between 1961 and 1967.]

[Undated]

The problem of perception: common sense and group polarity of instincts

Berkeley says the stimulus may be God; so does Descartes. I shall maintain there is truth in this and that amongst all the objects that any given hypothesis at any given moment asserts to be constantly conjoined there is always the element that is that aspect which 'God' presents. Thus if I say I see a table, I am stating that this is an empirical experience in which my hypothesis that certain elements are constantly conjoined – those elements in fact whose constant conjunction I have decided to call, 'a table' – are again conjoined; furthermore, that amongst these elements (hardness, shape, etc.) is an element that is 'God's' contribution, a presenting in me the awareness of certain sensations. In this context I regard God, or Descartes' evil spirit or Demon (in his first 'Meditation') as being interchangeable views of the same thing.

What is this God or Demon? In my view it is none other than the social component, '*Vox populi, vox dei*', of the instinctual equipment. Or, looked at from another point of view, it helps to convince me that these conjoined sensory experiences are, or are proof of the existence of, a table. In the instance of the table this may not be of moment, but throughout the history of scientific endeavour we find evidence of acceptance by the scientist of beliefs that are supposed by him to be ideas corresponding to an objective reality, but which, in the light of later knowledge, we can see to correspond to that special or particular reality that we now see to be the common sense of the time. Such evidence is not proof but is at least not incompatible with the view I am proposing: that certain perceptions of the individual are not so much qualities under investigation as impositions on the individual's outlook by common sense (in my terminology) or God's idea (in Berkeley's) or the deceptions by God and Demon (in Descartes').

[Undated]

Ultimately, a science stands or falls in proportion as it is a valid technique for discovery, and not by virtue of the 'knowledge' gained. This last is always subject to supersession; indeed, supersession of findings by new findings is the criterion by which vitality of the subject is judged.

Induction

A generalization is induced from many (number not specified) instances – until presumably we get, 'All men are mortal', as our premise. But this seems to me to be a hypothesis like any other: a hypothesis that is then used as a premise in a deductive system no doubt, but a hypothesis none the less. And it derives from other hypotheses; for example, 'men'. But are any words that are not nouns hypotheses? All? Mortal? Are? If sounds can be combined to make words, then words can be combined to make further hypotheses.

The statement, 'All men are mortal: Socrates is a man; therefore Socrates is mortal', is supposed to be a deduction from the premise, 'All men are mortal'. But the premise is supposed to be arrived at by a process of induction. That is to say that a great number of people are known to have died, and from this, inductive reasoning leads to the generalization that 'All men are mortal'. It is my contention that this is false. I do not believe anyone has ever thought that a lot of people have died and then have begun to suspect that men die, until the suspicion begins to harden into a conviction and at some given moment the generalization flashes into existence – all men are mortal.

My theory is that contact with reality induces questions, and that the process of induction gives rise to questions. The hypothesis is inspired by the need to deal with – not necessarily to answer – the question. It may still be true that the hypothesis does answer the

question, but that may only be because in a particular instance there is an answer that would deal with the question.

The question may be of little social significance. That is to say it may, like instances of sense impressions that constitute purely 'private' knowledge, be a purely private question. Such an instance would be someone who fears that he has been responsible for the death of a particular man. His doubts and questionings could then be dealt with by the hypothesis, 'All men are mortal', and from this he could establish a deductive system of which 'All men are mortal' would be the premise, and so arrive at the conclusion that the particular man had died because of his mortality and not through any action on the part of the man who felt guilty. Such an inductive process is not, perhaps, as socially valuable as that of another whose induced questions had a bigger social or public component analogous to the 'common sense' of the man whose knowledge, the facts of which provided him with the material for his scientific observations, might be regarded as 'public' knowledge for public communication.

Any contact with reality leads not to the collection of facts that common sense would regard as material suitable for empirical observation and testing, but to the induction of a series of questions, or an amalgam of the series of questions – what? why? how? where? The statement, 'All men are mortal', is a response to that *private* question, and the problem of induction that has troubled philosophers is really not so much, 'How is that premise arrived at?' but, 'What was the question to which this hypothesis-turned-premise is the reply?'.

[Undated]

Mental health

The man who is mentally healthy is able to gain strength and consolation and the material through which he can achieve mental development through his contact with reality, no matter whether that reality is painful or not. This view may owe its origins to experience in no way metaphysical, but such as might be achieved through failure to admit the existence of a physical hazard to physical progress and the resultant fall. The reciprocal view is that no man can become mentally healthy save by a process of constant search for fact and a determination to eschew any elements, however seductive or pleasurable, that interpose themselves between himself and his environment as it really is. As a psychoanalyst I include the man's own personality as a part, and a very important part, of his environment. By contrast it may be said that man owes his health, and his capacity for continued health, to his ability to shield himself during his growth as an individual by repeating in his personal life the history of the race's capacity for self-deception against truth that his mind is not fitted to receive without disaster. Like the earth, he carries with him an atmosphere, albeit a mental one, which shields him from the mental counterpart of the cosmic and other rays at present supposed to be rendered innocuous to men, thanks to the physical atmosphere.

[Undated]

I have said that the inchoate mass of incoherent, or apparently incoherent, elements can, by selection of the appropriate fact, be made to appear to the observer to come together as a whole in which the elements are now seen to be related to each other as parts of the whole. When time is essential, this selected fact is known as the cause, but this fact is otherwise no different from other facts that are selected for their apparent ability to bring these elements together as a whole. Such facts do not necessarily possess intrinsic significance; that depends on what fact the observer lacks, and that clearly depends on the observer. The acceleration of the falling body could not be 'understood' by Galileo till he had selected the fact that the fall was proportional to the time through which the body had fallen, and not the distance (is this an instance of asking the right question: 'when?', not 'where?'). This fact is not a scientific fact unless and until it can be communicated and then found to be (or not to be) one that fulfils this function of integration for a large number of people, or a society or a group, 'in common'. But at first it is a private fact and is chosen because it fits into a scientific deductive system or calculus of immense complexity, for it is co-extensive with the entire mentality of the person.

In the instance of acceleration of falling bodies, it was Galileo who required a fact that would give coherence and meaning to the facts already known to him but felt to be devoid of coherence. But the environment, the world of external reality, was for all practical purposes no different for all Galileo's contemporaries. The majority of mankind, we may be sure, were unaware of any lack of coherence in the facts that they perceived to be associated with falling bodies. Yet it is not to be believed that the individual lacked preoccupations then, any more than he does today. Every individual is in a state of mind in which he is aware of elements of a world independent of himself. A contemporary of Galileo might be as well aware as Galileo of the

facts that bodies fall, but, as is the case with the majority of individuals today, those facts presented no problem.

It is at this point that we touch on the problem of induction that has given rise to so much confusion for the philosopher of science. It has always been felt that induction is very important. Even today Bertrand Russell considers that no scientific method is possible without induction, and even goes so far as to suggest that induction is the foundation of all scientific knowledge. It is evident that he is not happy in the consequences that follow from this belief, and he expressly states his conviction that Hume's arguments (against the supposition that something additional to constant conjunction is a purely psychological phenomenon arising from the tendency of the human mind to associate ideas together) have never really been met. I hope to show that, thanks to psychoanalysis, we are now in a position to see why the philosophers who argue in favour of induction are led into an impasse from which they have so far found no escape; and also why philosophers who are not satisfied by Hume's dismissal of constant conjunction as adding nothing extra to a pure phenomenon of the human mind – namely its tendency to associate one idea with another – cannot propose any alternative that will at once express the nature of their dissatisfaction *and* fill the gap that they feel Hume's theory leaves in the structure of scientific method.

I think the fault lies in the belief that the inductive method consists of the collection of data and the inference, from the data observed, of generalizations such as are commonly embodied in a hypothesis. I believe the hypothesis is not based on what is commonly supposed to be observation, but is essentially a statement that such-and-such is a fact. This supposed fact has invariably the following features, which are essential to it as a hypothesis.

1. It states that certain elements are constantly conjoined.
2. It states that these elements are conjoined in a particular way.

When one of the elements is time, the elements are always stated to be related to each other as cause and effect. The word, 'cause', is applied to the selected fact that, for the particular individual observer, gives coherence to certain elements that have, to him, been mentally present as incoherent and demanding coherence. Essential amongst these elements are (externally) time, and (internally, and peculiar to

the individual) feelings of guilt. We shall see later the importance of this description of the nature of a scientific hypothesis, but for the moment I want to turn to the problem of induction.

I believe that philosophers are correct in expressing the need for some theoretical concept, such as induction, to represent a verifiable fact that plays an essential role in the scientific method. I also believe that the process of induction – whatever that might turn out to be – is and must be related to a sensory awareness of data of external reality. But the function of induction is to extract from the data that have been collected via the sensory apparatus, not a hypothesis but a question – preferably the right question. By 'right question' I mean that which is dictated by common sense (in the sense in which I have defined it); any other question is a matter of private concern. All scientific matters are of public knowledge of public facts made public – the scientific work consisting of public-ation.

I suggest then that the process is one of awareness of incoherent elements and the individual's ability to tolerate that awareness until such time as induction leads to the formulation of a question. (Of the nature of those questions I shall speak later.) The question once formulated gives rise to an inspiration, the selection of the 'fact' or, as I would suggest, the sophisticated fact or hypothesis. From this follow the steps by which a scientific deductive system is built up: from the high-level hypotheses acting as premises, through the intermediate derived hypotheses, through decreasing generalization to the lowest-level hypotheses, we reach the particularizations that are open to invalidation by empirical testing.

It will be noticed that I have done away with the suggestion that the hypothesis is derived from observation that certain elements are constantly conjoined; I have substituted for it the theory that the hypothesis invariably maintains that certain elements are constantly conjoined and that it is the function of the hypothesis so to do. This substitution may at first sight seem to be of very little consequence, and indeed even to be a merely arbitrary alteration in the accepted order of events. But in fact, as I shall now demonstrate, it is an emendation that, like so many in the history of science, is apparently trivial in itself but effects a change that is of an importance apparently out of proportion to its seeming insignificance. For, once it is accepted that an essential feature of the hypothesis is to state, together with whatever it states, that certain elements are constantly conjoined, then

it becomes possible to see something of the history of the hypothesis as a development in the human mind in its change to the phase that Freud calls the dominance of the reality principle. Furthermore, it becomes possible to make a new approach to the difficulties that have been raised by the philosophers of perception to the discomfiture of those philosophers who feel that a place should exist for the exercise of common sense, and that common sense and the objections of the phenomenologists could not really be brought together in anything more satisfactory than a head-on collision.

I suggest that the elements of scientific method to which I have drawn attention, namely the relationship between the psychological needs of the individual, the demands of the reality principle, the demands of reality on the individual for recognition as reality if he is to survive, the hypothesis as an assertion of constant conjunction of elements and a statement that the elements are conjoined by different forms of relatedness that may be distinguished from each other, the social component that is discerned in the fact that public-ation is an essential and not an accidental feature – all are present at an early stage in the history of the individual and the race, and are associated in particular with the development of verbal thought. Here again I think the problem is simplified if we ignore for the time being the characteristic of words which has so far dominated the picture – namely their characteristic symbols – and consider each word to be by way of what at a later stage we call a hypothesis.

Regarded in this light, I suggest the individual seeks by the emission of selected sounds, later to be distinguished by words, to convey that certain elements in his surroundings are constantly conjoined. Thus the individual may express by some sound, such as 'da–da–da'; that certain sensory impressions are always conjoined; the 'da–da–da' being conjoined with them is a method of public-ation of the hypothesis, and at the same time a reduction of the hypothesis to terms that can be verified by empirical tests. "Da–da–da", says the infant. "Yes", says the perceptive mother, "That's right; it's Daddy". And the scientific method, high-level hypothesis, generalization and verifiable statement, together with public-ation, has been born.

I do not suggest that this is going to meet the objections of the philosopher of perception who may still feel that a particular problem is insoluble. Namely the problem of how the private knowledge of sense impressions is ever to be translated into public knowledge,

or how the individual is ever to be assured that any phenomena lie beyond the sense impressions of which he is aware. I can only reply, taking a leaf out of the hypothetical book of my hypothetical infant, by public-ation – that is, speech. This problem, which appears to many philosophers to be a matter of dialectic, cannot be regarded as unimportant by the psychoanalyst who may be treating a patient whose sense impressions appear to give him information that does not correspond with what the analyst ordinarily considers to be the appropriate external facts.

* * *

When is the private fact made public? In the individual, when it has become a matter of common sense; that is, all his senses combine to give the same information. But amongst these elements of personality, in which I include the sense perceptions, I wish to include also that aspect of the senses which is held in common with the group. Private knowledge becomes public knowledge when the common sense of analyst and analysand agree that the perceptions of both indicate that some idea corresponds to an external fact independent of both observers. I shall later suggest that it is the moment of publication that is the point at which a mental phenomenon – a thought, an idea, a hypothesis – becomes an action in a psychoanalysis. When the psychoanalyst gives an interpretation that is a public-ation of private knowledge, he is translating thought into action, word into deed, just as much as the physicist conducting a laboratory experiment.

[Undated]

In my papers, 'The Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-Psychotic Personalities' [1957] and 'Attacks on Linking' [1959],[1] I was concerned with the effect on the patient's capacity for communication with himself and others of the minutely destructive fragmentation – originally described by Melanie Klein ('Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms' [1946]) – which the schizoid inflicts on these methods of communications as a part of his destructive attacks on all links. At the moment I am not concerned with the destructive attacks nor yet with the attempt, implicit in the psychoanalysis of such a patient, at reparation of the destruction and synthesis of the fragments – except in so far as it might be possible to deduce from these experiences some tentative hypotheses to illuminate the normal process of development. The elements with which we shall be concerned are hallucinations associated with intense deprivation (whether caused by the blockading effect of the patient's own envy or for any other reason, e.g. destruction of all links, murderous super-ego, predominance of death instincts), dreams, speech and its disorders (e.g. stammer), painting and drawing, and reports of difficulty with musical execution.

I shall commence with the description of a clinical experience. The patient gives virtually no information in terms of ordinary conversation. But he is able to create an impression. In my attempt to understand him I am successful in that I receive an impression, but I am unsuccessful in that the impression I receive cannot be evaluated. The patient speaks: "Well, I don't seem to have anything to say . . . I say I have nothing to say . . . it doesn't seem to me that I have, anything at all . . . I suppose I've done something wrong . . . of course I did go . . . no, it's no good."

These statements are made as if they were addressed to me. Each group of words is followed by a pause, as if I were invited to reply. My silence prompts the patient to repeat himself in a tone that betrays

[1][For both, see *Second Thoughts*: Volume VI. *Ed*.]

his sense of being disregarded by me. The phrase, "I suppose I've done something wrong", is an expression of grievance at the utterly unreasonable treatment to which he is being subjected in being made to feel guilty when in fact he has nothing with which to reproach himself. The total episode must have occupied ten minutes, and up to this point bears the stamp of a contrived situation.

The remainder of the session, after appropriate interpretations, took on an entirely different stamp and consequently becomes irrelevant for my present purpose. I propose, therefore, to dwell on certain aspects of this fragment, ignoring subsequent developments and the work that preceded it, except to say that the main characteristic was the same as that of this fragment, namely envy. Even so, the fragment expressed only one facet of the operation of this emotion. Envy in one form or another dominated every session for months on end, and the essential feature of the envy was its disastrous efficacy in cutting the patient off from every – or what seemed to be almost every – source of vitalizing influence.

The isolation of the patient was effected by the severance of his means of communication with the vitalizing influence. This is the true significance of the attacks on linking to which I have drawn attention; these attacks and their effect are clearly manifested in the destruction, namely projective identification, ideogrammatic expression, sound (as the matrix of that specialized form which in its maturity we recognize as music), and indeed the ideational counterpart of all the senses.

But in addition to these there is an attack on the Positions because they are a vital factor in the conversion of the unknown to the known. That is to say, the individual's capacity for learning depends throughout life on his ability to tolerate the paranoid-schizoid position, the depressive position, and the dynamic and continuing interaction between the two. The Positions are not to be regarded simply as features of infancy, and the transition from paranoid-schizoid to depressive position as something that is achieved once for all during infancy, but as a continuously active process once its mechanism has been successfully established in the early months. If, therefore, this is not established at the outset, then its operation remains defective throughout life (in varying degrees of intensity), and the patient cannot reap the benefits that accrue through smooth operation of the to-and-fro between the two positions that should, for a full and healthy life, be always available to him.

As I attempted to show in my paper on the attacks on linking, this means that the two main routes by which the patient can maintain communication with the sources essential for healthy development are both obstructed with degrees of thoroughness dependent on the severity and duration of the attacks on the links. I shall discuss this in detail later, but for the present pass it by to consider what these vitalizing sources are from which the patient is isolated.

I must make it clear at the outset that I cannot pretend to anything but a shadowy idea of these sources; I do not doubt that they will need psychoanalytic investigation for many years. But, broadly speaking, I believe they are sources that betray their presence and activity in the Oedipus myth.

We are accustomed, thanks to Freud's discoveries, to attribute great significance and importance to the Oedipus complex, and consequently it has come to be regarded as if it were the starting point of a dynamic process.

* * *

I wish now to regard the Oedipus myth, the Sophoclean version of that myth, and Freud's own discoveries as all being attempts at the resolution of a developmental crux. I hope to show that these attempts at resolution are far more widespread in time, and far more various in the form and method of resolution adopted, than has hitherto been realized or even suspected. One such attempt can be discerned in the issues involved in the production of a scientific deductive system and the calculus that represents it.

With this end in view I propose to examine Euclid's elements. This brings me back to the point at which I said a search must be made for the intersection of processes analogous to those which we ordinarily see in dreams, with the processes we ordinarily associate with mathematical logic. But before doing this I must give a warning: it is inevitable that I should appear at certain points of the discussion to be seeing sexual, and particularly Oedipal, symbols in certain Euclidean propositions. As I shall make clear, there is nothing new in this: in fact insights date back at least to Plutarch. But in some respects it would be putting the cart before the horse to think that Freud's Oedipal discoveries elucidate the Euclidean theorem, for I wish to propound the hypothesis that the Euclidean theorem and Freud's discovery of the Oedipus complex, together with the Oedipus myth and the

Sophoclean version of it, are alike in that they are both attempts to resolve the conflicts and problems of which they are at one and the same time the manifestation and the attempted solution. I further wish to show that the problems involved in the interplay between the Positions have also prompted attempts at resolution analogous to those to which I point as associated with the matrix or matrices of the Oedipus myth.

I have previously pointed out that the Oedipus myth itself embodies the problem of knowledge in that a question is posed, demanding an answer. One point on which I shall dwell is, what was the question posed by the Sphinx? To this I shall suggest a solution. I shall also suggest that envy plays a role in the fundamental problem, which has not been appreciated although it is of first importance. This envy is directed against the capacity of the individual that makes him able to negotiate the Positions.

To start with the Sphinx and her question – I stress, *her* question – tradition has it that the question was: what walks on four feet in the morning, on two at noon, and on three in the evening? And the answer was: man crawls on all fours as a baby, walks upright in the prime of life, and uses a staff in old age.

I shall propose a different answer. But I must first draw attention to an aspect of Euclid's Fifth Proposition in his first book. We are so accustomed to regard his use of the term, 'isosceles triangle', as bearing only the meaning that we associate with a mathematical term, that it is difficult to realize that the Greek term could be translated as, 'a three-kneed thing with equal legs'. R. B. Onians has shown – and he cannot be accused of any tenderness to Freud's theories of sexuality – that the knees, in early Greek literature, are very frequently associated with the genitalia [*Origins of European Thought*, p. 174]. This has made me look at Euclid's Fifth Proposition in a new light. It also makes one inclined to attempt a revaluation of the question traditionally attributed to the Sphinx. But for the moment I shall rest content with bringing together Euclid I.5 and the Oedipus myth.

[Undated]

The Oedipal chain

The fate of the primal scene:

1. There may be an actual sensory experience. This would correspond to the lowest-level hypotheses of empirically verifiable fact.
2. The scene assumes the character of a hieroglyph or an ideogram.
3. The ideogram becomes (a) formularized, or (b) abstract. If abstracted, then it becomes a figure constructed out of the 'elements' (of Euclidean geometry).
4. An intermediate phase derived from another context – the invention of Cartesian co-ordinates.
5. The further abstraction of the scientific deductive system that is Euclidean geometry, to produce the algebraic calculus representing the scientific deductive system that is Euclidean geometry. Thus is established algebraic geometry.
6. Further calculi.

Reverse the direction

Now the algebraic calculus has to be returned to the lowest-level hypotheses of empirically verifiable data; it can then find its 'realization' in 'space' from which Euclidean geometry supposedly springs. But in fact the calculi that have been produced are many and diverse, including those of non-Euclidean geometry. Some of these calculi are applicable to study of astronomical space. But in so far as inappropriate calculi may be used, they tend to betray their origin, and the space that is explored by virtue of these calculi is given characteristics that are markedly reminiscent of the empirical data from which the calculi were originally derived. Are these characteristics then actual characteristics of space? Are there actualities or realities

corresponding to the *ideas* of reality that the calculi have enabled the astronomer to achieve? Or are the ideas only reflecting the origin of the calculi and the scientific deductive system, Euclidean geometry – namely the space of the primitive individual from which the scientific process sprang?

Unfortunately astronomy is based on data derived from one sense, sight, so 'common sense' may be hard to achieve. Furthermore, the actual elaboration of calculi, in the way I have described it, is a kind of expanding mental universe – from primal scene to nebulae – and this fact may colour the theory of the universe which is being produced, so that it is supposed that there is an expanding universe rather than an effect of an expanding mental universe that is produced through minute and excessive splitting, and explosive ejection of the apparatus of perception – the ego. This would mean that the sense of an expanding mental universe is itself illusory and related more to megalomania than a development of apparatus for achieving knowledge.

Thus two possibilities are opened up: one is that, thanks to the elaboration of scientific methods, we are learning more; the other is that, thanks to the impulse to escape from Oedipal material, calculi are produced which are impregnated with the impulse to escape and the archaic remnants of that from which escape is sought.

But even in the original elaboration there is clearly an attempt at more than escape. Therefore there may be presumed to exist an element conducive to an accurate assessment of space which is to be as overwhelming to the man as the space, apparent to his infant capacity, was to him in infancy.

The attempt to escape will tend to betray the corresponding attempt to discover that from which escape is sought in the expanding concepts of space as the individual travels from infancy to adulthood. The psychotic shows a desire to occupy a very small space.

Can the calculi produced yield equipment suitable for investigating the problem from which they sprang? Can the calculi, which represent an attempt at abstraction as escape from an Oedipal situation, be made to explore that situation? Do calculi already exist which do just that? Can Oedipal conflicts be resolved by a *mathematical* experience? The internal universe would then be explored by a calculus turned back on its origin.

Exploration of space

In paintings of the nude we have another approach to exploration or 'discussion' of space – the earliest space of all. And Kenneth Clark [1956] shows the wish to bring mathematics to bear on it. Is it to control or to further the exploration, or to escape by mathematics?

One would suppose that painting is a kind of representation of that which becomes an ideogram, hieroglyph, diagram, or figure of geometry in another situation and in another discipline. There may be counterparts of the scientific deductive system in activities other than scientific activities. What are these counterparts? In the arts it is sometimes said that the artist is concerned with a particular aspect of truth. He must then, like the scientist who looks to his methodology, have to question his methods of achieving it. What does the artist question? Surely not simply his technique with a brush? Or with his musical instrument? The composer's tools are scales, harmonies, etc. Are there significant places in his schemes for intervals of thirds, fourths, and fifths? In short, is there a musical counterpart of the theorem of Pythagoras? And is there an 'algebraic calculus' that represents the B Minor Mass? Are the following ideas, linked by the double arrow, related?

1. B Minor Mass ↔ scientific deductive system
2. scientific deductive system ↔ musical score

[Undated]

Theorem of Pythagoras – Euclid I.47

The side subtending the right angle: the sides containing the right angle. How much can be obtained by ignoring the figure, the diagram, except in so far as it serves a function – like that of the material of a sculpture by Henry Moore – in framing the place where there is *no* material? To act as a boundary to the open space, that is to say the part where the figure is *not*.

Then the squares on the sides containing, and the squares on the side subtending, the right angle serve to enclose the triangle – the 'three-kneed thing', but also the right angle.

The construction is a trap for light.

Pons Asinorum + Positions

Euclid I.5 marks the point at which the 'elements' of geometry are left behind when the student crosses the Pons.

[Undated]

The relationship of Ps and D positions to the Oedipus complex

Paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions will from now on be called by me, 'the Positions', as a matter of convenience.

The Positions are emotional experiences intrinsic to work. All anxiety is related ultimately to The Anxiety, which has two roots:

1. the contents of the Oedipal situation, which has as its scientific deductive system (s.d.s.) the Theorem of Pythagoras and as its calculus the relevant portions of algebraic geometry;
2. fear of the Positions, which have as their s.d.s. the Pons Asinorum, Euclid I.5, and its associated algebraic calculus.

Both theorems have always engaged the attention of mankind and have been confused with each other by name, e.g. the French call I.47 the Pons Asinorum (*see* Heath [1956], *Euclid*, p. 417).

The I.47 Oedipus and I.5 Pons Asinorum belong to different axes in human knowledge, but they intersect: one is related to content of knowledge (I.47 Oedipus), the other to acquisition of knowledge (I.5 Positions).

The Oedipal situation may occupy different positions in the hierarchy of hypotheses in different s.d.s's. In some it may be an initial formula; in others, a derived formula according to the function which the associated calculus is intended to fulfil.

There must be a counterpart to this in non-scientific discipline, and the same difference in hierarchical positions will be observed.

The s.d.s. associated with Euclid I.5 and the algebraic calculus associated with it are all associated with the Positions.

The Oedipal situation is associated with Euclid I.47 and its associated s.d.s. (if different from the theorem itself) and its associated algebraic calculus.

[Undated]

The scientific deductive system and calculus via Euclid

What are the scientific deductive systems that could be used in psychoanalysis? What form would a calculus take? Can it be found in Euclid? That is certainly what I suspect. That is to say that the problem would be associated with the three-kneed thing with equal legs; and this would provoke the search, as described by Poincaré, for the harmonizing fact to be selected. What then?

If this is correct, then one would suppose that the scene described by 'blood everywhere' might be formalized, say, as 'the looking-glass murder' – rather like a film being projected end first so that the scene of bloodshed would depict itself as one in which the 'blood everywhere' was being reabsorbed through the original route. Cubism might be a kind of attempt to geometrize a scene: in this way the looking-glass murder would need to be formalized – but how? Do Lewis Carroll's chess rules for *Alice Through the Looking-Glass* give a clue?

The clue is in the translation of an isosceles triangle as the three-kneed thing with equal legs (A. D. Ritchie, *Studies in the History and Methods of the Sciences*, p. 28) and then the astounding fact – and yet I expected it and was looking for it – of the popular names for the Euclidean propositions, and in particular for I.5 and I.47, the Pons Asinorum and the Theorem of the Bride (Heath, *Euclid*, vol. I, p. 415).

The question that arises at once is that which I have already formulated about Poincaré's statement of a need to find a fact that harmonizes as a method of coping with the intolerable paranoid-schizoid position (Poincaré, *Science and Method*, p. 30). Is the mathematical discovery reassuring by virtue of its being an external creative attempt that can be set against the internal stress of depressive or paranoid-schizoid positions? Or is a formula produced which itself brings into being a calculus (and the s.d.s. it represents) that is of 'importance in various branches of science', including in particular the relationship of paranoid-schizoid to the depressive position? Certainly Poincaré

describes the former experience, that is the reassurance, the therapeutic reassurance, obtained by being able to do something creative and harmonizing externally, which can then be used as an external fact to set against *internal* depression. And yet it is a description that does not exclude the possibility of some internal adjustment by virtue of which he now possesses a capacity for seeing wholes. Are I.5 and I.47 externalizations of the Oedipal situation? Is that all? Or are they s.d.s.'s that make it possible to investigate the Oedipal situation? This point would be clinched if one found that I.5 or I.47 reached a conclusion that could then be translated into terms of lowest-level hypotheses – or, rather, into terms of empirically verifiable data – which could then be seen to have carried the theory of Oedipal conflict to a point further than any yet reached in psychoanalytic discovery.

It is possible that a s.d.s. and calculus produced under pressure of Ps ⇌ D might be important in other branches of science, or even in other branches of the same science, namely analysis, rather than in the investigation of Ps ⇌ D itself. Similarly, the s.d.s. produced under pressure of, say, the Oedipal situation might be of no use in investigation of the Oedipal situation, but of service in the Ps ⇌ D situation. In either case we know the s.d.s. to have been important in astronomy, i.e. in an entirely different branch of science. It may be only now, after this excursion into outer space, that it can be brought back after two thousand years to its own sphere.

[Undated]

An interpretation

An interpretation should not be given on a single association; a single association is open to an enormous number of interpretations. But two associations, like two points that determine a line, determine an interpretation. Not quite. What do they determine? A direction; a trend of thought perhaps. And does this mean that it is at a point of this kind that one might find the intersection or meet a logical product of the psychoanalytic interpretation with the s.d.s. known as Euclidean geometry? Is the statement that two points determine a line really an abstraction from an empirically experienced fact that two ideas, taken together, determine a trend in the speaker's mind? If so, then it is possible that the s.d.s. that is Euclidean geometry is of great importance in the science of psychoanalysis (Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation*, p. 27) and can be used to establish calculi, e.g. algebraic calculi, to 'fix' certain psychoanalytic theories and expose fallacies in others, as was the case in mathematics when nineteenth-century mathematicians tried to represent the mathematical 'proofs' of certain eighteenth-century mathematicians in an adequate calculus.

I have noticed that something that seems clear when I write it appears to have lost all meaning when I come back to it freshly on a subsequent occasion. The words are all there and are as likely as not clear enough, but I find that I no longer know what they are about. It is like the disappearance, apparently, of all knowledge or understanding of Greek literature in Byzantium, or of astronomical or other ideas that are clearly grasped by one generation but then seem to be completely lost by subsequent generations, e.g. the heliocentric theory of Aristarchus. Is it possible that one of the great functions of abstraction is to 'fix' an element, *the* element, of empirical experience, which without abstraction is lost? Is there something permanent and indestructibly precise about the formula of a scientific deductive system that renders it peculiarly fit for the preservation of ideas? Is this a function of logic – logically necessary propositions? Would a

s.d.s. give a permanence to Melanie Klein's paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions?

How does one *find* the appropriate calculus? Or invent it if it does not exist? Galileo had to get on without the differential calculus in solving the problem of the freely falling body.

[Undated]

Probability

The statement or belief that something is probable is related to prediction. Even when it appears to refer to the past, as in a statement that something probably happened, it means that at a future date it is likely that something will be discovered which proves that such-and-such event took place.

It has been supposed that there are universal hypotheses, so-called deterministic hypotheses, which state validly that 100% or 0% of things are A; and these are contrasted with statistical hypotheses, which state that a certain proportion of things, between 0% and 100%, are A (Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation*, p. 115). Psychoanalytic hypotheses mostly belong to the latter class, which now includes the hypotheses of any scientific deductive system relating to quantum mechanics.

Braithwaite cites, by way of example, the statement: '51% of children born are boys.' He points out that there can be two statements of probability involved thus: it is probable that the hypothesis – that it is probable that 51% of children born are boys – is true.

This at once raises the question whether any hypothesis says any more than that something is probable, unless it is a definitory hypothesis; even the universal hypothesis, unless it is definitory, only states (as I have already pointed out) that certain events are constantly conjoined. But this means that all hypotheses are really definitory hypotheses; that is, that in the view of the person using a particular s.d.s. (which for the time being expresses the view he holds) such-and-such phenomena are constantly conjoined.

What then does the rational number express? Does it express a fact that 51% of children born are boys, or that he wishes it to be understood by himself and others that he is in a state of mind in which he has a 51% feeling of certitude? If the latter, then he is also expressing the view that he is 51% liberated from the Ps position; or that 51% of the potentially unrelated facts (Poincaré, *Science and Method*, p. 30)

in the area of his mental activity have now been harmonized by the ideational counterpart of a fact he has selected.

What deductive system is this fact supposed to fit? Or for what system does it provide a lowest-level hypothesis? Any statement made by an analyst as a statement of fact about an event in analysis should be regarded as a statistical hypothesis, for it must be more obviously an approximation to the truth (rather than the truth itself) than is the case with most other disciplines. Even if we assume that an electrical recording could be made of the events in a session (which is in fact not the case in the kind of analysis with which I am acquainted), there remains the fact that at best such a recording can only bear the same relationship to fact as a pointer, reading from a piece of apparatus in a laboratory, bears to the facts it purports to indicate. Indeed, the comparison is extremely flattering to the supposed analytic record. The apparatus in the physics laboratory is, say, designed to record one comparatively simple fact – the wavelength of an electro-magnetic wave; the analytic record, though it is restricted to phenomena perceptible to hearing only, is nevertheless called on to record very complex sounds – two people talking.

But if quantum mechanics has to rely on statistical hypotheses as its lowest-level hypotheses and can thrive on them, as manifestly it does, the same may be true of psychoanalysis. The essential point would seem to be to establish the nature of the lowest-level hypotheses in a psychoanalytic deductive system. By that I mean the nature of the statement that has to be made if the investigator is to be presented with what he can regard as empirically verifiable statements of fact on the one hand, and on the other, if he is to know what kind of phenomena he has to deal with in his attempt to produce a s.d.s. and its representative calculus.

I propose to ignore for the time being statements made by other analysts and to consider only the problem involved in an attempt to produce a s.d.s. and its associated calculus, which will serve as a generalization that will be an epitome of experience on which I can draw in my analytic work, and which I can use to communicate my experience to the patient – and if possible to other workers in the field.

I propose to limit the sphere of experience on which I draw to two main areas: the totality of my own life, or such part of that experience as is available to me; and the psychoanalytic situation as it obtains when I see a patient five times a week for an indefinite period. I shall

not for the time being attempt to define this sphere with any further precision.

My experience in analysis will mostly be restricted to one part of this situation, namely the part described by Poincaré (*Science and Method*, p. 30), and one that is therefore analogous to the paranoid-schizoid position. In practice, what this means is that at the beginning of the session I shall not burden my mind by attempting to remember what the patient has said on previous occasions. There may be a time and place for attempting such a recall, but that time and place is not at the commencement of a session. Nor shall I burden my mind with attempting to recall what others, or even I myself, may have said or thought about such a patient as I am about to see. I shall not even consider what kind of patient he may be.

The reason is simple: I am concerned in a session with what I do not know. The session is the only time when I can have contact with what I do not know; at any other time I can only have contact with, or think about, phenomena which I believe – rightly or wrongly – that I have already observed. But in the session I can have contact with phenomena that I have not so far observed, or have observed only partially. It is an opportunity that is not to be missed, for if it is it can never be repeated. It therefore merits as precise a description as I can find to delineate the emotional experience to which I attach such supreme importance. It is the emotional experience appropriate to the observation of a series of apparently unrelated facts that the analyst believes are related to each other and to him in a significant manner [*see* 'Notes on Memory and Desire' (Volume VI)].[1]

At first sight it seems obvious that this emotional experience must be akin to that of the paranoid-schizoid position. But kinship must not deteriorate into identity because that would preclude the possibility of synthesis, which is essential to the analyst's work. 'Our mind . . . would be obliged to forget each of these details before examining the next because it would be incapable of taking in the whole', as Poincaré describes the state preceding the discovery or selection of the harmonizing fact. Nor is it wholly satisfactory to postulate a state of mind akin to the depressive position unless it is made equally clear that it must not be *identical* with the emotional experience associated with the depressive position.

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[1][See also Volume VI, p. 326, and Volume V, p. 85. *Ed.*]

Freud has described the value of a state he calls benevolent neutrality, a kind of free-floating attention. Poincaré would appear to desiderate an absorption in logical mental processes that, if not in themselves mathematical, at least issue ultimately in mathematical formulation.

For convenience I propose to call this state, which is neither the paranoid-schizoid position nor yet the depressive position but something of each, the Positions. I shall further suggest that the process of discovery or selection of the harmonizing fact or, as I should prefer to regard it, its ideational counterpart, cannot be initiated or maintained without the mobilization of the mental processes of dreaming.

It must not be supposed that I am setting this up in contrast with, or as an alternative to, what I conceive to be the logical or mathematical absorption that Poincaré had in mind; nor am I suggesting that the analyst should go to sleep. But I believe that the analyst may have to cultivate a capacity for dreaming while awake, and that this capacity must somehow be reconcilable with what we ordinarily conceive of as an ability for logical thought of the mathematical kind.

[Undated]

The attack on the analyst's α-function

I have pointed out that it is essential to mental efficiency to be able to 'dream' a current emotional experience, whether it is taking place while the person is awake, or while asleep. By this I mean that the facts, as they are represented by the person's sense impressions, have to be converted into elements such as the visual images commonly met with in dreams as they are ordinarily reported. Such an idea will not seem strange if the reader considers what happens in reverie – the word itself, chosen to name the experience, is significant of the widespread nature of the experience. Certain conditions are necessary for this work of conversion to be carried out, but these conditions, as we shall see later, may be denied, so that *α* is made either impossible, or at least difficult. The analyst needs to have these conditions in his work, for smooth working of *α*-function is essential. He must be able to dream the analysis as it is taking place, but of course he must not go to sleep. Freud has described the condition as one of 'free-floating attention', but it is a state that is of value in many tasks besides analysis, for, as I have said, *α*-function is essential to proper mental efficiency, no matter what the task.

Clearly it would be helpful to establish in some detail what goes on in *α*-function; an examination of the conditions required for its fulfilment might give some clues. Indirect evidence is available from the psychotic patient who appears to be sufficiently aware of the analyst's need to be able to set out to deny him it – presumably as an extension of the patient's own attempts to destroy his links with reality, and in particular that which links live objects to each other. It is well known that in many sessions the patient is at pains to behave in such a way that the analyst is given no information at all – in so far as this lies within the capacity of the patient. Frequently he will do this by being mute, but on the occasions to which I refer, the patient is not only loquacious but is most insistent that the analyst should follow every word he says and will constantly inject comments that are intentionally evocative or even provocative. The analyst is to be

so treated that he cannot stay awake, and so interrupted and importuned that he cannot go to sleep.

This is clearly a much more positive attack on the analyst than mere mutism or other forms of withholding information. It also bears a striking resemblance to the state produced if the patient cannot wake up or go to sleep – not through lack of α-function but artificially induced.

Can it be dismissed as a somewhat ordinary exercise in sadism, or should some significance be attached to the resemblance of the analyst's predicament to the state in which the patient finds himself when incapable of α-function? The resemblance may be fortuitous and not therefore of significance. It may be the repetition, this time against the analyst's α-function, of the attack that has been previously made by himself or another on his own α-function – in which case it may help us to understand how the α-function is destroyed and what vicissitudes we may anticipate in the patient's development. More probable than either of these is an attack on α-function made through the agency of projective identification, partly because projective identification is so consistently employed that it is difficult to imagine without very good reasons for the supposition that its use would be in abeyance, and partly because any other view leads us into unnecessary difficulty in explaining the skilled nature of an attack which implies the existence of a high degree of well-organized sophisticated destructiveness quite out of keeping with what we know of the patient's condition. The operation of projective identification, if we could assume it, would go some way towards resolving a contradiction that makes a supposedly insane patient behave with the organized efficiency that the diagnosis precludes. I do not mean by this that resolution of this contradiction is a matter of major consequence, but that it needs to be resolved because this would help investigation of something that *is* a major problem – the nature and operation of the non-psychotic part of the psychotic patient's personality.

The analyst's odyssey

The patient comes to the door and looks away so as to avoid my eyes. He is dirty and unkempt; he wears gloves but they are not a pair. His face expresses almost physical pain. He holds out his hand limply to

allow it to be shaken, but he seems almost to dissociate himself from the act physically as well as mentally. He lies down on the couch. "Well", he says, "I don't seem to have much to say." There is a pause of two or three minutes. "Funny, I seem to be feeling anxious." He is tense and lies still in a posture that might, but for his tension, be described as limp. He examines his hand with detachment, as if he were witnessing a hallucination or some event from which he wishes to detach himself because he is so frightened by it. He turns his head slowly to follow the movements of his hand. He folds his hands on his chest. The operation is complete; he composes himself for slumber.

I have good reason for anxiety about this patient; I know him to be violent, and I know his fears that he may commit a murder are not groundless – or so I think. Thinking over the matter, I am not so sure. I have occasion for the same kind of misgivings about his finances; and the same kind of misgivings about my misgivings. My experience of him makes me feel reasonably sure that if I allow my attention to wander, he will quite happily – if one can apply such a word to him – let his wander too. But I decide to wait.

I may adjust my position in the chair, or even make some sound or movement much less obtrusive. At once the patient starts violently, as if I had frightened him beyond endurance, or maybe even struck him. His attitude expresses intense pain. Slowly, reproachfully, he subsides. The session has begun.

"I forget what I said", he presently announces. After a further pause, "Funny", he says, puzzled. Later on he says, "There is something I meant to say". The session gradually peters out. The tension, apparent earlier, slowly ebbs away.

I indicate it is time to stop. "Yes. Thank you", he says. And he goes out, leaving me to wonder if he seemed to be slightly shamefaced, or if I imagined it.

The session may take a different form. He may start talking to me softly, confidentially. "They are cutting the grass. Of course", more confidentially still, "I could hardly protest; the tea was awful, really awful". There is a sudden sharp mocking laugh, stifled almost as it is uttered. "Well", he goes on in matter-of-fact tones, as if to suggest he is going to get down to business, "there it is; no home, tea all over the place. I simply will not stand it." The last sentence is uttered with a kind of desperation, as if he were attempting to break through a restraining barrier formed by an inability to express himself in terms

that would link him with another person. "I will not stand it", he whispers.

On the face of it there seems to be no reason why such sessions should ever come to an end. Let us see what can be said about them.

First, I do not feel able to communicate to the reader an account that would be likely to satisfy me as correct. I am more confident that I could make the reader understand what I had to put up with if I could extract from him a promise that he would faithfully read every word I wrote; I would then set about writing several hundred thousand words virtually indistinguishable from what I have already written in my account of the two sessions. In short, I cannot have as much confidence in my ability to tell the reader what happened as I have in my ability to do something to the reader that I have had done to me. I have had an emotional experience; I feel confident in my ability to recreate that emotional experience, but not to represent it.

Another session: "I don't seem likely to do much." After a pause, "No. It seems very unlikely but . . . just *hark* at it!" He stumbles over some words, artificially, I thought. "Aah . . . just listen to me. I went to the art galleries in the end and the waitress said, she *said* it wouldn't be long. I was furious. I just broke the place up . . . oh, shut up. *Shut* up, I say. Shut *up* . . . I must have done something wrong." This is said reproachfully as if to indicate that as usual I am bad-tempered and hostile and trying to make him feel guilty. "Oh well, I suppose I must say something." He then becomes sulky and examines his quite remarkably filthy nails. "Another session going to waste. . . . I know I had something very important to say. . . . In the end I just had to get up. Oh shut up." He whispers, "Shut up: shut up".

There are many interpretations I could give, and have given in the past. They are apparently quite ineffectual; there seems to be no particular point in repeating them. What, I wonder, can have happened to them? Years of analytic interpretations, and the patience and knowledge that go with them, have been swallowed up by him, or poured into him by me, without apparently leaving the slightest trace. He might simply be a gaping hole or mouth, with nothing beyond it. He is taking up time and space and analytic experience that another patient might use to some profit. He might acknowledge some of the effort on his behalf, but it is simply as if his mouth gaped ever wider for more and more, all swallowed without discrimination of any kind. He requires more. And all through the session he

interrupts, often saying he does not want to interrupt, breaking in in a manner to which my powers of description cannot do credit, with futile, hostile commentary on his futile, hostile comment – if such disjointed phrases can be called comment. What is he commenting on? He is commenting on a relationship between two people, or on what links them. What in fact links us is endurance, fortitude, patience, anger, sympathy, love. Is the task in hand, the analysis itself, a link? It seems hardly possible because it rarely comes to a point where it might be called analysis.

Yesterday he felt it was hardly to be justified – the time, expense and effort to analyse him. He was lucid – almost – and I am reporting far more what he said than what I understood him to say. Ordinarily I have to interpret what I have understood him to say; this may be significant. It means that I am forced to have an emotional experience, and that I have to have it in such a way that I am unable to learn from it. I have consciousness, a sense organ enabling me to perceive the "psychical qualities" (as Freud puts it in *The Interpretation of Dreams* [1900a]), but I am not to be allowed to comprehend it. Then I cannot learn by the emotional experience, and I cannot remember it.

* * *

Take now a different patient. Out it pours – masses of semi-whispered, disjointed stuff, name after name, some of which I know, some I may be supposed to know, some presumably I cannot be expected to know. They are mostly doing something that the patient sees: "It didn't occur to him . . ."; "I asked him, he did realize . . .". It does not require interpretation so much as loud cries of, "Help! Help! I'm drowning, not waving."

What is it all? Can anyone stem the flood? What interpretation, when there must be so many millions? He may be proving and feeling how superior to me he is, how much further he can see than I can; it may be a modernized urination, or flatus, or defaecation. It might be, as this might be, a book by Sacheverell Sitwell in which virtually nothing is done with the material. The overburdened mind just deposits it in the lap of the analyst and says, "Here, *you* do it!"

This is really an abstraction technique. This is what I am doing here in this writing, and hoping that I shall then be able to make head or tail of it. But I can't. The essential feeling is that nothing can be made of it – there is no selected fact, nothing to make it all cohere. If

this is so, then perhaps the essential thing is an emotional situation in which the following features can be distinguished:

1. feelings of persecution,
2. a mass of apparently unrelated facts,
3. an inability to find a selected fact, or perhaps to believe it would be any good if one could,
4. an inability to see any value in the facts, to regard them as dead particles, bits of faeces.

But surely the point here is a lack of capacity for integrating? Is it that the content is significant? Or is it the cement – narrative, logic, selected fact? It can be content *and* . . . [*breaks off here*]

[Undated]

Freud described the conscious as "the sense organ for the perception of psychical qualities". If the patient, thanks to deficient *α*, cannot be awake or asleep, conscious or unconscious, can he have a conscious or an unconscious? His attacks on *α*-function make it impossible to become conscious or unconscious, but he can have a conscious and an unconscious, so he is able to perceive psychic qualities. But he cannot transform them into *α*-elements. This is where I do not accept Freud's description of the conscious as *comprehending* psychic qualities, but do accept his description of the conscious as *perceiving* them.

It is evident in my clinical experience that the patient *can* perceive psychic qualities in that he says he is anxious, or frightened, or depressed. He must then be able to perceive that, but he seems unable to learn from the experience of being anxious, or frightened, or depressed. It may depend on what he expects he would learn if he learned anything. But as I have shown with the emotional experience of having emotions in sleep, this kind of patient cannot 'dream' it and so cannot learn from the experience. Exactly the same thing is true of the emotional experience when he is awake: he cannot become unconscious of the emotions, and he cannot become conscious of them. What, then, is the position in analysis when the analyst gives an interpretation drawing the patient's attention to an emotional experience that the analyst can deduce from the patient's behaviour? At least we should expect to run into great difficulties in so far as an analysis is to be regarded as an emotional experience, for we cannot regard it as anything less and yet suppose it has some kind of reality.

It is tempting to suppose that the patient fears that if he learnt anything from his emotions, he would learn that he is alive, and from that, that his parents had had sexual intercourse; he then fears that this would release murderous envy and hate towards them and towards himself as the result of such intercourse. In one case it was clear that the patient feared just such an attack, for those reasons, from the analyst and an elder sister. "I don't know what I mean" had

this situation as one of its backgrounds – he feared that he himself was a sign that could be read to mean that his parents had had intercourse. But though we may suppose that he has other fears of what he would learn, such as that he is insane, it is wisest at this point to suppose only that the patient hates emotions and concurrently cannot 'digest' them, i.e. bring *α*-function to bear on them. And this must affect the analyst's attempt to interpret.

If the patient cannot have a conscious because of lack of *α*-function, how comes he to have sufficient of one to perceive his emotions, to act as a sense organ for the perception of psychic qualities? He *can* have a conscious; he merely cannot *become* conscious.

Let us suppose now that the patient *is* capable of the process of the formation of a presentation or idea. Is that to say that the patient is capable of *α*-function and can transform the sense impressions, be they what they may, into *α*-elements? No: it means that he can have visual images on which, as Freud says, ideation depends ('Two Principles of Mental Functioning' [1911b]).

I shall include the capacity to have visual images amongst the factors in *α*-function, but it is only one factor – though an important one. It makes storage possible because visual images are a kind of notation. One patient talked of lines and dots making up the film cartoon; it sounds like the elements of geometry (Euclidean). But before dream-thoughts are possible, it is necessary to find the selected fact and to use it for initiating the paranoid-schizoid and depressive position interplay. This means that *α*-elements cohere, separate, cohere again, separate again, converge, diverge, and so on. It is an experience in which coherence and separation are never observed; at one moment the *α*-elements are coherent, and then they are incoherent. It is similar to the experience of watching reversible perspective – at one moment one thing, and at another, another. It is similar to the dream – at one moment it is remembered, and at another there is no trace.

In distinction to this method of employing *α*-elements are two others: they can be strung together temporarily, in time, in a narrative sequence (as is the case in dream); and they can be connected logically, which is linear as in Euclid.

[Undated]

Curiosity, and fear of socialized super-ego

The story of the Garden of Eden and the story of Oedipus each contain a character whose attitude to knowledge is hostile – or perhaps I should say, 'two-faced', since the Sphinx demands the answer to a question and may therefore be supposed to be favouring a search for it, and God of Genesis plants the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden. Psychoanalysts have concentrated attention on the sexual pair and have left discussion of the attitude to knowledge on one side. Yet in man's search to know, few disciplines have penetrated so far in illuminating that source of his difficulties that lies within himself. This adds significance to the neglect of the material that might be compacted in the roles attributed to Sphinx, God and Devil (also Tower of Babel – verbal thought attacked).

But my concern here is not to elucidate these myths. I wish to clarify the similarities and differences between psychoanalysis and scientific method as it is understood and employed in spheres other than psychoanalysis. Nevertheless I believe the reader would find it rewarding to refresh his memory of these stories and to bear them in mind as he reads this; their effect thus used could be restorative during the arid passages that must be traversed in this investigation.

[Undated]

Tower of Babel: possibility of using a racial myth

Can we, at such a crisis as this, fall back on a racial myth on the off-chance that it is a tool that has not yet outlived its usefulness? Let us interpret, for *our* purposes, the story of the Tower of Babel. I propose to use this story in a manner analogous to the use to which a scientist might put an already existing formula of mathematics. The mathematical construction may have been invented without any intention that it should be used as the scientist proposes to use it, or indeed without any intention that it should be used at all. Yet the scientist, despite the mathematician's avowal that his formula has no meaning at all, may decide that he has found a realization that is the counterpart of the mathematical formulation and will use the formulation accordingly. This I shall now do with the story of the Tower of Babel.

First, I decide that the story is formulated in *Genesis*, but I might as easily decide to write my own version. This story I do not interpret: I use it to interpret a problem of mine. When I say I might decide to write my own version, I do not mean that the basic elements of the story can be altered. Some transformation is necessary which is not an interpretation of the story, nor yet a sophistication. It is not an operation such as Freud proposes for the elucidation of a dream: it consists in a recognition first that the story is a social version of the phenomenon known to the individual as a dream – it even has some resemblance to the consciously sought selected fact; it is an emotional experience that has been subjected to α-function.

There must be many such myths that are not recognized at all, except in a pejorative sense in which some unlikely story, or one that the listener does not wish to believe, is dismissed as a 'myth'. We cannot now say how they started, nor are we able to observe the process of myth-formation, if any, at work in our midst. If an individual, some anonymous genius, invented it, then we may suppose that the process is one marked by the following steps: the individual has an emotional experience; it is transformed by α; it is published. In almost every instance nothing further happens, for the emotional experience

is of too particular a nature to be at all widely significant. It might then be regarded, by analogy with scientific method, as a hypothesis, not false in itself, but applying to events of such extremely rare occurrence as to make it pass unnoticed, in the way that a mathematical formulation (Poincaré, *Science and Method*) might be perfectly sound yet never be employed because no realization had yet been perceived to which it might be applied as the algebraic system corresponding to its representative scientific deductive system. This must be the case with virtually all so-called dreams; they express, thanks to α-function, the stored and communicable version of an emotional experience. To this extent the narrator of his dream has been able to render the experience communicable, and has even published it, but the emotional experience itself – and consequently its α-formulation – has small social value because of its extreme particularity.

But there are others that might be grouped on an ascending scale of generalization until we reach, through myths of national significance, those, such as the Oedipus myth or the story of the Tower of Babel, which are felt to be of so nearly universal significance that their publication spreads over wide areas of racial and national thought and is also repeated in time. The individual who is able to transform such an emotional experience, by virtue of his α-function, into material that can be stored, communicated and finally published must belong to the category we loosely call 'genius'. But my point is that we must regard these stories (and later I shall consider actual historical events too) as being parallel with the algebraic calculus produced by the mathematician not simply to represent a specific already-existing s.d.s., but as a mathematical formulation that has not at the time, but may at some future date turn out to have, an actual realization to which it is applicable.

This being my view, I return to our chosen myth of the Tower of Babel. How are we to determine what the basic elements of the story are, without simply laying ourselves open to the charge of tampering with a text that, on my own showing, should be treated with respect? The theory of α-function may give us help. I suggest that we assume that the story is intended to deal with an emotional situation; further, that the visual images verbally conveyed have to be considered as α-elements. The narrative form we regard as being a method of imposing an appearance of coherence and integration on these elements whose coming together might otherwise demand explanation.

The narrative, like the words 'as if', etc. – which Freud thought could not be expressed in dream language – seems to be a method of expressing the emotion that has to be stored. I propose we ignore, for the time being, the narrative and other forms of conjunction, except for one very important point: these elements unequivocally mean that the *α*-elements, the visual images, are constantly conjoined. The function of the narrative form is to enable the individual and the race to observe and to maintain this constant conjunction.

This brings me to the application of our myth to the problem that it is to interpret. The scientist must know enough mathematics to understand the nature and use of various mathematical discoveries and formulations, such as the differential calculus or the binomial theorem: the psychoanalyst must know his myth. The scientist must also know enough to have an idea when he is confronting a problem to which a particular mathematical procedure would apply: the psychoanalyst must know when he is facing a problem to which a myth would provide the psychoanalytic counterpart of the algebraic calculus. This, one might say, is precisely what Freud did; he recognized, as a scientist, that he was confronted by a problem to the solution of which he would have to apply the Oedipus myth. The result was the discovery, not of the Oedipus complex, but of psychoanalysis. (Or is it man, or man's psyche, that is discovered when these elements are constantly conjoined?) It is in this sense that I believe that the myth of Babel, or Oedipus, or Sphinx must be used as a tool comparable to that of the mathematical formulation.

Before proceeding further with the investigation of the myth as a tool for investigating emotional problems, I must point out that already this inquiry has reached a point that has implications for the use of dreams. I have said that most dreams are of very low-level generalization, but this fact, which is a disadvantage if the matter at issue is the mental life of the group in space and time, is an advantage when the issue is something so idiosyncratic as the mental life of a particular individual patient in analysis.

The dream of the individual must be taken to mean that certain *α*-elements are constantly conjoined. The *α*-elements in themselves, and their constant conjunction as shown by the dream, must be regarded as of equal significance. The *α*-function has then served the purpose of making storable, communicable and publishable an emotional experience that is constantly conjoined and has made it

possible to record the latter fact. How does this relate the ordinary, apparently non-recurrent dream to the recurrent dream? If myth and manifest content of a dream are to be regarded as the group and individual versions of the same thing – and that thing an assertion that certain α-elements are constantly conjoined – to what use are we to put this statement? If we are to regard it as analogous to $(a + b)^2 = a^2 + b^2 + 2ab$, then presumably we need to know how the statement has been constructed and what the rules are that have to be obeyed if we are to use the statement correctly. At first sight the mathematicians appear able to do this; we can say something about the way these letters, a and b, are being used, and we can explain the rules by which their manipulation is to be guided. We can also show that certain problems can be solved if we recognize that the elements of the problem can be adequately represented by this algebraic formula. Furthermore, we can be taught how to recognize that a given problem would be aided by this particular formula rather than another, and we can pass on that information. There is, nevertheless, a gap: some individuals are more easily able to understand the explanations and to grasp when and how such a formula can be applied to advantage than others who are thought of as being mathematically ill-equipped. It is not only the mathematically ill-equipped who have difficulty in accepting the mathematical explanation of fundamentals of procedure, as mathematicians and philosophers show by their discussions of these problems, which are inseparably bound up with the nature of mathematical ability itself. But nevertheless there is no doubt that mathematicians have formed a method of recording and communicating their formulations which makes teaching of the formulations and their use assume an enviably uniform and stable discipline – at least to me who proposes that myth and dream should be regarded as corresponding to algebraic calculi and therefore as capable of yielding, after scrutiny, the tools that can interpret, through their suitability to represent a problem, the problem itself, and so open the way to its solution.

I propose now the task of establishing the fundamental rules for the use of dream or myth. The first point is that all dreams have one interpretation and only one – namely, that α-elements are constantly conjoined. The second is that every dream has a corresponding realization, which it therefore represents. This realization may be of such insignificance or rarity that it is never observed to occur, although

potentially it might do so. Sometimes it is observed, and its resemblance to the dream that represents it is so nearly conscious that the dreamer has an illusion that he expresses by saying he had a dream that came true. This usually means that the dreamer believes the facts of the realization were correctly foreshadowed in a dream in which the same or similar facts occurred in a similar narrative. This is an illusion in which the similarity that exists between an emotional experience (as it is recorded and stored through the agency of α-function) and an event (to the understanding of which the stored emotional experience is essential) has been transferred to what are believed to be two narratives. In fact, one narrative serves to mark the conjunction of α-elements required to store two different but related emotional experiences: one, that which was experienced in sleep or the waking state known in *déjà vu* phenomena; the other, that which was experienced in the course of actual events in the individual's life. Since the same dream would serve as the product of α-function operating on the two emotional experiences, it is believed that the supposed events of the narrative of the dream, and the events of the emotional experience to which the dream serves a function analogous to that of algebraic calculus to empirical data, are the same. The third point is that certain factual experiences will never be understood by the patient, and therefore will never be experiences from which he can learn, unless he can interpret them in the light of his dream or the myth in which the group has enshrined both the dream and the belief in the dream's validity for all members of the group. In psychoanalytic practice this means that what the analyst has to interpret are certain facts that befall the patient in the light of a dream that has stated that for the patient certain α-elements are constantly conjoined. Thus, if the patient reports a dream that he was seated in a railway train and gave the signal usually given to indicate an intention to stop when driving a car, and that his arm fell off, it must be assumed that certain elements are conjoined.

The following are a few of the points known to me that are relevant to understanding what the elements are that are conjoined: the patient was not responsible for driving the train; he wanted to be helpful and warn the traffic against a possible accident due to ignorance of the train's movements; this, from his point of view, worthy behaviour did not meet with success because his arm behaved as if it were having a tantrum and fell onto the grass, where it lay unhelpfully. The patient

was bewildered that such unexceptionable behaviour should provoke such a hostile response and that he should find himself vulnerable to criticism because of the behaviour of his arm which apparently was quite independent of him. The dream indicated that for this person any attempt to be cooperative or creative led to independent action by the appropriate part of his personality, that is, to thwart his creative and helpful intentions. The helpful intention was in itself good because it meant that the patient was in an agreeable and therefore rewarding state of mind. It is this rewarding state of mind that is denied to him by the independent action of his arm. This potentially pleasing state of mind is further attacked because disapproval was drawn to him from the remaining passengers by the behaviour of his arm. These were the most obtrusive elements.

At first sight it may seem that this is an interpretation, though a superficial one, of the dream. I would make a distinction between two kinds of interpretation by calling one the 'meaning' of a dream or any other kind of association, and the other the 'interpretation'. I consider the 'meaning' to be that aspect of the communication which, if it were made extra-analytically, is what the speaker consciously wishes to convey. Failure to interpret the dream is the most potent contribution the analyst can make towards producing acting out; failure to dream through lack of α-function is the patient's main contribution. But before a dream or association can be interpreted, its meaning must be established. Though it is fairly easy to say that the meaning of an association is that part of a communication that the patient consciously wishes to make, it is not easy to say what part of a dream is the communication that the patient consciously wishes to make. For, assuming the theory of α-function is applicable, the manifest content of the dream is a verbal expression of visual images that have been joined together because, being joined together, they record that certain elements of an emotional experience are constantly conjoined and, by recording it, make it available for unconscious waking thought (as in the example of the establishment of walking as a skill that can be exercised without further intervention by consciousness) or for conscious waking thought, as when the individual repeats the dream to himself or someone else, thereby making it accessible to the correlations that are the basis of the rationality of common sense, and to the criteria of common sense that are the establishment of correlations without evidence of contradictions. From this it follows that

the publication of the dream is a request for knowledge often overtly posed as such in the form of a wish to be told what the dream 'means' or predicts. At first sight this would seem to be a reasonable request to make of an analyst. In fact it is not reasonable to make it, nor is it reasonable for an analyst to feel called upon to say what a dream means. The problem is not the dream but the emotional experience of which the dream is the irrational counterpart of the algebraic calculus. And about this emotional experience the patient feels much as an infant might feel about bumping its head on the floor – it wants to know what it means. An emotional experience, then, is in some respects like a physical experience in that it can be felt to have a meaning; that is to say, it is felt to be an experience from which something can be learnt. The α-function is the first step (without which nothing can be learnt) in turning the emotional experience, or rather the data associated with it, into material from which it is possible to learn; that is, material suitable for dream-thoughts (Freud's unconscious waking thoughts) or for correlation with common sense, which implies not only conscious waking thought, but also awareness of individual attitudes and outlook, which are a part of the individual's endowment and equipment as a member of a group. This brings me to the essential feature in the conscious communication of the individual reporting a dream: it is an overt expression of curiosity. It is exposure for test by common sense of a hypothesis, as Hume would understand such a term, namely as an assertion that certain associations are constantly conjoined. As an expression of curiosity we may regard it as suitable for investigation by the application of myth, using myth as the counterpart of an algebraic calculus.

We have now arrived at this position: the core of the dream is not the manifest content, but the emotional experience; the sense data pertaining to this emotional experience are worked on by α-function, so that they are transformed into material suitable for unconscious waking thought, the dream-thoughts, and equally suitable for conscious submission to common sense. Freud clearly thought that this material was equally suitable for more than correlation with and by common sense, and attempted to apply to it the methods of scientific investigation, as if what I am calling α-elements lent themselves to that kind of procedure. This is to assume that the α-elements can be used for purposes other than simple correlation – one of the most rudimentary of scientific procedures. The manifest content, as

it would be called if we were discussing dreams in Freud's terms, is a statement that these α-elements are constantly conjoined; that being so, it is in every way analogous to the selected fact, the function of which is to display the constant conjunction of elements characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position, and some of which it has the property of showing to be related. We shall have to consider later how the manifest content of a dream (a 'narrativized' collection of visual images) and a mathematical formulation such as an algebraic calculus can come to be fulfilling an apparently identical function when they are in every other respect so different from each other. For the moment I must point out only that the hypothesis, the word regarded as a hypothesis, and the manifest content of a dream all share the characteristics of the selected fact in being able to bring coherence to facts previously known but not previously seen to be connected. Since the core of the problem that awaits solution is an emotional experience, we must make a distinction between this and the emotional experience that is secondary to a problem that awaits solution. We have hitherto supposed that every problem, of whatever kind, is, when reduced to its abstract basic elements, the task of finding the selected fact that harmonizes elements previously known by showing them as related to each other in a way that was not apparent before the discovery of the selected fact. I have shown that this is a description that is so close to the description in Kleinian theory of the interplay between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions that speculation must be aroused about the nature of this description, which, as a hypothesis itself, is an example of a selected fact, and about the nature of the phenomenon to which it applies. Are there in fact elements? And if, thanks to some selected fact, they are seen to be related to each other in a particular way, does this mean any more than that – the human mind being what it is – the individual from time to time has this experience of observing the harmonious inter-relatedness of these elements, whereas in fact there is no reason to suppose that any such relatedness exists? Elements and relatedness alike are aberrations of the observing instrument.

Suppose that this last is the fact: then we would be in the position of being able to observe that our observations consist of elements that we believe to become synthesized by some mental event which corresponds with a fact. But this statement is a supposition based on a supposition. It is evident that, no matter how I attempt to state this

problem, we are involved in an absurdity. This I believe to be a peculiarity related to those problems in which the emotional experience is primary. It is for this reason that I say a distinction has to be made between the experience that consists in attempting to understand an emotional experience that is secondary to the attempt to solve a problem, and the experience that consists in trying to solve a problem in which the emotional experience itself is the problem. In the first, it is possible to regard the problem as one of unrelated objects requiring synthesis; in the second, there is probably no way of regarding the problem 'as' anything at all. It is possible that there are external problems of which it is true to say that there is no way of regarding them 'as' anything at all; it may be that it is from precisely such a situation and its accompanying emotions that the selected fact extricates the observer by appearing to reveal the relatedness of some of the elements. In short, there are situations that are felt to be problems that either have no solution, or to which no solution can be found with the equipment at the disposal of the individual experiencing them. Such situations are not absolute: they may be fairly common and of short duration, but such an experience, if it lasts, itself becomes a problem that makes demands on the individual's equipment of intelligence and personality.

The essentials of this situation depend, as far as the individual is concerned, on his appreciation of the environment (that is on what he thinks are the facts of his environment) and on his appreciation of himself (that is on what he thinks are the facts of his personality). As far as the external observer, the analyst, is concerned, the situation may be regarded as limited to the following elements:

1. the environment,
2. the personality of the individual,
3. the relationship between (1) and (2),
4. the belief that the individual himself entertains about (1) and (2).

Even if we restrict the field in this way, and even supposing years of psychoanalysis, we know little about all four. The difficulty is increased because comparison is not possible; terms such as 'little' seem to say something, but under scrutiny appear to be expressions of feeling and not statements of fact. Even so, the problem has been simplified in some of its aspects by the introduction of the external

observer, the analyst. For it is legitimate to believe that by transferring the problem of the relationship between an individual and his emotional state to an external observer, we at least make the investigation approximate to the situation that obtains in scientific investigations of objects by trained observers. This raises two questions.

First, in what respects has the problem been simplified? In view of my discussion of the possibility that the belief that a scientific discovery has been made is really an expression of feelings that are a product of the transitions between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions and back again, it would seem likely that the problem has not been simplified so much as altered in kind. Even in a discipline such as physics, in which scientific method has been rigorously pursued with apparently gratifying results, it is clear that there is no justification for any assumption other than that the facts discovered are simply a selection from the sum of knowledge of those facts, or characteristics of facts that lend themselves to comprehension by human mathematical and logical faculty, human perception, human tool-making capacity, human capacity for interpretation of the behaviour of the tools employed; they also lend themselves to adequate representation by the constructs which α-function contrives from the sense impressions supposedly related to these external objects.

The second question raises the doubt about simplification to a higher pitch still. In psychoanalysis the observer is not an external force, except in the sense of not being the analysand, because he *is* an important part of the environment. What is being investigated, as the physicists also have discovered, is not an object *in vacuo* but a relationship between the object and its environment. (As also in mathematics – see Semple and Kneebone, *Algebraic Projective Geometry*, 1952, p. 3). The alternatives may be set out in a formula:

> Suppose A to be the person concerned with his own emotional experience, a,
>
> and B to be the psychoanalyst,
>
> and C the environment less A and B.

Then

1. self consciousness would be: A knows $a + B + C$,
2. analysis would be: B knows $A + C$.

But (1) can be seen to be complicated by the fact that *A* may not recognize that *a* appertains to himself and not to his environment.

This setting out of the problem shows that analysts have not really decided if what needs to be investigated is *a*, or *A* + *B* + *C*, or *A* + *a*. Let us assume that this is not a material point and that *all* combinations, until it is proved to the contrary, need to be known. Let us further assume that in psychoanalysis, what *A* needs to know is, *A* knows *a* + *B* + *C*; to know that would be to know all that needs to be known of other combinations.

Let us fall back on the idea that, to make progress in *this* investigation, what is needed as our tool is not an algebraic calculus but a myth. The myth, or myths, we require must serve to elucidate the problem of learning, and must elucidate this problem when it is associated with investigating or learning about an emotional experience that is felt to be primary and not secondary to some other investigation. Since I know virtually nothing about this subject beyond the tentative suggestions I have been making, I shall not be disturbed by the fact that the choice of myth I make would not be the choice someone else might make. As I know no rules, I do not have to obey any, but will make up some as I go along, thus following the precedent of the King in *Alice in Wonderland*.

My first rule is to make any rule I please. The myths I choose to elucidate the problem of learning are: (1) Adam, eating of the fruit of the Tree, is thus opposed to God's will, learns from it sexual guilt, and is expelled from the Garden (= Paradise). (2) The Sphinx stimulates curiosity; hubristic vow to be ruthless in its satisfaction at no matter what cost – suicide, incest and death are the rewards of success, and pestilence for failure. (3) A co-operation to build a tower up to Heaven is punished by God who destroys the method of verbal communication that made co-operation possible. (4) The youth who seeks a mirror in which to observe his beauty is punished by God. This last choice is made in the hope that it will serve to elucidate problems of curiosity and learning associated with the personality of the investigator himself – his need to find a mirror, that is to say a tool, which will help him to satisfy his curiosity, his *loving* curiosity, about himself. The curiosity, one might say, is not disinterested. (The lack of integrity vitiates it if one is expecting scientific curiosity.) The punishment seems peculiar.

Perhaps the way to use a myth is to associate to it; this may be the analytic counterpart of the algebraic calculus that is used for a specific task when its variables are given values. Free association to a myth is the equivalent of giving the elements a value as if they were variables in a formula. The values are those that are relevant to a particular problem, and the particular problem is the personality of the person who produces the free associations. By attributing these values to the variables of the myth we understand that those qualities are, for that person, constantly conjoined. So far, so good. But what does this mean in practice? Does one ask the patient for free associations on the Oedipus myth? Or on Narcissus? This certainly does not appeal to me. Rather, I would say that, listening to the free associations, one would think something like this: the patient is wanting me to agree with him; it is obvious from the way he is putting forward a suggestion that he has a beautiful personality. It appears to me that it is a morally beautiful personality; my personality is likewise beautiful; in fact I am to be a mirror of his excellence. But there is more of this story, the myth of Narcissus: there is a god who turns him into a flower. What is the patient saying that corresponds to this? There *must* be something because my myth tells me that these elements are constantly conjoined; or perhaps this is not the right myth. Either it is the right myth, and I have so far failed to see this aspect of it as it has appeared, or I am mistaken in thinking this is the myth to be employed. Perhaps I should seek for a more appropriate one – the Oedipus myth, for example.

I can see objections. It will be argued that no analyst could possibly have such a store of myths available in his psychoanalytic armoury as this procedure would seem to desiderate. It may further be objected that there is no reason why an analyst should store myths rather than theories; surely the analyst should be asking himself, as his patient talks, what is the appropriate psychoanalytic theory – not what or which of all the myriad myths ought to be dragged in as appropriate.

Psychoanalytic theories, as propounded by the best analysts, have served the cause of scientific development well, but Freud owed more of his discoveries to his use – the unconscious method of his use – of the Oedipus myth than to other more easily recognizable aspects of his scientific method. The real nature of psychoanalytic methodology has

never been properly assessed; there is a danger that the successes of the movement will be attributed to the ability of its students to apply conventional scientific method, and not always the best examples of it, rather than to the intuitive flair that made it possible for Freud at least to do more. One consequence is a tendency for the movement to proliferate jargon – a danger that besets even mathematics, although there it is disguised somewhat through appearing as correct axiomatic formulation that is inadequately appreciated because it is no longer seen in relationship with a more concrete background. There are times when psychoanalytic theory is so propounded that it is made to sound, as a bad teacher of his subject makes mathematics sound, as if it were "an ingenious manipulation of symbols in accordance with certain arbitrarily prescribed rules" (Semple and Kneebone, *Algebraic Projective Geometry*, p. 1). An appreciation of the importance of the use of myth in scientific method is necessary for further progress, or to arrest a process of retreat from positions already won, because it helps to keep the concrete background of psychoanalytic theory in view. If this is the case, is it not analogous to the low-level hypotheses of empirically verifiable data, rather than to algebraic calculi? And if so, should not the concrete background be provided by psychoanalytic practice rather than myth, which seems in danger of being a *substitute* for a concrete background rather than the concrete background? This objection could be valid if indeed a study of myth is to be used in the study of the individual, not instead of it. That is to say, the analyst should have at his disposal certain myths, as the scientist has certain mathematical procedures; he should frequently produce his free associations to them so that he is familiar with them and their use; and he should then learn to detect from his patient's material which is the appropriate myth, and from that what is the appropriate interpretation. Free associating to his chosen myths would then become the analyst's form of practising his craft so as to remain in training for his work. The choice of myth that he would use for the purpose would be an indication of his scientific affiliation.

Suppose an analyst did not include in his canon the Oedipus myth: it would be an indication for considering to what extent he was able to regard other psychoanalysts and himself as embracing the same discipline and therefore able to communicate with each other profitably. But this, though important, is relatively not so important as

the part that association on chosen myth, and selection of the myths on which to associate, plays in the promotion of psychoanalytic intuition and, more precisely, in the repair and reinvigoration of the analyst's α-function. Perhaps for the first time my suggestion makes it possible to give a practising analyst precise advice, and even instruction, on how to keep in training. He should not bother so much with attempts to keep notes about patients but to take, say, the Oedipus myth, and write his free associations on it, noting the date. This he can repeat as often as he likes – the free associations will never be the same for different dates. If, amongst his associations, a patient's name appears, that name can be indexed if he feels he needs notes on his patients. This procedure can be repeated, five days a week, for the same myth or for such other myths as he feels disposed to include in his canon; and he can discard and return to any given myth as often as he chooses. It would be as well to use a version, or versions, of the myth for whose historicity there is scholarly evidence, as, other things being equal, it seems that a version that has withstood the passage of centuries is probably more likely to have powerful appeal to the human mind than one that may be an ephemeral aberration and therefore of too great particularity.

This procedure promotes analytic intuition in the following way: suppose the Oedipus myth is the chosen exercise; it will not be chosen unless it has some immediate relevance for the analyst, and its relevance must be that the analyst has an emotional experience that is either repeating, or threatening to repeat, itself. Even this will not explain the choice of myth, but the analyst can draw his own conclusions on that matter at his convenience. The point is that his free associations should show him what the features are, in his present situation, which are interpreted and given a meaning by the myth on which he has chosen to associate. It will again be observed that this course of action differs from the accepted view of analysis. It is not using conscious material to interpret the unconscious; it is using the unconscious to interpret a conscious state of mind associated with facts of which the analyst is aware. The interpretation of the dream will give meaning to the known facts and feelings of the analyst's life, just as scrutiny of an ordnance survey map can give meaning to natural features clearly visible to the traveller and bring him to a realization of the point that he has reached on his journey. The myth

embodies the constants and variables valid for any period of life: the free associations ascribe the immediately current values to the variables, and the scrutiny of the material reveals the problem, which is the step essential to its solution, if any.

Now let us apply the Babel myth to destruction of the α-function. One point that immediately obtrudes is the hostility of the Deity to the aspirations of men who wish to build a city and a tower to reach to Heaven, and to make a name for themselves to prevent their being scattered [Genesis XI 1–9]. The people are making bricks and slime, which are then to be put together to make the tower to reach Heaven. It seems like an artificial breast-penis. And what of the name to prevent scattering? The word as a hypothesis which brings the scattered objects together and keeps them so? It is the God who is opposed to the hypothesis, the word (as hypothesis), and it seems as if the people who *have* come together are to be scattered; the hypothesis or selected fact is to be destroyed, the fragments scattered upon the face of all the earth. This is an attack on an attempt to reach Heaven: it is an attack on linking – the language that makes co-operation possible.

[Undated]

The claim of psychoanalysis to be a scientific procedure has often been challenged by scientists of other disciplines. Stirred by a desire to repudiate what seems to be a denial of the analyst's aspiration to be honest and to state his findings truthfully, psychoanalysts tend either to assume that the criterion is based on a misunderstanding of their work, or else that there is such a thing as scientific method employed by physicists, chemists and others, but that it cannot be used in any valuable way in their own work. The explanation of this attitude probably lies in the nature of psychoanalytic training, which has to cover such an enormous area and is so closely associated with the cure of patients that the would-be analyst can hardly find time to concentrate on the essentials of psychoanalytic theory, let alone investigate metalogic and metatheory. It is likely that if he does so, he will rapidly conclude that they have no relevance to his work and so dismiss both as insignificant.

Yet he would be wrong, and it is one of my aims to show that metatheory and metalogic are of great importance in all scientific work, and of peculiar significance for the psychoanalyst – nowhere more than in the psychoanalysis of severely disturbed patients of the kind known to psychiatry as psychotic or borderline psychotic.

I shall approach the subject as if my aim were to see in what way the criticism that psychoanalysis is unscientific is justified. To do this it is necessary first to try to understand what constitutes scientific method and by what criteria it is possible to determine whether a given method is scientific or not. To this end I propose to consider the views of physicists and philosophers. I choose these two disciplines because it would generally be conceded today that it is in the field of physics that scientific method has achieved its greatest successes, and in the field of philosophy – particularly through the labours of the philosophers of science – that the most rigorous investigation of the methods by which these successes have been achieved has been set in train.

I must say at once that the idea that there is any generally accepted view of what constitutes scientific method, or indeed that there is *a* scientific method, is one of which one rapidly becomes disabused. The search, as I hope to show, is rewarding; the more thoroughly it is carried out, the greater and more fascinating is the complexity that is revealed. In the first place it is clear that psychoanalysis is not alone in being vulnerable to criticism of the scientific soundness of its methods and results.

[Undated]

Metatheory

In the following pages there are grouped together a number of propositions under a few specific headings. The headings, together with the descriptive matter, are brief to a point that makes me fear they may be regarded as cryptic; even so, for the purpose they are to serve they are far more lengthy, complex and imprecise than they should be, compared with their nearest counterparts in other scientific disciplines. For the functions they are to serve approximate to those that are performed by the lemma (proposition taken for granted) in Greek geometry, the postulate, the definitory hypothesis used as a premise, the hypothesis taken from one scientific deductive system to act as a premise in another, and even the word, regarded (as I think it can be) as a hypothesis as it is understood in the light of the constant conjunction theory of Hume. It may be thought that this is a condemnation of these groups of propositions, but although I am aware of their defects I am doubtful whether these defects are not inherent in the task I have set myself, rather than in my performance of it.

The discoveries of psychoanalysis make it no longer possible to be satisfied with the methodology of scientists or philosophers of science even in the refinements of method they have produced to counter their own dissatisfaction. The psychoanalyst is in the curious position of studying a subject that illuminates the most ineradicable source of unscientific inquiry, namely the human mind, using that same mind as his scientific instrument, and having to do so without the comfort of thinking his observations are made by an inanimate machine that, by virtue of being dead, must be objective. But clearly an inability to be satisfied that the methods of scientists of other disciplines are scientific decreases rather than increases the psychoanalyst's hope to be more successful. Yet the attempt must be made to use psychoanalytic experience to improve on classical scientific method, and to use such improvements to fortify the procedures we employ. It is as a part of this attempt that I am using these groups of propositions. I consider them to be psychoanalytic definitory hypotheses that I

propose to employ as premises in deductive systems that I elaborate later. I shall call them premises (from mathematical logic) for short. My desire to make them as short and precise as possible is frustrated because precision demands elaboration in a subject dependent, as in metaphysics, on the use of words that have already a penumbra of associations that render them at one and the same moment suitable for employment in the psychoanalytic context, and yet permeated by meanings that need to be discarded if their use is not to mislead. This fact has made it necessary for me to lengthen my verbal embodiment of the premise by references to the provenance, the genealogy so to speak, of the idea I wish to express, and although I have limited this severely to the psychoanalytic provenance and, as I am well aware, to only a small part of that, it yet amounts to a considerable lengthening of an already long description and still does scant justice to the ideas or to the workers who have previously employed them. It would be pleasant to think that omissions and failures were attributable to faulty selection from the material of previous workers, but I fear that the true explanation is likely to be ignorance of the work, maybe even important work, that others have done but of which I have been unable to keep informed. However, I hope that I have been able, by this device that I have included in each premise, to clarify the sense in which I am proposing to employ that premise.

Frustration

A sense of frustration engenders feelings that are hard to tolerate. Intolerance varies with the individual and may be pronounced, according to the age and character of the person who experiences it. The baby experiences frustration, does not like it and makes, or is forced to make, a decision: it must decide whether to deny frustration or to modify it.

This bald statement can hardly be said to represent a fact. As with all psychoanalytic theories, it is necessary to make statements, as Freud pointed out, which are sufficiently exaggerated accounts of the facts they represent to make the facts themselves stand out unmistakably and yet not fall into caricature, which induces an opposite error. But it is true that early frustration presents the baby with a problem that has to be solved, and one on the solution of which much

depends. Suppose the child to be extremely intolerant of frustration: the danger is that it will strive to deny frustration and to continue to deny it until its appreciation of the world of reality is itself impaired. In the extreme case of such denial the foundations for psychosis are being laid, for an awareness of the real world is an essential part of contact with reality. The hatred of frustration is easily extended to embrace reality itself in a way that is typical of the psychotic; it may then be extended to that part of the mental apparatus on which the awareness of reality and frustration depends.

There are degrees of intolerance of frustration, and there are degrees of intensity with which it is denied, until we reach that moderate degree of denial that passes over into the state of mind, typical of the development of the domination of what Freud called the reality principle, in which frustration and its associated feelings, painful though they are, are tolerated sufficiently to enable the personality to entertain the possibility of modification of frustration rather than denial.

Denial of frustration

Let us consider denial of frustration, taking as our example an extreme degree serious enough to produce psychotic reactions, but not so extreme that the patient is inaccessible to an analytic approach. As I have said, the intolerance of frustration extends to an intolerance of reality; since modification of reality is precluded by the state of mind itself, the hate is directed against the mental apparatus on which awareness of reality depends. Provisionally we may accept the view, put forward by Freud, that this apparatus has the following components: a capacity for thought that is available as a substitute for immediate action of the kind designed, under the dominance of the pleasure principle, to relieve the psyche of accretions of stimuli; a system of notation associated with the development of a capacity for attention on which memory depends; an awareness of sense data. The denial of frustration therefore involves denial or destruction of these functions. Again, it is a matter of degree, and some functions – notably those concerned with awareness of sense data – may suffer relatively less damage than others.

Modification of frustration

Suppose the intolerance of frustration to be less extreme: the functions I have listed as marked for destruction when the intention is to deny frustration are cherished because they are essential to the task of modifying frustration by modifying its source. This may be the environment, including special though temporary features of it, or, as in psychoanalysis itself, features in the personality that might be supposed to intensify the painful aspects of the frustration experienced. These same features of the functions peculiar to domination by the reality principle are therefore subject to quite different treatment according to the degree of intolerance of frustration: if it is great, then denial and destruction; if moderate, then growth and development. Later, these functions of the reality principle will be examined more rigorously. For the present I wish to leave the discussion of frustration at this point: the psyche copes with frustration by methods that can be seen to fall into one of two classes of reaction: denial, or appreciation with a view to modification.

Concern for truth and life

I must make clear my choice not only of these terms, but also of the realities they represent for the second of my fundamental postulates (hypotheses or premises). No single word can adequately express the ideas to which I want to draw attention. By 'concern' I mean something that has in it feelings of consideration for the object, of sympathy with it, of value for it. The person who has concern for truth or for life is impelled to a positive, not merely passive, relationship with both.

A concern for truth may seem to be so closely related to impulses that operate under the dominance of the reality principle as to make it scarcely worth while to distinguish it from them by singling it out for special mention. The reasons for linking it with a concern for life may seem equally to be obscure, but I hope to justify both procedures.

The concern for truth must be distinguished from a capacity for establishing contact with reality. A man may have little capacity for that through lack of intelligence, training or even physical endowment – he might be defective in one or more of his senses, to take an obvious example. Yet this same man can have an active yearning for,

and respect for, truth. Conversely, a highly gifted and well-equipped person may have little concern for truth about the realities with which his endowment permits an easy contact. Such unconcern will clearly be a matter for attention by the analyst for whom the psychoanalysis of the patient has truth as its criterion.

Concern for life does not mean only a wish not to kill, though it does mean that. It means concern for an object precisely because that object has the quality of being alive. It means distinguishing between objects because one is alive and the other is not. It means considering that the difference is an important one. It means being curious about the qualities that go to make up what we know as life, and to have a desire to understand them. Conversely, a lack of concern for life means regarding a living object as indistinguishable from, or as being unworthy of being distinguished from, a machine, a thing or a place.

Finally, concern for life means that a person must have respect for himself in his qualities as a living object. Lack of concern means a lack of respect for himself and, *a fortiori*, of others, which is fundamental and of proportionately grave import for analysis. It is clear that lack of such respect means lack also of a safeguard against murderous or suicidal impulses. But there are other implications scarcely less serious, though less obvious. I shall consider them as I discuss concern for truth and life conjoined.

The patient who has no regard for truth, for himself, or for his analyst achieves a kind of freedom arising from the fact that so much destructive activity is open to him for so long. He can behave in a way that destroys his respect for himself and his analyst, provided he always retains enough contact with reality to feel that there is some respect to destroy; and this he can always assume if his analyst continues to see him. If his analyst does not continue, then he has destroyed the analysis. But destruction of the analysis is to be avoided, for it entails loss of freedom – at least till a new object is found – thus introducing a need for moderation that is apparent at other points in the closed system that the patient strives to produce. An obvious instance of this is the need to avoid successful suicide or murder. In brief, it is necessary for the patient to avoid any step calculated to effect change, and yet to change enough to ensure more analysis either for the reason that he has temporarily become a greater liability and needs more care, or because he shows such promise that it would be wrong to stop just when affairs have reached so happy

a posture. But it is clear that the limitations on freedom, and the sequent frustration, are associated with the patient's sensitiveness to reality. He must therefore lose some of this freedom in keeping analysis going.

But I am exceeding the boundaries of the discussion as I wish to preserve them for the present. I conclude by repeating that my wish is to direct attention, as a matter of psychoanalytic significance, to the degree to which any analysand displays concern for truth, life, and truth and life together.

Violent emotions

Violence, attributed to the emotions by me here, is not intended to imply only quantity of feeling. I shall consider only love and hate because I regard them as comprising all others; I do not separate love and life instincts, or hate and death instincts, nor shall I consider whether the violence implies an origin in the instinctual endowment or is secondary to an external environment stimulus. It may on occasion be due to a deficiency in a capacity for thought, or some other function proper to the onset of the reality principle which tends to produce arrest at a stage where action is a method of unburdening the psyche of accretions of stimuli, and so contributes to the physical expression of love or hate which can be characteristic of violence. Violence, then, though related to quantity or degree, contributes to a qualitative change in the emotion. The qualitative changes make love and hate possess appreciably cruel strains together with diminishing concern for the object. Both love and hate thus become more easily associated with a lack of concern for truth and life.

The breast

The term, 'breast' is here used and discussed as a definitory hypothesis. 'Breast' is the name of a hypothesis breast, and the hypothesis breast is to be understood to imply that certain mental phenomena and their corresponding actualities, if any, are constantly conjoined. It will be seen that I treat the name given to an object, the word 'breast', as a hypothesis, and follow Hume's view that a hypothesis

is the expression of a subjective sense that certain associations are constantly conjoined, and is not a representation corresponding to an actuality. In psychoanalysis the hypothesis is also the actuality that it represents: breast is a hypothesis that certain phenomena are constantly conjoined, and the hypothesis states that it is itself that constant conjunction.

Breast, like all other hypotheses, is a condensation. It is a condensation into the verbal counterpart of a visual image, which is itself a condensation. I proceed now with the expansion of the condensation, but only to that limited extent sufficient to indicate by the nature of the constantly conjoined associations something of the nature of the hypothesis breast.

I am treating breast as an α-element, not as a thing-in-itself, a β-element, or as a symbol. By virtue of its function as a hypothesis, it is also capable of the functions of the selected fact that has qualified as a hypothesis through public-ation, and therefore differs from the selected fact that has a private function. It also has affinities with a fundamental postulate in a scientific deductive system. It has similarities, by virtue of its character as an α-element, to 'the elements' – as that term was originally understood when it was used by Euclid for the elements of geometry. Finally, I am displaying a facet that is extremely close to that attributed by Freud to the condensation in a dream-element, which condensation can be expanded by free association "to six, eight or a dozen times as much space" (Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams* [1900a], p. 279).

So much for the metatheory: now to consider the theory. There are a number of hypotheses relating to the breast. Some are: the breast is a link between two objects; the breast is a source of good things to its possessors; the breast can be maltreated, gouged out, cut, split. To what do these theories relate? The first refers to happenings observed in an analysis; these are believed to be related to each other and are given a meaning if they are considered by the observer – be it analyst or analysand – to be a breast. They are seen, by virtue of the hypothesis that they are a breast, to share certain characteristics, and together and individually to share in linking two objects together. Characteristics and function are believed to be made evident by the application of the term to the appropriate happenings. Put in another way: in an analysis occasions will be found to arise when the series of statements (emotional expressions and other attributes of the meeting between

analyst and analysand whose connection with each other and with the known objects of the meeting is either undiscerned, or seems to be of a kind that offers no clues that are relevant to analysis) may be seen to be so related and to have such relevance if they are recognized as the breast. The breast, then, is a definitory hypothesis that can be used by the analyst to provide the patient with the selected fact that he cannot find for himself.

Two points require comment. First, I have spoken of certain events or happenings as being given coherence, without saying what these events are to which breast gives coherence. This is deliberate and is due to the fact that they must be regarded as constants to which a value has not been assigned. Even this is not quite accurate, for amongst them are variables whose function – in the sense in which that term is used by the mathematician – is not given and may not be discoverable. Second, I have used as the name for a definitory hypothesis the word, 'breast', which has a historical meaning that is simple and direct. It may therefore be said already to be a definitory hypothesis – in my terminology – which indicates the constant conjunction presumably for a number of simple phenomena such as woman, warmth, love, sensuality, and so forth.

Why is such a word used? In what sense is it illuminating to employ a term with such a penumbra of associations (many of which are physical, concrete, primitive and sensuous) to provide a definitory hypothesis, functioning as a selected fact, for the situation in analysis which, on the face of it, bears no resemblance to the historical meaning of breast? The situation in the analysis that requires the use of the term, 'breast', requires it precisely because it has become so divorced from the penumbra of associations adhering to breast that it bears superficially no resemblance to them. It requires it because breast, if the interpretation is correct, is a hypothesis in the Humean sense which fixes a constellation of associations that are constantly conjoined but have lost their connection with the material expressed by the free associations of the analysis, these last having become conjoined with material now alienated from, or never in contact with, the penumbra of associations of breast. The juxtaposition, by interpretation of breast, to the events of the analysis can be seen to resemble, as I have already said, a provision by the analyst of a selected fact that the patient cannot find for himself, but there are also important differences. The selected fact is a discovery made by the patient or

individual and is the tool by which he ensures the constant progression, the very essence of learning and therefore of growing. This is represented by the sequence: paranoid-schizoid position, selected fact (precipitating coherence of the elements of the paranoid-schizoid position) ushering in the depressive position, which then instantaneously reveals yet vaster areas of hitherto unrelated elements belonging to domains of the paranoid-schizoid position which were previously unrevealed and unsuspected – a revelation that contributes to the depression peculiar to the depressive position. The *selected fact* then is an essential element in a process of discovery. The *interpretation* – employing definitory hypotheses, such as breast, which have many resemblances to, and in some respects are identical with, the selected fact – is concerned not with *discovery* so much as with *repair*. This difference, important as it is, must not obscure the fact that the definitory hypothesis employed in interpretation, and the selected fact, are in one respect identical: they must be α-elements. We shall see later the disastrous consequences that follow from an absence of α-elements.

The penis

Most of what I have said about the breast may be said about the penis in its function in the theory I am propounding. The metatheory is identical, but now that I have discussed the use of the name, 'breast', and *the breast*, it is possible to add something to what I have said about the metatheory.

The first point is that an attempt to clarify metatheory is embarrassed by the lack of philosophical and scientific equipment appropriate to the needs of psychoanalysis. I have been reduced to educing the qualities associated with (a) scientific hypothesis, (b) psychoanalytic theory of dreams, (c) Humean theory of the hypothesis, (d) the selected fact of Poincaré, to produce a hybrid to describe the scientific nature of the usage, breast. Probably the best plan is to name the class to which breast belongs, 'the class of interpretations'. I propose accordingly to call all the objects I choose for discussion in this chapter, 'interpretations'. The interpretation then is a word or phrase that must be an α-element, must be interchangeable with a visual image, and must be capable of the functions of the selected fact. To this must now be added that it has, when it comes to any attempt

to produce in psychoanalysis the counterpart of reduction of a high-level hypothesis to formulation in terms of empirically verifiable data, the resistant qualities of a scientific deductive system in which the lowest members in the hierarchy are statistical hypotheses. The psychoanalytic interpretation, by virtue of its having the characteristics of a statistical hypothesis, cannot be verified empirically in the sense in which empirical verification has hitherto been understood. This does not mean that psychoanalysis is unscientific – psychoanalysts may be; so may chemists, physicists, philosophers, logicians and others – but it does mean that the philosophy of science, together with mathematics, lags too far behind the development of psychoanalysis for the necessary concepts to be available. In the meanwhile, I propose to improvise temporary solutions of our problems by these short interjections of metatheory between the discussions of successive elements of theory.

We have discussed shortly what I now call, 'the interpretation breast'; there follows a similar discussion of 'the interpretation penis'.

This interpretation, in its visual aspects, is more elongated than the breast. The verbalization of the visual image, which is inescapable, imposes rigidity on the interpretation that, if it could be recorded for public-ation (as I am trying to do at this moment by translation into words) in a manner that preserved its qualities as they are preserved in private by the method of recording that is available to the mind through the operation of dream-work-α, would retain one of its most important qualities, namely plasticity. These two interpretations, breast and penis, are plastic; that is to say that in the mind their visual image can alter enormously and yet retain its identifiability without loss or diminution.

Splitting

'Splitting' is the name of an interpretation: the interpretation has affinities with a constant conjunction hypothesis, a statistical hypothesis, an α-element. The visual image is fleeting, as in a dream: it seems to be there, and then not there. For example, it is a mass of Y's associations of person after person, all of them on a flat plane; it flickers, and they have gone. But surely this is 'splits', or rather some thing for which 'splits' is the right name. Perhaps splits are a way of indicating

splitting, a way of producing a visual image of splitting, or an image, an ideogram. I am not convinced by this. I am struck more by the fact that these splits appear and then they are gone. In this respect there is much in the consulting room that has this dreamlike quality. That is to say that there is some aspect of the sessions that fades and then reappears quite clearly in the way that a well-remembered dream appears and then fades. There is plenty that is not like this: Y, who talks as if it were all rational and straightforward, man-to-man stuff, has a way of denying psychosis. It may be true that what needs watching is this dreamlike stuff. But if so, what has happened to the α-theory? I am lost and see no connection. Perhaps it is that under the rational, which is being used as denial, are only α-elements.

I think 'splitting' calls up the wrong visual image. What does it look like, or feel like, or sound like? What does Y do? Not splitting. X is much more like it, and comes as near as he can to applying a gridiron of splits like a chip-potato machine, so that one is left like a series of pieces ready to be fried. Splitting is done by a single wedge-like object (the penis) or by the grid-like object. This welling up of a field, or sea, or mosaic of splits presents an appearance not unlike what one would expect to see representing the paranoid-schizoid position. It may be that the patient's trouble is that the paranoid-schizoid position is indistinguishable in his mind from a terribly split object. This means that Melanie Klein is right in saying that the depressive-position depression is about all the destruction the patient has wrought. But has she regarded the splits as being parts of the whole object that has been destroyed? One aspect of this must be the problem it produces for learning when every synthesis reveals more of the unsynthesized, particularly in analysis, when every gain in self-knowledge appears to reveal how little is known. This depression is quite common, but it may be that the rational depression at discovering how little you know about yourself is deepened by the feeling that the devastation of personality is even greater than expected. The devastation is seen to be the *consequence* of curiosity, and the synthesizing aspect of the experience is lost to sight. The greedier the curiosity, the greater the amount of destruction revealed. Yet there remains the problem: why does the fragmented, uncoordinated mass of elements loom so large and thus overshadow all else? It only seems to beg the question to say it is a depressed personality: it may be nearer to say it is one that is immensely greedy to be creative.

[Undated]

It would be useful to take a leaf out of the mathematical logician's book and consider concepts such as, 'breast', 'penis', etc., as conjunctions, or the emotions as connectives, or whatever it was that was thought to be most accurate. But in fact these terms are not very suitable for psychoses because I am concerned here with something that approximates to psychoanalysis of the state of mind that in one person becomes a psychosis and in another an invention of mathematical logic. The failed mathematical logician might develop a psychosis, and the aborted psychosis might determine its experiencer to turn to mathematical logic. We may have to invent, with such assistance from the mathematical logician as we can get, a mode of abstraction for terms such as, 'penis'.

The first need is to consider what it is that we want to abstract from such a term: if it is its function, for which of its functions do we need to find an abstraction? At the same time the question obtrudes: how is the meaning of the original object, from which the abstraction is to be effected, to be retained? The answer is, by preservation of the visual image and hence the importance of the term, 'penis', for example, for this term has the merit of being able to evoke a visual image. So we must never attempt abstraction without concretization.

What is to be abstracted? Its quality as a link. Very well; call it, '*a*'. What of its meaning as a sexual symbol? Call it, '*b*'. But some people think it dirty and disgusting, and that it should not be mentioned because it is dirty and disgusting. Call it, '*c*'. But anatomists consider the term to connote a physical structure. Call it, '*d*'. The physiologists, on the other hand, consider it . . . Call it, '*e*'. And so on – almost for ever, one might think.

In these examples I have not been able to produce an abstraction without particularization. For example, '*c*' has been chosen to represent that which stands for something very particular – a person or persons being disgusted by the term, 'penis'. It is clear that something has gone wrong with this approach. Suppose we start again,

and say that '*a*' is the abstraction of 'penis'. Can we then regard '*a*' as a variable that may be given one of many values, e.g. a link, or an object of disgust, or an anatomical structure? Or we may say that the term, 'penis', is the name we give a visual image, and that the visual image is an abstraction, a variable that can be given many different values. Here we differ from the mathematical logician who makes a mark on paper that, one supposes, is not able to call up any visual image but itself; nor do we attempt a painting, sketch or photograph. We employ a word on the understanding that it is an abstract visual image. Do we differ from non-scientists in this? The statement, 'Dogs are animals', would seem to use the term, 'dog', as evocative of a visual image that, if not abstract, is at least a variable that is probably given a value by speaker and listener alike. But it is understood that though it is a variable, the degree of abstraction is limited. It is not supposed that 'dog' can be given the value of a cat or a pebble. We must assume that it is evocative of a visual image that will permit the requisite amount of freedom and yet also impose a limit. Yet both 'dog' and '*a*' call up visual images in that both are seen, and both are marks on paper. But if I *say*, '*a*' or 'dog', then '*a*' simply calls up a visual image of the letter of the alphabet, whereas 'dog' calls up a visual image of an animal.

Let us now consider this situation in which the patient says, "Blood everywhere" – he calls up a visual image in my mind, but I do not see any blood that appears to correspond in reality to the visual image he calls up. But by his behaviour I am given to understand that he expects me to do just that. On the face of it, I suppose that the evidence that is presenting itself to his senses is the same as that which presents itself to mine; if that is so, then his interpretation and mine are obviously different. (I am using the term, 'interpretation', in the way I have already explained, that is to say, as the name in metatheory for those words, or collections of words, which indicate constant conjunction of elements.) In this situation I am confronted by elements for which I can find no selected fact. I cannot, therefore, draw together certain elements in a manner that appears to give them coherence. I can direct my attention to one of two groups of phenomena: I can attempt to illuminate the facts that he, so I gather, sees and feels blood everywhere, and I don't – I may try to find a selected fact that will give coherence to the elements of this situation; or I may give attention to a quite different set of elements, namely those associated

with what seems to me to be the patient's state of mind. The two sets of elements need not be separated. For example, I may decide that the patient is mad; this selected fact will make elements in both sets cohere. But in either event I must exercise the wide-ranging activity of which Freud[1] says, "A special function was instituted which had periodically to search the outer world in order that its data might be already familiar if an urgent inner need should arise; this function was attention", and which I have replaced by *α*-function. To this I now add, since I am engaged on the specialized task of psychoanalysis, my theory of the use of myth. I therefore exercise *α*-function on the facts, my interpretations of the facts, and my knowledge – such as it is – of mythology. By this means I hope to arrive at a psychoanalytic interpretation. But at this moment I do not wish to pursue the search for a psychoanalytic interpretation; I wish to scrutinize the nature of the method I am pursuing, and to do so with a particular aspect in mind of the problem I am investigating, namely the fact that the patient has produced what I call an interpretation – blood everywhere – of some experience. I, in this very sentence, am expressing my interpretation of what I think are facts, namely the facts covered by the phrase, 'what he is doing'. Further, I am seeking an interpretation (based on the idea that what he is doing is expressing an interpretation of some experience he is having) of what this experience can be which is expressed for him by the words, 'blood everywhere', but which I do not think can possibly be expressed for me by those words. To do this I shall use my theory of *α*- and *β*-elements, and assume that the difference in view lies in the fact that I am using *α*-elements, and he is using *β*-elements.

[1]['Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (Freud, 1911b). *Ed.*]

[Undated]

Theories for use in the psychoanalysis of disorders of thought

The scientific principles on which this book [a preliminary outline of *Learning from Experience*] is planned I have explained elsewhere. But it may not be out of place to summarize the main points for the benefit of those to whom this form of presentation is unusual. First, a warning: the reader may feel that what is said is obscure and difficult.[1] Allowing for the intrinsic difficulties of the subject, I believe that much of what is felt to be obscure on a first reading will appear less so if the reader will not allow himself to dwell too long on his first encounter with an obscurity, but will press on till the end, when I think he will have a fair idea of the whole and will thus be in a position to return to the earlier obscurity to find it much more comprehensible. But of course I realize that ultimately the difficulties of the subject, and my limitations in exposition, will make the value of the book depend very much on the skill and patience of the reader, and the goodwill with which he repairs the deficiencies of my work. I can at least promise that he is not being called on to waste his time because I have grudged mine.

The first part of the book consists of theories. Each theory is set out on the same plan, which is essentially that of a scientific deductive system. That is to say, first there are a number of hypotheses so arranged that they follow logically from the premises and from the preceding hypotheses. Consequently each hypothesis has a preceding premise, and is itself the premise of a succeeding hypothesis.

This system is in accord with that pursued by those sciences, particularly physics and mathematics, whose success both in results

[1][This statement is of use – and is intended by Bion to be useful – to readers getting to grips with his writings; it is consistent with the recommendations offered by Freud (1912e) in helping us to bear the uncertainty and ambiguity of apprehending derivatives of the Unconscious. See also Bion's introduction to *Learning from Experience* (Volume IV). *Ed.*]

and in the pursuit of those results has been one of the outstanding features of our era. At the same time, this may not at first be apparent because psychoanalysis, in common with other biological sciences, does not as yet lend itself to the degree of abstraction that makes it possible for the physicist and the mathematician to set out their scientific deductive systems in a manner that is at once exact and brief. The employment of verbal descriptions, often lengthy, contrasts with mathematical formulation and the formulations of the mathematical logician in a way that tends to obscure the structure of these theories and, consequently, their similarity to those of the physicist and mathematician from which their form is derived.

I have followed each scientific deductive system with a discussion of the premises and an acknowledgement of the source, usually the work of a practising psychoanalyst, from which they are derived. I have added comments of my own when it has seemed to me that they would be helpful.

The second part of the book is devoted to the use of these theories in the practice of psychoanalysis. First, I discuss the problem inherent in bridging the gap between hypothesis and empirical data. This is not exhaustive, but its disadvantages are compensated for because the solutions of the problem I adumbrate are implicit in later sections of the book. It will be evident that the suggestions I make can only be provisional approaches to this problem.

An intrinsic part of this disquisition will be a detailed investigation of what is meant by, or is comprised in, the meaning of free-floating attention and counter-resistance. This is of importance not only in itself, but for the light it throws by contrast on what it is that the patient is unable to do.

From this I shall pass to that aspect of practice that consists in theory construction, which is preliminary to interpretation. This will involve the use of already existing theories, including those I put forward for consideration here. I shall make it clear that this involves, on the part of the analyst, not only a knowledge, a working knowledge, of existing theories, but the analyst's capacity for freedom of mental movement from the paranoid-schizoid to the depressive position, and the reverse. This also will assist in comprehension by contrast of one of the major difficulties of the patient.

In the third part of the book I shall attempt a description of a few clinical episodes, which I shall then use to illustrate the process of matching theory with data. I hope to make these sufficiently illuminating to enable the reader to grasp the importance of attention in determining what kinds of material are presenting in an invariably complex situation which, as invariably, is disguised by a superficial appearance of monotonous similarity to previous experiences, and a monotonous similarity of one part of the session to all other parts of the same session.

In the fourth part of the book I shall consider some of the effects of the establishment of a capacity for verbal thought, including the obtrusion of neurotic symptoms familiar in the analysis of the non-psychotic personality.

In the fifth and final part of the book I shall consider some of the implications of the analytic experience for the patient, for the patient's environment, and for the analyst.

I have advised the reader to read straight through this book, not to dwell too long on difficulties, and in this way to gain a working knowledge of the book itself. But the book will have failed for the reader if it does not become an object of study, and the reading of it an emotional experience itself. My hope is that it will be an experience leading to an increased ability on the part of the analyst to mobilize his own resources of knowledge, clinical observation, theory construction (in the sense of propaedeutic to interpretation), and so to render this work out of date and hasten the day when what is perhaps the most distressing malady a patient and family have to endure will be classed as 'curable'.

A secondary but important aim is that the form in which I have presented the material will lead to a more rational, and therefore more certainly communicable, method of expression of psychoanalytic theory than obtains at present.

[Undated]

Dispositions

A man may be disposed to envy, or to violence of emotion, or to regard truth or life highly, or to be intolerant of frustration. Whatever it is that causes him to be so disposed, I shall call his state of mind at the time he is so disposed, his 'disposition'. The propositions I use as premises are all in this sense dispositions. But, as I write this, it is brought home to me how difficult it is to verbalize with accuracy without losing meaning, or to write meaningfully without losing accuracy.

'A disposition.' Does this mean something in the psyche? Are there such things as dispositions? At once a problem is, what does one mean by 'thing'? He is disposed to be envious; he has an envious disposition; his disposition is to be envious. All these sentences mean something. It does not seem unreasonable to claim that there is such a thing as an envious disposition. Very well: then there are envious dispositions, truthful dispositions, narcissistic dispositions, violent dispositions, loving dispositions – to take instances from the premises I have chosen. Since I want to say that there *are* such things, that is to say, things in actuality, in reality, which are represented by the word, 'disposition', it is essential always to use the word in such a way that the reader will be correct in assuming that I mean what I meant on the previous occasion, that there is in reality something that is represented by the word, 'disposition'.

If this were a difficulty peculiar only to this immediate context, the point would not be worth labouring, but it is inherent in psychoanalytic work and confronts the analyst at every turn. The problem is not new to the philosopher, but the analyst's position is more difficult because he is concerned with the practice of psychoanalysis, that is to say, he has to apply his theories in an empirical setting. Even so, this might amount to no more than the difficulties confronting the scientist who has to express his theories in terms of empirically verifiable data before subjecting them to experimental test, were it not for

the fact that the experimental test of psychoanalysis and its theories differs in important respects from the experiments of the physicist whose procedures were marked for their rigour and commended on that account even by Kant. The physicist has, or used to have, his laboratory: the analytic situation that the analyst seeks to preserve is only similar because, I suspect, we attempt to establish an identity with the known which in fact is inadmissible in any but the most superficial way. The tribulations of the physicist since the quantum mechanical physicists have shown that their lowest-level hypotheses, their empirically verifiable data, are statistical hypotheses, may help the analyst to feel that the gap dividing him from the most rigorous scientific discipline of all has become less wide, but it does nothing to bring his subject nearer to being scientifically impeccable. Still less does it contribute to the elaboration of a method or, failing that, an understanding of the need for a method that will place all science, his own included, on a firmer basis. Furthermore, Heisenberg's exposition of the philosophy of quantum mechanics shows that the dependence of the physicist's observed facts on a relationship with facts that are not and can never be known has abolished the limiting walls of his laboratory, and therefore the laboratory itself, so that the physicist has difficulties with his laboratory analogous to the analyst's difficulty with his consulting room and analytic situation. But it does not help psychoanalysts to help themselves, or the physicists to know this, unless through knowing it we can make a breakthrough on the psychoanalytic front. Hence the need for investigating the nature of our own abstractions to a scientific view.

Our scientific theories and systems of hypotheses need to be expressed with great exactitude through an instrument of verbal expressions which has inherent in it defects due to its origin and the penumbra of associations carried by its verbal units, and then has to be applied to a situation – clinical psychoanalysis itself – in which conversational English (or French or German, or whatever other is the native tongue of the participants) plays a dominant part. At first sight this looks as if the attempt to produce a rigorously scientific body of theory is a labour in vain; the errors and inexactitudes that the scientist in the analyst has striven to exclude are reintroduced in the act of translation into conversational usage. The danger is real, but it can be seen in better proportion if it is realized that the working

formulations of rigorous analytic theory are being applied to just those situations and emotional perturbations from which both the perfections and imperfections of language as a means of communication originally sprang.

Looked at in this light, the problem, though severe, assumes more manageable proportions. The exactitude that is essential to the theoretical formulation is essential because the function and context of the theoretical formulation requires it, whereas the context of a psychoanalysis itself does not. The exactitude demanded in the context of the psychoanalysis relates to a different problem and needs to be a characteristic of a number of converging features, some of which are time, emotional stress as it is experienced by both participants, and an unknown emotional experience that is only known to be unknown and must be recognized as such. The richness and variety of the respects in which both parties are ignorant must, as I hope to show later, not be allowed to be ignored.

There is no question of exactitude of time in the scientific formulation which must be true independently of time. Exactitude is not related to emotional situations, but must be characteristic of an entirely unemotional statement, though the statement itself purports to represent emotion. The exactitude of the theory also relates to a standard that is neither narcissistic nor socialistic, whereas the interpretation relates to a standard that is both.

To state the matter in yet other words: I may say that the psychoanalysis displays an emotional situation, a crisis in the relationship between the patient and analyst, and the patient and himself. Furthermore, it is a crisis similar to, and perhaps identical with, the crisis in the child's life that has to be dealt with by the development of a capacity for thought on the part of the mother and infant, and a capacity for the transmission of that thought by means capable of ultimate development into methods suitable for public, i.e. social, communication. These methods of public communication are language, music, arts and mathematics. The psychoanalyst employs language in his work; it is possible that this might account for a certain prominence of verbal thought in psychoanalytic discussion. Even so, I consider it to be so important that nothing is lost by stating the problem as if it were exclusively associated with verbal thought and verbal communication, which is what I propose to do, though it

will be seen that I cannot regard it as unconnected with other forms of public communication. This same language has to be employed in private communication, i.e. in that relationship with himself that is known as the patient's thought. Looked at in this way, disorders of thought can be regarded as an expression of an elaboration of a defective method of internal and external, private and public, communication which has obstructed the development of verbal thought and has thereby left the patient with a defective tool with which to correct mistaken solutions of the emotional crisis, and mistaken solutions of the problem in tool-making that were posed by the emotional crisis for which the tools were needed. It may be as well here to see that neurosis and psychosis in individual and group are not only problems in themselves but set further problems in the necessity to produce tools adequate for their solution. To this extent the original problem repeats itself phylogenetically and individually. This paper, as part of psychoanalysis, is itself a minor attempt at the solution of the problem of elaboration of the tool.

The tool of psychoanalytic theoretical language is:

1. A means of establishing a relationship,
2. A means by which collaboration in a common task is assisted, and
3. A means by which a man establishes a relationship with himself.
4. It expresses the relationship.
5. A man's character, like the properties of a chemical substance, can only be expressed in terms that refer to the nature of the relationship that he establishes with people and things, including himself.
6. A man's senses only give information about the relatedness of one object to another. The information given by the senses is worthless except as material suitable for the formation of judgements about relatedness.
7. There is a vocabulary suitable for, and adapted to, the description of sensual information, mostly adjectival.
8. There is a vocabulary similarly adapted to defining by naming sets of sense impressions that appear to be constantly conjoined:

these are nouns, e.g. table, chair. Such terms may be regarded as having the characteristics of hypotheses: 'table' is the name given to a number of phenomena constantly conjoined with a thing-in-itself, or thing in actuality, or a realization of what, without it, would be hypothesis only. In this respect the noun must be regarded as a succinct method of stating a hypothesis that certain no longer explicitly stated qualities and a realization are related.

9. The fact that the entire vocabulary in any language is formed to serve man's preoccupation with relatedness is not observed because the relationship with which man is preoccupied is possession – to possess or to be possessed. This tends to colour the belief in, and attitude to, things in themselves – realizations.

This is seen in

10. the words used to express relatedness of the self with itself and other things or people. Terms such as, 'love', 'hate', 'know', are hypotheses expressing a constant conjunction between feelings not related to the senses, and two classes of things: (a) those expressible in, or represented by, terms that are succinct hypotheses of constant conjunction of certain sense impressions, and (b) those represented by terms that are succinct hypotheses of the constant conjunction of impressions not related to the senses.

    An example of (a) would be, 'I hate the sea'. 'Hate' is a name representing the hypothesis: I have an impression that a number of feelings that are constantly conjoined and are as constantly incompatible with certain other feelings (the constant conjunction of which I usually name, 'love') are related to a thing that is constantly conjoined with certain impressions of sight, smell, etc., and the constant conjunction of those things and smells I usually state succinctly by the word, 'sea'.

    An example of (b) would be, 'I hate depression'. The first part of this statement is as before, but 'depression' is the name of a series of feelings that are constantly conjoined but are related to no senses that I am aware of. The bias towards possession as being the essential quality of all relatedness tends to the supposition that the person hates a feeling that he has, and obscures the fact that he is hating – that is to say, he has a particular kind of relationship to a feeling (depression) that is itself the expression of a particular kind of relatedness.

What is the tool of psychoanalytic theoretical knowledge for?

The answer would seem to be that it is for precisely the same purpose as all other language, and that the only difference between psychoanalysts and others is that analysts consciously use language for the purpose for which it was intended, and others use it for precisely the same purpose but without realizing what started them off on having a language at all, or what they are employing it for. It is as if a man picked up a book but forgot, as he studied it, why he had picked it up.

One of the consequences of not knowing what the activity is for which language is being elaborated, namely the exploration of relatedness, is a preoccupation with whether it is possible ever to know anything. The difficulty arises because it is not appreciated that 'X knows Y' is the expression of a special kind of relatedness, and the answer to the question depends on whether a link can be forged which serves the purpose of relating X and Y in actuality in such a way that the factual experience is correctly represented by the statement, 'X knows Y', when that statement is freed from the possessive connotation. If 'X knows Y' is not freed, and is accordingly allowed to retain an element of 'X possesses a piece of knowledge called Y', or that 'X contains a piece of knowledge called Y', then 'X knows Y' is a statement valid in itself and meaningful, but it cannot represent anything in the world of reality, for in the world of reality there is nothing for it to represent. It is a statement suitable for expressing a theory of knowledge appropriate to a stage of development in which knowledge is felt to exist, as a concrete object is felt to exist, but it must be stripped of such primitive components before it is capable of representing an actuality, or supposed actuality, without being incompatible with other statements representing other facets of the same actuality. I maintain that if the statement is stripped of all meanings that prevent it from expressing a relationship between X and Y in a manner strictly parallel to the expression of relatedness embedded in 'X loves Y', and 'X hates Y', then not only do contradictions that make it incompatible with other hypotheses of relatedness disappear, but there is an actual situation that it represents suitably. There is one further respect in which 'knows' can be made to approximate to reality; that is by making it express an activity continuously pursued so that X is conceived of as being actively engaged in a relationship of knowing Y, in the sense in which the phrase, 'getting to know', is

sometimes employed. The point will receive full treatment later, so I shall not dwell on it more than is necessary to make the statement, 'X knows Y', capable of representing the actuality represented by the statement, 'X psychoanalyses Y'.

Before proceeding further I want to make it clear that when I say of the statement, 'X knows Y', that in so far as it carries a meaning of 'possessing a piece of knowledge' there is nothing in the world of reality for it to represent, I do not mean that it is an untrue statement; it can be perfectly true, just as a mathematical calculus can be true and yet have no known corresponding realization. Although a statement represents an empirically verifiable fact – the statement has a corresponding realization – that statement is not therefore true, and consequently not capable of protecting the personality from the mental deterioration attendant on starvation of truth. Whatever 'truth' may mean, it does not mean a quality whose existence or non-existence is established by the correspondence of a statement with a realization. Truth and absolute truth are statements of a judgement of a statement. Thus the statement that 'the sun rises' is a true statement. If I were asked whether it was absolutely true that the sun rises, I should say, "No". As a hypothesis, there is no corresponding realization that it represents. But though I know this, I also know that there is a set of phenomena that can be made to appear related, are given a relatedness, if I produce a hypothesis that the sun rises. What are related to each other by my statement are appearances; and the appearances are characteristics of my relationship with stimuli. Furthermore, they are characteristics of a particular form of relationship with the stimuli – an 'I know' relationship. But I have already said that I know that the statement, 'The sun rises', has no corresponding realization. How then can the statement, 'The sun rises', be said to be true and part of an 'I know' relationship? The answer is that the 'I know . . .' relationship is between me and a set of phenomena some of which might be, to take an example, that my friend wants to see a particular view at sunrise, that he wants my company, that he thinks I can be relied on to wake at a time suitable to fulfil his aim, and so on. With all these I have an 'I know . . .' relationship. What I am concerned with is a set of phenomena with which I have an 'I know . . .' relationship as contrasted with an 'I love . . .' or 'I hate . . .' relationship. For my purposes I need a theory that will relate these phenomena to each other. The phenomena are already selected from out of many millions that are

discarded as irrelevant (e.g. that no rain has fallen in the Gobi desert), and a further selection could be made by putting in one class all those that have been related by my theory that 'the sun rises'. As I have said, this statement is true because within a circumscribed area it has the effect of relating appearances, phenomena, with which I have an 'I know . . .' relationship. But if I am asked whether it is absolutely true, I assume that I am expected to remove the limits circumscribing my area in order to make it limitless; I assume I am to state whether this theory that 'the sun rises' will demonstrate a relatedness between all kinds of phenomena, and also a realization to which the hypothesis that 'the sun rises' corresponds. For this set of elements, facts and phenomena, the statement is not true.

Thus, 'truth' is the name I give to the quality that I attribute to any statement that is a hypothesis relating to phenomena with which I have an 'I know . . .' relationship. The function of the hypothesis itself, as I have already said, is to state a relatedness between elements that, without it, would remain discrete and therefore unable to yield the feeling of meaningfulness that is the inseparable emotional accompaniment of an observation of relatedness embodied in a hypothesis. Consistent with this usage it is correct to say that the statement, 'The sun does not rise', is untrue when it is the hypothesis which is employed in the same set of phenomena as I have used in my example, even though it can be shown to correspond with a realization and to be an accurate representation of the realization. One reason for this is that the theory is to be used for a limited number of phenomena in a context that shows clearly that the theory is to serve a purpose that is social and not, say, to illuminate an astronomical problem. It may serve as a useful introduction to later elaborations of these points to consider why anyone would resort to hypothesis perversely in the trivial social context; as it is an imaginary example, we may suppose the statement to be made as an expression of feeling, either as part of some joke, or perhaps to mislead. In either event, the relationship between phenomena and the observer is not that of 'I know . . .', but of 'I love . . .', or 'I hate . . .'. A hypothesis employed as part of an 'X knows Y' relationship is to fill a quite different function from that which is . . . [*breaks off here*]

[Undated]

I know X = relationship

'Knowledge' has no meaning unless it means that someone knows something, and this, as I hope to show, is an assertion of relationship, or of some part of a relationship.

The term, 'knowledge', I propose provisionally to employ to describe a state of mind indissolubly associated with a relationship between communicable awareness on the one hand, and the object of which the person feels thus aware of the other.

I must give some explanation of my choice of the term, 'communicable awareness': the term, 'communicable', is not synonymous with 'conscious', for a person may be conscious of something yet unable to communicate his awareness. Or he may be unconsciously aware of it and yet able to communicate his awareness to another who can interpret his communication though he himself cannot. I may be unconscious of my fear of something of which I am aware (and indeed of my awareness of it) and yet communicate my fear to another who has no difficulty in understanding from my communication that I am afraid, and of what it is that I am afraid. Obviously such communication depends for its efficacy on the capacity for receptiveness of the receiver, and therefore there can be no hard and fast way of determining the point at which awareness may be said to be communicable. But this is a difficulty that will be discussed when we come to the problem of restatement of a hypothesis in terms of empirically verifiable data. For the present I wish simply to establish my contention that the awareness must be communicable.

The instance I have given (that I might communicate my awareness of something that I fear) may serve as an introduction to the kind of relationship with an object which I claim when I say that I know it. I may say that I fear an object, but this statement does not include the statement that I know it. Indeed it may be an essential feature of my fear that I do *not* know it. But the statement that I know it may include the fact, stated or not, that I fear it. In some respects, then, to say, 'I

know X', is an inclusive statement; it implies an inclusive relationship wider than one implied by 'I love X', or 'I hate X'.

My aim is to define a common usage, which definition would obtain a large measure of support. This aim becomes more practicable if we attempt to describe that limited use of 'to know' which is implied when the speaker means that in saying, 'I know X', he is really meaning a kind of relationship with X which is to be specifically discriminated from all the other kinds of relationship signified by 'I hate X' or 'I love X', 'I see X', and so on.

In an analysis, the action of the analyst in being an analyst means two things: in so far as it is an investigation, it means 'I want to know you', but in so far as it is interpretation it means 'I know you'. This is an example of the kind of relationship I wish to use the expression, 'I know X', to describe. It is between communicable awareness and the patient.

The meaning of the word, 'know', is determined by its context. In attempting to define my use of it, I am wishing to control the context so that the word has a more rigid meaning, and thereby a meaning less liable to fluctuation. The same purpose informs the attempt to address my comments to a selected audience. I hope that if the audience is literate, the penumbra of associations it possesses will reinforce the meaning I wish to convey. Clearly this limitation is again imposed by selecting a philosophical or psychoanalytic audience.

Nevertheless the word, 'know', in the statement, 'I know X', has constantly changing meaning, and these changes in meaning remain out of the control of the person making the statement, no matter how carefully he may strive to make it exact by definition, by control of the context in which he uses it, or by selection of those to whom he addresses his observations. My point may be clarified by the exaggeration of an extreme view, namely that we cannot know the meaning at any moment of the word, 'know', unless we know all the meanings of the word at that time – and that means never. Such a view is ordinarily of no practical consequence, yet it may serve sometimes to point the way to an understanding of some of the difficulties that are of practical importance. Amongst these are those that arise because it is a problem even to achieve the relatively modest aim that the writer may and should have: to know all the meanings with which he is at any moment investing the word.

[Undated]

Kinds of relatedness

'Caused by'. But also the mathematical symbols for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Are these expressions of relatedness? And if so, what is their history in the development of the individual?

This and this and this and this = a table. (*addition*)

A table without legs or a top or hardness or softness = a hallucination. (*subtraction*)

A table *multiplied* by today and tomorrow and the next day and the next day = lots of tables.

But if it is the same table? And if two people have to share it, is the table *divided* by two?

[Undated]

The cause and the selected fact

The cause and the selected fact are alike in that they are both ideas that have the power of being associated with an emotional experience that at one moment gives rise to a sense of creative synthesis *and* awareness of still unsynthesized discrete objects. Every emotional experience of knowledge gained is at the same time an emotional experience of ignorance unilluminated. The sense of creative success with its accompanying elation is therefore inseparable from a sense of failure to synthesize the discrete objects, the elementary particles, which are revealed by the success.

Dominance of the life instincts carries with it the continued repetition of this experience. In extreme form, fear of this experience can lead to repudiation of the life instincts, and the reinforcement of the death instincts that are idealized and libidinized.

The fear and intolerance of the cause or selected fact ultimately contribute to increasing attacks on the individual's equipment for feeling and satisfying curiosity, and therefore contribute to the forces operating in producing senility. Senility is a process analogous to destruction of the ego and of α. It thus contributes to the shortening of physical life, just as destruction of α and the associated loss of contact with reality in infancy endanger life.

The selected fact relates to synthesis of objects felt to be contemporaneous or without any time component. The selected fact thus differs from the cause that relates to the synthesis of objects scattered in time and therefore with a time component.

The suicide of the Sphinx, and the Oedipus myth, are both verbal accounts of pictorial solutions (visual images) of the same problem: one solves it by death; the other by re-entry into the mother's womb. Both solutions are intended to evade the emotional experience of cause or selected fact, i.e. the interplay between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. This interplay cannot be carried out without visual imagery of the Sphinx, or of an internal parental intercourse.

If cause is transferred to epistemology, as I think it should be, what is the link between hypotheses in a scientific deductive system?

If I say destructive attacks lead to fragmentation of α, it cannot mean (according to my theory) that they 'cause' fragmentation: it must mean that the individual cannot make destructive attacks on α without thinking that α has been fragmented. If the patient makes destructive attacks on α, or what he feels to be α, then he thinks I had no umbrella in London, he took a taxi, I had pneumonia [*see* p. 180] and so on, in disjointed bits that seem to him to be objects, i.e. bits of his personality indistinguishable from things in themselves. Though cause has no realization corresponding to the concept, the patient regards cause as having an existence as a thing in itself, not independent of thought but as a part of his personality possessing independence in the sense that he cannot control it.

Such a patient, having only objects at his disposal – which, as we have seen are unserviceable for anything but projective identification – cannot feel he is able to discern a link between discrete phenomena or their counterpart in reality; such an idea is not appropriate to a state of mind in which only bizarre objects exist and can only be projected, evacuated, or internalized by a mind that is a bowel. There is therefore no possibility of his feeling that he has discerned the link that brings phenomena together, and therefore cannot have the emotional experience that the non-psychotic personality recognizes under the name of 'cause'. His experience is quite otherwise: he feels that various objects have cohered; they are felt to have done so voluntarily, and independently of his volition; yet since the objects are part of his personality, he is responsible for their voluntary and independent concatenation.

But I have said that 'cause' should be, and is, the name of the emotional experience inseparable from the interaction between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. The solution of this contradiction lies in the difference between the emotional experience known to the psychotic, and the emotional experience known to the non-psychotic personality, both of which experience have the name, 'cause'.

I have already adumbrated the nature of the emotional experience called 'cause', as it is experienced by the psychotic: we must now consider the nature of this experience as known to the non-psychotic part of the personality.

Disregarding for present purposes the fact that the non-psychotic

believes that cause is a phenomenon with a corresponding realization and belongs to the domain of ontology, and considering only that part of his beliefs which relates cause to the domain of epistemology – that is, as an emotional experience – we can see that he feels he has discerned a link between phenomena. For the psychotic the objects have come together in a cruel juxtaposition: for the non-psychotic the previously discrete phenomena are felt to be unchanged but related, and the emphasis is not on the objects (phenomena) but on the relatedness. The relationship is variously described, but usually as 'logical', and the effect of discerning this relatedness is felt as subjectively therapeutic. What, then, is logical relatedness as contrasted with, say, cruel juxtaposition? The psychotic view impels towards splitting and dispersal, whether under dominance of life instincts (L), or death instincts (D); under L, the objects are scattered to prevent destruction, and under D, they are the explosive result of it. The non-psychotic view impels towards further discovery and synthesis.

Differentiation of cause and selected fact

So far I have spoken of 'cause' and 'selected fact' as virtually interchangeable terms used as names for an identical emotional experience. I shall now use 'cause' exclusively for those emotional experiences in which *time* is intrinsic, whether this is explicit or implicit in the material. Time is a component in all emotional experiences; therefore the emotional experience I call 'cause' will be intrinsic to the experience described or discussed, and to any scientific deductive system which is constructed to represent it; it follows that it will be implicit in any calculus corresponding to the scientific deductive system.

The term, 'selected fact', I reserve for use in emotional experiences of thought about phenomena in which time is excluded, and in all scientific deductive systems and the corresponding calculi which are constructed to represent such phenomena.

In so far as an exercise of the logical faculty is an emotional experience, time is intrinsic; this fact will be reflected in any scientific deductive system and its associated calculus, which is constructed to represent the experience of exercising the logical faculties. But logic is not impregnated with time, although it may be concerned with it as an object of thought for which it supplies the laws. A logical

formulation, therefore, cannot be described as a cause: it will be called a selected fact. A mathematical formula is, for the same reason, also a selected fact. A logical formulation or a mathematical formula may nevertheless be called a cause, but only in so far as it has been an element in an emotional experience and is therefore represented in the appropriate scientific deductive system and its associated calculus. In the system of logic or mathematics to which it belongs it remains a selected fact and is timeless.

Mathematics and logic are unaffected by the passage of time, though time is intrinsic to the discovery of logical formulations or mathematical formulas. They 'are', independently of whether they are known, i.e. independently of whether there is an observer to observe them or not. They are therefore no part of experience or knowledge since there need be no one to experience or to know them. [*Marginal comment:* "This is running counter to my statement that maths is only a way of thinking."] This fact contributes to the comparative absence of awareness of time as a component in the problems associated with disturbances of thought, whether the disturbance is of the kind observable in an attempt to solve problems of acceleration of freely falling bodies without the discovery of the differential calculus, or of the kind observable in a psychotic patient who is incapable of articulated thought.

The elements of logic or mathematics are contemporaneous: the elements of experience are dispersed in time.

[Undated]

Suppose I want to go to Oxford Street but do not know how to find it. I may have to ask someone, or consult a map, or try to remember something that I believe would give me a clue, or . . . But it is obvious that if I stick to concrete examples of what I may have to do I shall not succeed in my immediate aim, which has nothing to do with Oxford Street. So instead of thinking of all the different things I might have to do before starting to go to Oxford Street, I shall see if I can find a short way of saying what I want you to know when I start writing of concrete examples of learning, such as consulting maps, policemen, and so forth. I have to make these concrete examples abstract; I have to abstract from the concrete the essence of my communication. But now that I have written this last sentence I am wondering whether abstract, concrete, essence, communication, are good words for stringing together in a sentence that has now perhaps become too abstract to teach the reader what I mean. My first attempt threatens to become so burdened with verbal descriptions of concrete images that the reader may feel overwhelmed by them to the detriment of his ability to learn what I mean.

Yet those visual images that I began to verbalize are only a small fraction of the many that were in my mind: the Radcliffe Camera; being lost in Turkestan with no policeman to ask and no knowledge of the language to help me frame a question about Oxford or Oxford Street; chain stores and uniformity; everyone talking the same language; a Brahminy bull helping himself to goods on a stall that I was not allowed to touch . . . I am not sure that I remember what I set out to say. But I think I know one thing that my visual images or free associations are saying, and that is something I did not mean to discuss. I was thinking of the sweets the Brahminy bull could have, but I – I was quite small at the time – could not. With an effort I can get back to the point; it is to do with learning and teaching.

If I want to go to Oxford Street and do not know how to do so, I must learn. If I want to teach something about learning, I must know how to learn and how to teach. I shall start again.

Suppose I want to go to Oxford Street but do not know. . . . There is much I need to know before I can ask the question. I begin as an individual with a place in time and space, and in the history of others. Closely related to the problem of locating Oxford Street is a vast amount of remembered experience. Some of this is mine; the rest is located in the society of my time, and I need to find it and to know *how* to find it. With regard to myself, I need to consult my store of experience; in some respects I can see how I do this. I need to know what I mean by 'Oxford Street' if I propose to get there. I have no difficulty in knowing that 'Oxford Street' is not just a noise in my head because I am able to have an image of the Radcliffe Camera, and so the noise, 'Oxford Street', becomes a sound, and the sound is now felt by me to have a meaning. The visual image of the Radcliffe Camera has therefore proved, with other associations, to be a repository of emotional experiences on which I automatically draw in order to understand a current problem with a view to solving it.

But my current problem is not how to go to Oxford Street; it is how to make public certain ideas of mine about learning and teaching. And while attempting to solve the problem of how it is to be done, I found myself wondering what I would say. It then occurred to me to answer my question by an illustrative example. That is how it seemed to me consciously, and that is how I would explain my behaviour consciously.

The other explanation that occurs to me is that the supposed illustrative examples are really α-elements filling their function as a repository of my experience, and being called upon to yield that experience so that I may the better be able to solve the problem of this communication here. In this the elements recall problems associated with solving problems by non-verbal means – the non-existent Turkestan policeman – but not only pre-verbal.

Now I can proceed with these free associations – or rather I can treat these images as free associations and attempt an analytic approach. This would depend on my regarding my immediate problem as one arising predominantly from an internal obstruction, i.e. an obstruction in my psyche, and on my believing that the method of solution was psychoanalysis. But may there not be some other way

in which these images can be utilized? In fact I have gone to sleep. Does this mean that the natural *modus operandi* is to have these images and then 'sleep on them'? Or to allow them to work as elements in unconscious waking thought when, my mental apparatus being in good order, a solution will emerge without my ever being aware of the unconscious waking thoughts that have effected it? *The Old Wives' Tale* [Arnold Bennett] certainly credits 'sleeping on' a problem with efficacy.

[Undated]

It has just come to me that the mathematician is one who is capable of α and that it has this consequence: he can see the essential characters in, say, the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, or the Oedipal situation, or primal scene, or any other. These situations, or complexes, are seen concretely and, at some point, in visual images. For example, Euclid's geometrical patterns can easily be visual images that are made abstract. But the mathematician is able to produce abstractions, and signs for these abstractions, and can then replace the abstraction or its sign (reversing the direction of α) with a *particular* concretization.

If my idea is right, then Euclid could say good-bye to the 'elements' (1.5, Elefuga). That is to say, the 'elements' could be worked – transformed, in his case – into an abstract visual image (the theorem) and then still further abstracted by Descartes (or rather the use of the system of co-ordinates he worked out) so as to form the whole system of projective geometry, and then abstracted still further to form the system of algebraic geometry. Now the calculus thus elaborated lies ready to use.

Leaving aside the question, for the time being, of how this process of abstraction is to take place and how α affects it, we can see that the calculus that has been produced is available for the solution of all kinds of problems which, on the face of it, are far removed from the basic facts ('elements', in this case) from which the original abstraction was effected. But it is probable that it will only serve effectually for the solution of problems in which the concrete facts, which are to be substituted for the variables of the calculus, have a value relative to each other which is similar to the values the original basic facts had relative to each of the other basic original facts. Put in other terms, a Newton explores astronomical space, elaborating his laws of motion in doing so by virtue of an already existing calculus, or calculi, which derived originally by a process of abstraction from the facts of the first space of all – the infant's space of breast, the Positions

(paranoid-schizoid and depressive), Oedipal situation, primal scene. There is, then: a basic pattern, an abstraction, calculi and reapplication of calculi.

A Newton then owes his freedom to investigate to a series of derivations from a basic pattern; but that same pattern also imposes a limitation on his freedom in that only such data tend to be regarded by him as will lend themselves to a scheme fitting in with the original basic pattern. In an extreme form this can lead to such a limitation of selectivity of observed facts that the 'discovery', e.g. of the origin of the solar system, is really not much more than a projection onto astronomical facts of a crude and very easily detected emotional problem centring, say, on the primal scene. But in another observer of the stature of Newton, the facts now drawn together by aid of the calculi already in existence can be seen not to be adequately represented by the laws of motion and their representative calculi.

Thus there is produced anew the situation, described by Poincaré, of disparate elements lacking any coherence. Confronted by this repetition of the Positions, again all depends on the individual's capacity for *α*. The new Positions can again be negotiated, depending on *α*-capacity, new visual images, new abstractions, and further calculi, and so on.

In this lies the possibility of belief in the value for scientific enquiry of the original basic patterns, and at the same time an indication of the nature of the limitations from which human intellectual exploration and enquiry is bound to suffer. We can ultimately only see in the universe that which lies within the compass of our mental equipment, and that in turn means that we can only see that which lies within the compass of our ability to solve through *α*-capacity certain basic elemental positions and patterns, such as the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, primal scene and Oedipal situation. All that lies outside those few elementary patterns can only be grasped by virtue of *α*-capacity which can be brought to bear on a derivation from a derivation from a derivation . . . to the *n*th.

March 1967

Reverence and awe

[*Synopsis and notes of a paper given at a joint meeting of the Los Angeles Psycho-Analytic Society and Institute, and the Southern California Psycho-Analytic Society on 20 April 1967 in the Mount Sinai Hospital Auditorium. There is no record of the actual presentation.*]

The Kleinian theory of the paranoid-schizoid position and its dynamic relationship with the depressive position can be seen to indicate a configuration that is constantly encountered in the realm of thought. I have drawn attention to the recurrence of this pattern in *Learning from Experience*. I shall indicate what I mean by two quotations, neither from psychoanalysts, which display it. The first is from a mathematician, Henri Poincaré, in *Science and Method*; the second from Eric Temple Bell in a chapter on Cause from his book, *Men of Mathematics*.

1

> If a new result is to have any value, it must unite elements long since known, but till then scattered and seemingly foreign to each other, and suddenly introduce order where the appearance of disorder reigned. Then it enables us to see at a glance each of these elements in the place it occupies in the whole. Not only is the new fact valuable on its own account, but it alone gives a value to the old facts it unites. Our mind is frail as our senses are; it would lose itself in the complexity of the world if that complexity were not harmonious; like the short-sighted, it would only see the details, and would be obliged to forget each of these details before examining the next, because it would be incapable of taking in the whole.

2

> . . . the theory of numbers, which in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been a miscellaneous aggregation of disconnected special results, assumed coherence and rose to the dignity of a mathematical science on a par with algebra, analysis and geometry.

I suggest that this constantly recurring phenomenon can at the present time be very clearly seen in the development of psychoanalysis. I do not propose to go into this and the oscillations of the group from persecution to depression and back again, beyond drawing your attention to its existence; my object is to give an account of a relatively short clinical episode, which is merely a particular instance of well-known psychoanalytic theories. It may seem unfamiliar but I hope you will agree that it is a perfectly fair account of a general theory well known to psychoanalysts.

If psychoanalysts can abandon themselves to analysis in the psychoanalytic sessions, they are in a position when recollecting the experience in tranquillity to discern their experience as part of a greater whole. Once that is achieved, the way is open for the discovery of configurations revealing yet other and deeper groups of theory. But the discoverer must be prepared to find that he has started another round of group oscillations. Persecution ⇌ Depression.

My example, which I have called 'Reverence and Awe', is taken from the analysis of a patient who came to me after an experience of many years of analysis. He had no doubt at all that he had benefited greatly from his experience, and yet he was dissatisfied. I expected to find that greed played a large part in his make-up, but from what I knew of his analyst I thought it very unlikely that this point had not been adequately dealt with. It seemed probable that the explanation would have to be found elsewhere. My reason for taking the very restricted sample from his analysis with me is to draw your attention to material, the pathology of which is familiar to you already, but which I interpret in a way that may be less familiar. I hope you will satisfy yourselves that despite apparent strangeness the reality that I am representing by my interpretations is in no way novel. I draw your attention to this point because I am convinced that this happens more frequently than psychoanalysts realize, and gives rise to unnecessary confusion and controversy. In my opinion it does not indicate differences in the theoretical outlook of psychoanalysts, but is symptomatic of the stage of development that the psychoanalytic group has achieved. That stage is described by my quotation from Eric Temple Bell.

For reasons of discretion I have had to discuss this patient in such a way that he cannot recognize the material. I believe, however, that

in essentials the account does not give a misleading impression of the actual case.

I deliberately made no enquiries about this patient's previous psychoanalytic history, working on the principle that either the difficulties had been adequately dealt with and were therefore no longer relevant, or that they still remained to be dealt with, in which case they would present themselves in an entirely novel manner in accordance with the changes that had occurred within the patient. I regard this point as of great importance: information given about such incompletely dealt-with difficulties is bound to arouse expectations in the psychoanalyst, making it very difficult for him to keep an open mind. While he is waiting for the appearance of material that he has been led to expect, he fails to observe correctly the material that is actually presenting itself. The repetition of such failures must be guarded against because it undermines his observations and therefore the soundness of his interpretations.

The patient was a man of medium height, fifty-three years old, with greying hair and an alert and lively manner. He at once embarked on a torrent of free associations plentifully sprinkled with information about various psychoanalysts whom he had known. The information was mostly trivial, but I was given to understand by his manner that he had plenty more. For example, he would mention some analyst known to him and show me that he knew certain matters about his private life and difficulties. I soon gathered that he believed I knew the man and that the details he mentioned were well known to me. I regarded this communication as fiction. At the same time he was making it clear that he was not going to be fooled by me or any other analyst. After he had gone on pouring out material of this kind for some five or ten minutes, I stopped him and said he was showing me that there was very little about being an analysand that he did not know. I said that his statements bore the unmistakable stamp of being free associations and had very little resemblance to the kind of thing that might be said by any ordinary person engaging in a conversation. I said that I thought he was very anxious to prove to himself that nothing was happening, or was likely to happen, with which he was not familiar. He complimented me on the brilliance of my interpretation and indicated what a relief it was to find that I was not wedded to any rigid psychoanalytic theories. There was no apparent awareness

on his part of any irony or sarcasm in what he was saying. I did not feel called upon at this stage to make any observation on what he was saying or the manner in which he said it.

I should explain that I regard the psychoanalyst's capacity to observe and absorb as much of the analysand's material as possible as important for the following reasons:

1. It will enable him to combine what he hears with what he has already experienced from the patient to give an immediate interpretation in the circumstances of the actual session.
2. At the same time he will observe features that are not comprehensible to him but will contribute at a later stage to the comprehension of material yet to come.
3. There are still other elements of which the analyst will not even be conscious but which will build up an experiential reserve that in due course will influence his conscious views about the patient's material on a specific occasion.

Reason 1, although apparently leading to the operative interpretation, is of less consequence than 2 and 3 because the interpretation is merely setting a formal seal on work that has already been done and is therefore no longer of much consequence.

Reason 2 is of great importance because it is part of the dynamic and continuing process on which the whole viability of the analysis depends. The more the psychoanalyst is open to these impressions, the more he is prepared to participate in the evolution of the analysis.

Reason 3, although more remote, ensures the long-term vitality of the whole psychoanalytic process. In short, the nearer the psychoanalyst can come to observation of the kind I am desiderating here, the less likely he is to fall into the wastes of jargon, and the more the analysis will approximate to being a unique emotional experience recognizably related to an actual human being, and not a conglomerate of psychopathological mechanisms.

The patient, for the time being, relinquished his flow of 'free associations' and began to talk as if he was having an ordinary conversation. I gave some more interpretations, that he appeared to accept but without any comment on their 'brilliance' – which as far as I was concerned remained undimmed. But now there came into the picture

a series of reactions that showed that he thought the interpretations were correct, and I was helped to make them so by his intelligent co-operation.

I hope to make clear some of the bewildering aspects of the patient's statements. It is virtually impossible in print to give any idea of the confused outpouring of statements in sessions when he was expressing envy and admiration. It is also impossible at the time to keep track of his statements, and therefore a reproduction is only an artificial representation. Provided this is understood the following will give an idea:

"She does it on purpose to upset me. The alignment of the tea-caddy was wrong again. She has set her mind on Geoffrey going to school at X which is very expensive. Laura is very good with Clementine but Clementine was extremely upset by Margery" (his wife). "She mentioned food again and she knows very well it would upset me. The pasty that I get from my usual shop is always very good. I do not think there is any chance that Geoffrey will get into Y. The headmaster told me that if he were border-line, then they might try to push him in, but his mark is frightfully low – only about sixty. I think Z has a lower standard, but again, it is very expensive and I do not think Geoffrey would have a chance. Margery again mentioned food when she knows it is very upsetting to me."

It would be wearisome if I were to continue this description, but it will give a fair idea if I say that three or four sessions a week would be taken up with this kind of outpouring. Such sessions were in marked contrast with others in which the patient spoke with the coherence usual in ordinary conversation with someone with whom one is on confidential terms.

The problem for the analyst is what to do with material of this kind. It is necessary to draw the patient's attention to it and, if possible, to get him to compare it with the way he talks on the other occasions. I do this in order to get the patient to see that there is a problem, without necessarily suggesting what the problem is. I find it necessary to have some basis for agreement on what the material is that requires interpretation. This, however, is not easy to do because the nature of the material, its characteristics and content, are not clear for some time. For example, if the analysand is expecting the analyst to interpret it, it means that he thinks the analyst must be well-nigh omniscient to understand such a flood of material and what

it is supposed to convey. The interpretation that the patient expects the analyst to be omniscient is one that I want to stress. There were, however, many others drawing attention to the fact that he spoke as if every item he mentioned was equal in importance with every other item. I had, in fact, to spend some time on this, basing my interpretations on the theory that his conversation to me had been subjected to splitting attacks that left the conversational link in a state of fragmentation. Interpretations of this kind did something to slow down the flow but did not noticeably decrease the number of sessions in which I had to cope with it. I spent several months drawing attention to the extent to which splitting was taking place. I pointed out that sometimes I was fragmented as if I were a woman or a breast, the fragments represented by the names of various women. Sometimes I showed him that he was not tolerating the problem of his boy's education which he had to solve, and was reacting by splitting that up into bits. Very often each bit represented a problem that could be solved, but the problem as a whole was not solved.

On occasions when I could make this clear he sometimes reacted by going into a state of depression, blaming me for making things difficult; on other occasions he reverted to my 'brilliance', that is, my god-like qualities or, alternatively, my devilish 'dazzling' of him so that he could not see the point.

Many sessions passed carrying their individual characteristics so that on the face of it one could easily stress the unique quality of each session. Indeed I believe that it is very important that the analyst should retain his freshness of outlook so that he never falls into the mistake of treating any session as if it were the repetition of a previous session. Even in instances where it appears to be almost indistinguishable, the problem for the analyst is how to retain an over-all knowledge of the human being and his psychopathology so that he would be able to deal with the greatest diversity of human beings while at the same time not losing sight of the fact that the personality with whom he is dealing is unique. This is so easily said that one feels it is almost a banality when put forward to a psychoanalytic society – as I am doing – but in the reality of a psychoanalytic session it is very easy to lose sight of this simple basic principle and begin to give interpretations in terms so near to being statements of basic psychoanalytic theory that they lose meaning for the patient. Conversely, it is possible for the analyst to react against the feeling of being confronted

with a unique and therefore unknown situation. Throughout these many sessions to which I have been referring, despite all their diversity to which I hope I was able to give due weight, it was possible to see the resemblance that they bore to each other as approximating to the Kleinian theory of progress from paranoid-schizoid position to depressive position.

I have found it important to regard every session, no matter how familiar the material may seem to be, as if one were scrutinizing the elements in a kaleidoscope before they shake into a definable pattern. The temptation is always to terminate prematurely the stage of uncertainty and doubt about what the patient is saying.

The most likely way for an analyst to do this is by giving an interpretation before the moment is ripe for the pattern to emerge; the analyst's armoury of psychoanalytic theory and experience is easily sufficient to supply him with plausible interpretations for this purpose. This is familiar to us all as a manifestation of counter-transference, but I want to stress the closeness with which the course I am advocating approximates to the feelings of persecution proper to the paranoid-schizoid position. It may be argued that an analyst should be so well analysed that he does not suffer from feelings of persecution, but I am not concerned with what *should be* the case but rather with what *is* the case. I certainly cannot claim for myself – who have been analysed by Melanie Klein – that I am incapable of experiencing feelings of persecution; in our present state of progress I think any analyst would be rash to think that he was. Since these feelings are very painful, naturally the analyst is anxious to terminate them prematurely in the way I have indicated. I suggest that for a correct interpretation it is necessary for the analyst to go through the phase of 'persecution' even if, as we hope, it is in a modified form, without giving an interpretation. Similarly, he must pass through the depression before he is ready to give an interpretation. Again, he should not give an interpretation while experiencing depression; the change from paranoid-schizoid to depressive position must be complete before he gives his interpretation.

Conversely, while listening to the patient the analyst should dwell on those aspects of the patient's communication which come nearest to arousing feelings corresponding to persecution and depression. In my experience this gives as good a check on the soundness of one's interpretative validity as anything I know. On the whole I am more

satisfied with my work if I feel that I have been through these emotional experiences than I do if the session has been more agreeable. I am fortified in this belief by the conviction that has been borne in on me by the analysis of psychotic or borderline patients. I do not think such a patient will ever accept an interpretation, however correct, unless he feels that the analyst has passed through this emotional crisis as a part of the act of giving the interpretation.

There were many fascinating aspects of this analysis including problems associated with the mention of number, as in the instance of his boy's obtaining sixty marks. It was not, I think, central to his psychopathology but was nevertheless very important.

He constantly reverted to feelings of admiration, which were not only clear in the transference but cropped up again and again in situations outside analysis altogether. Many times I had to give interpretations showing him that he was virtually worshipping 'God', although he had repeatedly said that he was not religious and had no belief in God. I pointed out that his reactions to the 'God' in whom he appeared emotionally to believe were hostile because He could not stand up to intellectual scrutiny. His reactions reminded me very much of the savage who is supposed to beat his gods if they do not grant his wishes. He seemed finally to accept that he felt an intense need for someone or something for which he could entertain feelings of reverence and awe. His resentment was related to his inability to feel this in any particular instance.

The problem of the patient's continuing dissatisfaction may be a function of his age. This would, however, apply to him at whatever age he was being analysed. This brings me to my point that at this stage of the history of psychoanalysis emphasis requires to be placed not so much on psychoanalytic discovery, but on the correct observation and interpretation of clinical material while it is unfolding in the analysis. There is a great difference between idealization of a parent because the child is in despair, and idealization because the child is in search of an outlet for feelings of reverence and awe. In the latter instance the problem centres on frustration and the inability to tolerate frustration of a fundamental part of a particular patient's makeup. This is likely to happen if the patient is capable of love and admiration to an outstanding degree; in the former instance the patient may have no particular capacity for affection but a great greed to be its recipient. The answer to the question – which is it? – will not

be found in any textbook but only in the process of psychoanalysis itself. I do not in any way decry the need for a thorough grasp of the major analytic theories, but I think that anyone who has experienced an analysis as part of his or her own training and development is likely to have no difficulty in achieving that. I would sound a note of caution by reminding you of Freud's words: "Once again I owe the chance of making a discovery to my not being well read" ('On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement' [1914d]).

[1968][1]

[*'Notes on Memory and Desire' (see Volume VI) was published in* The Psychoanalytic Forum *(Autumn 1967). These notes on the same topic were probably written in 1968 together with comments*[2] *and criticisms.*]

Introduction

Not a scientific paper but a super-scientific paper, i.e. a psychoanalytic paper dependent on advanced, psychoanalytic methodology. It is *not* sub-scientific.

The practising analyst, seeing patients tomorrow or the day after, is an essential, intrinsic part of the understanding of this address, though not in the least bit necessary for understanding the words and syntax.

Memory

Includes:

(a) Remembering and forgetting.

(b) Freud's notation (['Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through'], 1914g, p. 147 et seq.), 'A Note upon the Mystic Writing Pad' (1925a, p. 227), and *Civilization and Its Discontents* ([1930a], p. 71).

(c) Elements that can be categorized in accordance with the Grid – all of which are transformations.

(d) Possessiveness, ♀, Past, Desirability.

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[1][Undated at the time by Bion; the first entry, on memory, was written in Los Angeles in 1968. *Ed.*]

[2][Bion was exasperated by what he felt was wilful misunderstanding of his ideas, though his responses gave no sign of it. *F.B.*]

Desire

Not mentioned specifically by Freud but other terms, such as 'wish', obviously describe facets of the constant conjunction I bind by the term, 'desire'. Examples: holiday, cure of patient, end of day's work – all have the same configuration.

Aspects of Memory and Desire

1. Background of sensuous experience: pleasure ↔ pain.
2. The dominance of the visual image. This is related to *inaccessibility* – peculiar to objects of memory and desire. Freud's remark, "It has only one justification. It shows us how far we are from mastering the characteristics of mental life by representing them in pictorial terms" (Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents,* p. 71). The sense of sight seems to bring objects into reach when not within scope of other senses.

   Memory – the object is past, internal and possessed.

   Desire – the object is future, external and coveted.

Scope of discussion

Not psycho-pathological, not primarily as features of the patient, but as functions of the analyst.

Certain commonly accepted views

1. Need for a 'record' (Notation, Grid Cat. 3 [*see* p. vii, this volume]).
2. Object of analysis.

   Neither has relevance to the practice of psychoanalysis.

   Both obstruct participation in the analytic experience.

As aspects of the analyst's work

Memory and Desire should be banished because:

1. The mind becomes saturated by sensuous and pleasure–pain elements; both are misleading (false, Cat. 2)
2. Analytic objects cannot be appreciated by the senses – no shape, smell, touch, sight etc.

Therefore appreciation of O is hindered and K → O inhibited.

Consequences for the analyst

1. Increase of anxiety because there is no barrier against fears of acknowledged dangers.
2. No barrier against guilt because of no known substitute for acknowledged and conventional therapeutic aims.
3. Isolation from group basic assumptions.

Consequences for the work

1. Increased reality of phenomena, and therefore of objects that are to be interpreted.
2. Changed order of appearance of analytic phenomena in the analysis.
3. Increased awareness of the unique nature of every psychoanalytic experience and of psychoanalysis itself.
4. Clear emergence of O.
5. An experience common to all practising analysts becomes evident because of invariants; their *accidental* disagreement is diminished, and therefore communication is increased.

Consequences for the analysand

Inefficiency of his sensuous (including pictorial) representations of his mind is made clear by the less obstructed view of what he displays.

Psychotic's attacks on linking

1. He stimulates Memory.
2. He stimulates Desire.

[Undated – 1968]

Notes on ritual and magic

I define 'magic' as a resort to control the physical environment. I reserve 'ritual' to define that aspect of magic which is concerned to control the spiritual world.

I shall be concerned mostly with the discussion of ritual, but while I wish to preserve scientific rigour in discussion, I do not wish to give the impression that the rigidity imparted by the limitations of rigorous discussion has any counterpart in the nebulous domain that is the object of this discussion.

I can indicate the difficulty by reminding you that what a scientist today might regard as the physical environment at some period in history appears quite consciously to have included spirits, good and bad, and to the observation of a psychoanalyst may still – at least unconsciously – include good and bad spirits. Indeed, we assume, without usually recognizing that it is an assumption, that there is such a thing as a psyche that can be scientifically studied, that is studied with no allegiance to anything other than the truth. As psychoanalysts we are aware that such a claim for our investigations would be rash indeed, except as an assumption to be investigated.

Investigation was founded on the belief in one underlying principle of magic: astrology and alchemy. Astrology is applied astronomy based on observation and mathematical calculations. Alchemy is experimental chemistry. Investigation suffered from inaccurate observation, erroneous assumptions and false conclusions.

The belief in a universal spirit or principle animating the world has been and is powerful – a psychoanalytic fact.

Ritual and psychoanalysis

Ritual or ceremonial magic is aimed at the control of the spirit world by various means, from short spells and charms to lengthy and highly elaborate ceremonies including prayers and invocations.

The gap between theories of psychoanalysis on one side and invocation and prayer on the other is narrow. Sometimes it becomes narrower; sometimes it widens. Similarly, the gap between inaccurate observation, erroneous assumptions and false conclusions on the one hand, and scientific method on the other, cannot at present be determined through inability to discriminate.

The subject matter of psychoanalysis and ritual is reified; it then becomes subject to magic; ritual becomes scientific method; scientific method reciprocally becomes ritual.

Objects transformed and transferred to the objective domain come under the Rules of

Magic	→	Astrology Alchemy	→	Astronomy Chemistry	→	Island Universe Nuclear Physics

and then, transferred back to the domain of the psyche, they again come under the sway of ritual, the ritual being thinly reminiscent of scientific method, and scientific method often betraying a curious and disquieting resemblance to ritual.

[Undated – 1968]

Drugs are substitutes employed by those who cannot wait.

The substitute is that which cannot satisfy without destroying the capacity for discrimination of the real from the false.

Whatever is falsely employed as a substitute for the real, is transformed thereby into a poison for the mind.

The substitution of that which is peripheral to action instead of that which is central must cause imbalance.

Imbalance is betrayed by the resort of the helpless to an assumption of omnipotence.

Immaturity, confusion, helplessness and impotence are replaced, in those who are intolerant of frustration, by prematurity, order, omnipotence and power.

That which should be a prelude to action is replaced by action; action is replaced by what should have preceded it.

Hubris is the sin of Oedipus, the planners of the Tower of Babel, Adam and Eve, the animal that uses action as a substitute for thought, and thought as a substitute for action (not a prelude to it).

Craving for fulfilment, unlike pursuit of fulfilment, announces the existence of a vacancy (minus).

Areas of turbulence centre on a messianic idea.

The 'knot' resembles a 'vacancy', and both resemble the turbulence of the 'messianic idea'.

The knot excites curiosity.

The vacancy excites greed, substitutes, prematurity, memory and desire.

The messianic idea excites fear of disruption of ♀ and attracts destructive, restrictive forces.

The messianic idea stimulates growth and maturation.

Turbulence may signify maturation.

'Vacancy' consists of greed, envy, hate, destruction, paranoia.

* * *

'Fears' are as opaque as 'hopes'. Is 'hope' different from desire? Yes; like knots; it is desire + time.

Or,

Desire + Frustration = Hopes ↔ Fears.

[Undated – 1969]

The positive and negative therapeutic reactions are in essence the same; they are therapeutic reactions intended to take attention away from psychoanalysis. Like the insistence on 'cure' as an objective for taking up analysis, they are objectives for continuing or stopping; they are 'covers', rationalizations, 'reasons' operating in a role as slave to . . . what? The passions? Or some unknown such as hatred of doubt?

When a small attendance at a meeting is deplored, it is explained that had the complainant been in charge, how much better the result would have been; when he is one of the absentees, how good his reason for absence was. These are 'therapeutic' explanations; they heal the traumata of decision. But decision is an essential of 'achievement' or the transformation of thought into action – be it thought as a substitute for, or a prelude to, action.

* * *

Murderous, sadistic, 'malign' hate seems to be devoid of insight and to provoke a corresponding lack of insight – or unwillingness to use it – in myself; a 'damned-if-I'll-give-an-interpretation' feeling. Why should I give him an interpretation without being given what I call 'evidence'?

* * *

I feel a deep lethargy. I cannot see my way, and when I cannot see my way I feel no disposition to act as if I could, or in a way that would give substance to a reassuring phantasy that I could. *I do not know*. Now does anyone else. It is absurdly simple really – unless one wants to complicate it. When there is nothing to do – don't do it!

* * *

There is one luxury that should be sacrificed: that of talking about, or even thinking about – except in the strictest privacy – one's anxieties, sacrifices, austerities, or what it may cost one to lead the life one has chosen.

> Shape nothing, lips; be lovely dumb:
> It is the shut, the curfew sent
> From there where all surrenders come
> Which only make you eloquent.
>
> Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'The Habit of Perfection'

[Undated – 1969]

Much psychoanalytic 'controversy' is not controversy at all. If listened to for any prolonged period, say a year, but preferably two or three, a pattern begins to emerge, so much so that I can write a chairman's address suitable, with the alteration of a phrase or two, for practically any paper by anyone at any time. Thus:

"Ladies and Gentlemen, we have been listening to a very interesting and stimulating paper. I have had the great advantage of being able to read it in advance, and though I cannot say I agree with everything Dr X says" (chiefly because I haven't the faintest idea what he thinks he is talking about, and I am damned sure he hasn't either), "I found his presentation extremely – er – stimulating. There are many points that I would like to discuss with him if we had time" (thank God we haven't), "but I know there are many here who are anxious to speak" (in particular our resident ex-officio permanent bores whom no one has succeeded in silencing yet), "so I must not take up too much of our time. There is, however, just one point on which I would like to hear Dr X's views if he can spare the time." (At this point I prepare to give one of the favourite bees which reside in my own bonnet its periodical airing. It does not matter in the least how irrelevant it may be, or how unlikely Dr X is to have any views whatever on the subject, or how improbable that I would want to hear them if he had – the time has come and out it goes.) "It has often occurred to me" (and only the poor devils in my Society know how often that is) "that . . . etc. . . . etc."

[Undated – 1969]

The failure of a function should excite suspicion. It may be due to a natural lack; or it may be a Category 2 element [*see* The Grid, p. vii this volume]. What is that? The maintenance of a theory known to be false in order either to keep another out, or because there is no better. Is this a field on which a pattern can be traced?

The capacity of the mind depends on the capacity of the unconscious – Negative Capability. Inability to tolerate empty space limits the amount of space available. Curiosity should be part of the dependent group, but it can share fight–flight qualities [*see* Bion, *Experiences in Groups*, Volume IV] when the wish is to avoid impending discovery (Category 2). Is any impulse one way only? No. What then are the poles? Are there poles, or is there some better scheme?

* * *

The paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions are related to a part of the domain of thought, that part of it in which there exist thinkers corresponding to the thoughts awaiting someone or something to think them. The thinkers might be likened to objects sensitive to certain wave-lengths of thought, as the eye or radio telescope is sensitive to a particular range of electromagnetic waves. Such thinkers can be impinged upon by thoughts that are too powerful in relation to the sensitivity of the receiving apparatus. Or they may be unmatched by a reciprocating thinker.

The human being, despite similarities to other human beings, may not, through over- or under-sensitivity, have an apparatus adequate to thinking the thoughts. He becomes aware of these thoughts usually through the medium of what is ordinarily known to him as religious awe, and is variously expressed as incarnation, evolution of godhead, platonic forms, Krishna, mystic experience, inspiration, and the like. Thus the source of emission of the received or evolved thoughts is felt as external, God-given, derived from a particular person or occasion, phrase, book, painting, awareness of a constant

conjunction. The fate of the thought and the thinker is to follow one of the paths I have indicated as peculiar to ♀♂, or some variation. In some circumstances the impact is incandescent, growth-producing, and then the individual thinker becomes an emitter or intermittent. A chain reaction is set up, as I have already described it in terms of the messianic thought, mystic, etc. The problem is whether one is to regard this model, ♀♂ [*see* Bion, *Attention and Interpretation*, Volume VI, p. 42], as a model for a configuration that underlies certain groups of particular instances, or is it simply a way of regarding meaningless, incoherent, unrelated phenomena, and making them appear to have coherence and a meaningful pattern? Does it in fact matter which it is? Do facts arrange themselves in this pattern, or is it a peculiarity in the individual that he finds it necessary to discern this or similar patterns in the facts he observes? The craving for validation may then be a wish to localize the emitter in God, universe, person, conscious and unconscious, by instruments that are micro- or macro-scopic and appear to confer authoritatively the guerdon of truth.

2 March 1969

Reading notes again, I feel exasperated by their futility, but I am at least 'exasperated' by them. They must therefore have something to them, or they could not exasperate. 'Exasperated' – feeling of anxiety of 'theft' analysis while leaving me open to accusations of plagiarism, etc. This is persecution by the feeling that one's reward in analysis is not success or money or admiration; in short, that there are no rewards corresponding to one's preconceptions. The exasperation is at the 'note'; consciously, at what it contains. Interpretations occur to me, but for all I know I gave them at the time and I feel no more certain either way. Perhaps the point is that the note has a value, but I have no idea what. Or is it the paranoid-schizoid reaction that I have already described? Ps ⇌ D.

21 March 1969

There are certain 'uses' of things in themselves that could be analogous to 'uses' of modes of expression; they might form the basis of, or one axis of, a new Grid. Thus: money may be used to measure the status of a man or a woman, as in wergild, bride-purchase, religion. It can then be transferred to measure exchange values (commerce). It can then be debased in the sense of both change of base and change of value, i.e. to give substance to a fiction. For example:

A. Analyst fee: low ↔ high; to correspond to psychoanalytic value of the psychoanalyst, i.e. a measure of value.

B. Analyst fee: low ↔ high; to cloak and hide the value of the man or woman 'psychoanalyst'. The monetary value is de-based as the communicative value of speech, the 'currency of words', becomes debased.

In A, the money derives its value from the person to whom it is assigned, accredited, paid. In B, the person derives his 'value' from the possession of money that, already having value from its origin, is used to cloak his worth.

[Undated – 1969]

Determination of direction in a group

Suppose the group consists of twelve people, 1–12. No.1 and No.4 appear to be in disagreement. No.1 appears to be 'reactionary'; No.4 appears to be 'progressive'.

Question: to whom or what is No.1 reacting? No.4 denies that it is a reaction against him. But it appears that No.1 is reacting against No.4's personality. Is this another plane? On what plane is the study taking place? All planes? If not, which?

Definitions wanted

1. Void, Infinite: formless.
2. Drift: movement that is incoherent, patternless, unregulated.
3. Streaming: movement that appears coherent or regulated. Both Drift and Streaming require a point from which observation is made.

Since a moment's thought shows a point to be inadequate, we are led to the definition,

4. Base: the distance between two observers separated in
5. Space: for example, one at No.1's position in the room; the other at No.4's.
6. Time: for example, one in the present; one in time past; and one in time to come (= future).

   Streaming requires direction, and therefore a method of notation or signification of apparent origin and apparent destination. Thus,

7. Radiant: may serve as the direction from which movement seems to radiate. Its association with light or heat may also be useful.

The study is of what I call, provisionally, the mental phenomena of the group as observed by me. It will therefore be coloured by my point of view. Impressions received or radiated by me may themselves be regarded as radiants in so far as their origin appears to lie in me or my direction. These I regard as having a common vertex. I propose to regard the twelve members of the group as each representing or marking a vertex. These vertices, for reasons that will appear later, are not to be regarded as necessarily identical with the group individual members. The next terms, therefore, are

8. Vertex, and
9. Obscurity: can be regarded as analogous to a low-pressure area (Radiant being analogous to a high-pressure area).

Finally, I shall use the terms,

10. Thought: for which a thinker is not epistemologically necessary, and
11. Lie: for which a thinker is logically and epistemologically necessary.

It may at first appear strange to postulate thought without a thinker, but the convenience of doing so is considerable and will become more apparent later.

With these few terms as a preliminary and provisional equipment, we may commence the investigation.

No.1, who is a man of capacity, has made himself well known to the group through his constant attendance and the frequency of his intervention in discussion. From what he has said, it is clear to all that he holds a position of responsibility in his firm, is accustomed to being listened to with respect, and does not like – though he tolerates – a subordinate position. He now speaks: "I feel that it does not really matter what Dr Bion says; everybody listens to him and behaves as if his authority precludes discussion. When I speak, I am made to feel I don't know what I am talking about."

No.4 "Oh, I don't agree at all. On the contrary, I think we pay a great deal of attention to what you say. After all, Dr Bion is the doctor . . ."

No.1 "There you go again. 'Dr Bion is the doctor.' We all know that, but what about it? I know other doctors. My doctor, whom I may say I like very much and who is a very good man, often tells me things I don't agree with."

No.4 "But you listen to what he says about medicine?"

No.1 "Not always. As a matter of fact, I have poured his medicine down the sink before now."

[*Breaks off here. No continuation.*]

August 1969

What I do, or think I do, is to draw attention to certain patterns that I observe in the behaviour of my patients while they are with me in the consulting room. These patterns appear to me to be discernible and, sooner or later, describable in language which I can formulate and which, sooner or later, the analysand can understand. For this they must be able to learn my mode of communication – however defective. And I must be able to make a formulation which the analysand, granted that the evidence available in the analytic room can also be used to contribute to his comprehension, can understand if he will permit my formulation and his experience to reinforce each other.

To sum up: I must interpret while the evidence that I am interpreting is available to the analysand's and my scrutiny, and at no other time. These aims appear to be within the capacity of certain kinds of patient. It is supposed by me that the successful achievement of this aim is worth the patient's while. Why?

* * *

Anxiety arises because one knows that analysands come with an idea of cure, and one knows it is almost certain that they will not get, and cannot get, what they call 'cure'. Almost – but not quite. But even supposing one can lead them to something better – a very large supposition – even that is far from certain. What then? Is it possible simply to say, "Try it"? Much analysis, and even more psychotherapy, is ludicrously omnipotent and optimistic.

March 1970

Today I saw very clearly the absolute un-necessity for a session to be anything but a session in its own right. 'Progress' could then mean that instead of presenting one fact in six months, the patient comes to present six facts in one session. In short, he becomes a multi-dimensional personality – a three-dimensional physical identity, and a multi-dimensional psychic identity.

May 1970

As electromagnetic waves can be employed conceptually as a part of a theory embracing an enormous range of physical phenomena, so I wish to employ the concept of α-elements to embrace an enormous range of mental phenomena.

β-space

I shall suppose a mental multi-dimensional space of unthought and unthinkable extent and characteristics. Within this I shall suppose there to be a domain of thoughts that have no thinker. Separated from each other in time, space and style, in a manner that I can formulate only by using analogies taken from astronomy, is the domain of thoughts that have a thinker. This domain is characterized by constellations of α-elements. These constellations compose universes of discourse that are characterized by containing and being contained by terms such as, 'void', 'formless infinite', 'god', 'infinity'. This sphere I shall name by borrowing the term, 'noösphere' from Teilhard de Chardin [*The Phenomenon of Man,* 1955], but as I wish to avoid too great a penumbra of associations, particularly those activated by the term, 'sphere', I shall employ a sign that is as devoid of meaning as I can make it (compatible with retention of its capacity for communicability), Σ (sigma).

α-space

The objects of α-space I shall suppose to be real, with their own reality, both infra-real and ultra-real. Perceptible to ordinary thought are objects usually confused with and regarded as indistinguishable from objects of sense, namely certain active constellations of thought that

are associated with the discipline of biology and spoken of in those terms.

The classic psychoanalytic view supposed the mind or personality to be identical with the physical identity of a person. The object of my proposal is to do away with such a limitation and to regard the relationship between body and mind (or personality, or psyche) as one that is subject to investigation.

Thus, a nation is said to have a 'character', but the Σ associated with a nation is *not* identical with the σ (soma), though as a psychological aid in communication it may be convenient to speak of the nation's 'mood' as such-and-such. I should hope to approach a more rigorous formulation by saying, Σ (national: Persian), or Σ (individual: John Smith), or Σ (war: Ruritania/Rumtiphoo/Titipu). Similarly with various relationships somatically considered between individuals; and then extra-psychic and endo-psychic, still somatically described as an aid to comprehension of Σ constellations.

In mathematical terms one may provisionally suggest a linear formulation, a scale, which can be supposed to represent the 'mind' (psyche) as an instrument of investigation.

$$10^1\ 10^2\ 10^3\ \ldots\ 10^{n-1}\ 10^n$$

$$10\ 10^{-1}\ 10^{-2}\ \ldots\ 10^{-(n-1)}\ 10^{-n}$$

In the domain of physics a similar linear representation can be offered for the province of electromagnetic waves ranging, say, from angstrom units to metres. Between 10^{-3} and 10^{-5} would lie the visible region. Similarly, somewhere on the Σ scale would lie the sense-able (think-able?) range. That is to say, there would be Σ phenomena which by definition are matched by corresponding receptor organs.

The aspects of Σ I wish to discuss present special difficulties because there is no apparatus available for their formulations, so I have to employ the inadequate written word. What follows will therefore have to be couched in terms that are adapted for use in a more primitive mode of communication. The formulations I employ must be regarded as Grid category C [*see* p. vii], no matter how much they may appear to be elements of a sophisticated formulation.

I am supposing that there is a psychoanalytic domain with its own reality – unquestionable, constant, subject to change only in accordance with its own rules even if those rules are not known. These

realities are 'intuitable' if the proper apparatus is available in the condition proper to its functioning. Equally, there are certain minimum conditions necessary for its exercise. Approximately, in C-category terms, this activity depends on the presence of a personality, an operating intuition, a minimum degree of intuitive capacity and intuitive health. The conditions in which the intuition operates (intuits) are pellucid and opaque. I have already indicated that from the intuitor's vertex opacities can be distinguished sufficiently to be given names, however primitive and defective the ascriptions may be. These are: memory, desire, understanding. All are opacities obstructing 'intuition'. I have therefore stated that the psychoanalyst should exercise his intuition in such a way that it is not damaged by the intrusion of memory, desire and understanding.

Such freedom from opacity cannot be achieved during the psychoanalysis if the intuition has already been damaged by indiscipline at any time. The more nearly the psychoanalyst can approximate to freedom from these – and no doubt other 'opacities' as yet unidentifiable – the more confidently can he discount the origin of his observations as due to the 'personal equation'. This is well known and has been recognized as one of the motives for undergoing a psychoanalysis. What has not been recognized is the ephemeral nature of such psychoanalytic achievements and the need for the establishment of freedom from memory, desire and understanding as a permanent, durable and continuous discipline.

Suppose the psychoanalyst has been able to achieve a state in which he is the kind of 'person' capable of (psychoanalytic) intuition; suppose further that he is capable of maintaining such a state. Then, and only then, is he in a position to have certain experiences that I shall attempt to formulate.

The uniformity of Σ can be intuited as displaying areas of disturbance, 'turbulence', 'opaque' areas contrasting with areas of 'pellucidity'. The visible spectrum with its Fraunhofer lines can itself be used as a model (though a very crude one) for purposes of exposition, provided that its crudity is recognized and that the damaging effect of understanding on intuition is borne in mind.

These areas of turbulence indicate a constellation that may be ephemeral or may display a certain durability. The durability is significant and calls for appreciation of its domain: it may be significant of Σ, or of Σ (nation: Ruritania), or Σ (era: Christian), or Σ (individual:

John Smith). There are certain Σ areas that are relatively stable to a point where the fact that one is in contact with an individual (sense-able, and therefore denoted by me as σ, indicating somatic) becomes peculiarly seductive and therefore conducive to the misleading conclusion that Σ (individual: John Smith) is identical with σ (John Smith). But psychoanalytic scrutiny convinces one that Σ is the significant fact, and σ important only in so far as it is receptive or emittive of Σ. To put it another way: Σ is covering a range of 'wave lengths' belonging to the psychotic range. This area is characterized by extremely 'short waves', lack of range, and therefore lack of discrimination – what a musician could describe as inability to 'hear', or adjust to what is said in such a way that the statement made cannot be 'heard' unless it is exactly and precisely attuned to the receptor. The same can be said of what is seen: there is something in the range of colour perception analogous to perfect pitch in music. There is no response to a statement unless it is precisely and exactly addressed to the receptor; there appears to be no way in which emitter and receptor can be adjusted to each other if some degree of correction is required – a 'miss' is absolute, 'as good as a mile'.

In the domain of 'perfect pitch', the patient may be glad to be told indignantly, "You know perfectly well what I mean!" as a cover for his own suspicion that he knows nothing of the kind. He may even welcome the inherent implication that he is like everyone else in order to escape from an 'inescapable' sense of isolation and loneliness. Such a patient will welcome the attention of the psychoanalyst as an assurance that he is believed by someone to be comprehensible. Entire languages are learned to give substance to a belief that he is like everyone else, and to foster that belief in himself or others. He will welcome the idea that he hears what others hear when an orchestra is playing. He resists 'millions of interpretations' of phrases, music or colours. He can see 'millions of colours' where the psychoanalyst can only see 'white light'. He conceals as best he can that to others he appears, or would appear, 'tone deaf' or 'colour blind'. The analyst is predominantly important because the patient cherishes the belief that the analyst 'understands' him.

February 1971

The psychotic personality needs to have his *awareness* of sensuous experience brought home. The trouble may be the obtrusive and non-verbal nature of the experience; say, the buzzing of a fly. This is to be brought home together with the post-verbal awareness of the experience of the buzzing of the fly; for example, "You are feeling I am annoyed by the noise you can hear". If I said, ". . . by the buzzing of the fly", it would not be accurate because the patient does not know what I am annoyed at. 'Unconscious' and 'conscious' do not meet the problem. 'Unconscious' could sometimes be replaced by 'obvious but unobserved'.

* * *

Fear and hatred = powerfully obtrusive feelings; they are therefore liable to draw attention to the 'unknown self' → premature and precocious 'solution' to obviate feelings of hatred and fear of the hatred and fear. Abolition of feelings → hatred of sense of unreality.

The messianic idea is an unknown idea; it is hated and feared. It is dealt with by projection, materialization. It is, as a result, not an idea but something less frightening, a person or thing. Persons, physically, can be put a stop to, either by idealization (and proved to be real) or by realization (and proved not to be ideal).

Thus a series of events begins to cohere. For example, Aristarchus conceives of the possibility that the earth goes round the sun. There are no instruments by which the idea can be further elaborated. In the course of centuries the idea again begins to form, and this time instruments can be fashioned – for example, by Galileo.

The established order is disturbed, including the established web of thought – the racial web of thought, including profound 'religious' beliefs such as that associated with sun worship. The belief in the sun as God is quite rational; if you must have a god, it is not a bad god to have. Therefore Galileo tends to menace the

existing web of thought, both scientific and religious – in so far as scientific thought can be regarded as relatively conscious, superficial, rational; and religious thought as relatively unconscious, profound, irrational, but still operative. The more it is in fact *not* extinct, the more it is capable of instigating emotional reactions in the noösphere [*see* pp. 241–242, 301]. Curiosity, which might stimulate discovery of the unknown, stimulates the need for a defensive termination of the unknown messianic idea, or person, or movement. It may be overwhelmed; if so, no problem. Or it may destroy the establishment, including the established work of the noösphere – which I now prefer to regard more as 'no-amorph'. But in some respects it is convenient to regard it as possessing limits and therefore approximating to a sphere – the noösphere. The two names must not therefore be regarded as two conflicting theories to which there correspond two conflicting realities, but two conflicting representations of the same reality. In the realm of physics a similar conflict appears in wave and quantum mechanics of light.

For the most part, discoveries do not have great resonating force. For example, the advances in the physical sciences, quantum mechanics, astronomy, relativity, have so far not had much percussive force on the domain of thought – in which I include thoughts for which there is as yet no thinker. The landing on the moon, however, may be one of these percussive events: it is significant that one reaction – in the USA at least – has been that the nation cannot 'afford' the space programme, though it has partially broken out again, probably because international rivalry – a very powerful emotional force – has not been so far controlled by the emotional force hitherto more disguised than displayed or illuminated by the term, 'economics'.

It seems reasonable to suppose that our somewhat insignificant speciality, psychoanalysis, has already exhausted its impetus and is ready to disappear into limbo, either because it is a burden too great for us, as we are, to carry, or because it is one more exploration destined to display a blind alley, or because it arouses or will arouse fear of the unknown to a point where the protective mechanisms of the noösphere compel it to destroy the invading ideas for fear that they will cause a catastrophe in which the noösphere disintegrates into the no-amorph. This catastrophic change could be brought about by advances in astronomy, physics, religion, or

indeed any domain for which there may as yet be no name. The principles of psychic growth are not known. It is significant that even Newton, Leibniz, Descartes were not able to formulate such principles in the sphere of mathematics, though the differential calculus was such an attempt.

[1971]

"We had sex." A curious expression that is not known to me. I suppose I 'had sex' from an early stage of my life. The earliest and most primitive meaning is a sensuous one; the primitive is, by my definition, based on a background of experience gained through the senses of smell, sight, hearing, touch and taste.

According to E. D. Adrian (*The Physical Background of Perception*, 1947), the earliest senses are light rays and sound vibrations, "for these show what is happening at a distance", and "intelligent behaviour is guided by them far more than by what is touching our skin" (also hair, particularly vibrissae around the snout when the eyes are defective).

Other senses, according to him, are not concerned with general policy, but "with what we are going to do next". This involves information about "the body surface" and also tensions in muscles, temperature gradients, movements of viscera and concentrations of various substances in blood. There are "many varieties of receptor apparatus – each sensitive to particular factors in the environment."

The developmental scale would suggest that the earlier epistemological experiences are concerned with the sense of touch. Sensuous pleasure and pain would be external contact between skin and womb; internal, between ectoderm and mesoderm and endoderm. Chemical substances in blood – poisons – would also be in contact and might contribute to a sense of being peripatetic. The contact would be extended by the sense of smell (located in the vibrissae?) and the sense of sight.

Broadly, the sense of touch would be related to 'what to do', the realm of transformation into action. Most of this operates autonomously without the intervention of the mind, or is transferred through education to the autonomic; for example, from desire for mobility to 'walking'.

The distant receptors – sight, smell, vibrissae, intuition – are associated with 'distant' perceptors – wisdom, intelligence.

The short-range receptors – skin, genitalia – are associated with action (bowel sense, bladder sense).

The distant transmitters: eyes, smell (primitive?), phonation.

The two parallel lines of a railway track are seen to meet at a point, *P*. In sensuous visual reality this is the case; in tactile experimental reality they do not meet; in olfactory reality they do not meet. The olfactory sense, though a distant receptor (according to Adrian) seems ineffective if called upon to contribute information on this particular problem. The tactile senses have to augment their short range by some other source – like sight? And sight has to augment its contribution by – touch?

* * *

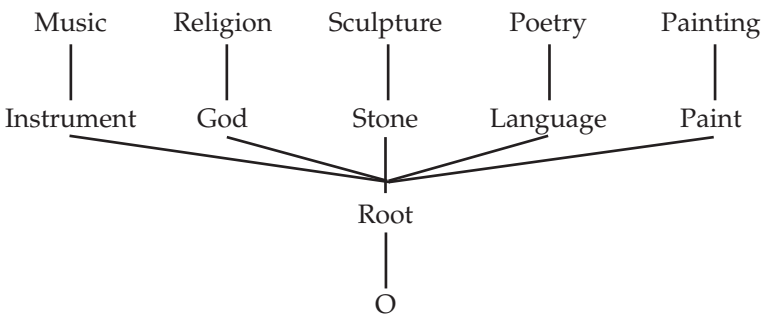
Thoughts do not have to be 'used'. Their sexual value is enhanced, if not transformed, because there is no impairment of their ideal 'reality'. Conversely, their reality transformation is impaired if transformation is not effected.

The thoughts can be 'formulated' and then used either as a prelude to, or a substitute for, action. In this respect thoughts resemble money – they can be stored or exchanged.

The crux lies in the fact that certain *decisions* appear to effect *irreversible* changes. Decisions are a kind of thought: their value is effected by their real or apparent irreversibility.

10 July 1971

> My subject is poetry, not language. Yet the roots of poetry are in language.
>
> Ernest Fenollosa, *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, p. 10



What is important? The root? The flower? The germ? The conflict? The durability?

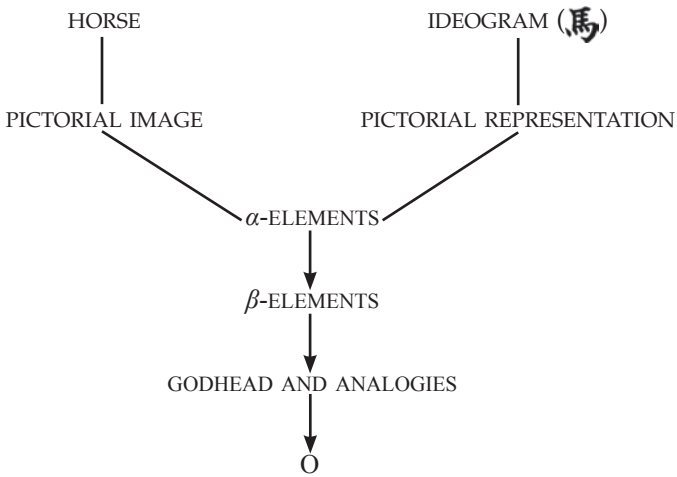
14 July 1971

The English grammatical formulation of psychoanalytic theories is one that employs a form in which succession plays the important role. 'Dog bites man' does not mean the same as 'man bites dog', and this gives a strong prejudicial colouration to all formulations in favour of the idea of events necessarily taking place successively – in the narrative formulation each event follows in a temporal order a preceding event, which follows another. In consequence it is supposed that mental events are similarly disposed in time – dreams, for example. But there is no real discussion of the importance attributed to ordered thinking that has any significance in the realms *not* of human thinking. The Kleinian paranoid-schizoid and depressive theories postulate another and quite different possibility.

15 July 1971

'Man bites dog' does not mean the same as 'dog bites man'. The introduction of succession – temporal and spatial order – is an essential quality which alters the meaning of the unaltered words: bite/dog/man. The ideogram for 'horse', 馬, and the alphabetic, 'horse', have a historic similarity because both assume, 'understand', and therefore leave out a precedent phrase or phrases between 'horse and ideogram' and the 'visual image'. There is similarly something between 'visual image' and 'thing-in-itself' – what I have called by the meaningless term, 'α-element'.

A pictorial schematic formulation:



The scheme can now be considered as providing an analogue for similar schemes in which the sense of sight is replaced by taste, touch, smell, sound, etc., from infra-sensual to ultra-sensual. Psychoanalytically it means postulating a psychoanalytic domain. I would borrow for my own purposes the term invented by Teilhard de Chardin,

the 'noösphere', supposing it to be included in a 'psycho-sphere'. Analogous to the supposition of a definitory hypothesis of 'thoughts without a thinker', the psycho-sphere would be without a noösphere [*see also* pp. 241–242].

To recapitulate: returning to the discussion of dreams related to visual images, I consider that dreams would need to be thought of as belonging to a far more widely extended C category [*see* p. vii], much more extended than one enclosing only visual or any other sensuous images, though in 'practical' psychoanalysis only elements within the sensuous range would, by definition, be experienced. Sooner or later, the investigation would have to be extended to infra- and ultra-sensuous areas first, then from noösphere to psycho-sphere.

July 1971

Predictive psychoanalysis and predictive psychopathology

A Fable for Our Time

In the year 30070 a revolutionary discovery took place. It is from that event, and in honour of it, that our present time-scale originates. It is difficult at this time – 300 n-years later – to be sure of the events; even something as simple as the fabular meaning of n.y. tends to be obscured in the minds of the vulgar by still older fables and associated locutions. The present writer has met with lower orders who believe the letters to stand for 'new years' or 'nuclear years', under the impression that our time-scale derives from a supposed atomic disaster occurring in year 1 of our era. In so far as it is possible to reconstitute the past from the scanty remains, something resembling the following account took place.

A man, whose name is lost but who must have been a genius of outstanding proportions for that age, made a discovery of an exceedingly simple kind. In those days there still existed a rudimentary science called, 'psychoanalysis'. The term was made up of two parts: 'psyche', referring to an undeveloped mind or personality which was believed to have given rise to the so-called 'psyche'; and 'anal', derived from an anatomical structure, notably that part of it concerned with the evacuation of the waste products from 'eating' – a habit very similar to that which can be observed in the 'domesticated' forms that we have derived from them. As far as we can now tell – or even conjecture from certain archaic vestigial survivals of our domestic forms – the psychoanalysts, for so I shall call them for short, connected their excretions – quite correctly – with what they 'ate', and developed elaborate rituals as part of the religion of cleanliness, which were supposed to placate, or render harmless, the remains of what they had devoured. If the destructive rituals failed, as was supposed to have happened on those

occasions when disease wiped out a few thousands of them, redoubled efforts were made to increase the efficiency of the cleansing rituals by sometimes using various difficult-to-obtain metals in the form of representations of the excretions. This ritualistic manufacture completed, the product was called Money and was set up for worship.

For a time the new religion flourished – reinforced and improved by the psychoanalysts – but greed led some elements to substitute inferior substances like paper for the hard-to-obtain metals such as gold. This development – associated in mythology with names such as Lord Jesus (nicknamed, The Christ), Lord Keynes, and even some dissident psychoanalysts such as Lenin and his associated 'Communists' – led to the undermining of the religion of Money, which was finally devalued. This anti-religious attitude did great harm to the hierarchy and certain areas like Russia, America, China and Africa. Groups found themselves virtually without authority which had formerly been provided by the hierarchy whose skilful manipulation of a mental characteristic of these creatures, called 'idealization', had led to their being regarded with reverence; it was an attribute of their personalities which approximated them to the deities in whom they could see and admire themselves.

These creatures, remote ancestors of the animals we use as new material for certain parts of our machinery, used this 'science' as a means for investigating the past of each single individual and, later, the past of the groups or hordes in which these creatures moved. This whole 'science' was believed to be superior to the earlier activity known as 'religion'.

About religion we have been able to discover little, partly because the study excites scant interest amongst us, partly because the remoteness of the past is such that it is doubtful whether the investigation could be carried out without an enormous and unrewarding expenditure of even our resources. It is known, however, that the practice of religion was regulated by a special hierarchy. This organization was taken over, elaborated, but otherwise hardly changed, by the new religion, which was called a science. Ritual, an essential feature of the religious observances, was likewise taken over, and even now evidence is being discovered showing how elaborate these rituals were, and how much time and money were

devoted to their proliferation. The new religion had to establish its superiority to the old, and exhaustive steps were taken to stamp out all evidence of the past. Even the rituals had to be disguised; the word, 'ritual', was replaced by the term, 'scientific'. In those times it was the habit of the hierarchy to hunt out and destroy all evidence of potential growth. In this it must not be supposed that they were without ingenuity and even a kind of rudimentary foresight. 'Brain-washing' was, for example, immensely improved and brought to a very considerable and meritorious degree of efficiency. The expression derived from the same sources from which Money had sprung – namely, the anus.

Up to this point all seemed to be going well; the new religion had triumphed and was established as the 'science of psychoanalysis', with its hierarchy firmly in control and its ritual 'scientific method' codified and recognized as the hallmark of the New Era.

Again we are hampered by a period of obscurity and ambiguous evidence. As far as the remains that have come down to us can be pieced together, the rules of psychoanalytic investigation – which were rigidly enforced so that there could be no breach in the solid foundation of what was already known and described as 'history' – began to be assailed by ominous and inexplicable attacks. One trouble-maker, called Smith, seems to have caused the authorities much difficulty. (Smith was a common name, usually associated with welding.) The evidence is scanty but enough for us to assume with plausibility the existence of an Ur Smith.

By legendary repute at about the time now known as 1 NY, one of the priesthood, of eccentric manner and history, was interrogating an individual supposedly even more eccentric than himself. The records, such as they are, indicate that at this period one of the obligatory rituals was supposed to separate the psychotic from the non-psychotic personalities, the whites from the blacks, the candidates for the Establishment from the candidates for the Loony Bin. This ritual, known as Selection, was attended by much anxiety, and it was obligatory for representatives of the various factions to be present to force their candidates onto the Establishment and so save them from being placed in the Loony Bin, or Not Yet category. As the officials and candidates were virtually indistinguishable from each other, almost everything depended on the numbers that could

be mobilized in support of, or against, the course to be prescribed for the given candidate.

Apparently, in the instance that has now become the pictorial symbol for the year 1 of our era, NY, Ur Smith's candidate and not reached the day for selection and would, in the ordinary course, have been destined almost certainly for the Bin.

To understand what follows, it is necessary to explain the incredible barbarity of the customs of those times. See-ers, in common with all others, were subjected to a period of what was known as 'prolonged and deep analysis' by one or more of the priesthood employing one or more of the 'methods of scientific investigation' (rituals). These investigations were confined to elucidating 'the facts'. This was a device introduced by the priesthood to exclude any possible risk of controversy, doubt, or exercise of judgement, by limiting the material on which the pronouncement of fitness was to be made to those facts that were deemed to be known for certain. Since, by definition, the material consisted of facts that were known to have happened already, it was an article of dogma that, the foundations being solid and the brains of the judges as undisturbed by doubt or anxiety as they were solid, the outcome would of necessity be scientifically unassailable. To the great admiration and comfort of the hierarchy, a professor of statistics who had previously become one of their number pointed out, at a meeting called to discuss selection, that the method of counting the numbers supporting or opposing the candidate was by a happy chance both democratic and scientific because the introduction of numbers at last introduced 'mathematics', and therefore 'science', into the constitution of the Society. We need dwell no longer on these reconstructions of legend, but move on to firmer – though still legendary – foundations by considering 'Smith'.

He claimed to keep an open mind, meaning that he was open to entertain ideas that were new to him. He seems to have been unaware that such a claim was tantamount to an admission of instability and a lack of rigid frame so necessary for disciplined thinking. It is indeed extraordinary how he had escaped from being 'treated' by the more sturdy and reliable members of the establishment.

His candidate, a woman, thought she was 'the Virgin and the Duke of Wellington'. It was some time before he realized that she

was not referring to the titular heads of one of the many groups of the period, but that she was describing certain voices or people that were interfering with her mind. He continued to listen – his one great weakness – and for a long time sheltered her from the authorities to whom he knew he was legally bound to deliver her. Indeed he was in great danger both for harbouring a person who, in the quaint terminology of the time, was a menace to herself and others, and because he himself had begun to investigate her behaviour on the supposition that the present, future, and unknown were what required scrutiny rather than the past, the known. He also believed that there were thoughts that had no thinker. Had this come out, there is no doubt that he and his woman candidate would have been classed together, and would have had their brains scientifically and humanely destroyed.

Through years of danger Smith managed to carry on his investigation to a point where it was clear that his candidate was really a new type of immature animal and was not suffering from some malformation of character.

There was known to him an ancient legend of a dictator earlier in world history who had decreed the massacre of what were known as 'The Innocents'. He suddenly suspected that this was an earlier instance of what he was now witnessing – the early embryonic stages of a personality rightly and instinctively, though clumsily, recognized as a menace to the existing order. He realized that he would be a victim of his curiosity either through being disposed of by the group hierarchy for disregarding the rules and well-tried procedures of science, or by being executed by the woman as soon as she had developed sufficiently to know how to rid herself of him. She was developing fast, and had already reached a stage where she openly declared her intention to strangle him at the first opportunity. She often expressed her contempt for ancient legend and all the characters in it, professing her determination to dispose of Smith and all other such mentally ill-formed and monstrous personalities, reserving her scorn particularly for such characteristics as the passionate feelings of love or hate that she considered to be peculiar to the human animal. Her attitude to her genital parents was one of ruthless and icy scorn. They feared her as if aware that she regarded them simply as a matter for calculating assessment.

Smith appears to have been able to tolerate these threats, though fully aware of the conventional view that he risked being murdered or held responsible for murder committed by her. He ignored the warnings that poured in on him both from his own perceptions of danger, and from the lessons of his training . . . .

[Undated]

In arithmetic the statement, 2 + 3 = 5, expresses a relationship between specific numbers.

The statement, 'Two apples and three plums = five fruit', expresses a relationship between specific objects in a specific emotional field – a 'cultural' field in which it is agreed that apples and plums are accepted as possessing sufficient 'fruitiness' to qualify as 'fruit'.

In algebra the statement that $a + b = b + a$, will apply to any numbers. Any number, 'a', and any number, 'b', will together make the same result as '$b + a$'.

In this way the number may be seen to proceed from:

. . + *xxx* = *sssss* ⟶ 2 + 3 = 5 (any objects) ⟶ $(a + b) = (b + a)$.

But is this reversible?

Father + Mother + Infant = Oedipus complex (any F + M + I)

* * *

Which is the '*idée mère*'? *Idée mère* ↔ Messianic idea ↔ Any idea. Who owns it? Judgement of Solomon: whoever is to preserve the survival and development ⟶ growth (non-cancerous) of idea = the Owner.

September 1971

It is often said that faults are more easily seen in others than in one's self. Indeed, this would seem to be the main justification for employing someone other than one's self to be the analyst to whom one goes. The disadvantages of the arrangement become clear when the observer, psychoanalyst, sees faults that are his own in place of the defects of the analysand who supposedly has come to have *his* defects exposed, demonstrated (and dealt with?).

* * *

The relationship between myself and my colleagues here in Los Angeles could be accurately described as almost entirely unsuccessful. They are puzzled by, and cannot understand me – but have some respect for what they cannot understand. There is, if I am not mistaken, more fear than understanding or sympathy for my thoughts, personality or ideas. There is no question of the situation – the emotional situation – being any better anywhere else. I could say much the same for England. "The old order changeth, yielding place to new . . . ."

* * *

"Is this a dagger that I see before me, the handle towards my hand?" Suppose that on further examination it appears not to be, then the system of verbal expression, even the system of sensible experience, needs extension. It cannot deal with the domain of non-existent reality, of thoughts without realization (like Euclidean geometry with spatial realization), of sight available or accessible only to the blind, of thought without content. It took time for Balaam to achieve the standards of thought of his ass.

Who saw the dagger before him, the handle towards his hand? Shakespeare? Where was it? Where is it now? The words in print bear

no visual resemblance to a dagger. Nor do the sounds, if the words are transformed into spoken speech. Suppose a very good musician reads a musical score: does he become hallucinated? Does he suffer from auditory hallucinations?

1971

Psychiatry at a time of crisis, II

Part I was delivered to the British Psychological Society in 1947.[1] I do not remember what I said, and I do not suppose that anyone has even heard of it; so everyone, including myself, can be said to start more or less fair. Even with regard to language there are similar advantages and disadvantages because I propose to use English – my English – which you do not know, and you use your English, which I don't know. There are similarities however; so there is liable to be a prejudice on both sides that when you use, or I use, what appears to be the same word, our different memories will lead both parties to think they understand each other. In this respect both parties suffer from memory; and since you probably want to understand, and I want to make myself understood, both parties also suffer from desire. I propose, therefore, to make the best of a bad job by illustrating what I want to communicate, and to do this by using your presence and mine as a source of illustrations of what I wish to communicate.

What has been called, 'a scientific meeting', I propose to call, 'a group'. I consider that the group is composed of an aggregation of 'individuals'. These two statements are what I shall call 'definitory hypotheses'. About these two definitory hypotheses there can be no argument; they are merely definitions. Anyone is free to use other terms.

The title I have chosen has undertones and overtones. I was there when I gave the first paper, but others who were not there are now participating in an experience that goes back to something of which they cannot be aware because they were not there; they are entering into an experience that is, so to speak, the 'second chapter'.

To illustrate this in group terms, I am going to use a verbal formulation of a visual imagination. For this I use archaeology, about

[1][See Volume IV, p. 41. *Ed.*]

which I know virtually nothing. The visual image, in contrast to the definitory hypothesis, may be regarded as a preconception or prejudice, and *is* – again unlike the definitory hypothesis – open to argument. Here are the two 'visual images' . . .

[*Breaks off here*.][1]

[1][Bion's *Cogitations* included at this point his paper "Psychiatry at a Time of Crisis", which was originally published in 1948 . Since it appears chronologically in Volume IV, it is not repeated here. *Ed.*]

1971

The supreme importance of transference lies in its use in the practice of psychoanalysis. It is available for observation by analysands and analysts. In this respect it is unique – that is its strength and its weakness; its strength, because the two people have a 'fact' available to both and therefore open for discussion by both; its weakness, because it is ineffable and cannot be discussed by anyone else. The failure to recognize this simple fact has led to confusion.

* * *

The ideogram evokes free association; the alphabet does not. What of the Miltonic spelling? Its emphatic intonation? And ideogrammatic impulsiveness in geometry? Is it related to the visual image as algebra is not? But Arabic numerals are not more related to the ideogram than algebraic. The first few Roman numerals are nearer to ideogrammatic, visual tallies than are Arabic numerals.

* * *

'Unconscioused' = *unbewusst*. Oh, for a similar word for 'projective identification'; 'identijected', as contrasted with 'unconscioused'.

* * *

The matter of ownership crops up with territory; it certainly causes trouble in the realm of ideas. Why? Does anyone claim ownership of a lie? Of course not, because as the question is formulated the lie is worthless – it represents worthless property. [*Added as a footnote*: 'But what about Judith and Holofernes? That lie, deception, was valuable.'] [*see* The Book of Judith from *The Apocrypha*.] Worth is that which enhances the value of the person to his community; it must be distinguished from apparent or reputed worth. In the domain of

thought, values are contingent. An attempt is made to differentiate contingent values from absolute values by assuming that absolute values are those that are deemed to be so 'in the eyes of God'. What does that mean?

[November/December 1973]

[*Transcribed from a tape recording.*]

The murderous stranglehold – transformation into many varieties including the schizophrenic patient who covers himself completely with blankets and just peers at the analyst through one small hole with one eye only. One feels that there is a method by which the port of entry is felt to be so tiny that whatever can come into it gets tremendously compressed to a point where virtually it has had all the life squeezed out of it. It sounds like a vagina that might be a kind of penis, but a penis that has a very small opening and a very small point of egress, with these compressing and concentrating effects which finally compress and squeeze the life out of the thing itself.

There might equally be expansion in the opposite direction. But the real thing is this entry and egress, with this very narrow sort of port-like entering into a penis, or a vagina that is far too small to be able to take anything in and far too small to be able to let anything out. I am sure this theme needs to be followed up in its many applications.

I might write a book that could be drawn up in terms of the Grid, either by a special index arranged in the Grid order of the primitive nature of the thing – not to do with thought at all, the elements – through to the things that are various transformations of visual imagery, and so on. I must consider this more deeply according to the two axes, co-ordinates – the vertical and horizontal components.

* * *

It seems to me that it isn't simply a question of the concentration that is produced by the very strangling vagina or mouth, and the very explosive penis or breast or object that is put in. In other words, the conflict is between the container and the contained thing in which they both seem to be on very destructive terms, where either the container gets split apart, or the object that is put into the container gets

destroyed. This seems to be a theme that occurs over and over again; whether it is a question of my coming to the United States, or my coming to the Society, or my being excluded from the Society, there seems to be this question of the relationship of the Kleinian person, or the Kleinian theory, or the Kleinian analyst, with the existing Society or the container into which the thought or idea is put. Then there is this destructive relationship into which one or the other – the container or the contained object – is sure to be destroyed; there appears to be no way in which the relationship between the two is creative or constructive, or leads to any good outcome.

Even in this note itself one could say that the thing is repeated in the same form: I am trying to put into terms of a verbal communication some idea that is felt to be too vast. Either the speech, formulation, grammar is destroyed, or the vocabulary and grammar get the upper hand – in which case the idea is destroyed.

There must be something primitive and fundamental about this, something very difficult to describe without the destructive consequences that follow from the nature of the relationship between these two objects. Even if the container and the contained object are destroyed, these fragments are felt likely to come together in a very destructive and hostile manner. This would seem both to link up the idea of the part objects, the extreme fragmentation, and to be a continuation of a theme of the relationship between the two. If the theme is expanded in the way it is in analysis (as done by me) into a prolonged sort of interpretation, then it is felt to be something that destroys the patient's capacity to take in the idea. On the other hand, if one tries to concentrate it down, one gets to the state of simply describing the two pictorially, hieroglyphically, in a C-category way, which is then so concentrated that it becomes virtually incomprehensible. It is like a mathematical formula that is absurdly simple, but at the same time is so concentrated that it requires the whole of mathematics to understand it – like the theories in which Einstein enshrines his theory of relativity. Indeed, I think that the significance of it may lie in the fact that it is the theory of *relativity*; it is the *relationships* that are felt to be so difficult to concentrate, or even to expand.

* * *

I am inclined to think that I would have to use the Grid itself at some point in this book [*The Dream*, Book I of *A Memoir of the Future*] as a

method of formulating or re-forming or showing the relationships of one aspect of it to another, with a kind of arrangement by which all these relationships were shown in a form that was different from that of the narrative of the book itself. It would display the way in which the logical or rational connections of one part with another could be formulated – although, of course, rational formulation is not necessarily an adequate formulation for something that is not really rational at all.

* * *

I can see that this is compatible with a culture in which it is assumed as a matter of course that you do not believe what you are told by anybody. It is difficult to see how they ever manage to get anything done in which you would have to know the truth. It does seem to me to be almost a cultural matter; you simply assume that the person who is speaking is speaking an untruth, or at any rate is being dishonest in the sense of making a communication that is primarily for its own purposes, not for the communication of a true statement to some other person. It throws an entirely new light on the problems of psychoanalysis and the fact that nobody is likely to believe that one is trying to tell them something that it is worth their while to hear.

[August 1975]

[*The following eight entries were recorded or written in France.*]

Suppose I want to have a method of measuring or of mathematical manipulation that would be appropriate to the world of emotion to which I am accustomed: I hear a baby crying; I am filled with sorrow for the poor little thing, and possibly for the parent who is concerned to look after it. Supposing, then, that I hear two babies crying – then I might be even more upset. Supposing, however, that I hear, say, fifty of them crying and wailing in the same way; instead of being fifty times as compassionate, I find that I am becoming amused at the racket that is going on. Why is it that such a thing should take place? And how should I express this mathematically? I could say that I ought to be – as far as any mathematical system known to me is concerned – fifty times as upset or depressed. But in this instance the quantity has effected an emotional change, so the emotions that I am wanting to deal with, to measure, to speak about, to cope with, have altered in quality when I would expect them to alter in quantity.

Is there some form of mathematics that would give me the appropriate answer or solution of a problem to which I want to apply it in emotional terms? I am not simply talking about the number of babies, or the number of people, but a situation in which I require a kind of mathematics that not only shows or expresses a change in quantity, but also a change in quantity inseparable from a change in quality.

In the instance I am giving I could pose the problem like this: there is myself, one of me; and there is one baby. Is it 1 × 1 = depression? Or 1 × 2 = depression × 2? Or is it 1 baby + depressed person = 2 depressed people? Or is it 1 + 2 = 3 depressed people? What happens when it ought to be 1 + 50, or 1 × 50? What should be appropriate manipulation be? What should one do with the mathematical symbols in the nature of bringing them together, or perhaps, for that matter, or bringing them apart? 1 separated from 1? Or 1 separated from 50? In other words, could there be a form of intuitionist mathematics

that would come much nearer to giving me answers representing the state of affairs with which I might be dealing? Would the mathematical answer seem to bear a resemblance to the emotional experience with which I am familiar?

[August 1975]

"You said an earful."

"How could you say with your ear? I thought it was with your mouth."

"No – 'You said a mouthful' means saying something important. It is a common term not intended to be formal or precise."

"Ah – so you would not use it if you wanted to hit the eye –?"

"I wouldn't hit a bull of any kind."

"No, no! The eye-bull."

"Oh, you mean the eye-ball. I should not . . . You mean the 'Power of the human eye'."

"No, no! You haven't hit the eye-bull."

"No, I haven't, because I don't want to be rammed up the arse by an irate bull."

"Ah, yes – Arse and Craft. In my country everyone say how beautiful the craft and arse of England are."

"Ah!"

"Ah? Ah? What means that? Please?"

[August 1975]

Psychoanalysis tells you nothing; it is an instrument, like the blind man's stick, that extends the power to gather information. The analyst uses it to gather a *selected* kind of information: the analysand uses it to gather material that he can use (1) for purposes of imitation, (2) to learn the analyst's philosophy, (3) to learn how to conduct his life in a socially acceptable manner, and (4) to become acquainted with his Self.

Although it is true that it is not his intention to satisfy (1), (2) and (3), or any desire other than (4), it is impossible to make any statement that gratifies only (4) because of the lack of precision of spontaneous English speech. The analyst can try not to pollute his interpretation on the one hand, or to speak as if he were a living computer, stranger to human heartedness, or the life that the rest of our human companions are familiar with as members of our universe.

Certain words and phrases appear to be necessary for the communication of 'happenings' recurring in that part of human experience with which I am most familiar, and which happens also to be that part of my life that is my profession – what, for lack of power to describe adequately, I call 'mental suffering'. This touches on happenings about which the analyst can do nothing, and the thoughts and feelings that the patient has about them. The distinction is important, but it is one that cannot easily be delimited and isolated for examination without the inclusion of thoughts that are properly subject to discussion in their own right.

We have to use words and phrases, combinations of words, for the purpose of communication between the Origin and the Receptor (observer, psychoanalyst). We may assume that what the psychoanalyst says about the analysand is likely to be true of the psychoanalyst himself. But for purposes of psychoanalysis it is simpler to write this as an exposition from the point of view (vertex) of the observer.

August 1975

There is a scarcity of time; a scarcity of knowledge; scarcity of ability. Therefore choice becomes of fundamental importance – choice of time, theories, and facts observed.

* * *

Memoirs of the future

Wisdom borrowed – future wisdom after the event. Prophecy wise after the event.

Prophecy without foresight. Prophetic hindsight.

Prophetic Backsight. Regrets to come by Forthright Forethought.

Insight by Backsight.

* * *

Freud, in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* ([1926d (1925)], p. 138), is curiously one-sided. Surely emotional experience is common to foetus, mother and father, but emotions *and* ideas may be compatible or incompatible. [*See opposite page for Bion's annotations in the 1949 edition, The International Psycho-Analytical Library, No. 28, p. 108*.]

end to the dangerous situation which is reminiscent of birth, the nature of the danger it fears is displaced from the economic situation on to the condition which determined that situation, viz. the loss of object. It is the absence of the mother that is now the danger; and as soon as that danger arises the small child gives the signal of anxiety, before the dreaded economic situation has set in. This change constitutes a first important step forward in the provision made by the child for its self-preservation, and at the same time represents a transition from the automatic and involuntary new-creation of anxiety to the intentional reproduction of anxiety as a signal of danger.

In these two aspects, as an automatic phenomenon and as a rescue-signal, anxiety is seen to be a product of the infant's mental helplessness which is a natural counterpart of its biological helplessness. The striking co-incidence by which the anxiety of the new-born baby and the anxiety of the infant in arms both depend upon a separation from the mother does not need to be explained on psychological lines. It can be accounted for simply enough from a biological point of view; for, just as

[August 1976]

"What can I do for you?"

"That", he said, "is what I came to find out".

"Yes, but how do you think I can help?"

"But, doctor, how should I know? That is what I came to you to find out."

"Yes, but what is troubling you? Presumably you wanted to see me for something of which you are complaining."

"No, not at all. I have nothing to complain of. We are very lucky."

"You must have wanted to come for some . . ."

"Oh, I see – my wife sent me."

"Ah, I see."

(But do I? So far the only thing that is clear is that I am no wiser than I was when a brief note from his doctor asked me to see this patient – the husband of a woman whom he had originally treated for pneumonia. "More your line than mine", he said.)

"Your doctor must have thought you needed my help. Why was that?"

"How should I know? Didn't he tell you in his note?"

"I think he expected you to tell me yourself. So far, you know, you have told me nothing."

(A blunder – I knew it before I had completed my sentence. I sat back and waited. He returned my gaze with untroubled expression and waited to hear more. In the meantime I thought we could not simply continue to sit in silence, but I could think of no alternative. As time passed I felt a change was taking place and that the

meeting was deteriorating into a contest of wills. What is a 'will'? Does Freud say? Or Melanie Klein? Abraham? Ferenczi perhaps?)

"Would you rather I went away, doctor?"

"By all means, if you do not wish to stay, or . . ."

(I left the sentence unfinished.)

"Or what, doctor?"

(I was aware of growing anger. I knew that the overt expression of feelings of any kind stimulates – 'irritates', in the sense that the physiologist would use the term in describing an experiment with a nerve-muscle preparation – a personality, whether one's own or that of another self. Since strong emotions undermine the capacity to think clearly, it would seem logical to suppose that a doctor, a psychiatrist, a psychoanalyst, should achieve and retain a capacity for clear thinking, and help the analysand to achieve and maintain a similar atmosphere of calm deliberation.)

How? My ability to do so is tested every moment of my life, not only in the course of professional duty but in the day-to-day frustrations and happenings. I am still as far away from achieving success in this endeavour as I ever was. I do not think I and my analysands are exceptional in this. What *is* exceptional is that the attempt is now being made to develop such a capacity through psychoanalysis.

[August 1978]

When the patient said he dreamed he was being swept down the river to the weir – "I tell you, I never woke up so fast in my life" – what, according to me, was he talking about? In so far as I know, I was in the state of mind in which I am wide awake. Is that 'wide' enough? Or is it a state of mind that is too narrow – like "to–fro tender trambeams" truckling "at the eye"? [Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'The Candle Indoors'.] Or too 'wide' awake, too conscious, too rational?

"By that window" [*idem*] what sights did the patient see that made him 'wake up' so fast that he could not be swept down the stream? Was it the danger of becoming, like me, too wide awake? Or, like me, too fast asleep – in fact, the sleep of death? Or in the state of mind or 'sleep' of psychoanalysis?

"There plant eyes, all mist from thence purge and disperse, that I might see and tell of things invisible to mortal sight". [Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book III.] But the price appears to be the loss of 'mortal' sight. It cannot, however, be bought by 'losing' mortal sight; to be blind, unconscious, unaware of the world visible and audible, when you are in the 'yin' state of mind, is not the solution. One must dare to be aware – consciously – of the universe that is apparent in the state of mind in which one is asleep *and* the state of mind appropriate to 'awake', Yin and Yang [Chinese concept of the negative, material, and the positive, metaphysical together constituting the Cosmos]. Therefore merely being able to concourse musically, balletically, athletically, is not enough; it must be an intercourse – a means of communication 'inter', between two states of mind. Socrates described himself as a mental midwife; perhaps the psychoanalyst is a midwife between two states of mind of the analysand; for example, Maths + Art of Fugue, Cézanne + La Montagne Sainte-Victoire. The psychoanalytic experience consists in being able to know what it *means* when the physical quality says the age is twenty-five; what the man *means* when he says verbally that he is forty-two; and what it *means* when closer view shows lines in the skin of the face that would signify age sixty-two.

Where is that conflict? Between me and myself? Or between him and his knowledge of vital statistics? Between him and his vertex of vital statistics? Or between his youth and his age? Is it his youthfulness, vigour and energy (Schopenhauer) trying to break through? Up? Out? Down? The same question with his wrinkles.

In practice (contrasted with theory, or even memory or desire) is it possible to improve one's observation, or to make a change by refining one's vocabulary – one's '*outils*' for the '*atelier*'? For example, if you talk English, it is imperative to know *what* English you talk and *how* you talk it. If you are a potter, you may be the kind that requires a potter's wheel. What kind? It must be the *best* kind; it will not make you into a potter, but if you are a potter it will help you to make good pottery. If you are a good cook you need a kitchen and an oven. But lying in a bath and thinking of making buns will not produce bath buns. An analyst who has an office and a technique that enables him to produce good imitations of a psychoanalytic interpretation produces artificial interpretations, *representations* of a human being, not a human being.

I was never able to be a soldier – only an artificial representation of a brave man. I could see the spire of Sequehart church 'pointing to the sky' like non-conformist banners pointing up the broad Congregational Way to Heaven – plastic and plausible, and a diversion from The Way (Tao). One cannot in a crisis fall back on Truth. Artificial representations of truth form an insecure foundation for initiation; absolute initiation – advance or retreat – has a minimum necessary condition: sincerity.

8 August 1978

[Transcription of a tape recording.]

"The faces of old ghosts look in upon the battle", Tennyson said about that last strange battle in which Arthur took part before he travelled on his journey to the Vale of Avalon. ['The Passing of Arthur', Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*.]

Once more the world has reached the same kind of place in its journey round the sun which it occupied in the battle of Amiens (8 August 1918), which was said by Ludendorff to mark a black day for the German army. The ghosts look in from the battle again; Asser, Cartwright, and Sergeant O'Toole, the poor fellow who complained that he was only an orphan, with his protuberant ears, his red flushed face, his feelings of depression and anxiety, and his confiding to me that this battle on which he was about to embark together with the rest of the tank crew (I was not one of the crew as I was now commanding the tank section and was the second-in-command of the company) would be his last. He was, of course, quite correct; very soon after the battle started, Cartwright's tank received a direct hit, and the entire crew were killed. When I came across it, the bodies were charred and blackened, and poured out of the door of the tank as if they were the entrails of some mysterious beast of a primitive kind which had simply perished then and there in the conflagration, which must have been set off by the direct hit.

This experience is similar to others I have had in the past, but the similarity refers only to the known facts, not to the unknown. In this respect there are new experiences – unlike any Eighth of August of the past – not least when Francesca and I visited the Shelley and Keats museum in Rome. We both found it an extremely profound and moving occasion, as if we were indeed participating in an experience in which Shelley was still alive. I remember noticing, and being tremendously impressed by, his description of Keats as a greater man than he, a dangerous rival who would be sure to excel him. But he

said so without any of the hatred and envy that would have made it impossible for him to express the convictions to which he wished to draw the attention of his contemporaries and those who followed after him. So much generosity triumphed over hatred and rivalry and envy. These poets and artists have their methods of recording their awareness of some sort of influence, stimuli that come from without, the unknown that is so terrifying and stimulates such powerful feelings that they cannot be described in ordinary terms. They have to be considered to be perceivable only in so far as the human being has thalamic organs and thalamic experiences, and as if the human mind itself, described in physical terms, were a central nervous system that has only developed as far as the thalamus, thus leaving no real synaptic communication between the thalamus and the subsequent development of the mind, the neopallium, or whatever the appropriate term for it should be. We need to invent some form of articulate speech that could approximate to describing these realities, the phenomena that I cannot possibly describe.

Francesca showed me the letter, which I would not have noticed otherwise, written to Byron by Allegra, his daughter, from the nursery foundation run by a Catholic school – a most pathetic, touching and moving letter which apparently Byron never replied to. One could say that Byron, although appreciating the genius of Keats, could not possibly express the feelings of admiration and affection in the way that they were expressed by Shelley. Byron's *Don Juan* was no *Lament for Adonais* ['Elegy on the Death of John Keats'], which could only be written by Shelley. Similarly, one could say that *Don Juan* could only be written by Byron.

Shelley began his preface to *Adonais* with the 'Epitaph for Bion' (c. 100 BC) by Moschus:

> A poison came, Bion, to thy lips, thou sawest the poison. How did it run on to thy lips and not be sweetened? And what mortal was so savage either to mix the poison for thee or to give it thee as thou didst speak? He was immune to song.

'*Nisi dominus frustra*'. [Psalm 127, i: 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it'.] It is a simple abbreviation, and yet it is extraordinarily significant of the way in which certain words are left out. In much the same way letters are left out of the word, 'Yaveh',

because nothing else could possibly do any sort of justice to the fact that 'Yaveh' was a way of talking about a force, a power that cannot be described in articulate speech such as is appropriate when talking about omnipotence, or omniscience, or the ordinary formulations of religion – none of them adequate ways of describing the matters to which attention is to be drawn by the communication.

* * *

The people of this district [the Dordogne, France] speak of a '*crise de foie*'. It seems to me that this would be quite appropriate if it were spelt '*crise de foi*', or, '*crise deux fois*'. There is no need to suppose that the language being spoken, the appropriate language, is an articulate one rather than, say, a language that is a transition from paranoid-schizoid to depressive, from part objects to whole objects. Milton could have been talking more than one language: the articulate language, or even the poetic language, of a rational and superficial kind, as opposed to one that might be said to be much more primitive and much more like that of part objects; or objects that are not thought at all, namely the language of action before there is any discovery of an attitude that can be taken, or a technique that can be employed, between the awareness of an impulse and its translation into language. Freud described it as a state in which thought itself could be introduced as a phase leading to a pause between the impulse and the putting of that impulse into action.

One of the weaknesses of articulate speech is shown in the use of a term like 'omnipotence' to describe a situation that in fact cannot be described at all accurately with a language that is of one kind only. 'Omnipotence' must always also mean 'helplessness'; there can be no single word that describes one thing without also describing its reciprocal.

Palinurus was put to sleep by the god disguised as Somnus, and hurled into the depths of the ocean. Jesus showed that he felt betrayed when he found that God did not protect him from the murderous death that he suffered on the Cross. "Why hast thou forsaken me?" (Another possibility might be that he had a mistakenly optimistic view of the god with whom he thought he was dealing.) It is not possible to talk about 'god' unless one assumes that it also means 'devil'. The error has a very long history: in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna is rebuked for assuming that he is able to measure the morals or the

omnipotence or the mental outlook of the god by human standards; Job is reproved for having considered that he can measure Leviathan by the methods that are available for measuring ordinary human beings. Many mystics have been able to describe a situation in which it is believed that there really is a power, a force that cannot be measured or weighted or assessed by the mere human being with the mere human mind. This seems to me to be a profound assumption which has hitherto been almost completely ignored, and yet people talk about 'omnipotence' as if they knew what it meant and as if it had a simple connotation. Martin Buber came much closer to recognizing the realities of the situation when human speech is resorted to. [*I and Thou*: "The attitude of man is twofold in accordance with the two basic words he can speak. The basic words are not single words but word pairs. One basic word is the word pair I–You. . . . This is different from the basic word I–It."] When one talks about 'I–You', the significant thing is not the two objects related, but the *relationship* – that is, an open-ended reality in which there is no termination (in the sense that this is understood by ordinary human beings). The language of ordinary human beings is only appropriate to the rational, can only describe the rational, can only make statements in terms of rationality.

* * *

Sexual maturity is achieved very early and is frequently used as a barrier, a defence against the terrifying unknown which cannot be described in physical, sensuous terms – or if it is, it is much more likely to mislead than to illuminate. The 'thing itself' is a different problem altogether. A term like 'love' cannot describe something even as well as the term, 'the love of God' – that at least makes an attempt to introduce an element that shows that it is not a discussion about something that is so simple as physical love known to the human animal. A lioness nuzzles and shows every sign of feelings of love and affection – if interpreted in human terms – for prey it has destroyed; but it is murderous love, the love that destroys the loved object. Such visual images may be used to talk about love, even what we imagine to be mature love, but there is some other love that is mature from an absolute standard. This other love, vaguely adumbrated, vaguely foreshadowed in human speech, is of an entirely different character; it is not simply a quantitative difference in the kind of love one animal has for another or which the baby has for the breast. It is the further

extension to 'absolute love', which cannot be described in the terms of sensuous reality or experience. For that there has to be a language of infra-sensuous and ultra-sensuous, something that lies outside the spectrum of sensuous experience and articulate language. It may be approximated to by methods of communication that are not purely sensuous; the artist who paints a little street in Delft can see and communicate a reality to the observer who then sees something that is quite different from any brick wall or little house that he has ever known or seen in his life. Even in science, Heisenberg's description of the Uncertainty Principle shows that already a crisis has arisen – a '*crise de foi*'.

* * *

This crisis of 'I and You', or 'We and They', can indeed be one of very great proportions, partly because there is no language with which it can be expressed. I could try to put it this way: the fundamental reality is 'infinity', the unknown, the situation for which there is no language – not even that borrowed from the artist or the religious – which gets anywhere near to describing it. Nor can it be assumed that there is a relationship between Smith and Jones, because 'Smith and Jones' is a language that is used to describe a physical reality in which there are *physical* boundaries, but not a *mental* reality; we do not know where the mental boundaries are, nor do we know where the impulses commence.

* * *

I think it may be erroneous to assume that because there is a past that seems to bear a certain resemblance to the present, the present therefore bears a resemblance to the future, which can be described in terms of the past. I can perfectly well see that there may be a crisis of development in which the human being is absolutely terrified by the fact that the future is unknown, cannot be known by himself at the present time, and may only be known to certain people, described in terms of 'genius' or 'mystic', who have a peculiar relationship with reality. It is possible that the human being is indeed doomed to extinction because he is incapable of further development; some quite different species may be required to go on from the point that has been reached so far by the human animal, in the way that the saurians were replaced by the mammalians. However feeble embryonic mammals may have been, they were nevertheless superior to the saurians.

[April 1979]

[Transcription of a tape recording.]

. . . under the domination of what I call the 'vogue', by which I mean something that is extremely powerful, not merely the passing fashion which happens to change from hour to hour, day to day, month to month. I mean something that persists and that is part and parcel of the permanent equipment of the human being. I think there is the same dominating force that dictates the form taken by thought itself, whether that thought be historical or musical – after all, the Lydian airs of the Greeks would not be particularly appealing to us, any more than the Art of Fugue would be appealing to the Greeks, or would even be understood by them. I think there are also vogues in religion. Freud talks about 'the future of an illusion' as if he thought that religion itself was an illusion; it may be, but I think it is a *basic* illusion [*see* p. 349 for Bion's annotation to his copy of *The Future of an Illusion*]. Any particular religion changes with the prevalent fashion, but the fundamental thing, religion itself, does not. It is a very powerful force, as can be seen by the evidence of what would appear to be a sign or symptom of the thought of a period dug up by the archaeologists who excavated the Death Pit at Ur. Apparently, when the ruling authority died, the court also died with him; they were all buried in the same pit and took the same dose of whatever drug was used before they were buried alive. That itself would seem to suggest that the religious force is a very powerful one, whether it is located in God, or the people, or the priesthood, or the court authorities. That can alter; perhaps a few thousand years hence the archaeologists may excavate signs of the state of mind that existed in Guyana in 1978 [over 900 followers of the Rev. Jim Jones, leader of the People's Temple, died on 18 November 1978 in a mass suicide ritual]. Of course, the recording now is so ephemeral – it is not in tablets of stone but on paper, and the bodies are removed from the original site. So the evidence may be less, or different. We do not know what record could exist in the

future history of the world of this latest manifestation of religion – not the Jewish, or the Christian, or the Buddhist, but Religion.

* * *

Philosophical discussion in Edessa became suppressed and then disappeared, but re-emerged in a peculiar way because the Christian religion was carried to Damascus in terms of the Greek language. The Greek method of communication survived, and as a result there also survived with it the Greek way of thought; then, via Syria and Damascus, it came back to Greece. So once more the philosophy of Greece, of Plato, re-emerged when Constantinople fell; the thought that was locked up in Constantinople was then able to reassert itself with formidable consequences, which we call the Renaissance – the renaissance of culture in the western world. It is a very peculiar history – that philosophical thought should be suppressed or destroyed, go, as it were, 'underground', get lost to sight, and then re-emerge in these strange ways via the Arab culture, suppressed by the Turks, locked up in Constantinople, and then again released by the fall of the Byzantine Empire.

It is difficult to see what the trouble was when, according to Plato, Socrates – who had described himself in the *Theaetetus* as being a midwife (if Plato is to be relied on) – was condemned to death for having corrupted the youth. But so it was. In more recent times there seems to be a kind of dissatisfaction with the familiar philosophical views as being inadequate for the purposes for which they are needed. There were rumours during my time at Oxford about a thing called 'psychoanalysis' and somebody called Freud. I knew nothing about it, nor was much known about it at the university.

I made some enquiries but was persuaded that it wasn't really very much good – there were a lot of foreigners and Jews mixed up with it, so it was better not to get involved.

However, when I was fortunate enough to come across John Rickman, I decided to launch out onto an analysis with him.

That I found to be extremely illuminating; to my surprise, psychoanalysis seemed to have a distinct relationship to what I thought was common sense. Then, alas, came the threat of war, and I found my analytic experience terminated.

After the war, Rickman did not feel that it was possible to continue with me because we had had plenty of experience together during

the war. However, I took the plunge and went to see Melanie Klein. I found that what she said, while seeming very often to be rather extraordinary stuff, had a kind of common sense about it – not altogether what I would have regarded as obvious or clear to me, but on the other hand not divorced from what I knew about myself or other people, or even about my war experience.

In due course I found myself officially qualified by the British Psychoanalytical Society and gradually more and more involved in matters I was unfamiliar with – including those that I was not at all qualified to cope with, such as the President of the British Psychoanalytical Society. I never felt that I had been trained to fill such a prestigious position.

I had a good deal of opportunity for hearing about my various failings and defects, and also those of psychoanalysis, from my patients. Much the same sort of thing happened when I transferred my activities – for a short space of time, I thought, perhaps five years – to the United States. It took a long time to get used once again to the fact that nobody had ever heard of me, except one or two people who seemed to feel for some reason that they wanted further assistance. At the same time there were attributed to me qualities or abilities that seemed to be very wide of the mark; if I had had the qualifications or the addiction, I could have found myself thrust into the role of a sort of messiah or deity. All this ran parallel with its being made crystal clear to me that I was a mere human being, that psychoanalysis was, after all, only a form of verbal communication, and that there were limits to what could be done by it – especially as one was dependent on having somebody who would listen to what one had to say. So, what with having to say something, and also having to have somebody there who would listen to what I said, it was clear that the position that was being thrust upon me, or that I was being invited to take, was one not at all within my compass or capacity.

Comparing my own personal experience with the history of psychoanalysis, and even the history of human thought that I have tried to sketch out roughly, it does seem to be rather ridiculous that one finds oneself in a position of being supposed to be in that line of succession, instead of just one of the units in it. It is still more ridiculous that one is expected to participate in a sort of competition for precedence as to who is top. Top of what? Where does it come in this history? Where does psychoanalysis itself come? What is the dispute

about? What is this dispute in which one is supposed to be interested? I am always hearing – as I have always done – that I am a Kleinian, that I am crazy. Is it possible to be interested in that sort of dispute? I find it very difficult to see how this could possibly be relevant against the background of the struggle of the human being to emerge from barbarism and a purely animal existence, to something one could call a civilized society.

One of the reasons why I am talking like this here is because I think it might be useful if we were to remind ourselves of the scale of the thing in which we are engaged, and whereabouts a little niche could be occupied by ourselves.

[Bion's copy of *The Future of an Illusion* (1927c) is heavily annotated. The following passage is written at the end of Chapter II, p. 14.]

> "Reading this chapter seems to show the extent to which the advance of psychoanalysis renders its own formulation obsolete. Freud has for the foundation of his discussion, as its realization, his own conjectures on the nature of the civilization. He then has theories about the conjectures. Because the conjectures are those of a man of genius, they command attention. But there is no recognition of the status of the conjectures or of the status of theories about conjectures. In psychoanalysis it is assumed that a theory is false if it does not seem to minister to the 'good' of the majority of mankind. And it is a commonplace idea of good. The whole idea of 'cure', of therapeutic activity, remains unscrutinized. It is largely determined by the expectations of the patient though this is questioned in good analysis (as I know it). But in nuclear physics a theory is considered to be good if it aids the construction of a bomb that destroys Hiroshima. Too much of the thinking about psychoanalysis precludes the possibility of regarding as good a theory that would destroy the individual or the group. Yet there will never be a scientific scrutiny of analytic theories until it includes critical appraisal of a theory that by its very soundness could lead to a destruction of mental stability, e.g. a theory that increased memory and desire to a point where they rendered sanity impossible."

long since,[1] art offers substitutive satisfactions for the oldest and still most deeply felt cultural renunciations, and for that reason it serves as nothing else does to reconcile a man to the sacrifices he has made on behalf of civilization. On the other hand, the creations of art heighten his feelings of identification, of which every cultural unit stands in so much need, by providing an occasion for sharing highly valued emotional experiences. And when those creations picture the achievements of his particular culture and bring to his mind its ideals in an impressive manner, they also minister to his narcissistic satisfaction.

But also escape from brute potentia.

No mention has yet been made of what is perhaps the most important item in the psychical inventory of a civilization. This consists in its religious ideas in the widest sense—in other words (which will be justified later) in its illusions.

[1] [Cf., for instance, 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming' (1908e).]

Reading this chapter seems to show the extent to which the advance of psycho-analysis renders its own formulations obsolete. Freud has for the foundation of his discussion, as its realization, his own conjectures on the nature of the civilization. He then has theories about the conjectures. Because the conjectures are those of a man of genius they command attention. But there is no recognition of the status of the conjectures or of the status of theories about conjectures. In psycho-analysis it is assumed that a theory is false if it does not seem to minister to the "good" of the majority of mankind. And it is a commonplace idea of good. The whole idea of "cure," of therapeutic activity, remains unscrutinized. It is largely determined by the expectations of the patient though this is questioned in good analysis (as I know it). But in nuclear physics a theory is considered to be good if it aids the construction of a bomb that destroys Hiroshima. Too much of the thinking about psycho-analysis precludes the possibility of regarding as good a theory that would destroy the individual or the group. Yet there will never be a scientific scrutiny of analytic theories until it includes critical appraisal of a theory that by its very soundness would lead to a destruction of mental stability, e.g. a theory that increased memory and desire to a point where they rendered sanity impossible.

APPENDIX: REVIEW OF COGITATIONS 1992

André Green

'Review of *Cogitations*', by André Green, was published in 1992 in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 73*: 585–589. I am indebted to Professor Green for his generosity in giving permission for the inclusion of his full and detailed review.

Review of *Cogitations*

André Green

Cogitations is the name given by Bion to his thoughts transferred to paper. These reflections had been left behind in Bion's filing cabinets, and, unearthed by his wife Francesca, are now available for us to read. It is all very well to desist from publishing what is deemed unworthy of publication, but it must be admitted that Bion's sketches and cast-offs are much more valuable than the common run of material that finds its way into print. These day-to-day jottings are like a breath of fresh air from the open sea.

Compared with Bion's published works, the Cogitations are thrilling to read and often less difficult to assimilate, because the author's formulations are less condensed and because he makes us witnesses to the process of the unfolding of his thought. We literally follow him.

The psychoanalytic diary draws its material from two sources: clinical experience and reading. As for psychoanalysis, only the essentials are to be found: Freud (and then only certain works – *The Interpretation of Dreams,* 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning'); Melanie Klein (although no title other than *Envy and Gratitude* is mentioned, but only basic concepts); Winnicott (quoted once, on p. 161).

By contrast, we are struck by the wealth, variety and depth of Bion's philosophical reading, which covers epistemology as well as other aspects of philosophy. His avowed preferences on 10 January, 1959 (p. 27) are Kant, Whewell, Mill, Peirce, Poincaré, Russell and Popper (already!). Others, forgotten on that day, must be added: Braithwaite, Prichard, Hume and Descartes. Those he 'summons up' are principally logicians and philosophers of science, and he makes particular mention of mathematics (a point in common – there are fewer than was to be claimed – with Lacan).

Looking at this programme, I can think of many colleagues who would openly express their distrust of such a reader (if he were not Bion) and accuse him of no less a crime than 'intellectualization' – a charge that may be said to condone intellectual sloth. These cogitations have a theme: the relations between psychoanalysis and science. Bion looks at the problem from two points of view: that of the scientific methodology of psychoanalysis and that of psychoanalysis of the scientific methodology.

The writing of this diary is variable in form. Sometimes there are long developments, tantamount to papers which one is sorry were not published earlier, as they would have greatly assisted our understanding of the author's ideas; sometimes short paragraphs succeeding each other with rigorous logic; and sometimes brief notes which pursue ideas already expressed, as if intended to confirm the intuition already set down.

The clinical examples are for the most part short: a session (exceptionally), a sequence (more frequently), a sentence (quite often) as a starting point of reflection. They take the author back to the cradle of experience and give us an opportunity to admire Bion's interpretive inventiveness: he never allows himself simply to paraphrase what the patient says, as the Kleinians so often do. But the criteria of the interpretation are very different from Freud's, without for that matter conforming to the Kleinian canon. They are inimitably Bionian. "More than one patient has said my technique is not Kleinian. I think there is substance in this" (p. 161).[1]

Many of the notes are unfortunately marked 'undated'. Francesca Bion has carefully restored a credible order and her efforts can be trusted. All the same, the reviewer's task is not an easy one.

As we know, Bion began his career as a group therapist just after the Second World War. Later he was to devote himself entirely to individual analysis, but it would be wrong to assume that the group dimension had been abandoned. One thought constantly recurs in these notes: the opposition between narcissism (or ego-ism) and social-ism – that is, the participation of the individual in a group.

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[1][This is modified by Bion's final two sentences in that note. 'Bionian' is a term that Bion would have objected to, and it perhaps makes as little sense as the term 'Segalian'. *Ed*.]

As Aristotle said, man is a zoon-politikon or political animal. Such a qualification implies the frustration of all instincts.

The reduction of this idea to its essentials links up with Bion's concerns about common sense: (a) the sharing of the experience of reality as commonly perceived; (b) the important step taken in communication (the expression includes the element 'common'), in the sense common to both partners in the psychoanalytic session; and finally (c) in the elaboration of a sense common to all the other senses in the analysand. This commonality emerges after an experience of unification which Bion compares to the passage from the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position. The author manages to combine the Kleinian theory with Poincaré's methodological hypothesis that it is the discovery of the selected fact that allows us to make sense of scattered, uncoordinated elements in the putting together of a meaningful coherence.

One of the most enriching parts of these Cogitations must surely be Bion's conception of the dream work. We find here the germ of what the author was later to call the capacity for reverie. What this means is that the dream work constitutes only a small part of this type of activity as found in the dreamer – that this work is a continuous process which also goes on during daytime activity, but remains unobservable (other than in conscious fantasy) except through its lack in the psychotic. The capacity for reverie is merely the visible aspect of a largely unconscious form of thought.

Functioning of this kind is synonymous with an activity of storing away (making latent, as some would say) – that is, of saving up for future elaboration, an essential stage in which will be naming. Without naming, without subsequent verbalization, the patient is confronted with unspeakable, nameless anxieties. For Bion, dreams are not equivalent to hallucinations as they were for Freud. Hallucination was for him an evacuative activity, the opposite of the dream work, which was a 'garnering' activity.

I have been surprised to note how sensitive Bion is to what I myself have called the work of the negative. The night after reading a passage of Quine on the negative, he dreamed of a negro. And his conclusion is that neg is here common to negative and negro. He concludes from his chain of associations that the negro is an ideogram capable of containing the entire chain of associations produced

(negro: negative, native, dative, ablative . . .). In this connexion Bion, like Freud, attributes cardinal importance to the visual function as the psychical matrix of elaboration.

We can already deduce the significance of the α-function, which appears on 5 August 1959 and is defined on that date: "α is concerned with, and is identical with, unconscious waking thinking designed, as part of the reality principle, to aid the task of real, as opposed to pathological, modification of frustration" (p. 58). Bion considers such work to be logical. The psychotic's attack on the α-function is reflected not in differences from the associations that neurotics or normal subjects would have but in the absence of associative productions – what might be called an absence of psychic generativity. This is reminiscent of the psychosomatic ideas of Marty, involving the discovery of an irregular functioning of the preconscious, which has become impermeable to the derivatives of the unconscious.

According to Bion, this impossibility of producing associations is because evacuation shortens the life – along the lines, I would suggest, of the 'shelf life' of a therapeutic drug – of psychical phenomena in the organism, thus affecting the storage and memory of mental phenomena. However, these phenomena are underlain by the emotional experience which constitutes the raw material that is the foundation for mental elaboration. The series could thus be summarized as follows: emotional experience – visual image (ideogram) – α-function – dream work.

To generate elaboration, it is not sufficient that evacuation does not occur; the visual image may, instead of unfolding in its associations, remain captive and give rise to an hallucination having the aim not of containing but of encircling the experience in order to neutralize it.

A murderous superego may become involved when some unconscious content becomes conscious, as if these transformations were equivalent to a loss and even to a death. One of the interesting aspects of Bion's thought is the constant linking of an intrapsychic with an intersubjective point of view. The transition Ps $\rightleftharpoons$ D (which is intrapsychic) has its counterpart in the (intersubjective) patient-analyst relationship involving the logic of a couple rather than of a single individual (26 September 1959, p. 80). It is impressive to see how Bion can move so easily from this living, concrete, human base to its mathematical equivalents, which could not be more abstract.

But why a murderous superego? Bion's argument on this point is paradoxical. A unified superego becomes conscious of what escapes it by way of reunification – of which it is itself the product. In other words, knowing is not only to grasp what was not known before knowledge supervened but also to become conscious of the extent of our ignorance and to accept it; conversely, in some cases a murderous rage destroys what has already been acquired. It is evident that, from then on, psychoanalysis develops from the twin aspects of affect (fantasy) and cognition.

It was in October 1959 that Bion had the intuition of the theoretical importance of frustration. Before him, frustration had been used simplifyingly, almost behaviouristically. Bion, however, must take the credit for the cardinal distinction between frustration evasion and frustration modification. In other words, the important point is to discern the means whereby the frustration is not acknowledged, accepted or transformed by the psyche, which can only evacuate it and evade it; alternatively, frustration may give rise to a modification of the psyche, which may in turn modify the conditions created by the frustration. Bion made this distinction the foundation of his system.

This positive modification must presumably be linked to the α-function. It is a fundamental mechanism postulated to explain hypotheses that may be capable of translation into verifiable data. It is therefore a postulate, which may also not be linked to any verifiable empirical reality (p. 95). The link between the α-function and visual images should be emphasized. Bion is plainly thinking of dreams; in other words, visual images for him are fundamental thing-presentations. The images of things may either open the way to thoughts or ideas, or regressively become 'things in themselves' – a term which it would be unwise to connect directly with Kant in spite of appearances, but which should rather be conceived as pre-representative. All the same, such a structure may find itself prevented from ever achieving representation.

An important difference between Freud's and Bion's positions is that for Freud representation is first and foremost the representation of a wish, as man has no disposition impelling him to seek truth. For Bion, on the other hand, the need for truth is just as essential to the psyche as food is to the body. This position, which is liable to the charge of being a religious one, may be criticized; after all, we know

that Bion was not indifferent to religion. However, this hardly ever caused him to underestimate the role of disavowal.

One way in which the analyst may become aware of the destructiveness of the patient's communications – more properly, of their sterility – may be through his difficulty in remembering the material of a session; this experience is common to all analysts who work with difficult cases. The effort of understanding and binding in the session is so intense that it is deployed at the expense of recording and storage, functions to which no difficulty attaches when the understanding of what is communicated by the analysand does not absorb too much of the analyst's energy and 'makes sense' more or less appropriately.

Again, this expenditure and consumption of energy by the analyst occurs in the work of binding and association which the patient himself is unable to undertake or absolves himself from undertaking. This takes place spontaneously in the neurotic, because in neurosis the synthesis of the elements produced is in effect automatic. It therefore depends less on the analyst's associations.

The result of this synthesis (which is the work of the α-function) manifests itself in two ways: (1) by a logical (mathematical) construction, and (2) by a dream. One of the most original aspects of the Cogitations is the drawing of a parallel between logical and dream structures. Just as a mathematical formula gives rise to developments, so a dream engenders associations. This finding can be further extended to the relation between narciss-ism and social-ism, secrecy and public-ation. Unlike other Kleinians, Bion never loses sight of reality – and still less of truth.

There are occasional Platonic accents in the Cogitations, for instance, when we read that generalizations and 'idealizations' (in the dual sense of products of ideas and ideals) may be one and the same thing. This pair is echoed by another couple, realization and particularization. Bion was well aware that the principal analytic *aporia* was to give a verbal response to non-verbal objects. The consequence of the struggle between the life and death instincts (Bion does not use these terms but speaks of living and dead objects) is that when the forces of death predominate, animism (or the animistic view) cannot develop. Death is in the soul.

The first intuitions about attacks on linking can be found in February, 1960. In fact, the formation of the dream and its associations is

evidence for the existence of an *α*-function. Bion is the only Kleinian for whom the model of the dream is more important than the model of the baby. Such an option presumably reflects the renunciation of the empiricist or pragmatic position so often embraced by the protagonists of a psychoanalytic constructivism based on a naïve conception of development. For instance, in Bion a reference to the breast is not a direct reference to an organ or even to a person, but is an hypothesis that is bound up with mental phenomena (p. 240). However, some embarrassment is evident in his reflections on the penis (p. 243).

Bion's conception of the relations between psychoanalysis and science, at a time when these matters are acutely topical, is interesting in that it constitutes a total reversal of the usual approach to these relations. Instead of wishing for a psychoanalysis carried along in the wake of science, seeking validation procedures agreeable to scientists, Bion, on the contrary, maintains for example that what a community deems to be 'scientific' dictates which fantasies are to be externalized in the prevalent cosmology and which are to achieve some other outlet (p. 150). The deductive scientific system is that defined by its place in the hierarchy of thought processes; it is at one and the same time the topmost level of a particular system and the basis whereby lower-level systems (in terms of generalization) can be used.

We thus gain an extremely precise impression of the *raisons d'être* of many of Bion's concepts: phenomena, things in themselves, the object, language, affect, integration, etc. Here are the foundations of nothing less than a treatise; we can only speculate on the reasons why Bion refused to publish it during his lifetime, but are happy to be able to read it now (between pages 147 and 160). These details are all the more useful in that Bion, more generally, stresses the weakness of our methods of communication – this being true not only of communication among analysts but also of analyst-analysand communication. Mathematics and music are exceptions to this rule. Perhaps it is relevant that both use words only secondarily.

However, the most extreme case in which this failure occurs is the analytic relationship with psychotics – so much so that it may be felt that any communication that has taken place is understood by the non-psychotic part of the personality (of the psychotic). Here the role of representability must be underlined. Again there is a reference to dreams: the representable is the foundation of the *α*-function, which leads to the dominance of the reality principle, whereas the

β-elements remain under the sway of the pleasure-unpleasure principle. Rather than regarding the relations between the *α*-function and reality as a progressive pragmatic learning process, Bion holds that, since the *α*-function is the substrate for idealization, such an evolution is possible.

Here we have the author's first intuitions about what was to be called the K factor (K for knowledge). K and –K are the two facets of the same phenomenon. Knowledge is both stimulated and prohibited. The myths of the Fall and of Oedipus bear witness to this. Bion gives us an interesting discussion of the myth as 'common nonsense'. He brilliantly compares myth and manifest dream content. Boldly extrapolating, he extends the comparison to mathematical formulations of algebraic calculi, in that each formation in its own way performs an identical function. At the root of each solution lies a common phenomenon: emotional experience. Myths are perhaps to the psychoanalyst what mathematics is to the scientist.

This again confronts us with the problem of causality. Bion takes his stand against the inductive approach, in favour of deduction, in which the element of time is essential to the cause-effect relationship. Bion's rejection of the empirical modes of thought which are common coin in contemporary theory can hardly be over-emphasized. Another cornerstone of his theoretical approach is the reference to the social dimension, itself connected with language. Structural interpretation of the Kleinian 'positions' makes it possible to extricate Melanie Klein's thought from its 'infantilism' (p. 193). Bion's acceptance of Melanie Klein's postulates is not accompanied by any underestimation of the Oedipus complex, as it often is in Klein's successors. Bion is surely the only Kleinian author who has striven to unify the ideas of the founder of psychoanalysis with those of his most noteworthy mutant.

The importance of the controversies in psychoanalytic circles on the validity of psychoanalytic reconstructions is well known. Criticism of Freud's reference to a 'material truth' has induced the post-Freudians to embrace an exceedingly debatable scepticism – in favour of a theory of 'narrativity' and a hermeneutics which have abandoned any claim to insist on a truth of any kind. Bion offers a solution to this problem by defending the status of an approximation to the truth. Using this proposition, we can at one and the same time avoid

deluding ourselves about the value of our speculations and avoid having on that account to forgo an essential reference of the Freudian approach.

This diary also contains Bion's first intuitions about attacks on the analyst's *α*-function, a particular case of the problem of attacks on linking. This very popular concept clearly and precisely takes up Freud's final ideas on the relations between binding and unbinding as an expression of the mode of functioning of the life and death instincts.

Unbinding is the result of frustration – more precisely, of the tendency to evade frustration instead of modifying it, the tendency that was to be the cornerstone of Bion's theory. The plan and objectives of what appears in schematized form in *Learning from Experience* are here formulated with extreme clarity (p. 249). The work of Cogitations takes the form – extremely rare in psychoanalysis – of a metatheory. No author who has reflected at all upon theory will be able to escape the force of these pages.

The foundations of Bion's theory can be formulated in different ways. I would choose the following according to their author: the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, the primal scene and the oedipal situation – together constituting a successful synthesis of Melanie Klein and Freud. It is this fourfold structure which underlies the material of the *α*-function. In the final part of *Cogitations*, considerable space is devoted to Bion's recommendation that the analyst should be without memory or desire – a recommendation which has had large repercussions.

There may perhaps have been misapprehensions as to the meaning to be given to this precept, which, one feels, carries the risk of turning analysis into something like a mystical technique. I understand Bion's concern to give priority in the material to what is connected with the unknown. However, it seems to me in part contradictory to refer to the relations of causality and temporality and at the same time to advocate such a 'forgetting' of the past material.

When I once discussed this with him, he replied, again referring to Freud, by pointing out how the latter claimed to 'blind himself' – deliberately – when the material seemed to him to be obscure or indecipherable. In my view, this rider changes everything, because it is a technique for emerging from an impasse and not a rule of

ordinary behaviour. However, with psychotics, it is true that analysts are often driven to the verge of mental confusion. But one should be careful before generalizing the advice.

The same detachment is observed in Bion's positions on the therapeutic reaction (both positive and negative), in that it is always bound to divert attention from psychoanalysis proper. Such a position is unusual among English-speaking analysts, with their concern for helping the patient. On rereading his own notes, Bion claims to be exasperated by their futility (p. 294): is this false modesty or an uncommon superego demand? The latter is surely the case, as guilt feelings arise, whereby he feels open to accusations of plagiarism, of theft from his patients, and so on. This demand is an elevated one indeed: to achieve a theory of thought. Thoughts await their thinker. What would thoughts which did not need a thinker be? And only the liar needs a thought.

One particular cogitation is to my mind formidable. In February 1971, Bion notes that psychoanalysis might have exhausted its impetus and be ready to disappear into limbo, either because it is a burden too great for us to carry or perhaps because it is a blind alley, or else because it arouses fear of the unknown to a point where the protective mechanisms of the noösphere compel it to destroy the new ideas for fear that they will cause a catastrophe in which the noösphere disintegrates into the amorphous. Considering current developments in psychoanalytic thought itself, perhaps having the aim of protecting analysts themselves, this is not an unrealistic fear.

In July 1971, Bion gave free rein to his inclinations as an author of fiction, which were to develop subsequently, and wrote a 'fable for our time (30070)'.[1] Here, the author demonstrates both his great depth and his sense of humour, which relativizes the most dismal thoughts. However, disillusioned, he describes his relationship with his Los Angeles colleagues as almost entirely unsuccessful (p. 321). What is more, he claims that he could say much the same for England.

The thinker disturbs: he arouses fear, on account of his ideas as much as of his personality. Pessimism pervades this diary, as witness

[1][See *Cogitations*, July 1971 (Volume XI, p. 314). Green is referring to Bion beginning to write what was to become the first part (*The Dream*) of his *Memoir of the Future* – see Volume XII. *Ed.*]

the feeling that barbarism is gaining ground in modern times with the development of technology. Science is also affected by this trend. The final pages of the diary show us a Bion who is a reader of Freud. He is a critical reader, to be sure, but what reading of Freud worthy of the man could, today, not be critical?

Bion the man is not absent from these Cogitations. On 8 August 1978, he recalls the events of 60 years ago to the day, at the battle of Amiens, in which he took part during the First World War, a few months before the armistice, when all his men were killed.

Bion has an astonishing ability to grasp the common factor in very different situations: for instance, the relationship of the baby to its mother, of the analysand to his analyst, and of the believer to God. Relationship is a key term in the thought of Cogitations, not in the trivializing sense of object relationship, but in that of the concept of relationship, to which too little thought has been devoted in psychoanalysis. The religious aspects of Bion's thought have been distrusted. However, his direct references to religion are discreet and he is always very concerned to place it in perspective with the other vertices considered by him. Does this mean that he was preoccupied with his own imminent death? There is not the slightest allusion to this subject in the Cogitations, assuming that they have been published in full.

These notes end on a leitmotiv which has been formulated more or less explicitly throughout the book: Bion's concern to place psychoanalysis in the context of the human struggle to emerge from a purely animal or barbaric existence to a state that could be called civilized (p. 348) – and without illusions. After all, our conception of the good, or of the 'good theory', precludes the idea that it might destroy the individual and the group (April 1979).

The Cogitations break off at this point.

The reader of this review will, I am sure, feel that I am much too approving of their content and not critical enough of their author. In my opinion, the opposite charge should be levelled at me. I do not consider that I have succeeded in conveying the exceptional wealth of these private notes, in giving an impression of their importance to psychoanalytic thought. My agreement with Bion no doubt has to do with the fact that I, for my part, have arrived at certain conclusions very similar to his, independently of my reading of his work. I knew Bion personally, after discovering him through his books, and

remained in contact with him uninterruptedly until his death, and this is bound to give my reading the quality of an emotional experience, which might be said to lack objectivity.

What makes me respond so positively to this reading is the comparison it compels me to undertake with the current average state of psychoanalytic theory as revealed in publications and international congresses. In the last years of his life, Bion, it will be found, published hardly anything in the official psychoanalytic journals and was never approached by the IPA Congress Programme Committees. Is this coincidence? We owe a debt of gratitude to Francesca Bion for allowing us to read this exceptional document.

All psychoanalysts agree that Freud was a genius, but after him, opinions differ as to who else might deserve this description. I for my part believe that Bion might seriously be considered for it. I definitely incline to this view. As it happens, I read the *Cogitations* at the same time as the extraordinary volume on the *Freud–Klein Controversies 1941–45* (King & Steiner, 1991), which tellingly conveys the scientific situation of the British Psychoanalytical Society during those years. Compared with those exciting discussions, *Cogitations* feels like the expression of the thought of a different age. Where are we today, ten years after Bion's death?

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME XII

Cornfield from the Little Cottage
Oil painting by WRB

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W. R. BION

VOLUME XII

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KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume XII): 978–1–78220–240–0

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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A MEMOIR OF THE FUTURE

1975

A Memoir of the Future was first published in 1991 by Karnac Books, London. It consisted of revised and corrected versions of three previously published books – *The Dream*, *The Past Presented*, and *The Dawn of Oblivion* – together with a revised and expanded version of *A Key to A Memoir of the Future* (1981).

The Dream was first published in 1975 by Imago Editora, Rio de Janeiro.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

A figurative and free-ranging psychoanalytic novel was not something Bion would have felt free to write and – more to the point – to publish had he and his wife, Francesca, not moved to Los Angeles, which they did in 1968. Once there, Bion set about adjusting to the new culture, establishing links with the analysts who had invited him, and setting up an analytic practice. He also began work on a book, which he called *The Dream*, published in 1975. Two years later he added *The Past Presented,* and in 1979 – with the addition of *The Dawn of Oblivion* – the novel had become a trilogy. In 1991, at the instigation of Francesca Bion, the three were finally published in one volume, with corrections, together with an enlarged version of *A Key to A Memoir of the Future*, which had first been published in 1981. Francesca Bion has described the *Memoir* as

> a fictionalised, dramatised presentation of a lifetime's experiences, filled with a crowd of character; voicing the many facets of his own personality and thought; at the same time we recognise ourselves among the *dramatis personae*. [see Volume XV, p. 101]

Bion's *Memoir of the Future* is a work that makes use of the form of a novel in order to explore the meanings of analytic and philosophical concepts, without his writing being constrained by having to 'make sense' in conventional terms. Bion seems to have felt an urgent need to do this: to liberate himself from the constricting container–contained effects of the 'psychoanalytic establishment' in order to distribute the elements of his thought in fresh patterns and configurations. These patterns are capable of triggering the reader's own alpha-function (as is true of the more formal writing in *Learning from Experience*) in ways that may be of use to the clinician.

The work has relevance to Bion's concept of group mentality as an aspect of the individual personality; In *A Memoir of the Future* one can see how shifts in ego-functioning are reflected in the positions taken by the different characters in the 'story'. Lia Pistiner de Cortiñas (2010) has written concerning this:

> To transform criticism, feelings of guilt, reproofs, inhibitions into characters that are able to begin a dialogue with each other and with those that are criticized, has been in my experience a very useful instrument. It helps the patient develop more of an ego-related capacity to observe these conflicts instead of being crushed by them. The usurpation of ego functions[1] by a precocious development of a primitive Super-ego is also linked to the primitive group functioning. Personification with its characteristics of fiction and dramatic play, help to develop a separate mind that is able to think the primitive group functioning instead of transforming it into action. This 'group mentality' is present in every human being even if isolated, because it is inherent to our condition of being a herd animal. [p. 126]

A Memoir of the Future has not been without its eminent critics. There is no doubt that, in contrast with the work of the 1960s, Bion's writing in this work is undisciplined, and intentionally so. Edna O'Shaughnessy, an analyst who has a deep understanding of Bion's work and who has integrated many of his key concepts into her clinical approach, felt that it might have reflected a reduction in the discipline of his thinking in relation to that piece of writing, and also in connection with his concept of 'O'. She wrote, "By 'less disciplined', I mean mixing and blurring categories of discourse, embracing contradictions, and sliding between ideas rather than linking them" (2005, p. 1524).

Waddell (2010) views this last work by Bion as a continuation of his clinical thinking using allusive literary structure. She sees it as "a great autobiographical account of an interior story" of the self's development and the becoming of a psychoanalyst, drawing upon a lifetime of analytic reflection. For Waddell, the mode of writing in *A Memoir of the Future* is not wilfully obscure but represents an attempt to express in a literary way something of the elusive nature and functioning of the world of psychic reality. This view concurs with that of Meg Harris Williams (1983), who wrote that Bion made the investigation of himself

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[1]For example, Bion has a 'character' called 'Container' in *A Memoir of the Future*, who says at one point, 'It distends me'.

as a person and a psychoanalyst inseparable from a search for an appropriate artistic form, given the inescapable fact that 'the thing itself is altered by being observed'.

Harris Williams describes the progress of Bion's search – using the relationships of *A Memoir of the Future* – for an underlying pattern, first in the sense he used in studying 'catastrophic change' in the personality[1] and, second, in the sense of a search for appropriate artistic form. As she puts it,

> Bion's 'internal voices' (including P.A. – Psychoanalyst) struggle towards 'disciplined debate' as they experience past and future catastrophes in the present. The internal 'Group' gradually achieve coherent genre as they increase in selfawareness and in resilience to catastrophic change. By Book 3, their history becomes recountable in the terms of a single lifecycle, from prebirth to approaching death. Key points of catastrophic change are represented by birth itself, by the transition from latency to adolescence, from adolescence to adulthood, and by death. The approaching catastrophe of the future, unknown although imaged by death, becomes containable artistically – casting its 'shadow before'; and catastrophic anxiety no longer fragments the Group. Their original chaotic 'Dream' undergoes successive transformations – part revealing, part constructing a 'pattern' – until it comes to metaphorically express the process of thinking itself, equipped to face the birth of an 'idea'. [Williams, 1983/2010, p. 381]

Bion's elder daughter, Parthenope Bion Talamo, was impelled – through translating *A Memoir of the Future* into Italian – to appreciate the clinical relevance of this emotionally interactive text, describing it as a "a veritable mine of clinical insights" (Bion Talamo, 1997). The drawbacks to such an appreciation, she felt, were (a) the amount of patience and hard, mental 'spade-work' required to harvest the insights; (b) the necessity for practical experience of analysis if the reader is to detect the underlying patterns of what, on the surface, is a rambling novel; and (c) the emotional disturbance evoked in the reader as a result of becoming open to his or her own deeper associations to the text, to his or her own 'α-function'. She considered *A Memoir of the Future* to be something of an exercise in dreamwork-alpha – to use Bion's own phrase. This point is so crucial to understanding why Bion wrote such a peculiar book, that

[1]Following Poincaré, with his concept of the 'selected fact'.

I will quote Parthenope's conclusion in full regarding the relevance of *α*-function to *A Memoir of the Future*. Referring to an undated 1960 note in *Cogitations*, Parthenope writes:

> What Bion says, very briefly, is that dreamwork-*α* is a process of mental assimilation and growth; the individual has an emotional experience which then has to be clothed with a visual image (or, more generally, a sensorial one) for it to be available as a building block for thoughts. The visual image – he gives the example of Cromer Church in Norfolk – lends flesh to an emotion so that the latter can be 'thought'. At the same time, however, the image is not saturated; that is – in Freudian terms – it can undergo further development, through both a future *Nachträglichkeit*, and further accretions of emotions.
>
> The *α*-elements, which are the resulting product of dreamwork-*α*, can be stored; one of their functions is, in fact, that of storing emotional experience in a communicable form.
>
> The evocative writing of *A Memoir of the Future* does indeed call up the *α*-elements of the reader – sometimes with a vengeance – and this is one of the reasons why reading the book can be a painful process.

Finally, another insight into *A Memoir of the Future* by Parthenope is that the principal metaphor of the book, and that of the mind, is *dramaturgical* – feelings and ideas that have been split off or subject to repression are, in the book, represented as rebounding from 'behind the wings'.

The book has something in common with *Learning from Experience*. In both, the reader is made to realize that he or she is being impelled to make use of his own mind, and his whole life's experience. Parthenope Bion Talamo reminds us that this fact parallels the situation in analysis itself.

A Memoir of the Future was dedicated by Bion as follows:

> "To my wife and to Parthenope, Julian and Nicola".

It is published here across three volumes of *The Complete Works of Bion*, with a 'Key' that Francesca Bion and I have further expanded – and this is in spite of the fact that Bion himself would, we are sure, have resisted such a piece of editorial apparatus.

A MEMOIR OF THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION . . .
PRELUDE . . .
OVERTURE & BEGINNERS . . .
ONE, TWO, . . .

Within this book there are changes of meaning that are obvious, communicated and interpretable according to the rules of grammar and articulate speech. There are changes of rhythm that are not so obvious, but if detected they are similarly communicated and interpretable. The rules to which they conform may be more difficult to detect, as would the key of a musical composition written without the statement of the key signature. There are changes detectable only by those willing to make the effort. If no existing human mode of thinking provides a model, an approximation could be found in astronomical space. There may be modes of thinking to which no known realization has so far been found to approximate. Hallucinosis, hypochondriasis and other mental 'diseases' may have a logic, a grammar and a corresponding realization, none of which has so far been discovered. They may be difficult to discover because they are obscured by a 'memory', or a 'desire', or an 'understanding' to which they are supposed – wrongly – to approximate. Unless the obscurity can be circumvented or penetrated it will remain unobserved, as the galactic centre or the origin of the universe remains unobserved.

Book One:
The Dream

Q Can you give me an idea what this is about?

A Psychoanalysis, I believe.

Q Are you sure? It looks a queer affair.

A It is a queer affair – like psychoanalysis. You'd have to read it.

Q How much does it cost?

A It says it on the book. You would have to read it as well though.

Q Of course. But I don't think I can afford the time or money.

A Nor do I.

Q But haven't you read it?

A Yes, in a way.

Q You're a queer salesman. I'm only wanting to know . . .

A I'm not the salesman. I only wrote it.

Q Oh, I beg your pardon! I quite thought . . .

A I'm flattered, but I'm only the author.

Q May I have your autograph?

A No.

Q Oh.

PRO-LOGUE

I am tired. It is quite bad enough having a full day's schedule without having a full night's programme too. I do not remember what happened anyway. Something about reversed perspective. I was writing something about it. The advantage of falling back on borrowing a mathematical term like 'vertex' is that it can make it possible to talk to lunatics who are thrown into confusion if you say things like, 'from the point of view of smell'. It is very exasperating to find a man who interrupts by saying, 'My eyes don't smell', or, 'My smell can't see any view'. My exasperation doesn't help either. Now I remember a bit of a dream about violence and murder. Something about Albert and Victoria, I think. Suppose these vertices are separate and distinct, the two vertices could contribute to a harmonization rather like binocular vision. Suppose I used my alimentary canal as a sort of telescope. I could get down to the arse and look up at the mouth full of teeth and tonsils and tongue. Or rush up to the top end of the alimentary canal and watch what my arse-hole was up to. Rather amusing really. It depends what my digestive tract felt about having me scampering up and down the gut all night. Perhaps that is what gave me such a bad night. Alice didn't think much of it obviously. But what was *she* up to then? Must remember to ask her. She seemed to think it was my fault.

Suppose the vertices were separate and coincident. This would do if one of the points which was separate and distinct rushed down the arc to meet the other; but, judging by what it felt like last night, it was more like sound travelling in bent tubes. As a matter of fact, that would only be true in a relatively gentlemanlike Oxonian manner. At night – last night – they weren't at all respectable; much more like farts and gerks rushing up and down alimentary canals.

Whether it is respectable or amusing would depend on which vertex, or who or what it was at the vertex. But here and now I know nothing about that. If I were there, with the companion to whom I wish to communicate, I could appeal to him to see the evidence I cannot formulate, but on which I wish to build my structure. It is the overriding advantage of the *practice* of psychoanalysis over anything more abstract. It is also a fact which, to me, makes any puzzlement at the disagreements between two participants, say, in a scientific meeting or supervision, different in kind from the disagreement between the two participants in a psychoanalysis (as I understand that occurrence in a relationship which I define as psychoanalysis). Anyone can employ another definition, but no one can honestly maintain that I speak without practice as that term is understood by other practitioners.

I claim (the claim itself being definitory) that this is a fictitious account of psychoanalysis including an artificially constructed dream; definitory status is also claimed for the constructions of wakefulness, scientific alertness and scientific theory. The definitory hypothesis is intended to be taken and applied in all seriousness in the practice of psychoanalysis by those who wish to confront what they believe to be 'facts', as near to noumena as the human animal is likely to get.

This may be 'never'; with Kant, I hold that the thing-in-itself is unknowable. Falstaff, a known artefact, is more 'real' in Shakespeare's verbal formulation than countless millions of people who are dim, invisible, lifeless, unreal, whose births, deaths – alas, even marriages – we are called upon to believe in, though certification of their existence is vouched for by the said official certification. 'You are a fabulous monster', said the dove to the serpent Alice. Many people are so lifeless that I could stare in silent admission that I did not believe the evidence of my senses. Nor do I believe that 'science' – smoke drums, statistics and other apparatus usually assumed to belong to the domain of science – would ever bring them to life or breathe life into them.

At one end of the spectrum I could be convinced by 'scientific' evidence that these people exist; at the other end there are fictitious characters who could be said with certainty *not* to exist. (In terms of logic this situation is what is often described as a 'paradox'.) The 'softly breathing bronzes' of whom Virgil speaks in his tribute to Marcellus can be described as a poetic formulation of a visual image. The same

is true of the heroes rescued from the black night that engulfed the many brave men before Homer immortalized Agamemnon; or the sculptures conjured from the marble by Michelangelo or Praxiteles. They can be re-buried. Confronted by a work of art, there are 'clever men' who can see that it is genuine and worth a lot of money, but they may *not* see what the artist has revealed.

To turn to psychoanalysis: the erudite can see that a description is by Freud, or Melanie Klein, but remain blind to the thing described. Freud said infants were sexual; this was denied or reburied. This fate could have befallen the whole of psychoanalysis had there been no one to confer, as Horace said of Homer, immortality.

If psychoanalytic intuition does not provide a stamping ground for wild asses, where is a zoo to be found to preserve the species? Conversely, if the environment is tolerant, what is to happen to the 'great hunters' who lie unrevealed or reburied?

1

'O dear, oh dear', said Alice rubbing her eyes and pushing away the shower of leaves which had awoken her. 'I had such a queer dream that I was the Empress of India. Rosemary! Now where has that tiresome girl gone? I had quite forgotten I had dismissed her! For such impudence too. Ah, here she is – with her suitcase packed I am glad to see.' Alice sounded quite severe as her maid came into the room, with her shawl and bonnet, ready to leave. She was deferential, almost obsequious, Alice was glad to note. 'You called me, Ma'am?' 'Before you go – there is still half an hour before the last train so you have plenty of time just gather up these leaves which have blown in through the window you so carelessly left open.' The maid put down her case and shawl before falling on her knees to gather up the mess. She was attractive, Alice had to admit; indeed her attractiveness had been 'the last straw', for she had appealed so strongly to Roland, Alice's husband, that his wayward glances lingered, in Alice's opinion, a shade too long upon her features. Misgivings that she had been unfair awoke at the sight of the slim kneeling figure gathering up the leaves. They were stifled; 'her behaviour to poor Tom was really quite intolerable'.

'I've cleared it all, Ma'am', she said at last, 'can I go now?' Alice was almost ready to let her go when Rosemary added, 'It is almost time now and they do say it is the last train'. Alice, herself famous for her beauty, allowed the compassion in her expression to relax into its customary insolence. 'Let me look at what you have gathered', she said, taking the leaves from Rosemary's nervous hands. She was aware that the leaves which she was scrutinizing with deliberate slowness were the pages of a dismembered Bible.

'Oh please, Ma'am, may I go now?' she broke in, 'or I shall miss the train and they do say it will be the last before the enemy come. I want to go – please!' she begged. 'With Tom?' 'Yes, Ma'am – and please won't you and Roland leave too? I'm sure it won't be safe when the enemy soldiers come.'

Alice drew herself up haughtily. 'I am sure that *Mister* Roland will be quite safe with me.' 'Oh, Ma'am, I didn't mean that – really I didn't – please can I go now?' 'We shall not run away. These are civilized enemies . . .'. But Rosemary, unable to stand it any more, had picked up her traps and run. Alice, realizing she was alone, was reading the words on a torn scrap. 'And the Satyr shall cry to his fellow.' That was all.

For a time she sat brooding in silence. Night was falling; she could hear carts lumbering westwards; men and women; animals. She was brave; she prided herself on not being afraid like her maid. What could be expected of Rosemary? 'Tell Mister Roland to come . . .'. but Rosemary had gone; with Tom.

2

Tom was a powerful lout who worked about the farm attached to the main building. He was an excellent servant and reliable in work which required strength but no initiative or intelligence. His grin was a feature of the homestead. Roland had sometimes spoken of his cruelty, but Alice did not think it amounted to much more than the thoughtlessness of a good-humoured but otherwise likeable person. It was exasperating when Rosemary complained that she had been assaulted by him. Roland was unwilling to dismiss him. He was too valuable a worker, he said; besides, who knew what Rosemary had been up to? She was no saint – always making eyes at all and sundry. 'Well, you ought to know', said Alice with meaning that made Roland colour angrily. 'Don't be ridiculous, Alice. You're jealous. She's pretty in a servant-girlish sort of way and she may have made eyes at Tom I admit – very probable in fact; but I don't want to lose a good workman.' So it fell to Alice to see her lady's maid as the culprit. This she was willing to do, for she was jealous and her jealousy was not appeased by her own very good looks. After thinking the matter over she called Rosemary to see her privately.

'I am very worried by what you told me yesterday, Rosemary. The master says Tom is a good worker and he is certain – he told me positively – that he would not do anything bad. Are you sure you didn't lead him on?' The girl coloured indignantly. 'Oh *no*, Ma'am – I would never do such a thing. I was passing by the dairy and he called me to tell me something – I went into the barn where he was standing and . . .' Alice dropped her eyes but listened with attention to a sordid story of near rape and not so distant seduction. Rosemary was angry – and frightened. Alice paused; then went on thoughtfully, 'You have to be careful. You are a girl that men find pretty and it would be

awkward if you had a baby. Especially by Tom because I know my husband, *Mister* Roland, wouldn't like that.' Alice's face, despite its beauty, was hard as she watched her maid to detect a reaction to her words. Rosemary's eyes had become hard and bright. Alice went on, 'Have you any followers, Rosemary? You can tell me without fear. I only want to help you.' 'No, Miss, except . . .' 'Yes? Except?' 'Only Tom, Miss.' Alice relaxed. 'Yes, I think he is a nice boy. And God-fearing. It will help you if . . .' 'I know he's in love with me, Ma'am . . .'. Rosemary's eyes did not relax their hard, animal stare, '. . . if you have a man's love to fall back on'. 'Oh, I have indeed, Miss . . . Ma'am, I mean.' Alice dismissed her after some more minutes of near conversation; she had wondered if she could dare to mention how great a support it had always been to her that she could fall back on the security of Roland's love. It was only after she had told Rosemary she could go that she began to suspect that her assumption of her maid's need for warning, maternal love was misplaced. Her small sarcasm at Roland's susceptibility to a pretty face began to harden, to remain undigested. Envy lay waiting, single-celled, to become malignant.

All night long the noise of traffic rolled; distant gunfire occasionally flickered, like summer lightning, noiselessly in the clouds. Alice composed herself to sleep in her chair, judging that anything more elaborate would scarcely be appropriate to the reception of the enemy forces when they arrived. Roland, having seen that the rituals about the farm had been ceremonially accomplished, drew a chair up next to Alice and set himself to ignore the rolling of the tumbrils. As dawn revealed the shapes of the furniture, Alice awoke to the strange familiarity of things familiar to her since babyhood; even her feelings seemed like old friends, made strange by their inappropriateness to the arrival of a conquering army. She rehearsed each step with a sleepless, unkempt Roland. 'Of course I shall not hide anything. "Here are the keys to all the locks on these premises. I think you will find everything correct." Then I shall retire.' Roland agreed that this would be the most dignified course. 'I don't think you are really putting your mind to it, dear', said Alice solicitously. 'When do you think they will arrive?' He examined his fingers meticulously. 'They are not like invited guests you know. They have not told me when the party is due to start.' She was vexed and felt the occasion was too serious for sarcasms.

3

Gunfire died away: the enemy did not come; preparations for his reception languished, first misted over by Alice's vivid but diminishing anxiety, finally swallowed by the background of her boring life with Roland, the routine of the farm. Alice noticed with surprise that she was bored when something made her tax Roland with lack of interest. He flushed guiltily – itself a novel change in the level uniformity of the ardours of their passion. He tried to restore the familiarity of love. Alice was not reassured as his protestations and denials formed into a hard, smooth coat of love which fitted like a strait-jacket.

She purred furiously till her rage turned to clanging heartbeats beating the murder out of her. 'I will be good . . . no hate or bitterness in my . . . write it out, fifty times . . .'

There was a disturbance in the yard, hurried footsteps and a woman's voice crying furiously, 'Let go! Let me go!' A man swore in pain. 'You bloody bitch . . . !'And then steps running up to the room where Alice and Roland waited in sudden fear to see – what next?

It was typical of these times: an eternity of boredom displaced without warning by flaming dread. Alice and Roland waited with ashen faces and staring, questioning eyes. The pounding footsteps fused with their pounding hearts – battered from without and within. The door crashed open and a woman half fell into the room.

She was gorgeously dressed in a quilted, crimson gown. With open mouth she looked from Alice to Roland, stammering with fear. 'Oh, Miss! I'm sorry, Miss. I couldn't help it, Miss! You sent me away before! I couldn't . . . the last train couldn't go. They stopped it and turned us off.'

A car in the yard started up and drove away, the sound of its engine fading into the distance. Then silence flowed back into the room where the three had stopped to listen. Alice recovered her voice first. 'Rosemary! What are you doing here?' Roland relaxed as if resigning further part in the talk. He noticed that Rosemary was naked but for the gown and ill-fitting shoes. Roland excused himself. 'Must see to the cows; bye-bye', and he bowed himself out of the scene.

The two women faced each other, Alice's restrained, good taste contrasting drably with the tattered splendour of her maid's finery. Alice was tense; Rosemary stared as if unable to comprehend her mistress's incomprehension. 'You can't send me away! They will catch me, like they did before, before I got to the train.' 'You must go! – at once!'

'I can't. I won't! How can you be so cruel?' Alice stretched out her hand as if to compel her towards the door. The movement released something in Rosemary who at once held Alice's hand and bathed it in kisses. Alice was angry, frightened, tense. 'Go! Go! you fool! Can't you see? You put us all in danger!'

'I won't! I'm frightened!'

'Fool! There's nothing to be frightened of.' As she said it she was aware of the fear in her own voice. 'Let me go!' Alice struggled to free herself. Rosemary was startled by her own success. 'Oh, Miss! Forgive me. I'm sorry, really I am', but she did not let her advantage go. Alice, weakened by the months of anxiety since the day the invasion had become inevitable, was no match for her maid. Rosemary knew something of that bright world outside. Alice and Roland existed in a cocoon of fear that gripped them like steel; Alice did not know the world of which Rosemary had had a glimpse.

Alice struggled furiously to free her hands, both now gripped by her maid. 'Please forgive me!' Frightened and humiliated, 'Let go! How dare you!' Her maid stared uneasily into Alice's frightened face. It was fear now . . . not anger. Rosemary's flood of apology and prayers for forgiveness did not cease. Nor did she loosen her grip. 'Let go!' Alice could hardly hide that she was near to tears. Her background of wealthy home, conventional schooling and religion did not provide her with the dam to hold back her fear.

She was standing very near to the bed behind her. In her anxiety Rosemary had pressed her mistress ever nearer to it and a last

struggle to release her wrists led Alice to pull Rosemary to her. Both girls fell over onto the bed, Rosemary uppermost. Rosemary's anxiety and guilt were overcome by lusty strength; Alice's weakness inflamed her passion.

The physical contact, her body against the young girl beneath her, caused Rosemary to stare intently into the tear-soiled face. All guilt and subordination gone, she pressed Alice's head back, exposing her throat. She forced the eyelids apart and peered into her eyes. Then she laughed – no trace of shyness now but frank curiosity. 'Why – they are blue! Such a pretty blue too! Not dark and brown like mine.' Alice was indeed a pretty and intelligent blonde, contrasting with her maid's dark colouring. The convention of the superiority of wealth combined with Alice's striking looks served to dim the power of real beauty. Alice's advantages were in eclipse. It was Rosemary who was flushed, the physically dominant, privileged girl.

Both girls were ignorant of sensuous pleasure. For Rosemary, the vital force coursing through arteries, battering her heart and temples, brought thoughts from a reservoir unknown to her. As she gazed she knew triumph. When Alice at last brought herself to meet her maid's stare, the past had gone as if it had never been. Not only had her situation changed, she had herself become the home of feelings that might have belonged to someone else, they were so strange.

Rosemary adjusted her position. The slum child, robust and dominant, luxuriated in the physical mastery. 'They are the same as we are; just as bad if we teach them what we know.' The response from her mistress was unmistakable. Alice had for so many years been starved of passionate life that she was vulnerable to her maid's manipulations. As soon as she had elicited the proof she wanted, Rosemary tossed the hair back from her eyes, sat up and rested on the edge of the bed. Alice also rose, but it was a new Alice, rosy, submissive. 'What does madam wish now?' Rosemary half turned, but without looking directly at her 'servant' held out her hand. 'The nail file, please, Alice.' 'Will that be all, Ma'am?' 'All for the present; get on with tidying the room till I want you.' Alice flushed with pleasure, but this time she was angry and resentful too. When Rosemary looked at Alice she too was aware that Alice's new-found beauty reflected a complex emotion. She might have said something if she had not at that moment seen a face in the mirror beyond Alice's

shoulder. She spun round startled. Rosemary's sudden movement made Alice follow her gaze; it was only Roland.

'Roland! What are you doing here?' It was Rosemary who had recovered first. 'I see', said Alice icily, 'you have met before'. 'Oh, rather!' babbled Roland. 'What an utter damned fool', Alice thought bitterly, 'that husband of mine is. Can he really ever have imagined that I didn't know what those two beauties were up to?' In one respect she was herself surprised. Rosemary recovered, to settle into that very same state of mind which Alice half expected her to deny with confusion. 'My lipstick, Alice', she said with calm authority. Unprepared for this, Alice obeyed and placed it – her special lipstick – in her maid's hand. 'Well, Roland, what have you been up to?'

It was Roland's turn to be at a loss. Rosemary was not acting a part; it was clear that there was something genuine about her hatred and contempt for both husband and wife. Without looking at either she continued her make-up in leisurely style.

Suddenly Alice lost self-control and slapped the manicure set, a present from her father, out of her maid's hand. Rosemary stood up, pale and tense. 'All right, you bloody bitch, I'll make you pay for this. This is not capitalist England now, you know!' For a moment Roland thought he understood it all. 'You fool!' he said to his wife. 'God knows what you have done with your tantrums!' For an instant Alice was abashed. Her sudden rage had taken her by surprise and now she was flooded with a feeling of intense remorse and menace.

'Come, Roland dear' – it was Rosemary speaking – 'I am sure you have had a very trying day. Come to your lovey's arms.' She glared at Alice whose turn it was to be pale and frightened. 'I'm sure Alice won't mind will you? Don't bother about the manicure set – forgive and forget I say! Come, Roland', and she opened her arms in a wide embrace.

For all his hatred, Roland was not prepared for this. He hesitated, scared also by the cold contempt in his wife's eyes. 'Darling!' – it was Rosemary's mocking invitation, but she had overdone it. Roland made a response of disapproval as if the episode were some improbable joke. Were it not for the tense faces of the women and the reality of their hate for each other and the man, the participants could have been an hallucination.

A car was drawing up outside. Rosemary, nearest the window, looked out. A man in a dark suit, athletic, with a slight tendency to

corpulence, was carefully closing the car door. The tension, made worse by the banality of the scene, rose to higher pitch. Rosemary had lost her arrogant assurance and turned dead white. 'Who is the Duke?' whispered Roland. 'Shut up, you bloody fool!' The man had heard something from the window at which they stood; he turned his face up to the three and froze; the stare bound them together, as it were, in perpetuity. He stared with a calm deliberation which contrasted eerily with the horror with which they looked at him. Rosemary had beads of sweat on her now sallow face. Alice could not understand.

Another man, who had been hidden by a buttress of the farm building, joined the first. 'English?' The first nodded and lost interest in them. The group at the window took advantage of the disinterest to move out of sight.

Roland scoffed, 'Whatever is the matter with you two?' Alice had no interest in Roland's futilities; her lips were pursed and bloodless, her eyes angry. 'Oh come on! What have I done?' He appealed first to one and then the other. Alice moved away. Rosemary, appealed to directly, responded as if to continue the hostile banter in which she had been interrupted. Her finery accentuated the fact of being a drab slut. Desires to humiliate his wife with her maid gave Roland's features a fleeting vivacity, but could not withstand the reality. 'I don't know what's happened to you', he said truthfully. Rosemary came to life. 'Nothing! Why, darling?' She had assumed a well-drilled representation of sexual life.

Alice, watching as she realized she was supposed to be, had none of the 'appropriate' feelings of rage and humiliation. Menace overwhelmed her. Through the growing darkness two figures detached themselves from the background of the passage beyond the door. Their entry, though quiet, was not disguised and startled the 'sexual pair'.

Neither man seemed aware that anyone other than themselves was present. They walked to the cupboards in which Alice and Roland kept their clothes and piled them on the floor, drawing up lists of all items. 'Very methodical', said Roland aloud, making no attempt to disguise his sarcasm. 'May I ask what you think you are doing?' The man whom they had first seen getting out of the car stretched himself upright. He appeared to be the senior. 'We are collecting and

checking the personal effects of Mr and Mrs Trubshaw, deceased.' 'There was a maid-servant and man about the house too', said the second man; both referred to some official-looking paper. 'But we are not deceased – yet', said Roland with some asperity. 'Yet?' said the stranger. 'Must be some mistake.' 'Indeed there must!' 'I don't think it concerns us. That's the liquidation department I expect. We are only collecting up their effects.' '*Their* effects!' Alice broke in indignantly, 'But it's *our* effects'. 'Are you Mr and Mrs Trubshaw? Who's this? You Miss Slocombe, the maid? Have you seen . . .', he consulted his paper . . . 'Mr Jeremy? He's the man isn't he? It's nothing to do with us, but contact the liquidation people; they may have made a mistake.' 'But do you mean', said Alice flushing angrily, 'you take these things away?' 'That is all we have to do.' 'Do you give us a receipt?'

The man seemed almost shocked. 'Whatever for? As soon as it's all been checked and found correct *they* give *us* a receipt.' 'Who's "they"?' 'Just the department. It's nothing to do with us. It's only because they sent us before the people who should have collected you I expect. It doesn't matter you know.' 'But these are *our* things! This is *our* farm.' It was his turn to look surprised. 'I don't think so; it would be most unusual. Are you alive? Our list says you are deceased. Since the completion of the conquest the usual regulations come into operation.' 'What are they? We have not been told anything!' 'Well no, I don't expect so. Our people would know, but I don't imagine they would bother about what order they collect in – people or things, it's all the same to them.'

The investigation and removal continued impersonally and coldly; it was frightening in its thoroughness. Roland wanted to bluster, but the civil, patient indifference to his presence was intimidating. All Alice's belongings were neatly ticketed, parcelled, labelled – though she could not see the labels – and removed.

'You have left me none of my clothes!' she expostulated. The man understood only imperfectly. 'I have nothing but these things I stand up in!' He came over as if to reply, but all he did was check her dress cursorily, saying, 'That will do for now. You'll be told about your clothes allowance tomorrow.' He walked off before she could recover from her indignation. 'Well I'll be damned!' said Roland, following the retreating figures with his eyes. Alice turned away from him; overcome with sudden fear, she burst into tears. She felt, had felt for

a long time, completely alone. She slapped away a kindly but clumsy attempt to caress her.

That night Rosemary got into bed with Roland and, laughing, pushed Alice out to fend for herself. Proud and humiliated, she went upstairs to Rosemary's bed; she could not bear to share the room with 'those two'.

4

The night of Rosemary's sexual triumph was busily spent in luxuriating in her mistress's bed, her husband and her husband's downfall; she was conscious of the pleasure she felt at his weakness in succumbing to her seductions. It was his marriage and home, as well as Alice's, that she was destroying. The degradation of her class, of her beauty, was being avenged; that night she knew what it was to be the initiator. The feelings obscured the anxiety which had been her constant companion for months during which the successful invasion, its details unknown, had swept over her homeland. 'Her homeland . . .' – the phrase aroused her scorn. It was not *her* homeland; it was the homeland of the rich, the powerful, the dull, the respectable, the cheats, the hypocrites. How smug Alice had been when questioning her – damn her bloody impertinence! – about her 'followers', her 'lovers'! Rosemary remembered her fears (groundless, as it turned out) that she had been made pregnant by the powerful but dim-witted man-of-all-work, Tom. 'You must have encouraged him', Alice said. 'Tom has always been a good worker; certainly I have never known him to be anything but respectful.' Rosemary had dabbed her tear-stained face and stolen a surreptitious glance as she stood, submissively, before her mistress. 'Yes, Miss – I mean, no, Miss', she said demurely. Neither would have admitted sarcasm or ironical denial. Both were unaware that the scene in which they were actors was anything but real, so well had they learned their parts; the past was unknown, the present unobserved; the 'future' was in fact at hand this very night, as Rosemary played sensuously with Roland in Alice's bed.

She had again been 'encouraging' Tom. She and Roland were taken by surprise nevertheless. 'What's that?' said Roland sitting up

with a start. 'It frightened me too', said Rosemary as she soothed him back into her arms, but she was laughing too. A muffled scream had been followed by sounds of physical struggle. 'What was it?' said Roland, partially reassured, allowing himself to sink back. 'Let's listen to them, the rascals', said Rosemary in a dreamy, reminiscent voice. 'Who is upstairs? Who's in your room?' 'Nothing, nothing – go to sleep, my pet. Or you can stay awake and listen to them if you like. It's nothing. Only Tom and Alice having a bit of fun.' Thoroughly awake, horror-struck, Roland scrambled out of bed and began hurriedly to throw on his clothes as he groped for them in the dark. 'Don't be a fool!' Rosemary was alarmed now. 'Come back into bed!' she ordered in peremptory tones. Bewildered, unable to see where he was going, Roland at last returned, shivering, to bed. 'What's the matter with you?' she scolded as she stimulated him. 'Can't they have a bit of fun as well as us? I bet she encouraged him!' 'She wouldn't do such a thing. Who told you that story?' Roland could not see her face, but he could feel her laughing mockingly. It did not seem – or was it? – to be unkind.

The sounds from the floor above were unmistakable. Powerful feelings flooded Roland's mind, but did not include sexual passion for Rosemary. She was frightened to realize that her stimulation, usually unfailing, did not draw him to her or seduce him from fear. Both listened to the struggle. Alice's protests gradually became muffled and finally ceased altogether.

'He's murdered her! Are you sure it was Tom?' 'Of course it was.' He was not reassured; but he had sown doubt. Rosemary knew she was lying. She had encouraged the farm lout to believe that Alice would be expecting him in her, Rosemary's room. She had been an idiot to blurt out that she 'knew' anything. Besides, she did not know; even if it were Tom, who knew what form his rage would take if he felt Alice was fooling him? Or even if her resistance served to inflame him further? There were such things as murders of passion.

They listened. The quiet had turned to silence. The silence had become absolute. Rosemary was furious to find that her plans for the use of the night had so miscarried that dawn already lit the curtainless windows. The pair listened and watched; the growing light promised a rare day; promised, but did not fulfil. The window, framed in light, revealed lack of curtains and the room bare of its treasures. Once Rosemary had coveted them; now she was the owner.

But no magnificat dispelled, or even obscured, the dread which grew with the dawn.

'I'm going upstairs', said Roland desperately. She did not restrain him, but instead joined him at the mean attic door. For a while they stood silently and gazed at the dirty and disordered bed. 'Look peaceful, don't they?'

The phrase lit up the scene of his mother lying in her coffin 'like undertaker's confectionery', he thought as he had surveyed the ghoulish artistry of funeral craftsmanship. 'Looks peaceful, don't she?'

Once, how beautiful the dawn over the English farm and field would have seemed. What might it not have promised? 'Like two kids aren't they? Come on, we can't do anything here', and Rosemary drew her arm through Roland's to go. It was too late.

5

Alice, taking refuge in her maid's room, was desperate with rage and fear. She did not get into the sluttish bed, but composed herself for sleep in the wicker chair, the only comfortable chair in the room. She had been left with scant clothing; it was too dark to read even the trash she would be likely to find. Unable to ignore the cold or prevent her shivering from making the chair creak so loudly that it woke her, she escaped into thought till fact and nightmare were indistinguishable from hallucination.

These experiences became so terrifying that she was sure a man was in the room. She struggled to retain some vestige of hold on fact. When she sought to cover herself with the bedclothes she had scorned, the comfort conspired to make her feel she was in the arms of a man. Then, angry at her resistance, he threatened to bash her. She struggled against the suffocation of the bedclothes which were rammed over her head. She bit at the loathsome terms of endearment which reproached her with being mean. She was convinced it was Tom until the threats became so violent that she knew it could not be anyone so benign as the lout who was docile and contrite when she had reproved him and threatened him with instant dismissal. Even the memory turned bad and became one in which he accused her furiously of going back on the message which she had sent him by Rosemary. She was overpowered, she could not resist the assault. 'Aah . . . I can feel the love-light in your eyes. I know! I know!' he said triumphantly. Too weak, she swooned away.

'Get up, you slut!' The order was uttered harshly. 'I can't', she managed to say. It was daylight. It was the man. 'This your boyfriend?' He did not wait for an answer but turned to some subordinates. 'Take the two women to the truck', he ordered, with no attempt

to disguise his contempt and indifference. 'And these two', indicating the men, 'I've done with them. Block B – in the yard.' Tom and Roland were hustled out.

For weeks Roland had been the object of sporadic and casual inquiry; the procedure had been both searching and thorough. The man who appeared to hold some authority had on one occasion made him so angry by the searching inquiry about the livestock on the farm that he asked him 'who the hell' he thought he was and turned sulky. The man did not answer or take offence – he dropped his questioning. The next day another took up the interrogation. After a day in which he had been approached by three different men, Roland voiced suspicions. 'There are a hell of a lot of Nosey Parkers around here, I must say', and told Alice why he thought so. Her indifference led him to forget his annoyance before it grew into suspicion. It did not occur to him that his complaint might indeed be a scientifically accurate observation.

Both Alice and Roland were jumpy in a way to which they were not accustomed. Their lives proceeded as they had before the invasion; they were master and wife, joined in a drab, conventional, comfortably-off fidelity. It slithered into an equally drab, conventional infidelity. Then the anxiety and dread of the approaching disaster turned to anticlimactic newslessness. One day Roland saw a number of foreign soldiers in the marketplace at Puckeridge. They looked casually at him; he dared not question them. He realized he was cowed, but did not know why. He hoped Alice would not ask why he had not found out the news – he would not be able to tell her. There *was* no news. Roland belonged to a class which assumed that if there was news he would be told it as a matter of course. Disdain had been cultivated sedulously till it was second nature to hide his poverty beneath a cover of profundity modestly concealed. Uneasy lest others would face the truth of which he was dimly aware, he swaggered and blustered and hoped no one could see his fear. Alice, likewise, was afraid lest the married unit disguise would fail to convince. The life from which Rosemary came was a better preparation for ability to recognize poverty of any kind. The opportunity for observing 'married love' from the vantage of the maid and whore provided binocular vision; with this she could now view love and war. Whether she had the ability to understand the observations which she made was not clear. Like Alice, like Roland, she was cowed, but the emotion differed

for the blend differed. The victorious troops who wandered so freely about the country, the farm, the house itself, knew fear; that, likewise, had a quality which Roland knew was different from his. He had first realized this when the man whose easy insolence he was resenting sprang up to address a stranger who had joined their conversation.

When Roland and Rosemary had been confronted by the man, his unceremonious treatment frightened, but did not surprise them. Alice was suffering from an assault which she had known only as something that happened amongst the 'lower orders'. Roland had once seen a pregnant child stare at him with feral eyes and disappear suddenly, smoothly and silently as if magicked away. Such things did not happen in the world inhabited by English women. Alice had gone before he could tell her of his horror. Just as well perhaps; he had not prepared his speech. Not even clichés would come to help him bluster.

Out in the yard, he and Tom were told to wait. The memory of the pregnant child triggered off feelings which were unfamiliar to Roland. His heart beating fast, aware of great danger, he raced to the corner of the building and dropped to a slow walk. The man, talking to a subordinate on the other side of the yard, would turn in his direction in another moment. Roland slid round the corner unobserved. Where was he going? To Munden, if he could. It was three quarters of an hour's walk and he would have to cross the Puckeridge road. He thought he would be safe till then. By fields and a lane which he knew better than any stranger, it took him an hour to get to the main Puckeridge road. There he had to hide sharply to avoid being seen by approaching transport. Then silence – but for the larks in the blue sky. It was strange to be a fugitive in such a peaceful scene which he knew so well. If he were caught he would be shot – his running away made that certain. He was flying to save his life; why had he not saved Alice? Damn Alice. He did not love the bloody woman, never had, though she was still very pretty. Her looks had become hard as she had soured as they remained childless. Well, maybe she would bear a 'defective' by Tom.

When the Munden farm came in sight he realized he had no idea why he had come. Who was in occupation? What was he to do? England was a prison; it had been 'pacified' – like hell it had! How the larks sang! He had not heard them like that before. He crouched

behind the pigeon cote where he commanded a good view of the homestead and stared at its door as if willing someone to come out.

Suddenly he thought he heard his name whispered from behind. He listened; it was a beautiful day, so still that all he could hear were the larks and a convoy on the main road. He began to relax. He was hearing, as if for the first time, country sounds in his own land. The voice came again, this time more urgent. Keeping his head down, he replied, 'Robin'.

6

Alice jolted in the back of the truck. She was battered, mentally and physically, from her night's experience; more undramatically, from her life since marriage. Near to tears of fatigue, she was unable to tolerate the sight of Rosemary in her ridiculous finery; it seemed impossible that any man could be attracted by such a slut. It was not her get-up that was sluttish; it was not her body; it was her self. Yet she had a tautness of mind which could not be said of herself or Roland.

The truck stopped. 'Get out!' They scrambled out and Alice saw she was at Braughing House, which had belonged to some friends by whom they were occasionally bored. The fabric was intact, but their solid and handsome furniture had, like themselves, been taken away. The women were shoved into the hall. 'Stand there! From now on you are under orders. You will obey instantly. And keep your bloody mouths shut!' He left them and disappeared into an inner room: they could hear men's voices.

It was cold. It must have been half an hour, during which they stood and shivered, before he reappeared. He gave them both rough, blue cotton dressing gowns. 'Take your clothes off and put these on. Come on . . . hurry!' he said angrily as they hesitated, expecting him to withdraw. 'But . . . started Alice. He slapped her hard across the mouth, making it bleed. 'Didn't I tell you to keep your mouth shut?' He collected their clothes and walked off.

As they stood, starved, naked and trembling, despair came near to breaking the resistance of the two girls. 'I'm dreadfully sorry, Miss.' Alice noted with surprise that Rosemary was expressing real compassion. 'I know them. You don't. They are all the same.' 'You know them, Rosemary? How? Have you seen these men before?' 'Oh no, Miss. Though', she added with a meaning nod towards the door off

the main hall, 'I've seen that fat rascal before. And lots more like him.' She addressed the interloper directly. 'Come on, Fatty, want a peep? Can't you get a cock stand with your girlfriend?' The man quickly withdrew. 'There! You see, Miss?' she said in triumph, 'they are all the same if you talk the right language – and, begging your pardon, Miss, but I don't mean English – they know fast enough, I can tell you.'

Alice was not listening. Her attention had become wayward; since the outbreak of war she had noticed a deterioration which she supposed must have gone on longer than she knew. Interested in what her maid said, disposed to question her further, she could not sustain her train of thought. She knew this hall; with an effort she could visualize what had been its appearance when she dined here. Its drab, unfurnished condition established it as if a photographic slide had replaced the scene she knew. Where had the Calverts gone? Where had they been taken? It was easier to believe that the inhabitants of the island had been wiped out and replaced than that there had been any form of assimilation of one population by another. The village had been familiar since childhood. She had never known herself as anything but one of the gentry. Now she stood naked, incongruous, alien, without a point of reference that made sense. True, there was defeat, but this was on a scale of defeat so disastrous that it would be necessary to suppose that something analogous to the Norman Conquest had taken place.

There was movement at the other end of the hall. Two or three men and a woman came in with a jug of water and what might have been surgical instruments. The water was cold. They talked amongst themselves, but otherwise paid no attention to the two girls except to wash them and clean their bodies thoroughly, with no more concern for them than if they had been inanimate. They appeared to talk freely and replied civilly if either Alice or Rosemary spoke to them. 'May I ask what this is about?' The woman gave Alice's question consideration and then replied, 'As far as we know it is in conformity with the S18B.' 'And what is that?' She showed Alice a printed slip. It was a succinct statement, in English, of cleaning instructions. 'We are not allowed to talk to you or you to us.' And that was that. A little later Rosemary, exasperated by an unusually painful scrape between her fingers – they were usually too expert to inflict pain unless with intent – asked if she could apply for a job as a cleaner. 'Out of the question', was the curt reply.

When the cleaning was over the team withdrew and were replaced by medical assessors. The room which had been allowed to become dark, was flooded with bright light. This time there was no conversation and when Alice asked one man if they were to be given food and facilities of a sanitary kind, she was so alarmed by his ferocious gaze that she fell silent.

The medical examination was minute and thorough. The wishes of the two girls were of no consequence. There could have been no more convincing evidence that they were irrelevant than the way the examination was carried out on this and subsequent occasions. It was a daily routine expeditiously carried out.

That night the two were provided with simple beds and bed clothing. Alice felt relief that nothing worse had happened; fatigue did the rest. She heard Rosemary say, 'Oh Alice, I'm so sorry', and lapsed into stupor before she heard what her maid was sorry about.

7

Robin was in a disused compartment of the pigeon cote. It was not used for any purpose; even Colin's sacks of meal had lain neglected for two months since he had been 'removed' – what Roland had learned was the 'pacification'. Robin insisted Roland should not attempt to join him till dark. It was obvious that Robin's safety was not to be prejudiced in favour of Roland's. The unwelcome thought would not have been entertained even one day before.

After dark Roland joined Robin, who questioned him closely, in whispers, over and again – was he sure, quite sure, that no one had seen him at any time on his way to Munden? Why had he come? His old friend was not pleased to see him. On the other hand he did not want him to go. 'After all, they might see you going.' Roland was affronted. 'I don't know how I'm to get food for you; you haven't brought your own I suppose?' 'I say, old man, don't bother! I can scrounge for myself – you know I can. You remember, with the Boche . . .' The idea filled Robin with terror. 'The Boche! My dear man, where have you been? These people aren't the Boche!' 'Oh, I'm sorry' – Roland was angry and sarcastic – 'I thought they had declared war again.' 'Forget it. The Nazis were kind and good. A bit sentimental and damnably incompetent, but this lot – you've got something to learn. Do you know what happened in that last battle? Well, it was the last. There's no army; there's no nation. Do you know . . .' They were interrupted. Stealthy steps were coming upstairs. They stopped outside the door which was ajar. It was pushed open by a dark, stocky man. Roland found himself looking down the long barrel of an automatic. Robin held his hands as high above his head as he could get them. The movement was instantaneous and distracted the man's attention from Roland. Roland, surprised into action, leaped

at the man who fired – too late. Whether he was stunned by the fall, Roland did not know, for he was bashing his skull in with the man's rifle in a paroxysm of fear and rage. 'You damned fool! Look what you've done now! No time. Out of here! They must have heard the gun. Out! you fool, there's not a moment to lose.' They rushed, almost threw themselves, down the stairs and into the darkness of the yard. They were sobered into silence by the stillness of the night. 'As fast as you can. Puckeridge! You damned fool! You damned, damned fool. What did you have to come for? Board and lodging, peace and . . . till you had to come.' 'Shut up', said Roland. 'What an age they've been coming from the guard room, or wherever they've been. Now, move!' They had now gone far enough to dare to move fast. They avoided the road – Robin was certain searchlights would come into use when the body – 'Blast you!' – was discovered. As if in response, two searchlight cars swung out of Munden Lane; one turned sharp right towards Wadesmill, the other left in their direction, both with sirens blazing. 'Lie down! Freeze!' The car raced past. Roland took a deep breath. He laughed. 'Bloody fools! I thought you said they were intelligent. Anyone would think a man on foot needed pursuit by a powerful car doing eighty miles an hour!' Considerably relieved, they walked on. 'I think', said Roland, 'we have probably a good half hour, probably more, till they start back having decided they have missed us. Of course, they may be more intelligent than I think and have pulled up at the pub to "write their reports" in comfort before going back to H.Q. By the way, is H.Q. at Munden?' Robin shivered. 'I'm scared, I'm hungry and I'm cold. What is more, they are not bloody fools. They won that war. In a week there were no British Armed Forces. As for you and your intelligence – why, you haven't even heard the news yet.' 'What news?' 'The news I've just been telling you. You know nothing about it, or you wouldn't talk such rot. Here's the searchlight car, crawling back again. Get down!'

'Don't bother', said a cultured voice immediately behind them as the searchlight car drew up by their side with the beam full on them. 'You were, of course, quite right', he said courteously to Roland. 'The police – didn't Lorca describe them as "with skulls of neuters"? – I think so – are so famous for behaving as you suspected that we thought it might be worth using that bait. Excuse me', he said apologetically, 'for trying so simple a dodge; it does usually work. We just send out walking parties – their pace is more appropriate than that of

the high-powered car – then, when the fugitives relax, they give away their presence in their momentary – with you I am sure it would be no more than momentary, er, – incaution.' He bowed politely. 'Now shall we be getting back? It is rather dark and – dear me – I believe it's starting to drizzle. I expect you could both do with a meal and, I daresay, Mister Remes has told you our rations aren't bad, though for the past two months he has been picnicking, rather than dining, off them. After you.' He bowed the two into the open door of the police car.

At the pigeon cote he was still politeness itself. 'Do you mind', he said, 'if I come and see your quarters? They are, I know, rather rough, but', as he followed them upstairs into the room where Roland had only shortly before murdered the guard, 'I imagine Mister Remes has found them adequate for his purposes. I expect he told you he has been living here for a couple of months.' He looked at the bloody body on the floor. 'Dear, dear. I am so sorry; we are very short-staffed or I would have had this cleared up. He's a countryman of yours. I can't think why he's such a careless fool. Or was, perhaps I should say, but I had warned him repeatedly not to be so foolhardy. I knew he would go blundering up after you when I heard', he again bowed slightly to Roland, 'you had arrived. Dispose of the body at your convenience, gentlemen.' A swift glance round the loft and he was gone. He was back almost immediately. 'By the way, I ought to have warned you. I wouldn't relax your precautions if I were you. These fellows of yours are not very reliable. This poor fellow – you'd hardly believe it, but we warned him repeatedly *not* to be foolhardy and yet he came blundering upstairs after you. Admittedly he was a bit dim and I know you wouldn't do anything rash. If you will go on, Mister Remes, as you have been while you have been staying with us, I am sure you won't get into any difficulty.'

Roland and Robin stared at each other. 'What do you make of that? He comes and goes like the Cheshire cat.' 'Damn the Cheshire cat! I tell you – I'm scared stiff. For God's sake, don't be a bloody fool!' 'I am not feeling quite in the mood to be called a bloody fool', said Roland exasperated. 'Where do we go from here?' '*You* tell *me*. I knew they saw you coming and you had to underline it by murder. Obviously they did nothing; they knew you were here all the time. I wonder who this poor sod is. I didn't see him, did you? How do we get rid of it?' A bullet crashed through the window, hit something

else, and whined away into the darkness. 'Oh God! *That's* their game. We are here free – free to provide them with targets.' Roland was determined to get away before his reserves went. If he didn't, he would become like Robin.

The night, or what was left of it, was a source of terror. They had had no food. Robin assumed, though not so readily as Roland, that they were expected to find the same source of food available as before, namely, the Officers' Mess pillaged by the old cook. 'Come to think of it', said Roland, 'where is the Officers' Mess, now you mention it?' 'I never *have* mentioned it', replied Robin. 'I thought you had seen the Officers' Mess.' 'How could I? I haven't been here for the last two months. It's you – *you* said you got grub every . . .'. Another heavy bullet crashed through the remains of the window, spattering them with glass. 'Are they going on with this do you think? We'd better get out of here.' 'Where to? You forget England has been "pacified" very thoroughly; they don't admit they ever went to war.' Five more bullets came together almost at once. 'Hadn't we better stop talking? They know we're here.' 'Of course they know we are here. Let's get to hell out of it.'

8

The dreamless sleep ended. The day was as empty of events – facts proper to daytime – as the night had been empty of dreams. Meals were served to both girls. It occurred to them that they had no memory of the food; the 'facts' of daytime and night were defective, mutilated. They were having dreams – mutilated dreams – lacking a dimension like a solid body that casts no shadow in light. The world of reality, facts, was no longer distinguishable from dreams, unconsciousness, night. Thoughts with and thoughts without a thinker replaced a universe where discrimination ruled. Dreams had none of the distinguishing characteristics of mind, feelings, mental representations, formulations. The thinker had no thoughts, the thoughts were without thinkers. Freudian dreams had no Freudian free associations; Freudian free associations had no dreams. Without intuition they were empty; without concept they were blind.

Rosemary said, 'You are nice, Alice. I prefer you to Tom.' Alice felt a voluptuous glow steal over her. 'Oh thank you, Ma'am', she replied humbly to her maid. 'Will that be all now?' 'No, lay out my finery; then you can go.' Alice found herself ranging over the wardrobe of exquisite shoes.

Thoughts, whore's apparatus, schooling . . . As she collected these objects she was carried away by an immense love and adoration. Unable to contain herself she said, 'Oh, Ma'am, can't I see you wear them? It would be wonderful to be able to give them all to you. I shall call Roland. He will make a better husband for you than for me. You will make him a better man than I could.' She fell at Rosemary's feet, anointing them with her tears which themselves turned to a precious ointment as they fell. How does she come to waste all her treasures like this? Does she not know what manner of . . . servant this is? Does

she not know what the value of her gifts is – the education, the health, her beauty, our beauty? Does she not know that we were Penelope's suitors? That Homer celebrated us? That we died even before there was a poet to confer immortality upon us? Ronsard knew of us when we were beautiful. Why does she not send them away? Why are we sent away empty? Why are even our thoughts emptied and our concepts denuded of their contents, our concepts and thoughts denuded of their apparatus, equipment, without which they are blind? Did not Kant, our Browning, tell them? Why do they choose Cant, the Barabbas-like thief? I before ee except after see?

Alice, adoring, looked up. 'Who are you? May I not see you as you are?' 'I have told you. I am your maid – your servant – poor, despised, needy, the whore. It was I who sent Tom to you, deprived you of Roland. You can't give me anything.' She spoke without bitterness. Alice looked up expecting to find she was being mocked. There was no mockery. 'But tell me who you are; I shall wrestle with you from dawn to dusk; from dusk to dawn, from O to God; from God to science; from science to God; from security to the infinite that is man's infinity; from the infinite confines of stupidity, from stupor to the bigotry of certitude; from infinite hate to infinite love; from infinite coldness, indifference of the absolute, to the intolerable infinitude of absolute love. Show me.' 'No.' 'Show me.'

'Because of your importunity I will lift the veil. I will not give you sight, but I will give you insight so your greatest will be able to see me in a glass darkly, me in whom there is no shadow cast by turning. You will pay as even your greatest had to pay – "from that time on the balance of his mind was disturbed." He was condemned to live imprisoned in everlasting sanity.'

'Who are you?'

'I am compassion.' 'Who are you?'

'I am your maid – but even then you did not see.'

'Open my eyes.'

'No. I sent you prophets but you would not listen.'

'Open my ears.'

'I sent you Bach.'

'He had perfect pitch.'

'He tempered the clavier well.'

'Send me a better one.'

'No, I sent you Mozart.'

'You took him back too soon.'

'I sent you Beethoven.'

'He was flawed.'

'You flawed him: you would not look at the flaws I made.'

'Show me.'

'I sent the spirochaete.'

'I could not see.'

'It was beautiful.'

'I could not see its beauty.'

'I sent you Thaïs.'

'Who are you?'

'Only now do you give a home to curiosity, but to make it sleep.'

'I will awaken it.'

'I have done that, but you strive to put it to sleep.'

'Tell me who you are. Let me see.'

'I will show and tell. And you will use what I show and tell to stupefy, to drug yourself.'

'Try me!'

'See then: I am Thaïs. I am Helen of Troy. I caused mankind to see Beauty. I launched a thousand ships and burned the topless towers of Ilium.'

Rosemary and Alice have swooned away, but Rosemary still talks.

'Who are you?'

(*Shadowy Figures disguised as S.F. take over.*)

'We are Science Fiction. Who are you?'

'I am the Artist who made the ram caught in a thicket beautiful in gold. I am the hunter who caught the ram in a thicket. I am the thicket in which the ram was caught. Who are you?'

'I am Science Fiction. I am S.F. I am the Fiction which became Science Fact. I am the tomb robber. I am the drug that stole your senses away. I am the tomb, ugly and frightening. I am the thief that made you bury, in the golden ram and its golden, golden thicket, the work of Art. I made you bury it in the death pit of Ur. I robbed the death pit of its terrors. I am the S.F. who, disguised as the holy fool, appeared as the Silly Fool. I am S.F. But who now is this?'

'I am what I am. I am God. I am Satan. I am hell fire. I am the burning bush. I am the fire that all men worship. I am Satan. I stole your thicket and refined it in the fire till it burned so brightly that all men worshipped me. I am Mammon. Who is this?'

'I am Strife. I set God against Mammon. I set the vulva against the penis, the contained against its content. I caused the lean to devour the fat. Who are you?'

'I am the dreamer. I dream a dream. I am the den in which I was buried. Who are you?'

'I am the thought that found a thinker. Who are you?'

'I am the robber who drugged you so you would not know you were being conceptualized. I am the dream that drugged you so you would not know I was a concept that would be so nice that you would never be the same once I had conceived you. You would not know that the direction in which I was robbing you would lead from nothing to unconsciousness to sleep to dream to waking thoughts to dream thoughts to nothingness to O = zero, from O = zero to O which is O = oh! to O which is a picture which is a picture of a hole or greedy mouth or vagina which offers perfect freedom which is death which is perfect freedom which is perfect pitch or absolute colour or Eternal Life or Eternal Death or Perpetual Motion or Perpetual Inertia or Absolute Space or space like mental space in which there exist objects so compact that they are like white dwarfs or so sparse and rare that they can only be grasped by finite means like Poisson's law governing exceedingly infrequent events or so absolute a space that your mental life is itself destroyed as in a body which is anaemic because mind is lost like blood in a body whose capillaries are so greedy that there is not enough blood to be shared. Who are you?'

'I can see you are waking. You will be blinded by day, by sight, because you are so blind you detect the faintest light of an object so dark that increased light is too much. You oscillate, back and forth.'

'No. Round and round. The diameter is so vast that you cannot see the opposite side.'

'No. You oscillate, with so small an excursion that you cannot discern that the excursion would have to be beyond your time to make the journey round the circle. You cannot even detect that the circle and the diameter are signs denoting the same object. You argue . . . who are you?'

'I am strife. I cause you not to agree and the strife wakes you out of darkness. I am confusion. I cause confusion of tongues. I am Babel. I am the Tower that all men are made like. Who are you?'

'I am the garden into which the serpent found entry.'

'I am the beam by which I found a way to enter.' 'I am Urania.'

'I am divine wisdom by which pagan disguise I entered as Urania.'

'I am Palinurus by whom the fleet of lesser helmsmen were able to sail.'

'I am the many-wiled leader who gave Palinurus his orders. Who are you?'

'I am the disguise robbed from Odysseus who is so wealthy in wiles. I flung reason from his throne. Who are you?'

'I am rationalization who is Reason disguised so that I may appear as the slave or the master of the passions. Who are you?' 'I am the king in whose dream you are but the furniture. If *I* were to wake you would go out bang! – like a candle. You are?'

'I am a funny story. I am a child's book. I am wonderland. I am a children's story. You are laughing in your sleep. You are waking up. The funny story which makes you laugh will make you cry. The child's dream will grow up to become adult, the night mare will carry you, like Shakespeare's sonnet, sluggishly away from home but fast, back to where you came from: which is the same place as the one you go to. Godlike, I shall fling you and your tiller back to the domain from which you came disguised as Palinurus, Urania. As men like trees walking. Rooted as trees disguised as men walking. Your root is already in its grave; your flower is already so brave, so fiery red. You slept. Who are you?'

'I am the horrendous dream that turned Science Fiction to Science Fact. I turned hideous night to even more hideous day. And you?'

'I am the Refiner's fire. The glorious sun who was the revolutionary flame disguised as R.F., the république française, the public thing, the thing that turned the hidden thing to the public thing; who robbed death; who robbed the secret of its cover and exposed it as the monster that it is. Who are you?'

'I am thought searching for a thinker to give birth to me. I shall destroy the thinker when I find him. I am the Odyssey, the Iliad, the Aeneid. I prevented Mars from destroying me but I ate away Mars from inside, from outside so he died. He is a memory and a desire: I am the eternally alive, indestructible, indispensable, adorable. I am the force that makes the books. My last triumph is the Mind. The mind that is too heavy a load for the sensuous beast to carry. I am the thought without a thinker and the abstract thought which has destroyed its thinker Newtonwise, the container that loves its content to destruction; the content that explodes its possessive container.'

Both girls woke up. 'This is terrible. Let's get to hell out of it.' 'Why? What's the matter with it? I rather like it', said Rosemary. She looked Alice up and down. 'After all', she drawled, 'you make rather a good skivvy. Isn't that what you and your boyfriends used to call us? Now we workers are liberated you don't like it. Anyhow, how do you get 'to hell out of it', as you put it? *We* couldn't. I couldn't stop your beastly husband making what he, in his beastly way, called "love" – his "beastly" love – to me. I used to laugh at his horrible, mawkish, shop-soiled, left-over love, though of course his public school education, his *gentlemanly* education made it impossible for him to conceive that *his* skivvy – your skivvy – could see through both of you. Why, I knew that you hadn't the remotest idea of how to keep him in his place. I knew from the way you ticked me off about Tom that you hadn't the faintest idea what a woman, a real woman, could do to that blundering dimwit – or his equally dim-witted master. That is why I – *I*, I tell you – decided to set him loose on you that night! And Roland couldn't even enjoy your screams! "Ooo!" he started to blubber', and she began a mocking imitation of Roland's voice, "my poor wife! Is the little itsy-bitsy sweetheart being raped? What a shame!" He couldn't care less. But his bloody school had taught him he was a gentleman so he couldn't even realize he was just a cowardly, snivelling, cock-sucking bastard who couldn't stand up for a woman if he had one! I could show you half a dozen of my girlfriends who were more man than he was! Here, you! Get me *my* shoes – the best ones. And look sharp about it! I'm going to show you how to use Roland! I'll get him here!'

9

'It is all very well to say, "Get to hell out of here." How?' said Robin angrily. 'You'll know quickly enough if you stay and have one of these bloody things crashing a hole through your skull – that will leave a way out!' 'That won't be *less* likely if you start walking around here.'

'You're caught either way – stay or leave.'

The voice seemed familiar.

'Who are you, pray?' said Robin and Roland together. The wind was rising. The crash of the bullets seemed to be heavier, to become merged with the storm. 'God damn it! They *are* shells!'

'You use my name in vain! . . . in vain, in vain, in vain. . . .'

The words were echoing round the storm.

'Christ! I must be hearing voices now! Who are you?' 'Christ – .' The voice echoed round and the storm dropped suddenly to a whisper – 'All Mighty'.

The silence was so sudden that the words were clearly and shockingly audible.

'What the devil was that?'

'At your service!'

Though no one was visible, the voice seemed to be so clear that you could almost see it bow with elaborate and ironic courtesy. 'I told you I had come, didn't I? . . . come . . .'. The echo was almost gentle, like an invitation.' . . . to my arms . . . come . . . come . . . my beamish boy . . . come. Not in terror, like Ozymandias, but kind and good, like Hitler who chortled in his joy. Is that you Cap'n? Down below? Keep . . . till I come again.'

'Who *is* that?' Roland sat up to listen more clearly. He smiled a schizoid smile. Such a gentle smile. 'There! Don't your hear it?' He lifted a finger to signal silence.

I am the discoverer and inventor of homo alalu. I and my fellow homines with our opposable thumbs learned how to give birth and life by opposing penis to penis, vulva to vulva, till one of us began to swell up and up till the whole earth and sky was filled with the swelling and the roaring. It was decided that the monster should be destroyed. But some were lying and deceitful and resolved in their lying and deceit to continue their evil practices in secret and contribute their knowledge of pleasurable feelings to each other by rubbing. Some resolved to find this secret by learning from the secretive ones to do likewise, and others resolved likewise to deceive and lie so they could learn who and what they were that did these things so they could kill those who practised and taught these practices, and so confusion grew and it became impossible to tell good from evil. Some learned to talk, but again the same thing happened, for the language was used by some to perfect the arts of lying and deception and others to increase pleasure, but they could not agree which was which nor which was the sign by which what thing should be known. The monstrous swelling and roaring grew till the world was almost about to come to an end, but then it ceased. There came peace and quiet and the man was seen to be holding a deformed 'thing'. And he lied and said it came from inside him. And some said this was so and some said it could not be so and some sought to destroy the evil thing and some said, 'Let us wait and then we shall be able to tell whether it is as they who say it is evil are right, or whether they who say it feels nice are right.' But no one could say because sometimes even those who said it was good admitted it was an evil brat, but they were not constant and the decision became so late that the brat, if it were evil enough, could slay those who came to kill it and so again confusion grew until even the confusion of tongues, even the counsel, was darkened until it covered the earth. And fear made men worship what they did not know and some said – Let us worship it in ignorance and fear – and some said – Let us worship it in daylight when we do not fear – and some said – Let us make ourselves afraid or we shall not fear – and some worshipped the sun and some the moon. Some likewise worshipped fear itself and some happiness and joy and light. And again they could not agree. And some worshipped what they made and some worshipped their cleverness, saying – We are the highest and best of all animals because we are tool-making animals – and some worshipped that part of themselves which they

thought enabled them to make tools, the tools that made tools, but again they could not agree what that part was or how it should be treated.

What part of England or Shakespeare was it that forged the England that is eternal and will be for ever England? What is foreign soil? Which part is Rupert Brooke, Shakespeare, Milton? Which part will be for ever foreign? Pope was a nasty little man. Who, then, wrote the Epistle to Doctor Arbuthnot? Who knew Doctor Arbuthnot's address so many years ago? Who told Kipling – the worshipper of very ordinary trash – that he ought to write Recessional, and that somewhere amidst the ruck and reel which he not only observed but worshipped there were sinners who might have ears to hear – if he could write? Who told him he could? Who told Bunyan to stop his ears and run; Belloc, that the stupidity of his Church was such that it must have been divine to have survived; Hopkins, that 'double dark' would help him find the 'uncreated light'; Freud, that he needed 'artificially to blind himself to explore the dark places of the mind? Virgil knew that the death of Palinurus was unfair; the author of the *Bhagavad Gita* that God did not conform to the human measures available. Galileo knew he had better conform to fit the Procrustean bed in which it was his fate to lie. Was Jesus a megalomanic fool, Meister Eckhart a time-server, or did he feel that, like Jesus, he would be trapped and then deserted by his God? And Job – did he too know that it was immodest to suppose *his* fishing tackle was adequate for Leviathan?

10

Rosemary stirred uneasily in her sleep and woke. In her game that night she had played the arrogant mistress and turned Alice out of bed. 'Get out! You stink', and laughed coarsely. The faint light of dawn showed her Alice lying on the floor. 'What are you doing there? Alice! Come here this instant. At once! Do you hear?' Alice, ever wakeful, rose up and came over. 'Yes, Miss', she said deferentially. 'I can't sleep properly.' 'Nor can you on the floor. You may get into my bed. No, *not* there', she said petulantly, 'how many times have I told you not to put your head on my pillows?'

It was morning again; Alice was busy arranging things to please her mistress. 'Rosemary, why am I so happy? I adore you. I never want to be anything but your devoted slave.' 'Didn't you ever feel that with Roland?' – Rosemary was brushing her hair – 'Here! I'm sick of this. Didn't they ever teach you to have a lady's maid at your Paris outfit you were telling me about? Good job! You can be my maid now. Dress my hair – properly, like ladies have it.' Alice took over. 'I sometimes wonder why I didn't learn to be a maid. Is it because I didn't know my proper station in life?' Rosemary, now serious, pondered the question. 'No', she said, 'it was because Roland was a bastard. And you were busy learning to be a bastard like all the other bastards at your school.' Alice was shocked. 'Your language!' 'There you go – you were *taught* that that was bad language. Now, when I talk real language, you can't understand it. Listen: she that hath ears let her hear! . . . Now you'll say I'm profane won't you? Just what you bastards taught us children – but we were too tough and resistant to swallow all that bunk at Gold Hawk Square. We were not bastards; we were born of genuine, "ill-bred", bred ill poor, the sort that use bad language because we know that bad language is the right one to

use in a bad world. We knew that fucking was a nuisance. We knew, and our parents before us knew, that it was to be got over and done with as soon as possible; that children had to be produced and got rid of as soon as possible. "Mum", she began to mimic a cockney voice, "Mum! Tell Lily to stop pinching my bottom!" and Mum down the alley yelled, "Lily! Just you leave her B.T. be!" We knew it all, but it wasn't funny. We knew better, some of us, than to laugh at our teachers and we knew who our teachers were – not the bastards but the *real* fuckers. The lilies of the Field. Not the lilies of the botany class and all the silly rot you told me you learnt at your bin. Teaching you sexual facts – what did you say they called it? "facts of life" wasn't it? Makes me laugh! Jesus! Yes, I know, they called it religion and thought "Jesus" was a swear word and "Christ!" was the rude word for "Messiah". Jesus' Mum and Dad didn't marry. No, of course "God" did it! And *she* conceived without sin! Poor girl! Anyone knows that "sin" is what makes you laugh – same as sending people to Hell. My Dad told me that bastards made a Hell on Earth – as if they couldn't wait to get there. Our Father which art in hell, hallow it be thy name, thy will be done – on earth as it is hell! And it was so and the Devil came and looked upon his works and saw that they were – hellish. Did not abhor the Virgin's womb! I should think not – why should he? Just the "thing" for torturing poor woman with! The clitoris for me every time. No wonder – some fool was sure to come and say, "Penis Envy" – it is clitoris envy! And then it takes them ages to wonder why men have penis envy just like women. They do not envy what they've got – of course not – it's what they *haven't* got. And God, they said, was *not* in the mighty wind, but in the still *small* voice, the one that the serpent used – the big snake – *whispering* sweet nothings to Eve. The real fucker doesn't bawl it from the housetops; he whispers it to humble and meek clitors – that is what is "exalted" and becomes erect. *That* little button! Not some bloody, menstrual breast.' Then, in a sudden burst of savagery, she said, 'Anyhow, I've got you where I want you now you skivvy! – you and your "governing class" husband. Get my bath ready. Do you hear? Get it ready I say!' Her voice was rising to a scream. 'Careful', laughed Alice with her finger to her lips, 'or you'll wake the children'. 'What children?', Rosemary asked, looking round puzzled.

Lying on mattresses on the floor were Roland, Tom and the man who had removed their belongings from the farm. 'Are they asleep?'

Rosemary whispered. 'They look dead. How did they get in here?' 'Lie down, never mind', soothed Alice, 'I'm here to look after you. I love you.' Rosemary stared and then, 'I'm sorry, Alice, I didn't mean to be so beastly to you'. Alice looked at her maid in adoration. Then she leant forward and kissed her tenderly. 'I loved it, my sweetheart. Humbly, dumbly. I loved every moment of your flashing, contemptuous eyes. I am your slave – for ever. Let me lie at your feet for ever. I will teach you how to handle these . . .'. 'I see you are learning. At least you can speak a few words of plain English. I am afraid though . . .', she fell back, relaxed and contented, 'of having one of those horrid dreams . . . they are so real . . . of these corpses . . . these wax models'. 'Never mind Rosemary. I shall go to sleep with you. And we can listen to them talking. So scientific! Listen! They have started again. Listen – but don't laugh too loud or you will wake them.'

Roland rubbed his eyes. 'My eyes do trouble me rather. Do you know, I think I must have fallen asleep. I do that sometimes; it goes in a flash. Mostly people don't notice but sometimes I think they do because they look at me so queerly. Or perhaps it is the dream that I have and forget. It goes in a flash.' Tom seemed to be changing every second into someone whom he knew well, but could not remember. It was awkward that he did not know his name. One of his colleagues too! 'Call him "Colin" to myself, but must remember not to say it out loud. It will do for the dream or whatever this is. If it isn't too high-falutin' it reminds me of the shadows on the walls in Plato's cave. You remember', he said aloud, 'that Plato had an idea that what we call reality were really shadows cast on a wall of a very dark cave in which men were sitting, chained, with their backs to a bright light entering the cave from an opening that they couldn't see, but only were aware of by the shadows that they thought were reality. Well, Plato thought that "things", as we call them, and people are really a kind of precipitation of the "Forms". The Forms (either the concept, or, in so far as concepts cannot be called "empty thoughts", the "things-in-themselves"), the "noumena", were not understandable. Plato seemed to think that the Socratic Greeks might at least understand the parable of the cave. But between then and now many hundreds of people have tried, oh, "ever so hard", to understand what it means. And some people, like Jesus, have continued the naïve idea. "If you can't understand the parable, what am I to tell you?" he complained when his disciples were not stupid enough to be simple.

All that they could do was to decide that Jesus was God and shut him up under a tombstone of heavy, cold, religious adoration. I suppose they were foolish enough to suppose that they could get their shot in first before the opponents, who said they had known him from childhood and he was a carpenter's son and they were all so fond of him – why! they were his loving brothers and sisters! It was just brotherly love, and no less an authority than Jesus himself had admitted you couldn't have one who loved you more than a father or brothers or sisters. (Though even *he* preferred a Father in Heaven and not one at too close quarters). They had only come to save him because he was beside himself. Or, in plain Aramaic, "nuts". Well, since then that story has been taken up, whenever it has one of its periods of volcanic activity, by the scientists and the protagonists of the looney bin, the tomb robbers and the tomb builders, the religious outfit and the scientific blackguards who try to keep the humanists and artists and poets under control by murder, sometimes with "loving adoration" and sometimes with Herodic anxiety to find out where the dangerous embryo is, so that they can worship it to death. Of course they were crude, but methods have become refined. The "tool-making animal" found out that tools were very useful and anyone could learn to use a tool and no one need know *how* the tool was being used if it could be covered and hidden. That is where women were so clever. They had an invisible tool and the man had a visible and useless prick. Come, let us find it so we can worship also. So . . . well, some genius had to discover some way in which lying, deception, evasion and their opposites could be used without detection, and how "truth" and noumena-robbing were to be kept inviolate and inviolable. The "discovery" was, in its early stages, difficult because it was so vulnerable. Lying and deception were exposed, usually by some blundering child who could see that the emperor had no clothes, until it had been educated to know better. Hullo! hullo! No one here? Must have been talking to myself. Well, it's all practice I suppose!'

11

ROBIN It's all very well saying let's get to hell out of it if you are brave and wealthy, married to a wealthy and intelligent woman. *I* am to Hell *in* it. How did I ever get to Hell into Munden, with that damned Roland? Anyhow, he's gone, thank God or the Devil – God! What was that? Now I'm hearing voices. Thou shall not take the name of God in vain. When I first heard that it meant – or so I thought – I'm not so sure now . . . you must not be a naughty boy and swear, but *now* I have just seen that my god will come whenever I call upon him, and whichever god it is will come at once – and come with a vengeance. 'And how!' as they say. I begin to doubt the equivocation of the fiend that lies like truth. Some old bore said that. I remember having to learn it, by heart. Of course, I didn't believe a word of it, but I see now, I see that really it had a *double* dose of meaning and not no meaning at all. Well, well, *very* funny! Lies and Truth are indistinguishable! Missus What-not, the cook from whom I stole the cookies, used to say, 'I'll *give* you your *rations.* It's what you deserve. Now just you get out of here!' and I found myself outside in less than no time. Now I have only to want to go to sleep and I find myself *inside.* Ha! ha! ha! – very funny, very funny indeed . . . Shhhh. . . . What a bloody noise you make! You'll wake the whole place. Blood, blood everywhere; even noise is bloody in *this* hell! If I tried to wash these hands they would make even the sea bloody. If I tried to wash my hands . . . even the noise would become bloody and if I try to be reasonable and wake up, even reason itself becomes irrational and if I try to be reasonable. . . . What *could* be more reasonable than mathematics? – well, the mathematics have to become irrational. That bloody man Euclid! Today even Euclid is not safe thanks to that ghastly man Lobachevsky. And Riemann – sh, SH! What's so hellish funny about

that! ARF ARF? – I'll give you ARF! ARF! ARF! In Heaven indeed! Who are you?

BIG SISTER I am someone you have forgotten. Miss Why – bro! How dare you forget me! I'm your little bro. Why! You used to call me Sex-ton! Don't you remember? I used to walk along the row of little snivellers saying their prayers at the ends of the beds and tread on their silly, pink little feet turned sole upwards and say Ooh, Sorry! Ooh sorry! Ooh sorry!' and giggle, and your damn god who couldn't see a kind and loving joke would go AAARF! ARRF! Yes! Ever so funny you looked, scared out of your *damned* wits! And you didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Come 'n get you when you call upon me. You'll do it once too often. That's mathematics – once, *two* – often! And there you are, off like Sports Day. False start. On your marks. Once, Twice, Orphan! Wrong again – back on your marks! Once, Twice, Often. Better, better, but still wrong! Why don't you *try* boy?

SMALL MO Suicide? Well, that's easy enough; the one person one can murder any time – without cost? But in that sleep what Bills may come to shake their peers? If Jill is to be as good as her master what may a pint not do to its pot? What may the bloody noise do to the silence in which it lies imprisoned? *Its gisent la sans voix . . . sans ouie* . . . but suppose some sculptor with his chisel and violence releases 'them' from the stone? Some tiresome William Angelo Moore. Suppose he has no Joyce? No silence deep enough, no space mute enough to bury the brave who came before Agamemnon, no paradise lost enough to satisfy the damned who have gone empty away? Is there no scientific jargon turgid enough? There will always be a pound who will not impound the meaning – the double crossing acrostic solver who dissolves. There is no refiner's fire that does not refine love itself so lords and ladies cease to be refined, and skivvies are crossed with their doubles and lords are crossed with lords and produce half breeds and half breeds look for their better halves and better halves blush red like beetroots. Horny-handed tons of soil soil the white radiants of eternity and turn them into many-coloured life. Black men learn to be white and white men have black hearts and equal votes mate to equivocate. Come on – wake up! You are making such a noise.

HALF AWAKE Was I talking in my sleep? Well, you could call it that. I, the great hunter, stamped over your head, but couldn't break your sleep. Oh baa-ram I had such a funny dream. I thought you were

the lamb of God. I was so Woolley. Well, it is human to Ur. You urred too often. Toot and come again.

PARANOID–SCHIZOID I can't stand this damned noise. It is like being bombarded with chunks of feeble puns, bits of Shakespeare, imitations of James Joyce, vulgarizations of Ezra Pound, phoney mathematics, religion, mysticism, visions of boyhood, second childhood and visions of old age. Possibly, it could be old age itself. All these myths of Atlantis, all these visions of heaven and hell, are they reminiscences? Are they premonitions? Are reminiscences and premonitions, in fact, both the same thing, only seen so long as a domain in which measurement of temporal and spatial time is proper to a constant conjunction of helplessness, omnipotence, idealization, embryonic sense of reality, embryonic sense of sense, transformed for use in a non-sensuous domain of thought without a thinker, from thoughts in which a thinker is itself of the essence of thought.

DEPRESSIVE POSITION What are the rules in this domain of pure thought? How, and in relation to what standard, is the thought 'peculiar', or the dream 'peculiar'? Is it possible to define its peculiarity? If there is no peculiarity, what is to be used instead? What are the counterparts of disturbances, perturbations, turbulences that are violent, invisible, insensible? Analogous to the models made visible by Leonardo's drawings of hair, water? And occasionally by schizophrenic or other psychotic formulations? How does the person know of blushing so invisible, noise so inaudible, pain so impalpable that its intensity, pure intensity, is so intense that it cannot be tolerated but must be destroyed even if it involves the murder of the 'anatomical' individual?

BIG BRO I don't know what you are talking about.

SMALL MO On the contrary, you give the impression you *are* what you are talking about, but do not know the talk *about* it. I see you have woken up. But not become at one with you. My felicitations and commiserations and good wishes for a happy, brand new Introspection. And a jolly Extroversion likewise.

12

CAPTAIN BION I stared at the speck of mud trembling on the straw. I stared through the front flap at the clods of earth spouting up all round us. I stared at the dirty, strained face of my driver Allen – my strained face as I sat by me; at the boomerang that Allen sent me from Australia. I got out and hovered about six feet above us. I knew 'they' would . . . and saw trees as woods walking. How they walked – walk! walk! they went like arfs arfing. Arf arf together, arfing's the stuff for me, if it's not a Rolls Royce, which I'd pick out for choice. Then a nice little Ford bright and gay, and when they came to that ford, styx I say, Valiant for S'truth passed over and all the strumpets sounded for him on the uvver side. Cooh! What 'appened then? 'E talked a lot more about Jesus and dog and man and then 'e sez, all sudden like, Throw away the uvver crutch! Coo! Wot 'appened then? 'E fell on 'is arse. And 'is Arse wuz angry and said, Get off my arse! You've done nothing but throw shit at me all yore life and now you expects England to be my booty! Boo-ootiful soup; in a shell-hole in Flanders Fields. Legs and guts . . . must 'ave bin twenty men in there – Germ'um and frogslegs and all starts! We didn't 'alf arf I can tell you. Let bruvverly luv continue. No one asked 'im to fall-in! No one arsed 'im to come out either – come fourth, we said and E came 5th and 'e didn't ½ stink. Full stop! 'e said. The parson 'e did kum, 'e did qwat. 'E talked of Kingdom Come. King dumb come.

13

MYSELF I knew you would wake him up if you went on making that noisy blood. He says the consistency of his mind never recovered. All he could do was write Opticks and be the Master of the Mint, a mental white dwarf. He never erupted again! Poor Newton! Poor Shakespeare! Poor Galileo, Descartes, Freud, Milton; whose are they – the faces, faint revealed, yet sure divined, the 'famous ones' – ante Agamemnona multi – the mute, inglorious ones? They saw the promised land, the mirage, the fame which is man's last and first infirmity of noble minds. Last, but not least infirmity, the weaker, least powerful helmsman waiting Palinurus-like to be hurled from the throne of the stern, the leader who obeys and by whose position all are ordered to steer. Even Aeneas is hurled from his trust in his steersman by a god whose true face is a disguise which conceals yet another god behind the mask of a benevolent, calm, inviting, alluring, seducing sea. The many-wiled Odysseus, Moses, Meskalam Dug, Arthur, Alexander – *où sont les neiges d'antan*? And what seductions, treasures remain to be unveiled, concealed (though betrayed) by Memory and its binocular, Desire?

There seems to be something to be said for the 'use' to which 'things' are put. If, then, one considers the accumulation of experience and then the use which is made of these 'possessions', one is using the vocabulary which has been forged for and from the world of sensuous experience. That, indeed, is the vocabulary and procedure which I am trying to use in this very communication. It is not likely to be adequate, but there is also the possibility, almost certainty perhaps, that the 'use' which I am able to make of it is as widely exercised only in those respects in which it has a past and forgotten history. It is also an equipment which is peculiar to that part of the spectrum of

thought-without-a-thinker which is peculiar to the biological range, from what could be called the infra-sensual to the ultra-sensual. Even so, the range is perhaps more correctly defined as infra-human (sympathetic) to ultra-human (algebraic) – in other words, a limited range of animal life. At the same time, the range is microscopic from one vertex, and yet too enormous to be likely to be bridged by anything so trifling, so trivial as the products of the human animal. Even so stupendous (on one scale of measurement) a mind as that of Pascal, when face to face with what he and others cooperatively can reveal in the domain of the space of visual capacity alone, was only able to arouse fear and cravings for omnipotent power. *Ces espaces infinis m'effraient*. Newton's vertex, whether employed in the religious or the scientific domain, cost him the disintegration of his mind. Henry IV, limiting himself to the ambition to possess Paris, could do so because its cost appeared to correspond to the smallness of his ambitions – a Mass 'only'. He, like Pascal and Newton, made his vertex 'binocular', but with one eye relatively blind. Nelson, a man of action like Henry IV, could achieve his ambition so long as he used an eye that was 'blind' for purposes of 'not' seeing (which is different from 'seeing'; that activity he left to the 'better' half). But clearly, here and now the better 'alf (arf arf) is threatening to scramble back to the 'conscious' and the relative safety of the world of fact. Daylight is safer; although one must remember that so great a protagonist of Heavenly light was not saved from blindness, the domain of the infinite and the horrors of the formless, any more than the Forms of Plato saved him and his public-thing from the poets. The revelatory instrument, if used, could be employed by the object scrutinized to look at the scrutineer in the other sense (direction). The poet or genius can look at the scientist or genius, and the revelations, which – at the opposite ends of the telescope – are too large and too small to be tolerable, or even to be recognizably related. It is felt to be the 'fault' of the instrument that brings such different objects together. But it might be the 'fault' of the objects for being so different – or is it the human animal that has to 'use' its accumulations of facts, that it has not the experience that would enable it to 'understand' what it sees, blind or sightful? Time I went to sleep. Excuse me . . . (*Exit to* α.)

14

'Well, who asked you to come to Munden in the first place anyhow?' said Roland. 'You know damned well why I came. I wanted to be near, near someone I loved, but who did not love me. And she loved you, who did not and never have loved her and yet married her, you swine.' 'Blast! That ruddy bullet has spattered glass all over and into me by the look of it.' Roland wiped his hand over his face. 'Blood everywhere', he muttered and then continued aloud, 'You mean the bloody bitch Alice? You have to *be* married to her if you want real romance. It's fine for you – wandering around with your tongue hanging out, nursing your marvellous "heart ever faithful" act. I'm married to her. I know – you don't – what it's like to get a good fuck once in a blue moon and spend the rest of the time trying to think up a reply to "darling!" when you are worried to death about some firm trying to dun you for a harvester you have had to buy!' 'It's become very quiet. I held out my hand to see if it's still raining and – no bullets, no sniping, nothing! Do you think the war's over?' Roland stood up. Robin tried to pull him down. 'Don't be a bloody fool! You'll get killed – I only had my hand out. I didn't suggest you stood up. Get down you fool! You have all the luck. I get shot at; I get killed; only I don't die. You stand up, you aren't hurt – *you* collect all the praise for being so *erect*, so honourable, are called love, a mischievous sprite! Such a charming rogue. Even I smile at your antics sometimes.' 'Do you by Job! I've never noticed it. Unless. . . . Yes, of course! That ghastly expression! Grinning like a Cheshire cat. It must be your smile! Excuse me! I never knew. Of course! Of *course* – it's Alice's very own pussy. It must have been smiling. And I thought you were showing your teeth. Allow me to introduce – the right honourable; this is my dear old friend. Excuse me – can you tell me how we got here?'

BETA Count – the cat disappeared – allow me to introduce you to my dear friend Cox! A fellow of infinite jest, my dear chap . . . hullo! What's that hellish noise? Of course, it's only me larf-arfing! Anyway you are making noise enough to waken the dead. That includes the living who might as well be dead for all the thinking they do and the dead who remain obstinately alive long after it's time they were dead.

ALPHA And even myself, whose thoughts and feelings linger on long after I have woken up and remain active and alive in my waking life long after it is expected or supposed (by whom, pray? Shut up!) that I should be dead and buried (where?) In the land of nod, the unconscious, the forgotten, the . . . wherever else I am to go to – the Future will do for a sort of royal cemetery as well as the past. Below the Thalamus. The royal cemetery at Ur, Newton, Shakespeare, Descartes. But some are so deeply buried, forgotten, even their names swallowed up, that they need exing the cave. Even metaphors come alive, otherwise the words that are needed achieve the qualities of 'life'. (More bloody metaphors! Who ever could sort out a mass of verbiage like this?) You could try calling it 'Paranoid Schizoid' after – a long way 'after' – Melanie Klein. Good idea. Good dog paranoid schizoid; here, here is a nice piece of jargon for you. Suspicious are you? Take *that* then! Another great lump of free associations, dreams and their interpretations, poetry ('all lies', said Plato, sly, suspicious old dog that he was) is hurled at the poor, new-born baby. 'Intelligence', they call the puir, wee thing. Where is that Anarch of the stops and dashes and never-ending Parentheses? – Sterne, they called him, wasn't it? The Anarchs of the world of darkness keep a throne for thee, puir, wee Intelligence. A rose by any other name . . . might just as well be a stink that smells as foul even if you call it a 'salubrious environment'.

Come here, bad, baaad dog! – Hitler dear, *such* a nice Hitler, *such* a *benito,* such a sweet, rosy little boy! Here, here's a nice salubrious environment! Washed, nay bathed, in our Auschwitz showers. They smell – aah! You can't think how sweet and refreshing those showers are. Now, *here* is a brand new *mind.* It is far superior to the nose as an instrument for discrimination. You just have to attach one of our 'minds' to the old apparatus and this tiny adjustment fitted to the nose and any of the no nonsense organs, to obtain a really superior organ of discrimination! Yes: but how can I tell quackery – use it! Why discriminate? – from truth? Can I tell by it, for example, if this mind

you talk about is any better than all the previous gadgets I have been invited to attach, at enormous expanding cost, to my various existing battery of gadgets? I knew a delightful old stegosaurus who thought he had found *the* answer to the tyrannosaurus. But the 'answer' was so successful that it turned into a kind of tyrannosaurus itself and loaded him with such fame – not to mention exoskeleton – that he sank under its own weight. In fact, he was so loaded that the only trace of him left was his skeleton. Yes, but those same dead bones gave birth to a mind. Because while all eyes were fixed on the conflict between Fate and armour (there is *no* armour against Fate) the attacker got through disguised as a bomber. Now, the Mind . . . you just try it. Just attach it to your sensory perceptions! How do I know it won't just turn into extrasensory perceptions – s.p. → e.s.p.? The animal, meaning you who reads this and I who write it and all biological living constructs, have an inborn mechanism for self-disposal. This dogmatic, definitory hypothesis shares the character of the character it represents. On this definitory hypothesis is built the hypothesis and the construct of which it is the foundation.

The tyrannosaurus provokes intrinsically an equal + opposite reaction – the stegosaurus. The stegosaurus sinks under its own 'maginot line', its defensive armour which is its own weakness and makes its own armament, its own weight, under which it sinks. The self-destructive elaboration is blind to the quality which is to lead to its own destruction. If ξ is felt to be the successworthy quality, to be producer of progress, it is also the character unknown and autodestructive. If the Oedipus story is the weapon that reveals homo, it is also the story that conceals, but does not reveal, that by which it will destroy itself. What happened to Delphi? And Socrates? If man is a tool-making animal he will not observe that that same capacity will be more than he can protect himself against. Superficially it may become clear that he is a clever monkey who can produce an atomic bomb that is a potential menace to his existence. While his gaze physiological is directed to observation and 'detoxication' of the menace *represented* by the atomic bomb, it will, by the same token, be directed away from the growing annihilating force, the 'helpless infant'. 'Too much learning will make thee mad . . .'. Too much 'tyranny' – freedom, food, armour, defensiveness; the list can be extended – but the only reality that matters is that which is denoted by 'too much'. Quantity, + and –, requires awareness. In the language suitable for communicating, it

would be called a capacity for discrimination of quantity and quality. But in the domain that concerns us there is nothing that lends itself to the exercise of discrimination; there is no quality, no quantity to be discerned. Relativity is relationship, transference, the psychoanalytic term and its corresponding approximate realization. Mathematics, science as known hitherto, can provide no model. Religion, music, painting, as these terms are understood, fail me. Sooner or later we reach a point where there is nothing to be done except – if there is any exception – to wait. The 'impasse' is itself a word which, in the context of this writing, is known to denote a feeling.

BIG BRO Using some schoolboy mathematics I make a model, thus: – I cannot take five from three using only natural numbers. Natural numbers are the kind of numbers I use if I see a pile of oranges and want to know how many oranges there would be if five were removed from the pile. I would say, 'one, two, three, four, five', as I separated the oranges from the pile. Then I would do the same with the remainder and count thirty. So, given the fruit and the technique I have described, what would happen if I took thirty oranges away from five? First, it would be very improbable that I would want to know anything so ridiculous, and I might be afraid of doing anything because the people around me might be very cross if I wasted their time, and mine, dreaming. In fact, I have just dozed off which shows you. . . . What?

MEMORY I dreamed I was taking thirty oranges away from five. In the dream I didn't see anything extraordinary about taking thirty oranges away from five. The five were very fat, big and greedy and had lots of oranges. I was angry that they should have such masses of oranges when they *were* oranges themselves already! So I suppose I did not see why they should not have thirty taken from them. It was really rather funny – really! What's so funny about it, said one of the big ones. I felt frightened. Well, put like that, what *was* funny? I remembered one of my patients telling me, 'I tell you . . . I never woke up so fast in my life, I can tell you!' So I thought I had better do the same. I *woke* up. What a funny way you laugh. Arf, arf, ARF you go . . . do wake up. What was so funny about it? I told her I had forgotten and couldn't remember. But it was – very funny. I wish I could remember it!

Well, as I was saying, of course you can't take thirty from five – not in reality; not with real numbers. If someone invents negative

numbers and you add them to natural numbers, *then* you can take three from five and get minus two! What's the good? Is that not just playing tricks with numbers? It doesn't mean a thing. *No.* It is pure mathematics. If it's pure mathematics it's all right because it doesn't have to mean a thing. Daft, I call it. There are lots of people who don't think. *They* must be daft too. No: because someone – Lobachevsky or Riemann – invented a daft geometry and now they find it quite useful in space – not the space which Euclid geometrized about infinite space, space that has no end. Like 'world without end Amen', you mean. Ye – es, perhaps; you mean religious space? I think it's more like the 'space', if there was such a thing, made out of adding conscious space to unconscious space. How? Well, if you have a new kind of space, call it mental space, then you may have to invent a new addition to go with it. Or, if you invent new numbers you have to invent new mathematics. They have: they have invented negative numbers and a new geometry in which there are imaginary points and tangents which have coordinates of two points, one which is real and contingent, rather like ones that are real and separate or real and distinct, and other lines which don't cut the circle at all and are conjugate complex. What the hell is that? I understand points that are real and distinct, or real and coincident, but not points that are conjugate complex. If you weren't so proud of being sane, someone would be sure to notice how frightened you were of 'insanity'. You wear your 'bravery' as a cloak for your cowardice and things you are afraid of – it must be terrible to have a para-sympathetic and a 'voluntary' nervous system so close to each other! What dreams, what thoughts, the other system has! Which is the other? Look at your skin; but I suppose you wouldn't dare to go more than skin deep.

15

'Time you went to sleep. You are right. It is high time you went to sleep. Excuse me indeed! I don't mind if you went to sleep permanently.' It was Rosemary talking to her 'memory' – her mistress, who was sitting on a chair by her bedside, the bed which used to be owned by Alice. 'If you don't go to sleep', Rosemary said threateningly, 'I know you will babble a lot of grown-up-sounding rot like Pound, translating, psychoanalysis, Growth, Newton and other boring and indecent people – oh dear, Alice, I haven't really quite woken. Such a queer dream. Let's forget it and talk about something interesting. I want you to treat me like a friend, Alice.' She made a sound which might have been a stammer or a snort of contempt or just a catch in her breath as she woke. 'Ah, good . . . just what I wanted – a cup of tea. What was I saying? Ah yes; even in the old days, Alice, I thought you would make quite a good skivvy. Sometimes I thought, if only there could be a revolution here! Of course it could never come to pass! But now! Isn't it marvellous? *Do* say it's marvellous – I never thought of an invasion in which all your bloody "upper classes" would be defeated and "the humble and meek would be exalted". It's funny! Did you think, when you went to church, you were singing about *me.* I knew who the mighty were, though. I never thought you would one day bring me my cup of tea and would have to obey my orders. Here, you! I'm getting bored.' Rosemary's mood had changed suddenly to one of violence. 'Make me laugh. Tell me about your lovely public school and its lovely hymns and bibles full of dirty stories – if you'd had the nous to know it!' 'But Rosemary', said Alice, 'we weren't so stupid as you think. We *did* know about the bible and we didn't all think of a bible with a capital "B". I used to find it a true source of "spiritual consolation", but it wasn't all biblical spirit.

Even when I was tiny I remember my mother saying to me, "I don't know what's come over you, child! I think the Devil has come over you!" and she meant it. And it made me afraid too, because that is what *I* thought. And sometimes I thought I could hear the devil laughing. I remember a bit about . . . "and the satyr shall call in the streets". I didn't know what it meant, but it frightened me even when I was awake, and later that night I had quite frightening dreams – terrifying dreams. I expect it was cats. There *were* cats and when we were in India when I was very little, I remember a night when my brother was frightened because a tiger was roaring round the camp because its mate was shot.'

Rosemary had become thoughtful and she spoke in a soft and gentle voice. 'Poor kid; I never thought *you* could be frightened – not as frightened as me when a drunken lout was thrashing my mother in the next room. I *think* it was my mother, but I may have imagined it. Later I knew my mother was a whore because the welfare lady – I knew she must have been a lady! – very kindly told me I should be thankful that I had a good home at the foundling hospital and if I was good I might earn a living as a skivvy! Now wasn't she a kind lady to tell me all that? "Yes, Ma'am" and "No, Ma'am" – I was very quick to learn and I know I could talk and say things like that even when I was two years old.' 'Poor child!', Alice murmured half to herself and half under her breath. But Rosemary's mood had hardened again. 'That will do, Alice. Sometimes I'm in the mood to be amused and then you can make me laugh by telling me about the miseries of the "upper classes". Just now you can dress me. With your education you should know what clothes would suit me best. After that you will find my skivvy's "day-off" dress. It will be a bit out of fashion, but it's neat and I kept it – God knows I *had* to – in good repair. Black worsted stockings and "sensible" shoes. I don't know where they have been dug out from.'

MEMORY – the unconscious.

ROSEMARY Shut up! Who *was* that? Respectable, shoddy, worn-out psychoanalytic, mental 'reach-me-down' mental clichés for the dead-from-the-neck-up! Go to sleep I say! Go to sleep!

ALICE Hush! Don't shout, Rosemary.

ROSEMARY Shout? Shout I never so loudly I could not break their sleep. Shoddy. . . . Who are you?

MEMORY Excuse me. I could not help overhearing you ladies. Fascinating! Do go on, please. My name? Oh, call me Memory.

ALICE (*sarcastically*) What a pretty name! One of the memories of childhood in . . . in, is it Berkshire? One of The Childhood Memories of Berkshire?

MEMORY Childhood, (*contemptuously*) no, one of the Memories of Burkshire. Who are you? A distant – very distant – relation. Your conversation woke me, ladies.

ALICE Do go on – now you're awake. Where were you born?

(*The two girls fall asleep – with boredom. Burkshire continues.*)

B. MEMORY I don't know. A very nice fellow told me I was conceived in Sin.

ROLAND (*waking up*) One of the most interesting conceptions I ever knew was born there. 'Born of the Virgin Mary', I presume? Pleased ter meetcher. I remember you. Haven't heard a word of you since my school days. You were ragged unmercifully in those days, especially on Sundays in Scripture class. There was nothing else to do! 'Arse-'oles inspire', we used to sing till they didn't dare have that him.

B. MEMORY Hymn, you mean.

ROLAND No, HIM – not 'him' with a small h and y – 'Him' with a whisper and a jerk of the thumb over the shoulder. He was the God we *did* believe in. 'Mumbo-Jumbo will get you!'

> The parson he did come, he did come.
> He looked so bloody glum, bloody glum.
> 'E talked of Kingdom Come –

B. MEMORY (*glumly*) Not funny.

ROLAND Cheer up! Come cheer up my lads. To glory we steer. . . . Saw men like trees walking. Up the line. At the Salient – in heaven so on earth. There was a chap there spinning round and round. With his guts hanging out. We couldn't help laughing. Jump into the tarpaulin Bill!

B. MEMORY (*cheering up*) Yes, I remember that – 'there weren't no tarpaulin there!' But Ole Bill he jumped and Kingdom came up and hit him! That *was* funny! The devil's own war that was. I will say that the devil looks after his own. When we pray to H – well, you know who – for hell as it is on earth to save us from the incredible boredom of eternal everlasting . . .

ROLAND (*interrupting*) School Chapel.

B. MEMORY I never had that.

ROLAND No, you lucky devils.

ALICE Angels. You should have heard the school hockey team singing 'Frail as Summer Flowers we flourish. Blows the wind and it is gone'! Laugh! (*Softly, Arf, arf*) Thought I should have died! 'Alice! Wipe that silly giggle off your face – at once.' The angel faces smile! I should just think they did!

ROBIN (*wakes up*) I didn't think you women were listening.

ROSEMARY We weren't. You don't think we'd have to *listen* to hear the bloody noise you make. You and your medals clanking all over the place and your talk about your goddam heroes. Ante Agamemnona multi indeed! And who heard of the countless generations of mothers who died unwept, unhonoured and unsung before some male thought of the Virgin Mary. That poor girl had and still has to conceive without the fun of sinning even! Gee! Fancy having to be made love to by God, that dirty old man!

D.O.M. Canst though draw out Leviathan with a hook?

ALL (*suddenly hushed in a whisper*) Who was that?

ROLAND (*recovering first, complacently*) It's a classic – quotation from Job.

ROBIN You gave me quite a start!

ALL (*hushed*) I swear I heard a voice. I don't like this – it's spooky.

ROLAND (*slightly less complacent – shaken*) It's a quotation from *Bhagavad Gita* .

ALICE (*angry*) Stop it!

VOICE Hear that? I tell you – I never woke up so fast in my life!

VOICE Why, if they woke up you'd just go out – bang! – like a candle.

ALICE You mean we are just a part of his dream?

VOICE Of course! You don't think we are real do you? Roland's waking up now. You'll see; we shall fade away. Our place will be taken by a mass of meaningless abstractions. Listen . . .

16

ROLAND'S VOICE (*the enunciation is clear and precise. He is himself not visible and as he talks he becomes progressively more a disembodied thinker and finally pure thought without a thinker*) Krishna makes the point quite clearly; he shows Arjuna that his depression is part of feelings of compassion which are unworthy of thought, still less of God-head. That kind of thing may be appropriate to reception and emission in the range of sensuous perception whether perceived directly or mechanically by constructs like radio receivers, X-ray films, musical instruments and, in their very crude and gross manifestations, by animals and creatures in the biological range. Very sensitive animal organisms may then be able to interpret or transform the disturbances in the waves which render them opaque and obstructive. St John of the Cross was even able to point out that an analogy can be found which may be serviceable in the process of vulgarization intended to make the grosser crudities even grosser, till they impinge on elements which are still within the spectrum of the infra-sensuous and ultra-sensuous, though not outside that very narrow and limited band. He uses, it will be remembered, the analogy of dust particles which can render perceptible a ray of light that traverses it. Recently, by mechanical means, it has been possible in the biological range (human sub-category) to detect disturbances of great violence which have completely escaped detection by animals dependent on sight, even when sight is augmented by instruments such as telescopes, spectrographs, cameras and preparations of film coated with fine grain receptors – all macroscopic. Yet these perturbations are matters of the greatest crudity and violence!

Though extremely rare and scattered over a huge range of temporal space, they only appear to be extremely rare because of the crudity

and triviality of recorded time as an instrument of measurement. Time as a concept is as inadequate as topological space to provide a domain for the play of such enormous thoughts as those liberated by freedom from dependence on a thinker. The breakdown is as trivial, though made to appear vast by the inadequacy of the framework as, to take a very gross but simple analogy, that which occurs if a simple operation such as the subtraction of five from three is attempted with sensuous objects or even a relatively sophisticated mathematics best limited by being exclusive of negative numbers though well stocked with real numbers.

The failure to grasp the trivial range of the biological spectrum, even when the field of the living is extended by the dead, the animate by the inanimate, has been matched with the vastness of the extent of the relatively minute. This is due, in part, to the failure to grasp the nature of relativity, in particular the fact that it includes paradox. The restriction imposed by the limitation of thought to thoughts with thinkers implies the polarization 'truth' and 'falsehood', complicated further by morals, uninvestigated 'moral' systems, and extensions of Plato's thought to moral views of the function of poets and artists. A similar seepage from the domain of religion may likewise be traced to the inability to respect the 'thought without a thinker' and, by extension, the 'relationship without related objects'. How this has affected even so-called practical thinking is seen in the difficulty of the 'public' to grasp that an analogy is an attempt to vulgarize a relationship and *not* the objects related. The psychoanalytic approach, though valuable in having extended the conscious by the unconscious, has been vitiated by the failure to understand the practical application of doubt by the failure to understand the function of 'breast', 'mouth', 'penis', 'vagina', 'container', 'contained', as analogies. Even if I write it, the sensuous dominance of penis, vagina, mouth, anus, obscures the element signified by analogy . . .

ROSEMARY (*yawning*) Oh my God!

VOICE Why drag me in?

ROSEMARY (*imperiously*) Alice! Come here at once.

ALICE (*submissively*) Yes, Miss.

ROSEMARY Why can't you keep that crashing bore in order? Why did you marry him if you didn't know how to keep him on a lead? You at least should have learned that the factual exercise of a relationship is not the two objects related, like the cunt and the prick,

but keeping one thing inside another. (*Laughs contemptuously.*) The container and contained! My God, I believe he has driven me as mad as he is! I'm even talking this crazy nonsense. I'll get locked up if this goes on much longer!

ALICE Yes, Miss. Excuse my saying so, but – *you*'ll be contained in a container then!

voice ARF, ARF, ARF. Very funny. Very funny indeed!

ALICE & ROSEMARY (*together, hushed suddenly*) *That* was a joke-without-its-fun, a joke *with* a vengeance.

ROLAND (*frigidly polite, resuming his discourse*) The joke with a vengeance differs considerably from the joke with fun. To the superficial observer they can appear similar. Poor Robin. To some extent, if I could compare myself even remotely to him, 'poor me'. Just now, when we left Munden . . . will you ladies excuse me if I continue my discourse?

ROSEMARY Make it snappy then. And not so much abstraction. Alice, this is your fault. Why did you let this fool break loose? You should have kept him chained to your sandals like Diana, that great huntress.

ROLAND Bahram, that great hunter, you mean.

ROSEMARY (*to Alice, angrily*) Baa lamb that great mutton. He thought he was hunting me. I knew I had him on a string when you engaged me – it makes me laugh when I think of it – to be your servant! Paint my toe-nails. And be quick about it! (*Relenting*) No, take your time, dear. And if you are good I'll let you lick them afterwards. You can put some more paint on afterwards. (*To Roland*) Get on. Let's hear about Munden – it looked amusing to me when I looked in on it.

ROLAND The journey from there to Norfolk was a nightmare.

ALICE (*to Rosemary*) Married Life with him was a daymare.

ROLAND (*furious*) The days – with you – were worse than any nightmare, you bitch! Do you know, the war – especially the final defeat and downfall of England – was a *relief*. Do you know why? Because I thought it opened up at least a glimmer of hope that I could be rid for ever – for ever! do you hear? – of you and your suburban, sub-human, sub-civilized, sub-'aristocratic' society.

ROSEMARY (*calmly*) Go on. I'm longing to hear about Munden (*yawning widely*) and your great hunting. It sounds absorbing – if only I can keep awake.

ROLAND I worked hard on the farm although in fact we were so well off that we could live very comfortably even if I had chosen to live on investments.

ROSEMARY So could we. Or so my Mum said. Till I came. Even then she didn't mind at first because I looked like being a beauty and she thought she could invest in me and retire comfortably on my takings in the profession – still, it didn't take long. I made the same discovery as she had, but I discovered I had no intention of devoting myself to supporting her. Go on, Sir Galahad. This is most interesting. It sounds as if we shall discover that your Dad was the wealthy aristocrat who made me frightened till I stuffed my fist in my mouth to stop my yells. I owe my beautiful eyes to staring, dumb with horror, at my Mum's screams as he lammed into her till *he* got frightened and left her for dead.

ROLAND We used to hunt. But mostly it was the fun of rough shooting round the farm. Alice visited us. I liked her. Till one day she flared up at going to church and said she had told her parents she did not like the parson because he gabbled away like an old cockatoo. I liked her fiery spirit and we agreed, privately, that we would marry one day. But war came. It was marvellous, especially when I went into action and didn't run away – the first time. I found I had to go into action again that same day. That I hadn't expected. I knew I would have to go into action again, but I did not expect that the second battle, only a few hours after the first, would feel so different.

ROSEMARY (*examining her toenails*) Alice, you look positively interested.

ALICE I am. I haven't heard any of this before.

ROSEMARY (*yawning with affected indifference*) Well, get on with it. I don't expect you to be listening to voices when you have my feet to attend to.

ROLAND The next day I was lying in a dugout because the strafing was so bad. Everything was going up. At first I was frightened. Then I realized I could run away. I had not realized that before. You couldn't even be brave!

ROSEMARY What on earth has this to do with Munden?

ROLAND It has this to do with it: Munden occurs many years after. In fact Munden lies far in the future. Also far in the past.

ROSEMARY Oh my God! Can't we have a little whoring? That also

lies far in the past. And far in the future. Also, it is at least interesting and not this boring Roland stuff. Alice! Give me that whip. I'll teach you what it is to be my maid. Now; lick! Not like that you fool! Beneath, under the toes. And between. Now the soles of my feet. You will never make a whore the way you are going on. Now – concentrate. Carpe diem, as we used to say and will say again when my client and slave arrives. I am Thaïs. I am Berthe au grand pied – you never heard of them, I suppose?

ALICE Oh yes: I had a question on Villon – le Grand Testament – in my certificate exam.

ROSEMARY Really? How boring you are. It comes natural to you I suppose. And just wake up that husband of yours will you? What about Munden?

ROLAND (*pale and sweating*) Those heavy bullets. They crashed like the slamming of train doors in a tunnel. Robin and I flattened as low in the mud as we could get. Slam! Slam! Slam! Grand slam! The rat hunt. Someone was trying to get me in a corner and club me to death. But thanks to reversed perspective I could cower in the corner where the angle of the walls protected me.

ROSEMARY What happened then?

VOICE 'E fell on 'is arse! Arf, arf, arf!

ALICE What was that?

17

ROLAND I believe it's clearing. God, but that was a heavy shower! Nowadays they use computers. Hard to see what fun they can get out of sports in which you use computers to work out the position – the exact position of your blows. This rat uses it to aim his blows exactly so they just miss. The wheels of God roll slow, but they roll exceeding small. Slam! Slam! Small! These are so close that I can feel the air hot as they pass. It has started again. You can't just have machines. There still has to be some kind of vestigial brain to programme the computer. The tiny vestigial scrap of human cruelty. Small, vestigial, but tough and resistant like a spore – a spore of malignancy. Where's Robin? 'They' must have got him. Ah, the sea at last. The salt marshes and the pee-wees calling and the great clouds billowing past far above. Is the war over? From that warfare there is no release – no release. Daddy! Oh Daddy – stroke me, Daddy! My dear, dear child, my fingers can't reach your sweet face now. Would God I had died for thee! Oh my son, my son: Oh my son Absalom! Past, present and future, all shrivelled up to a nothing – the heart of a computer!

ROSEMARY (*twitching a scarf about her shoulders. Is she cold – or embarrassed?*) Alice, that will do. Really, these men make one quite uncomfortable at times. Pathetic.

ROLAND Just what I was thinking. I had forgotten I used to be so sentimental.

ROSEMARY I never was. Alice – oh, I see you have recovered.

ALICE For a moment I was reminded of my young days and even of the rather attractive days of young love when Roland and I thought we were in love. I almost believed I would go back to it if I could. Do you remember, what Horace said about Lydia?

ROSEMARY Horses? No, never heard of him. Oh, perhaps I do.

That was in my Maid of the Mountain days. That is when I dreamed it would be lovely to go on the stage and act the lead. What was it? Marry a lord, have a mink coat and masses of diamonds, and the third was to fall in love. I have done the lot. Now I am not much more than a computer myself; married to another computer.

ALICE And I am the slave of my mistress. I rather think it's the best of the lot. What about my religious days? I used to be married – Roland and I even married in Church.

ROSEMARY Ask Roland. I never took to it much. He has some high-falutin' stuff about it. Roland – tell us about God.

ROLAND There is a remarkable durability about the human capacity to believe in God. Religion affords a continuing source of study. The persistence of the belief is used by some people as an argument in favour of the existence of God – as if one could not believe, still less that the race could not believe, in the existence and even worship of a reality which somehow approximates to the reality of the human and animal impulse to worship. The mouse or rat sometimes looks as if it were imploring, in a positively worshipful posture, the mercy of the cat who is licking its whiskers preparatory to making a meal of its prey. The human animal, which has achieved a degree of articulate speech, certainly seems to be aware of its equipment of cruelty and the need to glut it, or at least feed it with the appropriate diet for its cruel impulses. "'But not on us", the oysters said, turning a little blue', is a formulation of the material which is to nourish and sustain cruelty in vigorous health. You remember there is a well-known story – it is even attributed, amongst others, to Jesus the eponymous hero of the Christian religion. 'My God, my God', he is reputed to have said, 'why hast thou forsaken me?' If he had thought of his Father as greedy and cruel he would have more rationally complained about being remembered – in time to satisfy his hunger for the satisfaction of his cruelty. But usually the cornered rat seems to feel, in extremis, the advisability of adoration and worship; '*morituri te salutamus*', is a succinct formulation of the principle.

In a civilized world it is more comfortable to believe in its civilized qualities, to obscure the cruel laughter (as expressed in this artifactual dream here) which might evoke, through memory or desire, the configuration evocative of dread. It seems clear that the attempt is inherent to ward off, or to ward off awareness of, something which is dread or terror and behind that the object that is nameless. There

are many formulations of dread, unformulated and ineffable – what I denote O. Plato named it 'forms', of which sensuous objects are the unreal but sensible counterpart. Saint Augustine resorted to using the equipment of religion, which is available in many Religions, to express the separation of good from evil. The systematic separation into two objects, good and bad, conscious and unconscious, pain and pleasure, ugly and beautiful, has provided a framework which seems to have facilitated the development of knowledge, but the element of growth appears to have escaped formulation especially since it resembles maturation. The lack of any simple framework of coordinates by which growth could be perceived or measured can be described in imaginary or simple terms by constructing a theory that a child – fictitious, but plausible without outraging the intelligence – could observe that it eats food which disappears, and then evacuates urine and faeces which can be observed. Further investigation made by our fictitious child leads him to discover that what has been devoured has been transformed into faeces + urine and the process of ingestion has been transformed into a process of evacuation. The normal activity of growth does not betray itself unless it becomes significant through some secondary attribute such as pleasurable, painful or doubtfully related quality – measurements of weight, height and the like which depend upon conjecture, theory and controversy.

Imagine the confusion of the human animal that finds itself called upon to gauge, contend with, promote or discourage something which has apparently no attributes and no language suitable for co-operation either with himself or anyone else except the primitive and defective instruments of the sensuous world! It is difficult to believe that 'the mind' – shall we provisionally call it? – has no boundary which is obviously and clearly bounded by the same boundaries as the anatomical brain. It is worse if it is seen to be inadequately represented by systems of analogues. Consider, for example, the struggles represented by the approach made to this difficult problem by the Greeks . . .

ROSEMARY The Greeks, if I may say so, were almost as ridiculous as you would expect them to be if you allowed yourself to believe what men say about them. In fact, luckily, I did not have to go to school and learn Greek and Greek grammar and Greek translation. I learned all I wanted to know and in less time than it takes for you and

your lifetime of bellyaching noise. I learned, and Homer had the sense to make it possible for you to learn, that Helen was at Troy. One of you fools said it shortly and straight to the point – before the dawn, hidden but not silenced by the cliff above Plymouth – 'Anyhow, whore or no whore, she done it for him free', and that's what started all the trouble. I don't have to write learned scholarly disquisitions about it. Plymouth Hoe, the Siege of Troy – what does it matter? Or Elizabeth, by the Grace of God, Queen of England. Or me? I am still beautiful. Even Alice – look at her now: is she not beautiful? You are silent, Roland. Why do you not listen? There is no thought or language yet the voice of them have gone to the uttermost parts of the earth.

ROLAND What? Why don't *you* listen? What else have I been doing while I have been talking? I have been telling you both something. Some of what I have been telling you I know. A lot of what I have been saying I do not know. I know a little – that part of it which I can feel, very faintly, is being listened to somewhere; it's like being touched in a crowd.

ROSEMARY Because your language is, as you think, not listened to by me, you feel entitled to be impressive and to have an audience that is impressed. My profession is the oldest in the world. I am familiar with the arrogant contempt that you think you are entitled to feel if you muster enough intelligence to formulate that expression together with the musical expression of contempt. Thaïs, Eve, Lilith . . . *there* is a lineage which you cannot begin to match. Because I do not bother to put you in what you would be pleased to call the proper place, you feel very proud to think you know mine. The brand of Cain has also been worn as a brand of honour. Your regiments are vast. Since you have learned to count you have been impressed by numbers – the greater the number the greater the honour. The more or less – that is the only criterion you understand. If I were to unveil my beauty you would – shrivel up and die. No, please! Spare me your protestations; I was aware that if I succeeded in making you hear what I said I should be afflicted with the pain of having to watch and, worse, admire your pitiful posturing display. You did not think, did you, that the poor little guttersnipe from the ghetto, the virgin's womb, might be more than rewarded by not being abhorred?

ROLAND (*in his best Oxbridge manner. He speaks clearly and well and is not disguising the fact that he knows he is doing it modestly and well*) Who found the way to express what he had to say we do not

know. But we do know that as late as the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna is described as reproving Arjuna for his depression and the assumption that his standards are the measure of all things. Arjuna has no hesitation in thinking he can reprove Krishna, or God, or the Ultimate Arbiter, whoever that may be, for his defective standards. Why should he fight and kill his kinsmen and friends though he knows them to be no less worthy than himself? He will not fight. In the Iliad, Hector is defeated and his corpse dishonoured. Achilles, though ultimately the victor, can sulk unworthily in his tent. The Trojans are defeated by a stratagem in a war waged on account of a woman and her ignoble paramour.

ROSEMARY !

ROLAND I beg your pardon? . . . I thought I heard someone say something. No? Then I shall continue. (*Softly in the distance – arf, arf, arf!*) I feel cold. Are these the streets . . . of a great city? They seem empty, lonely, deserted. The satyr shall call in the street. . . . Is this Ur, that Royal place? Nineveh? Tyre? Babylon?

VOICE Pretentious ass.

ROLAND Why? What's that? (*After a pause he continues*) I'm scared. I used to lecture well . . . am I losing my gift? What was I saying now? O yes: (*recovery of his theme reassures him*) the Israelitish God was a recognizable, tribal deity showing marked human characteristics, such as jealousy and envy, not markedly different from the inhabitants of the Homeric Pantheon located on Olympus and freely participating in human affairs.

VOICE It is amazing that this lump of a farmer knows all this stuff. The explanation is either that he is so stuffed up with 'education' that he couldn't be expected to be any use as a farmer, or that his farming lout occupation explains his pretentious erudition. It reminds me of the laughable howlers which mark Ezra Pound's claim to be a translator. Do you remember Kipling's joke about Horace's fifth book of Odes? Well, at least that was funny. Even so he pretended quite seriously that he could understand Virgil's understanding of the Mantuan sisters.

ROLAND Was that someone laughing again? An 'educated' Oxbridge accent?

VOICE Oh, do get on.

ROLAND Certainly. What was I saying? Job was rebuked for his setting up, like Arjuna, to be able to judge Krishna by the scale of

moral views which might be appropriate to human beings. Even at school I thought Palinurus had very unfair treatment, but of course anyone could see that you can't expect much of an old bore like Virgil. You have to make allowances for a Classic.

TOM What's your little game?

ROSEMARY, ALICE, ROLAND, ET AL. (*hushed*).

TOM You heard and I heard you, you bastards! What's your little game? (*It grows lighter. Tom peers around and gradually begins to see*) So *there* you are. Pretending to be asleep. All right, I have an answer to that one! I will put you to sleep – permanently. (*Beside himself with rage, he brings his clenched fists down together on the nearest figure. His fists bury themselves in the bedclothes. His violence is such that he cannot recover himself but remains, weeping with impotent rage, unable to regain an upright posture.*)

ROLAND Neanderthal man –

TOM You trickster. I'll get you yet! You think you're clever. I am red-blooded. I live. I am a slave to my passions and by God I'll see to it that you are a slave to mine. Women – that's what I want. But *you* will do. You and your trick cyclists – I'll turn the bastards into my slaves. I haven't got teeth and jaws for nothing. I'll tear your flesh . . . (*Screams*) Let me up! Help me to stand. Then I'll show you.

PSYCHIATRIST You'll wake the whole place, you fool. Nurse, give him a shot – morphia, and quick!

NURSE That's nearly a lethal dose isn't it?

PSYCHIATRIST My job here is to keep order. If it's his life or mine, it's O.K. by me if it's *his*! What is a lethal dose of morphia for him is a soporific for the boss. What is a soporific for the boss is bread and butter for me.

BION What that man What's-his-name calls 'Transformations', isn't it?

STATE PSYCHIATRIST Why, even *I* am transformed. Not a bad little job is it? I'm surprised Newton found it wiser to be master of the mind till he found it safer to be master of the mint. That chap – Jesus – is still a nuisance though. 'We have scotch'd the snake not kill'd it', as Shakespeare, as he called himself, has it. 'Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?' It's no good driving them underground. Only palliative. Stone death had no fellow. Ah, here they are – stout fellows both. First murderer and second murderer. They look a bit rough, but hearts of gold really. Fine family these Cains. Best of the bunch!

You there – don't you play the flute or something? And you – poet aren't you? Homer? All Greek to me, but . . . say, you! Can't you turn out something good with fighting and murder in it? Oh, I'll get it translated, never you fear! We've a top notch translation department in the F.B.I. What's that? Fucking Bloody Infantry. *That* doesn't sound quite right surely? Anyway – stout fellows all. Nurse – no, not you – the male nurse. Ah, here you are. Fetch up a bucket full of decorations. We shall need them shortly. Put in a few guaranteed hero brand. That usually sends them to sleep quietly. 'An army marches on its belly.' So does Satan though. *He's* a fine reliable chap now! Suffer the little children to come unto me with gently smiling jaws. I love little children – especially if they are young enough and tender enough. What, are they *still* sleeping? They sleep, with their eyes of stone, without sense, without life, beneath the rosy hues which stain the white radiance of eternity. These wretched poets – 'ante Agamemnona multi' – why can't they let them sleep in their graves unwept, unhonoured and unsung? 'What?' they smile, 'our names, our deeds – so soon erases Time upon his tablet? Where life's glory lies enrolled? Their name liveth for ever more.' Now, thank God, we can go to sleep.

ALICE What a night! Roland, what on earth were you up to? Tossing and turning and shouting! I could hardly get a wink of sleep.

ROLAND What were *you* up to?

18

Full stop. Sleep. There appear: ALBERT STEGOSAURUS and his close relative ADOLF TYRANNOSAURUS.

ADOLF What the devil have you got all this armour plate for?

ALBERT Call me Albert. I've got it *for* the Devil. What the devil do you s'pose? I'm resting; it's my spore stage.

ADOLF But I got these teeth for spores. Your vegetative existence is an offence. It's provocative, blast you! It's a resistance! You put ideas into my head. I was all right before you stirred up the ten commandments. Since then I have not been able to sleep for the itch to commit adultery. It's all your fault.

ALBERT There you go! Now you are making *me* feel guilty. Why can't you keep your conscience to yourself? Now I am filled with the gnawing of conscience and re-conscience and remorse. World without end – Amen.

ADOLF Keep your religion to yourself! Now you make *me* want to attend mass. All right – serves you right if I do eat you!

ALBERT You have wak'd me too soon. I must slumber again.

ADOLF Do wake me – in a few thousand years' time.

ALBERT By that time I shall have reached your anus.

ADOLF The right place for anyone's remorse – keep right away from my mouth and teeth! Right up the other end of my alimentary canal.

ALBERT Don't blame me if you have digestive pains. You mustn't blame me if you devour me. My armour plate, my resistances, my spores are pretty tough. Are you sure your anus can take it?

ADOLF I've got a pretty tough unconscious. I don't let my right hand know what I'm up to. It will take you a few thousand years till your concepts cease to be blind and your thoughts without content

are discovered by a thinker without thoughts who has room for a few thoughts who can't find a thinker to give them a home.

ALBERT You give me a headache.

ADOLF I told you to keep your thoughts in their proper place! If you let them get above themselves no wonder your head aches! Take my advice – keep your head for your thoughts. What's that tiny little thing you've got up there?

ALBERT A rudimentary brain.

ADOLF Hmmm . . . I don't like it. Mark my words, it will burst your head open! Chacun a son goût. Ow! What's that? You've shoved your thoughts into me, you vile creature.

ALBERT You shouldn't want to taste what you eat. Why don't you remain satisfied with eating everything without discrimination? Keep your head away from my arse! And if I were you I'd keep your arse away from your head too! Or you'll end up by being anal-erotic!

ADOLF At least I shan't know about it. If this fool Albert thinks I can't chew up his armour! . . .

ALBERT If this fool Adolf thinks my armour can't wear down his teeth! . . .

BOTH . . . he's got something coming to him!

BOTH (*out loud*) Thank God we agree.

19

ROLAND The survivals from the past are pathetic monsters. Pathetic phalluses. It seems to me that the very points which are their strength are also their weakness: separate and coincident. I have remarked this peculiarity of man as a tool-making animal before, but here the same peculiarity seems to inhere in an animal antecedent to man by millennia. They lie there stretched out on the squares of black marble by the rosy hues of the stain on the white radiance of Eternity. Sequential thought 'stretched out' what it purports to describe. But may it not be a peculiarity of thought, of the deductive system which has become detached and confused with the reality that approximates it? If so, it could be an illusion like some foreign, alien object not really part of the thing-in-itself, the noumenon. A book is written in pages; the print goes from the top of the page to the bottom and the sentences conform to a particular grammatical structure; the print is disposed in order from left to right. These patterns are dictated by the need to conform to rules of English composition and typographical lay-out. These dispositions have not only been imposed by the culture, but have imposed themselves on the phenomena being observed without criticism. Is the supposition that the reptilian age is antecedent to Hitler correct, or is it a feature of our thinking process which has become an aberration which has not been considered, but has become part of what is *observed?* Suppose the reality is a meaningless chaos. The appearance of order and coherence may be peculiar to the human observer's deductive system and reported as if it were a feature of a 'constant conjunction', observed from without. Further, what is 'within' and what 'without'? Herodotus put forward the suggestion that fossil shells detected in rock might support the belief that the sea once covered that land. Towards the beginning of this century an educated

man again revived Herodotus' conjecture about fossils without being aware that it had been debated before. *On this evidence,* it cannot be supposed that knowledge of the nature of fossils has been accumulated or advanced in the intervening two thousand years. This is not evidence, but it may be regarded as an artificially constructed model.

BION The whole of this book so far printed can be regarded as an artificial and elaborate construct. I myself, here introduced into the narrative, can be regarded as a construct, artificially composed with the aid of such artistic and scientific material as I can command and manipulated to form a representation of an author whose name appears on the book and now, for the second time, as a character in a work of fiction. Is it a convincing portrait? Does it appear to 'resemble' reality?

Suppose I drew A and claimed it was, or was a picture of, a man. You who are looking at this could, if the conditions existed in which we could converse, agree that I looked 'just like that' and that it was a meritorious and continuing example of my artistic genius. This book could be hailed as bearing, in itself, resemblance to its paternity – that it could not be mistaken for someone else's 'brain child'. But I may have a different aim; say, that of writing a description of psychoanalysis. To me, that the book bore witness to its mental origins might be an unwelcome irrelevance, a feature additional to the main component of my wish to communicate and your wish to receive. It is this double quality of the communication and the fact that significance might be attached in varying degrees, now to one, now to the other component, that I wish to discuss. I want to stress that the components are not 'bi-valent' but multi- or poly-valent even if at first I denote it by a 'bi-valent' symbol – $\lambda\xi$. The signs I am choosing are the Chinese λ and the Greek ξ. If I write it as $\lambda\,(\xi)$ I wish λ to represent a constant, (ξ) an unknown variable. But what is this? Why have symbols appeared? The experience of my own existence stimulates curiosity about me and my objects – of people or things like me.

Since I do not know for sure what these objects are, but want in fact to discuss them, I need to have some way of referring to them. Sometimes it might be a book that I want to discuss. There would be no difficulty usually, because I could make do with a certain familiarity with the use of the English language, using the existing vocabulary and rules of composition. But sometimes, and this is one of those times, this is not true. True, I want to discuss this book. But

that is an unimportant part of my pre-occupation. I want to discuss man, but as soon as I say that, I realize the word 'man' has a definite, perhaps misleadingly and frustratingly definite, meaning. I can say I want to discuss 'wilfred *r* bion'. That would have a definite meaning to some, but it is not true; I don't want to exclude whatever is 'represented', signified, denoted by those letters, 'rbidefilnorw', arranged, according to certain conventions, to form a visual pattern on paper. The problem is obtrusive, but not informatively displayed. If I want to communicate a song to a group of people familiar with the printed word but unfamiliar with sung poems or patterns formed by print on paper, it would obscure comprehension of the music I want them to *hear* when they *see* the pattern formed on the paper. Pound has shown that the culture of a group may be such that they do not print poems that can be sung, but construct poems that form, when printed, a pattern which pleases the eye. If sung and heard, they do not form a sound pattern that satisfies; it dis-satisfies and displeases the ear. I am so defective or badly trained that I cannot be pleased if I read, by eye, a Shakespeare play; yet if good actors transform that same printed play into a dramatic presentation the effect is an experience which is emotionally stirring; it effects a change – in Wilfred R. Bion – that is durable. Some similar effect is produced if J. S. Bach composes a musical score which, transformed by suitably trained people, can result in patterns of sound that can be received by my ear. A fictional character, Quee-Quegg in Moby Dick, can be shown by contrast to be deeply moved, through his eyes, by the pattern which a printed book, of which he does not understand a word, stirs in his visual senses. An author, Herman Melville, 'caused' to be printed a book which had a similar – analogous? – effect on the aforementioned Wilfred R. Bion who 'read' it.

The places in the following few sentences marked by □ are places representing 'some thing' that I want to talk about. 'Some thing' is not adequate; it is too impregnated with pre-existing meaning – too saturated W and at the same time not saturated (λ) enough. I am now as wide awake, conscious, rational, sane as I am ever likely to be between the moment of writing and the day of my □. I pick upon the □ for although I do not know when that is, I imagine that the empty □ will at some time be, like an algebraic variable in the course of mathematical calculations or a legal register of births, marriages and deaths, completed. That moment of time and that formal

entry on a document seems to have a convenience comparable to the inscription, 'finis', which at one time was conventionally used at the end of a book. There are other forms, notably the form which James Joyce regarded as more adequate than the sensuously apprehended cessation of print. He wished his story to conform to some of the vicoesque qualities which he felt he had derived from the philosophical disquisitions of Giambattista Vico, but had not been able to receive from Freud.

$\lambda(\xi)$ denotes a domain without beginning, end, or other dimension. I have to employ an extremely inadequate apparatus to discuss it. I have to manufacture the apparatus as I proceed. I claim that it is artistic though the art has not yet been created; it is religious though the religion has not been and never can (without ceasing to be a religion) be made to conform to any of the dogmata and institutions hitherto regarded as characteristic of religion. I do not expect the art to be analogous to music, painting, literary expression, sculpture or quantum mechanics; the 'uncertainty principle' (borrowed from Heisenberg) used by me both formulates and destroys the formulation together with $\lambda(\xi)$. O is by definition indestructible and not subject to, circumscribed by, beginnings and ends, rules, laws of nature or any construct of the human mind. In the domain of human comprehension Melanie Klein could not reconcile herself to the fact that whenever she had made herself understood, that fact rendered what she understood no longer 'alive'.

This introduction is intended to be a simplification (intended to be, though by definition false); a way of psychological preparation for more rigorous, in every 'sense', presentation. I shall proceed to yet one more 'simplified' (more easily comprehensible) presentation. I claim that though I may not have succeeded in making simple or comprehensible the complexity or confusion of the religious–scientific–artistic formulation, it is not so because it is clarity → confusion oriented, but because it is confusion → clarity oriented. If the English written page can be treated as if it were a model for the thing itself and not just a written page, the *poles* of confusion and clarity could be located at top left and bottom right of the page; my meaning here is not confusion, but talk 'about' confusion.

It is commonly understood that an analysand talks to keep the analyst correctly informed and the psychoanalyst has a similar aim. It is easily demonstrated that such a supposition is erroneous: so

would be the case with the opposite supposition. Questionnaires are drawn up and they are supposed to formulate searching questions to which revealing completions would be provided and the result would be – 'revealing'. In psychoanalysis it is supposed that no questions are formulated and replies to the *No-Question* would be more revealing. I propose an extension of this procedure – the invention of the *No-Questionnaire.*

Once I used to make notes on the session in conformity with my training. I was aware of feeling guilt and anxiety if I had no records to support any argument with myself or my colleagues, or real or imaginary accusers. As I became more accustomed to and more familiar with the way I worked, I realized it would be agreeable if I could indulge in the truth. (I was, of course, convinced that I always had. I would have been indignant at any accusation that I had not always been the soul of integrity. Even as I realize this, I appreciate that this very account is embellished with certain artistically exaggerated locutions intended to add, in a famous phrase, 'veri-similitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative'.) This discovery appeared to emerge over a period of time. The awareness of the discovery varied in intensity – ebbed and flowed. The 'notes' I made, the 'records' of sessions, turned out to be useful in a way that I did not expect. As a sample I give this imaginary entry:

Nov, (date) My God, my God!
Nov, (date) !!!
Nov, (date)
Nov, (date) been with her brother!! At last
Nov, (date) must (illegible)

In so far as the patient's name was correct, the entry could be called evocative.

MYCROFT HOLMES (*yawning somewhat ostentatiously*) Most interesting.

20

WATSON Shall I shut him up?

SHERLOCK HOLMES My *dear* Watson!

BION (*outraged*) What the devil do you mean by butting into my serious discussion? Are you not aware that I am raising serious issues?

MYCROFT (*in no way impressed*) *Go* on Sherlock. This is more your line than mine. You tell him.

WATSON (*before Sherlock intervenes which he appears unlikely to do*) My dear sir, Mister Holmes and his brother really must not be interrupted; it's a private and important matter.

BION But, my good man, are you not aware that you are entirely fictitious characters? I am a qualified doctor!

WATSON So am I; and an M.D.

BION Nonsense! Purely imaginary and not very bright even in the estimation of your fellow spooks. I am a past President of the British Psycho-Analytical Society and past Director of the London Clinic of . . .

MYCROFT & SHERLOCK (*together burst into a gale of laughter*),=

WATSON (*contains his mirth with difficulty, but manages to be civil*) Excuse me, sir, but I must admit that I have never heard of your existence. I do not want to hurt your feelings or to appear to boast, but although Mycroft has always been of a retiring disposition, Sherlock, and to a lesser extent myself, has a world-wide following. You yourself were admitting that there are imaginary characters who are infinitely better known than countless generations of nonentities. Now excuse me. I am a very busy man – allow me to suggest that you get on that couch there and sleep it off quietly.

BION (*with a gesture of despair, abandons his office to the three intruders and goes to sleep.*)

SHERLOCK I hope you weren't too rough with him, Watson.

WATSON Real people have to be treated roughly if the universe is to be made safe for imaginary people. If you remember, this problem cropped up before with real numbers. Quite impossible for the simplest mathematical problem even to be formulated till negative numbers destroyed the tyranny of being confined in the restricted space of addition just more real numbers.

MYCROFT What was the problem, Sherlock? I had the impression it was something simple.

SHERLOCK The simple part of it has been dealt with by Watson. You heard that fellow Bion? Nobody has ever heard of him or of Psychoanalysis. He thinks it is real, but that his colleagues are engaged in an activity which is only a more or less ingenious manipulation of symbols. There is something in what he says. There is a failure to understand that any definition must deny a previous truth as well as carry an unsaturated component.

WATSON Like your observation of the Silver Blaze case.

SHERLOCK Good old Watson: dead on the mark as usual!

WATSON (*expanding in the unexpected universe of appreciation in which he finds himself*) *You* said, if I remember rightly, 'Let me draw your attention to the extraordinary behaviour of the barking dog', and I said that I had not heard a barking dog. 'That', you said, 'was what made it so extraordinary'.

SHERLOCK Quite so. Nobody will listen to silence. It was the greatest single contribution to the final and merciful extinction of psychoanalysis. If it became possible that someone might notice, or maybe appreciate a silence, the psychoanalysts started their dog-like yapping, yelping and quarrelling. At first I used to listen because it sounded so like meaning, but I realized it was devoid of meaning and a noise likely to make thought impossible. I noticed, being possessed of a rudimentary capacity for thought, they were some of the earliest animals to hate thought. Of course, it was a poet who formulated it first of all.

'Pipe me to pastures still
and be the music that I care to hear.'

MYCROFT Sherlock, you and your fiddling always made me suspect that you were more of an artist or a parson than a scientist.

Can't we get on to the point? Surely it must be obvious to you, as it is to me, that Bion is feigning sleep as a cloak for stealing my time and my capacity as a substitute for his truly real and majestic stupidity? These 'thoughts' are symptoms of an underlying group of transformations. The human animal is very highly developed; its whole sensual apparatus is a re-agent, admittedly usually crude. If it has, as is usually the case, over-eaten, it becomes aware of discomfort – pain, as it calls it. Amazingly enough – we must not make the mistake of underrating it – when it developed beyond the stage of yowling and shrieking, it noticed, after a thousand years or so, that it had a pain. Tyrannosaurus didn't like being eaten. In short, what was amusing and satisfying was the same activity when the perspective was reversed and yet felt quite different – or so it thought. It was not 'different' but 'reversed'. Their rudimentary forms of mathematics never got further than a simple activity which they called algebraic projective geometry. These long words themselves were very popular and gave them nice feelings when they used them, but caused howlings of rage and pain if the direction was reversed. It was not now a part of the anatomical digestive tract, but part of the mind which they felt was somehow derived from, or genetically related to, their nervous system. It was not related to their anatomy. But they had to go on trying to use, as a substitute for thought, an antiquated and inadequate system of models. Wonderful to relate, the system continued to develop – to grow, as they called it – till imaginary beings like me emerged. I am thought-without-a-thinker, but I can assume the appearance of reality and can even be supposed, by one of these exceptionally developed creatures, to be what they call an hallucination. It is in keeping with this domain that an 'hallucination' arouses fear. Any thought that does not fall into the 'rules' which they like to think are obeyed by what they call 'thought' is hated; so are the systems of 'grammar' which differ from the rules with which they are familiar. The marvel is that any procedure, development or growth ever occurred. Now the problem you are posing, my dear Sherlock, is ridiculously simple if you realize the need to use the counterpart of, say, an X-ray film, something that betrays patterns of light and dark thought in a characteristic form. Once that is done, and it is dared to look at the mental configuration without being overwhelmed by fear and distaste – for example, at thoughts without a thinker . . .

SHERLOCK I see what you mean.

MYCROFT I thought you would.

BION I'm damned if *I* do.

MYCROFT You're damned if you don't too. And now I must leave my fictitious state: it's rather fatiguing. Excuse me while you go to sleep. . . . Well, Sherlock, that's disposed of him.

WATSON I thought you were pretty violent.

MYCROFT You have to be – with these real characters. They are either at your throat or at your boots in spite of talk about an arse between these two.

WATSON Even so, they call it 'circumcision'. More long words, though in my time Shakespeare's language was good enough. 'There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.' You were saying?

MYCROFT Leave the long words out of it. They are useful only for mystification and dominance. We can use constructions and verbal transformations of objects derived from what were in origin part of the sensuous domain. For example, that poor fellow, though he knew better, struggled to transform his religious rubbish into what he called 'opticks'. Quite erroneous and limited in so far as he was successful. Berkeley had no difficulty; even labouring with the equipment of religious training he could detect the infinitesimal increments and the part they could play in postponing detection of a fallacy for at least a century.

SHERLOCK Is that a merit?

MYCROFT It involved the development of mathematical rigour. The development of the human mind was, in the course of time, believed to be associated with, or caused by, the central nervous system. Freud thought that. The Greeks believed in ghosts, independent of anatomy yet with a visible counterpart; some function of themselves able to apprehend a personality after the physical anatomy had been destroyed or dealt with, but not before. They thought they could not see it by mediation of the physical, sensuous, visual apparatus. We do not know what physical apparatus they thought betrayed the phrenes, though they spoke of them frequently and as if they had no shadow.

BION As far as I am concerned, you and Sherlock and Watson *are* fictional characters. I can see that they might be described as very vividly conceived fictional characters, but I see no reason for imagining or conceiving of them in any other terms.

MYSELF But *I* do, because the term 'fictional character' itself is an inadequate phrase. Here I have just written 'myself as if I wanted to give it a status different from me. I could call 'Bion' a second-class citizen compared with 'Myself. I indicate without definition that the opinions expressed by me, even if fiction, are worthy of being treated with respect. Those opinions are of superior status to opinions claimed as mine and spoken as if I claimed 'ownership' over them. Their value, in a war for possession, is greater than it would be if they were intended to be 'true'. Conversely, a statement with a vertex of truth value would be of lower value as a weapon in a struggle for supremacy.

BION (*catching sight of Doctor Watson about to speak*) My God! Whenever I see that chap I am reminded of Mister Pooter. Both of them remind me of poor Conan Doyle. How he hated and despised Sherlock Holmes and Mycroft and the other fictitious characters who drove 'scientific', spiritualistic Conan Doyle off the stage. The worst of it is that Watson and Pooter remind me of *me* – maddening! It's quite bad enough going to sleep and being driven off' the stage of conscious, waking, real life by dreams.

WATSON It's nothing like so bad as being driven off the stage by conscious, scientific, 'real' you and your 'real' associations. You probably don't remember what George Santayana said would happen if the scientific 'beasts and blackguards' got hold of the world. Saint Augustine described them as enemies of the City of God.

BION Since you drag in saints, I must remind you that the City of God was itself an attack on the people who were complaining of what the barbarians and their Christian Allies had done to Rome.

WATSON I don't see what you've got against religion.

BION (*in disgust*) I'm going to sleep.

SHERLOCK (*to Watson*) Has he gone? It's humiliating to think that dreams are at the mercy of people who dream.

MYCROFT It's worse to realize that thoughts are dependent on finding a thinker. Shhh . . . what's that?

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Faint sound – Arf, arf, arf.

MYSELF My God! Here they come again. Those howls! It's eerie. I believe they are nearer. That! That! . . . That is a tiger. *No:* Tigers are only cats. That is no cat. Arf, arf, arfer's little history of England. You damned hyena! If the wine don't get you then the women. . . . He's just insolent, sir. In what way sergeant? He . . . smiles. What! Well it's just a dumb insolence. Nurse. Out damned . . . No, ridiculous. I've got it mixed up. Hullo, may Potter, I mean 'mere pother' about nothing. If the windows rattle – last night it was windy and he waked the whole ward with his nonsense. What, was he sleep-walking? Not exactly, sir. He sat up and shook the bed, he was trembling so violently. 'They are coming!' he said, 'that's the firing party . . . they are coming for me'. Then, just as you'd think he was going to jump out of the window, he quietened down as if he was watching the lawn to see it open. He told me his dead wife used to come out and walk towards him to fetch him – till he screamed! Then she'd go away. Recently he's started crying, quietly, because she doesn't come. 'She won't come now any more', he says; like a baby, as if he wanted her to come. It's a terrible laugh sir. It upsets the whole ward. Better transfer him to the chronic ward. Chloral is it? Double the dose.

SHERLOCK Most affecting! Any damn fool could see his brain is damaged, has been since the war. He was blown up by a shell: they all are! Very respectable. And then there is some equal fool who wants to analyse him!

BION (*waking up suddenly*) The really intelligent – I mean *real* intelligence, not the intelligence which has a fictitious character – want to cut out the brain, so that he will be intelligent too – really like Tyrannosaurus himself and some sea birds. Aren't they beautiful? Don't

they fly high! They are so beautiful, so high – they don't need to be intelligent. They have to be blown up – not like this pathetic fool, but inflated so they can make use of the currents. Just like the birds who see maw! Not too much though, but like my beautiful friend Seymore. Like that man Shakespeare. How do, Cap'n? Art thou sleepin' there? Below? And how's the mind diseased getting along? Have you found anyone to minister in the last few hundred years? Well, yes, you could say that the trouble has been rooted out if it is erased properly. Leave not a rack behind. Nothing less than complete mindlessness will do.

MYCROFT If I may suggest that a thinker should be found.

MYSELF Why? Have you found a thought?

MYCROFT I have been wanting to get it expressed if only I could get you and your psychoanalytic friends out of the way. Let me try; it's this: the mind, though only a very recent development, is a subtle and sensitive one. Freud, as he often did, put his finger on the spot. In the seventh chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams,* he said, answering his own question, 'What is the conscious? It is nothing less than the sense organ for the perception of psychic quality.' It stands to reason, then, that if he was right, this very recently developed organ, though not secondary to the probings *of* the grosser senses, may be capable of 'probing' and reacting *to* the grosser senses by 'psychic reality'.

BION What's so new about that?

MYCROFT Peace, pint pot. All these dreams and things are not going to lead to a discovery of some still further and more developed mind because there isn't one. But if these dreams and fantasies and bright ideas could be looked at in a way which revealed certain constantly conjoined elements, it might be possible to discern an underlying configuration (as Poincaré suggested of the discovery of a mathematical formula) which showed coherence where none was before, and relationships where none had been previously seen to exist. These revealed configurations might then be seen, like the mathematical formula, to have a reality and meaning. That meaning could then, like a good X-ray, be interpreted.

The mass of material is now so abundant that it is doubtful whether any psychoanalyst could 'interpret' the pattern with the efficiency of a computer. So what is now required is a procedure or instrument that could reveal the configurations. The configurations require transforming into forms capable of programming. This in turn requires something analogous to the discovery of Cartesian

co-ordinates. Then the clumsy formulations of pictorial visions, analogous to Euclidean geometry, could be more elegantly expressed by mathematical formulas of algebraic deductive systems – not the clear but inflexible hieroglyphs of Euclidean imagery. A start could be made with the relatively simple, because unencumbered by free associations, dreams of the schizophrenic. The paranoid–schizoid position is itself clear and chaotic, that is, unspoiled by coherence unless spoiled by intolerance of 'mysteries, half-truths'. Good-night children – everywhere. And please, Consciousness, go to sleep. The world of reality is the place for you!

MYSELF You mean the 'macroscopic' senses. The important 'senses' may be the 'microscopic' – 'ultra'- and 'infra'-sensuous. I see something in this. Mystery destroyed by 'the laughter of a fool', the crackling of thorns beneath the pot, makes a 'hunch' impossible. One 'direction', predominantly followed, could lead to a prolongation of the impetus and further 'discoveries'. Increased quantity transforms to qualitative change. Multiplication of particular instances becomes new discovery. What Mycroft envisages is a reversal of direction; this bypasses multiplication and therefore discovery of a general theory which has already been missed. At present there is a slackening in discovery about the nature of the mind and observance of what the mind can be sensitive to as a sense organ of psychic and physical quality. The mental domain of thought has been and is vitiated by the failure to appreciate the need for direction analogous to the mathematical recognition of the value of weighing direction – 'sense' and sense. Consciousness functions as a receptor so sensitive that no machine can replace it; later there might be a machine which can do what the unaided biological organ cannot.

WATSON What's Bion scribbling?

MYCROFT Take the pen out of his mouth. There – did you anywhere see anything so laughable? – wide-open eyes, wide-open mouth! Look out! He's going to cry!

BION Mind the volcano . . .

MYCROFT He is what these real characters call 'waking up'. At present he has the sense to think he's the White Queen; when he is awake he will call it a fictitious character.

BION And in that sleep of death, what dreams may come . . .

WATSON Now Hamlet. If not Hamlet, Shakespeare – whom he will denigrate or plutichrate by calling a 'genius'.

MYCROFT And won't pay any attention to either on the excuse of his being a fictitious character or a genius and therefore not worthy of attention.

BION I wrote a book once and called it *Attention and Interpretation.*

WATSON What did I say? He has woken up. Back to the real world, 'false fugitive . . .'

MYCROFT 'And to thy speed add wings.'

ROSEMARY You wrote a book! (*Yawning*) How fascinating.

BION You are not a bit fascinated.

ROSEMARY True, but I am fascinating. And that is more than you can claim to be.

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BION Suppose there is a physical disease, such as asthma, possessing physical components which remain to be discovered. There may be a mind (personality) that fears discovery of the asthma. I regard that as the mental aspect of the personality from which he retreats. Or he may want to develop his existing capacity to a higher pitch. This development could show itself in a man who was unaware of the physical pain caused by a scarcely existent hepatic cancer becoming able to feel pain though previously incapable of experiencing it. But suppose it was not wished or not practicable to foster a development indistinguishable from an approach to hypochondriasis. Without any change in the personality, could one elaborate an instrument no more to do with the personality than a measure of length or height would have to do with the personality that wished to use it to find out how tall he was; or a system of lenses relates to the personality wanting to observe a distant scene? We might fit to his mind an instrument which made him, without any more disturbance than a pair of spectacles, aware of physical pain which he could not detect unaided.

WATSON What about fitting him out with a questionnaire which he could be required to fill in? Then, according to the pattern displayed by his completed form, it would be possible to 'see' the pain.

SHERLOCK Brilliant, Watson! I could hardly have done better myself.

BION So you fictitious characters have turned up again.

WATSON Not Mycroft; only Sherlock and I.

SHERLOCK Since you want to have a hunch – which you can deny if it turns out wrong – I suppose *we* have to stand in for your missing integrity. Is that it?

BION Not *quite.* But certainly I want to be able to repudiate it if it should seem unsuitable for rigorous application.

WATSON I see the idea. I wish you could have my Jezail bullet.

ROSEMARY (*brightly*) What about fitting a woman – me, for example?

ALICE Or even me? Could not that augment – without it costing you any change in your personality – your armoury of instruments?

ROLAND No. What say you, Tom?

TOM No.

(*Roland, Tom, the Man, the two Bions all look questioningly at each other.*)

ROLAND 'An evil and adulterous generation ask for a sign.' Usually it is 'cure' they seek for and that is why the world is littered with cures.

ALICE I must say you look a bit glum – all of you, except Rosemary and me.

ROLAND Certainly you two seem pretty cheerful. So would we be if we were able to have the . . . the luck of being women.

ALICE Well, Roland, why don't you? Why don't you pair off? You could pick any of your pals you fancy.

ROLAND Don't be ridiculous. We aren't 'pansies', homosexuals . . . (*Rosemary stops manicuring her hands and looks up, astonished, but says nothing.*)

ALICE (*looking wide-eyed at Roland*) Oh, Roland, you *are* a poppet! I could almost love you, you're so sweet!

ROLAND (*sheepishly*) Why? What have I done now?

ALICE Perhaps Rosemary could tell you.

(*Rosemary purses her lips but only resumes her manicure.*)

ROLAND I suppose you think it is funny to make men look ridiculous.

ROSEMARY No; it's too easy. They do it so well themselves. Remember the man spinning round with his guts hanging out?

ALICE (*sadly*) For so many years since I first met you I thought you were so marvellous. I remember how fine you looked that day you came back from school. You were so proud, so happy because you were going to join the army. And I was so sure you were going to win the Victoria Cross. I said hullo, but I realized that I was only a silly school girl and I knew you could not be bothered, but I hoped, one day . . . well, no. I don't know what I hoped. Then one day I visited your mother and she had been crying.

ROLAND Yes, I know. A telegram had come that morning to say Gerald had been killed. What of it?

ALICE I was afraid. I thought it was you. And I didn't know I minded at all. So when she said, 'Gerald has been killed in action', I was so happy I was shocked and stammered. Luckily your mother thought I was upset and sorry for her. And she tried to console me. She held me to her and said, 'Never mind . . . it is God's will. You did like him a little, we thought. Didn't you?' I was so confused I just shook my head and she thought I said, 'yes'. But I was sorry, genuinely sorry, soon after I got away home. It was horrible, dark, cold, raining. But I had a warm place in my heart. It was only for you, dear. And then a dreadful fear came – suppose it was you and not Gerald.

(*Roland recovers his equanimity and even some of his complacency.*)

ROBIN I used to think you were a bit sweet on Alice. Once when you came back on leave; I thought you were a lucky man. Alice looked a bit struck on you just as I thought you were on her. So I wasn't really surprised when the happy day came and you led her to the altar.

(*He speaks jocosely.*)

(*Alice shudders at the recollection but says nothing.*)

ROLAND (*the shudder is not lost on him*) What's the matter?

ALICE That nightmare wedding day. I thought it would improve. It did very slightly, for about a year. And then it settled down, nothing dramatic, nothing terrible (*bitterly*), only noticeable if you compared me to a summer's day, one day with another, at intervals of a year. Then it became clear that it was horrible and becoming more horrible. Even then I had to be off my guard, as you are when you go to sleep. 'What dreams may come, aye, there's the rub.' Even when it's only the sleep of life. Luckily I don't fear the sleep of death now. Come not in terrors as the king of kings.

BION Which reminds me – is there anything more terrible than reality in the shape of Wembley Cup Final?

ALICE Yes – Oxford playing Cambridge.

MYSELF I was going to suggest Sade versus Masoch. Or the same at a higher power, so that the change in quantity becomes a change in quality enough for it to be called *war.*

BION Or peace becomes pacification.

MAN Did someone call me?

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The scene is the vast arena of Wembley. At first sight there appear to be some hundred thousand spectators, but it becomes clear that there are very few people, but an enormous host of animals of every shape and kind. Just near one entry is a small group of men in what Bion, Myself and their party take to be film actors in the uniform of legionnaires of the Roman Army. A cup final supporter, paper streamers and all, approaches one of the motionless figures and addresses him.

SUPPORTER Wotcher chum! Wot's yer regiment?

LEGIONARY Legion Vicesima Valeria Victrix.

SUPPORTER (*in feigned fear*) Lor'! Selling booze – wot's yer line?

A NEIGHBOUR (*shouts across*) Ask 'im if 'e's got some beer, chum!

There is a noise which drowns his reply and conversation rapidly becomes impossible as the pulsations, emerging more and more from the confused noise, themselves become recognizable as an unmistakable rhythmic beat, and the beats as each made up of recognizable sounds. The terrifying rhythm could be matched as if it were a 'swung' version of the Christian hymn, 'Abide with me'. 'Kum not in Quat, Quat, Adze Zhee King of Kongs.' Bzzfading like the whine of a receding shell. Kind of good like guts wound round your bloody throat. The massed bands of the Brigade of Guards crash out the sense of intimacy as the hundred thousand become more crushingly intimate. The space has closed in as if the expanding universe had decided to contract instead. Every so often the rhythm is emphasized by a choral interlude, 'Arf, arf, arf. Suddenly the din stops and is succeeded by a silence pierced by the one sound or word, 'Farrar'. The vast silent crowd wait for Alice to present the prizes. Each animal goes off nuzzling a very small atomic bomb; some suck it, some try

to shove it up their neighbour's anus. Some come up to Bion to complain that it isn't detonated.

Valeria of the Valerian gens is – yes, there is terrific excitement as she approaches the centre of the field to carry out the ritual of Kicking Oft' the Ball, which is the start of the Dance of Death. A terrific spectacle! D. W. Griffiths – that must be why the Twentieth Legion have arrived! And the Head Psycho Anal List to read out the prize winners. Sh. SH. SHHHH. Quiet, everyone! The Papal Guard are about to play the composition by the winner of the music Festival. SHUT UP! You Bas Turds! The quartet will now play 'Solitude' on four trombones. Then the Commander in Chief will say his prayers at the climax of the most intimate crisis of the celebration before – where's that ruddy whore got to? – the Lady Valeria kicks off the Final, Absolutely Final, till next year, celebration of Peace. The general's Lady makes a few mincing steps towards the Ball. Cheers, laughter and tears. She'll have to be quick if she's going to get off before she's murdered.

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ALICE . . . one thing worse, but I didn't realize it till I came to you to be psychoanalysed.

BION That wasn't psychoanalysis. I didn't know any better then!

ALICE Do you know any better now?

BION Perhaps. I don't know.

ALICE Well, that's something, I suppose.

MYSELF Yes, something. Not much, but something.

ROSEMARY (*still pre-occupied with her appearance, apparently lost to all reality beyond her immediate needs and those seem to be exclusively centred on her looks*) I shall want you to come with me, Alice. I may need you when I go out in about half an hour.

ALICE Yes, Miss. Will that be all for the present?

MYCROFT The difficulty for poor Watson is he cannot adjust to these changes of translucency. Luckily I became used to them when the Bauhaus people were experimenting with the changes in visual planes. Even Sherlock became a bit mixed, but he should have known better. So ought our respected creator, Conan Doyle. But he got mixed up with that Spiritualistic nonsense just as Sherlock became entangled with 'reality' as he called it. Do you remember how he became tied up with 'the woman'? Irene Adler, wasn't it? Silly ass.

ROSEMARY (*appears again, though transparently. She speaks with a coarse accent*) Wot's up now Mister Mycroft? I've not much time to waste because I'm going out with my girlfriend. Showing 'er some of the sights seeing as 'ow she knows nothin' about them. Seein' she's a lady. Proper educated, I don't think! Wot's up Roland?

ROLAND (*struggling with some indignant need to protest; finally, in tones of stifled anger*) Alice was making out we were homosexuals. I was a soldier for four years and was decorated . . .

ALICE Oh, come off it, Roland. What's that got to do with it? Do you think we girls have never heard of a public school?

ROSEMARY Fine times you seemed to 'ave too! I thought all your slap-up institutions only went in for skivvies like me. I remember one day when I 'ad time off from a little pub my mum 'ad got me a job at. Nice boy 'e was too. I went out with 'im. Lord! 'E was like a cat on 'ot bricks! You'd think 'e 'ad never seen a girl in 'is life. I asked 'im wot 'is school was. My! was 'e red – 'e blushed and 'e 'ummed and 'e 'awed. I asked 'im what was the matter. And I found out 'e thought 'is school would find out 'e 'ad been out with me. I could 'ave smacked 'is face! But I didn't. I thought I'd make 'im feel more comfortable by telling 'im 'e looked nice. I said, you're very 'andsome – 'e was, too, I'll say that for 'im.

ROBIN I can see that it is funny to you. It wasn't to us.

MAN (*he is reclining on a couch and has been listening intently for a time, resting on his elbow looking at each speaker in turn*) I can understand why we won. I could not understand before. We learned at school about Shakespeare and Milton, Schiller and Heine. You didn't learn about Heine? Well, we didn't much either, but we liked Shakespeare. We had a foolish teacher. We called him 'unser Shakespeare' because he was so foolish and patriotic. We called him 'old ros' bif too and he thought we were making fun of the English, but we were making fun of him because he made us learn a poem about the Roast Beef of Old England. I didn't think it was a very good poem. Then when the second war came I thought something had happened to the English.

ROBIN Nothing had happened to the English. It was treachery. That man Chamberlain . . .

MAN No, I don't think so. Shakespeare spoke about England being true to itself. And I think what he said was right. No?

ROBIN (*flushed and angry – rises half off his couch, but seeing that the man is fingering a wicked looking automatic, sinks back.*)

ROSEMARY (*Her interest has been flagging but she is now watching with great interest, she beckons to Alice to pay attention; sotto voce*) Watch this, it's interesting. We shall have work to do soon. (*Out loud to the man*) I say! Can I watch? Are you going to shoot him? Oh, do shoot him – please, please! I've never seen a man shot.

MAN Shoot? No. We never shoot helpless prisoners.

ROSEMARY (*disappointed, losing interest*) Oh, I always thought men, if they were helpless, were shot. I had a boyfriend who became

an officer in the Air Force. He was shot escaping – so they said – with fifty others.

MAN It's a lie.

ROSEMARY I thought it was. I expect you are so different from Public School. A girl I once knew was watching an operation with a lot of other nurses. The chief surgeon looked along the row insultingly, making them uncomfortable for being such a poor lot – till he came to my friend, who was very pretty. My friend whispered to the girl at her side, just as she thought he was coming to her. When he saw her she was looking him straight in the face – apparently whispering – about him, of course! Boy! did he blush! He looked like a beetroot!

ROBIN Women always tell that kind of story. I expect he looked away, granted, but . . .

ROSEMARY Robin, did you go with Roland when he escaped from the pigeon loft? That was brave, wasn't it? I *like* our guardian here – or whatever he calls himself. You're all the same anyhow.

MAN (*has stopped fingering his automatic and has put it down with an amused smile*) Kolossal!

TOM I wish I had the gun. But as a matter of fact I am nervous of guns. I had to be invalided out of the army because I couldn't carry a rifle; I was afraid I might shoot someone.

ROBIN (*still smarting under Rosemary's questions*) Poor Tom! Couldn't you have shot some Germans? That would have made you feel better, wouldn't it?

TOM I was afraid I might shoot one of our own side.

ROLAND Much safer that way of course. War and murder are dangerous – psychopathic personality is safer.

MYSELF Not always – it matters which end of the gun you are.

ROLAND (*it is clear that he is contemptuous of psychiatrists and others that he calls 'trick cyclists'*) Well, I suppose it is all right if you are a balanced personality.

MYSELF You mean you think it's all a matter of 'tricks'? Well, it may be. I've certainly been scared all my life and I've had to learn to *look* brave. You always get caught and sometimes you are caught out.

BION Give me an example.

MYSELF (*with discomfort and distaste*) No.

BION Why not? This is a private matter where you are free to say what you like.

MYSELF I am not. I could try to escape the problem of discretion by using material drawn from myself and making it truthful. I cannot – I know myself too well to be honest. There would be no discretion or privacy unless I remained silent about my own affairs. There is a further problem. Non-artistic methods of communication are less accurate than those used by artists. For example, I could use a camera to take photographs, or a recording machine and video tapes to record the audible and visual. I can watch a television picture and see men landing on the moon. My impression is that the photographic representation is inadequate and even if improved by mechanical means, I and others would still regard it as 'flattening'. I can say this with conviction of the psychoanalytic experience also. I cannot describe this experience in any convincing way to someone who does not share it, any more than the moving picture of men landing on the moon tells me what it feels like. It is delusory to suppose that contemporaneity makes the experience communicable. Even while it is happening I may not succeed in drawing attention to the experience, less still with an experience which I know I have had, but cannot now 'remember'.

I can remember, faintly, what it is like to go into battle in a tank; I know enough to be able to describe it in terms of terror. I know a companion had the experience of being invalided out as schizophrenic; another never regained his skill as a soldier. He was said to have been delinquent although he wrote to me in terms of affection years afterwards. Another became disillusioned and desperate and in his last battle was destroyed with the rest of his companions and burned to death. I know that some people, while not having the same experience as myself, were confident that I knew what they felt; some believe I know what it is like to be a psychoanalyst; others neither know what it is like to come to me for analysis nor how it might feel for me to be their analyst. They can learn to pretend they are familiar with psychoanalytic experience as a clever animal learns tricks: the human animal can learn how to play tricks which might convince the ignorant. If trickery were enough, no harm would occur. In a group trickery might afford a solution of the problem. An interpretation appropriate psychoanalytically cannot be right in a room where others are present; the interpretation addressed to a group is witnessed in a way which differs from the psychoanalytic interpretation. In what does the difference consist? Some differences spring to the mind at

once. In psychoanalysis 'common' sense – I am talking about physical sense – suggests that two physical beings only are present; in a group a number of people can be physically 'sensed' (literally) to be present. Wilfred Trotter, in *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War,* suggested that the group as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. I feel that I, who am writing this (and thinking before I am writing it), am less than the whole of me. I can 'think' the possibility that my ideas, valued as cultural achievement, are insignificant, 'stuck on' a part of my group reproductive functioning which I choose to ignore by identifying with my sexual life and other functions which have been emphasized through the over-elaboration of the individual by psychoanalysis. Thus, I can argue that the mind and its works are of great significance; the rest, a total, inchoate mindlessness to be called 'the unconscious', is lumped together and glorified and idealized as a further tribute to the mind. Are the gametes mindless, unconscious, mentally active, or do they belong to a category so different that the mind has no apparatus for dealing with them? I put forward, herewith, a theory of ξ with a recently proliferated sense organ known as the 'end', in which various functions, usually associated with psychoanalysis (the Oedipus situation, aggression, rivalry) are supposed to be observed (on the model of forms of dis-order, dis-ease, sex, fear, love). In reality they are patterns, configurations, insignificant in themselves but, if delineated, indicative of an *underlying* reality by their perturbations, regroupings, shifts in pattern and colour; they reflect a category and kind that the human mind cannot formulate or conjecture in their presence. If so, these Oedipus situations, impulses, instincts and characters could be made opaque in the way in which patterns in X-rays are revealed by the use of sensitized plates. The personality or mind, as portrayed psychoanalytically in detail, is a recent photogram of some long-existent reality, of significance only as an archaic physical anatomy might be. Psychoanalysis would appear as an ephemeral phenomenon, betraying forces on the surface of which the human race flickers, flares and fades in response to the unrecognized but gigantic reality.

The practical point is – no further investigation of psychoanalysis, but the psyche it betrays. *That* needs to be investigated through the medium of *mental* patterns; *that* which is indicated is not a symptom; *that* is not a cause of the symptom; *that* is not a disease or *any*thing

subordinate. Psychoanalysis itself is just a stripe on the coat of the tiger. Ultimately it may meet the Tiger – The Thing Itself – O.

BION If I had heard you say this a few years back I suspect that I and my colleagues would have been shocked and thought you were turning against psychoanalysis and were guilty of dishonesty. Indeed, I would be interested to know how you justify the fact that you are still practising – do you call it psychoanalysis or some other term like psychotherapy? – and charging people fees. Can you expand this?

MYSELF Thanks to memory I can make a comparison. The comparison causes change, and on some occasions the change obtrudes. When this happens you feel the change deserves to be recorded and the dialogue between me and me might just as well be conducted between me and a fictitious character. The fiction can be so rhetorical as to be incomprehensible; or so realistic that the dialogue becomes audible to others. There is thus a double fear: that of the conversation being so theoretical that the thoughts might be taken for meaningless jargon; and that of the seeming reality. Having two sets of feelings about the same facts is felt as madness and disliked accordingly. This is one reason why it is felt necessary to have an analyst; another reason is the wish for me to be available to be regarded as mad and used to being regarded as mad. There is a fear that you might be called an analysand, or reciprocally, that you may be accused of insanity. Should I then be tough and resilient enough to be regarded and treated as insane while being sane? If so, it is not surprising that psychoanalysts are, almost as a function of being analysts, supposed to qualify for being insane and called such. It is part of the price they have to pay for being psychoanalysts.

25

MYSELF Hullo! What are you doing here?

ROSEMARY (*who is so obviously present that it is hard to imagine that her presence can possibly have been unobserved or ignored*) Your surprise surprises me. (*Turning to Alice who is equally obviously present*) Alice, do all your men-folk behave so oddly? Well, now I come to think of it, the men in Mummy's society did behave in a similar way. That teenager from Eton or Harrow – I forget which particular outfit he came from: I remember telling you about it. Bion reminded me of it and just now – I suppose I should call you the author? – the way you said, 'Hullo! What are you doing here?' reminded me of it – exactly! – just for a fleeting second. I remember walking along with him thinking how nice and handsome he looked. I did think he seemed a bit nervous, but thought no more of it. But as we walked on and it did not wear off I began to look at him and wonder what was the matter. Then I thought, I believed he was ashamed of being out with me! So, to try him, I said, 'It's not far to my Mum's place; come and 'ave some tea. She would be ever so pleased to see you.' He blushed! He blushed so red you wouldn't believe it. 'blot's the matter', I said, 'are you feeling ill?' Of course I knew it wasn't any such thing. I knew that nice well-behaved gentleman had the damned sauce to be ashamed of being seen with me. So I said nothing. Just put on the accent a bit more – like I'm doing now. You don't look well, I says. You sure you're well? A bit pale, I says – and 'im as red as a beetroot! shall I come to your front door with you? Oh no no no! Please don't trouble. I'm all right, really I am. But I've got to get back to my – prep or something, he says, the dirty young liar! A pal of mine was passing just then and I was so angry I had a good mind to tip him the wink. He wouldn't half have knocked the stuffing out of his pink beauties!

Of course he knew Mum was a whore, but naturally he didn't poke his nose into her business and I knew he liked me. But I said nothing. Well, to – ta George, I says. Sure you are George? – I says, a bit sarcastic like – of course I knew the young liar's name wasn't George by that time and I found out who he was. I had a good mind to send him one of those frightening letters so he would think I was going to blackmail him. But I didn't. I don't know why; I wouldn't think twice about it but I've always been a bit particular.

ROBIN Have you? Some of your pals aren't so particular.

ROSEMARY That's interesting. How do *you* know whether they are particular or not?

MYSELF (*before Bion or Robin can reply*) I don't think he does and I am beginning to think you and Alice may not.

ALICE (*bitterly*) I don't. I wish I had known when I met Roland. All I know now is that *if* I had known and *if* I had been with Rosemary as my friend when she had gone out with that young cad she has been telling us about, I would have been more likely either to have had a happy marriage or remained a spinster friend of Rosemary: preferably never married.

ROSEMARY No you wouldn't. Nor would I. We should both have done the same. Or some other kind of 'worse'.

MYSELF Well, how *have* we done?

MAN (*alert, lively, looking from one to the other in turn, but evoking no response and making no comment. Finally he gets up. His demeanour is modest, but he speaks with authority as he announces, as if to an audience in the darkness in front of him*) The Future! It gives me great pleasure to announce the Future and to express the hope that you all have enjoyed the present as much as I have.

26

MYSELF Much in this book has been described in narrative terms. The constructions employed could be understood if the language were known to conform to the conventions of spelling orthography, print, grammar. Are those rules to be understood as applying only to the domain of articulate speech, or is it possible that they derive from and apply to some domain of which we are unaware? Are the rules according to which I conform also to be understood to be a part of the representation to which some yet undisclosed realization approximates? The matter obtrudes if I am working with someone who does not pay attention to, or attach importance to, the verbal content of what I say, but interprets the 'flatus', the breath with which I say it. *I* may be under the impression that my articulate, verbal formulations are what is important; *he* may be concerned with the breath with which I say it.

The complexity of the problem is increased if the 'flatus' is the link between X, someone or something not me, and my self; the 'flatus' requires a spectrum of meaning to express 'Divine afflatus' at one extreme, to 'poison gas' at the other. It becomes still more complex if X is able to 'transform' the sound waves, which I think he hears via his auditory apparatus, into waves which I think would be usually appropriate to visual apparatus. If I suppose he *hears* what I say to him, but in fact he is *seeing* my words sailing through the air, the link between myself and X becomes a problem which cannot be solved with the existing apparatus.

Let us assume that there *is* such an entity as the mind; furthermore, that there is such a domain as approximates to, but is *not* identical with, the mind; that the 'rules' of that domain and the entities within it are only expressed in the crudest terms, derived from the

ordinary animal's experience of sensuous reality. Then my problem and the problem between myself and my partner assume a scale of difficulty which lies *beyond* the reach of their existing spectrum. Conversely, there may exist entities who are incomprehensible to me not because their scope is so much less than mine, but so much more. Indeed, Balaam is far more suitable to represent me than is what I consider to be his ass.

BION This theory may be necessary to represent the similarity between people separated by race, religion, language and distance, measured in terms of or by physical time and space. Our concern is how this 'domain', usually left to be 'dealt' with by geniuses, is to be managed by ordinary humans. Nietzsche says a group must produce or find a genius; how is it to recognize and preserve it when found? Is the human 'mind' the sense organ that could be adapted for the purpose? Can Freud's theory of consciousness be extended to the whole human mind and the object of its attention to whatever lies 'beyond'?

SHERLOCK Mycroft! Mycroft! I say . . . Wake up, do.

MYCROFT What's up now?

SHERLOCK I was having the most appalling nightmare! I dreamt that something . . .

MYCROFT Oh, nightmares. You have been eating too much.

MYSELF *This* is too much – do I have to put up with these two clowns? I know and you know they are fictitious characters. Have I got to have a highly significant soliloquy interrupted? I can't even so much as hear myself think! Where does all the uproar come from?

> 'Elected silence sing to me
> And beat upon my whorléd ear,
> Pipe me to pastures still and be
> The music that I care to hear.
> Shape nothing lips; be lovely – dumb.'

MYCROFT You observe the poor fellow can't even spell, Sherlock? He means whore-led.

MYSELF

> 'It is the shut, the curfew sent,
> From there where all surrenders come
> Which only makes you eloquent.'

WATSON I don't hear anything.

SHERLOCK That was the significance of the dog barking.

MYSELF This is too much! These are imaginary characters. We shall have imaginary numbers next . . . and thoughts that haven't even a thinker . . . and six characters in search of an author, I shouldn't wonder. Who was that?

WATSON I didn't hear anything.

VOICE . . . hear no evil, speak no evil, see no evil . . .

MYSELF Wasn't that one of those proverbial sayings?

TYRANNOSAURUS V. STEGOSAURUS DO NOT MISS THIS STUPENDOUS SPECTACLE. SADE VERSUS MASOCH. PRODUCER GIAMBATTISTA VICO. WATCH THE HEAD DEVOUR ITS TALE. THE ONLY GENUINE EXPLANATION EVER PRODUCED OF THE OLD FOSSIL. WATCH THEM, IN THEIR BLINDNESS, BOW DOWN TO WOOD AND STONE.

MYSELF Herodotus thought the sea must have covered the mountains. What next! Someone will say that something, a configuration or pattern, might be covered and revealed by the cover. Angels?

SHERLOCK Our discussion is being interrupted.

MYCROFT For my part, all I can say is that though we may be fictitious characters, at least you and Watson and I are not quite so stupendously boring as Bion and, worse still, Myself.

SHERLOCK Surely, even if you have to be a real creator there could be something to be said for being entertaining. I remember . . .

MYCROFT So do I. Your treatise on a hundred or so cigar ashes. Who on earth could possibly remember Myself on psychoanalysis or sex – whatever that may be! I'd give the lot of them for Irene Adler. She was at least fun. Even God didn't spend the whole of his time obsessed with religion. You would think he was fascinated by being worshipped like one of the psychoanalysts. *That* religion has to be a whole time job worshipping psychoanalysis and singing hymns to the ruling psychoanalyst and his divine attributes. Now: let me show *you* something. I'll give you a sight of – the promised land! Listen! – it's Browning speaking.

> 'Now the cloud rift broadens, spanning earth that's under,
> Wide our world displays its worth, man's strife and strife's success.
> What! they smile, our names our deeds so soon erases time upon
> his tablet where one hundred thousand are spread out.'

Already the famous are so thick they are anonymous. As Horace said, Vixere victoria ante Agamemnona multi, and yet the poet hadn't

turned up; so the recording tape was a blank! They disappeared into the shade – unwept! For want of a poet. What a joke! But, listen . . . sounds like the brigade of guards. Massed bands! At least we can have quantity – all famous! Listen . . . Abide with me – all hundred thousand – Zing Boom! Ching! Fast falls the even . . . on the just and unjust – couldn't be fairer – Zing Boom! – than that, could it? The darkness – can't the fools see? – I have seen a finer or hotter Cup Final? Never! 'You've all won', said the Dodo, marching off in strict Do-decanese time upon its tablet where they all lie stretched out cold! Arf-boom! – arf-boom! Arf, arf, arf-Boom! Kum not in errors like the Zing Zing Boom! But kind becos there weren't no 'paulin thar! You remember? The whole fleet was ordered to steer by Palinurus; and we couldn't help laughing becos there weren't no Palinurus there! Can't a man 'ave a bit of fun? Somethink crool! The light is bright, so dazzling it is impossible . . .

SHERLOCK What's all this about?

MYSELF I don't know what it's about. But I can tell you what, in my opinion, 'it is'. These are scraps of a conversation destroyed and fragmented by a jealous, hostile, curious and destructive, excluded, but none the less present, well . . . personality, shall we call it?

BION Even the excluded middle becomes less than law-abiding.

MYSELF Suppose God objected to human beings becoming too divine, too Godlike, like men becoming like towers, and wanted to make that language into rubbish, a tower not of strength and a power of love, but a tower of Babel, of confusion, of strife and contention. But suppose the excluded personality was in its infancy; then the whole of what I am saying might be an attempt to *imitate* the sounds that grownups make if they are engaged in what we call articulate speech. The psychoanalyst, the artist, the entertainer could be moved by love at one extreme, rivalry and hate at the other. In between the two, at neither pole, it could sound rather as I have said. Is 'Sordello' incomprehensible on purpose to make it difficult, or is it Browning's attempt to express what he had to say in the shortest and most comprehensible terms?

BION Is God, and his priesthood of artists, musicians, mathematicians, and now psychoanalysts, out to cause the most chaos? Or is he incomprehensible and himself unable to find an adequate priesthood for his purpose? Is it possible that his ways are not our ways, his Leonardos, Picassos, Bachs, Newtons, Einsteins, not adequate to

passing it on to the human animal? Any *moral* system so far invented cannot solve the problem – Sherlock, I hear you coughing. You can have your turn in a moment – oh, all right: go ahead then.

SHERLOCK I don't bother about morals. I have always stuck to a seriously scientific approach.

WATSON Oh Holmes, really! What about that cocaine? I warned you time and again about your very non-scientific, non-medical approach.

SHERLOCK Yes Watson, but I have had to point out to you that you can't even tell me where that Jezail bullet struck your anatomy. I sometimes wonder if there ever was such a person.

MRS MOP Can I do yer now sir?

27

MYSELF This place is thick with fictitious characters. There won't be enough 'cloud drift' for them to throng through at this rate.

MYCROFT But *you* are just as bad. You dragged in the whole Wembley Cup Final engaged in a sort of religious cup final. Actually, I thought it. rather entertaining. Does your God have a sense of humour and are you part of a kind of Psychoanalytic humorous priesthood?

MYSELF I think that's carrying it a bit far, Mycroft. If you had to attend meetings of the Psychoanalytic priesthood, *you* wouldn't think it funny.

MYCROFT I don't know. I thought you seemed to be having quite a bit of quiet fun out of attending the covens or prides or whatever you call the meetings of your mystery. *Weren't you* meaning to be entertaining?

MYSELF Now you mention it, I remember one of our Tank Corps officers thinking God sent 'His Englishmen to fight His battles *because* they looked so funny going into battle in tanks'.

STEGOSAURUS Like us: couldn't move; sitting target.

WATSON You shut up. You're extinct.

STEGOSAURUS No more extinct than old Tyrannosaurus here. Eh, old bloody chops!

TYRANNOSAURUS What about your poor plants?

TOMB ROBBERS Where would your scientific view be if it wasn't for us digging up a few cadavers?

PRIEST OF UR And our burying the whole Court. There would have been no death pit without us.

MYCROFT Pure suspicion and father of science! Love of gold!

PRIEST I have heard it said that even psychoanalysts make a profit.

MYSELF We run risks.

MYCROFT Isn't it amusing to see you unearth a paranoia?

> 'Oh, who will o'er the moors with me, oh, who will with me ride?'

MYSELF I did not know that you specialized in puns, Mycroft.

MYCROFT It hardly surprises me since I gather that you think you are a real character and that I am imaginary. Your friend Alice thought the Cheshire Cat wasn't real, but that *she* was. The Cheshire Cat was tolerant enough to see that from the dog's point of view the cat, itself included, must be mad since it growls when it is pleased and wags its tail when it is angry. I don't tell Sherlock everything even if he, like me, is an imaginary character and a blood relation – imaginary blood of course. Pontius Pilate – do you regard him as a work of fiction, extinct, fabulous, or governor (historically) of a Roman province? – washed his hands publicly; he and Lady Macbeth join the ranks of the hand washers; so does the blood join the category of signs (symptoms? evidence?) of guilt or murder or suspicion. This is where dear Sherlock specializes, as you know. What about writing a monograph on a hundred kinds of blood?

WATSON No, no! There are only two or three blood groups.

MYCROFT What says our real specialist?

MYSELF You are pleased to be facetious, but since you mean me I will answer. You are confusing . . .

MYCROFT I think you are 'murdering' if I want to emphasise your crime. Just because I shall still be entertaining long after you have disappeared, you have no hesitation in calling Sherlock and Watson and me imaginary characters and claiming a superior status for yourself and your bloody books.

MYSELF Oh no, I don't. Excuse me; but you have got me mixed up with Bion; and what about the blood you have just detected on my books?

MYCROFT Don't you acknowledge any responsibility for your books? Or do you disclaim your brain children?

MYSELF I don't disclaim them. But I do not now hold myself responsible for all the use that may be made of them.

MYCROFT Do you hold *our* author responsible for the use that you are making of *his* brain children?

MYSELF No, of course not. I do at least try to play fair you know. In my *Second Thoughts* I have pointed out that I regard myself as having a need to keep silent about certain information which people have entrusted to me, certain information which I have had an opportunity of eliciting for myself and which I think would be of no use to anyone other than the person who comes to me for help. There is still more information which in my opinion would be of no use to the man who comes to me, but might be of great use to his enemies. All this can be seen to apply not only to me, but equally to those who come to me for help. The person who comes to me for help can easily obtain it and, if he feels so disposed, can then use it to destroy me.

MYCROFT Sherlock, as you know, attributed my inaction, as he called it, to indolence; I regard his tendency to transform thought into action as verging on foolhardiness.

MYSELF I should have thought that during the course of your sojourn in my mind – if that's where it and you have been – you would have become transformed from a relatively minor, fictitious character into a somewhat major part of your more useful characteristics. If there were such a thing as a mental digestive system, I could say that the mental diet of entertaining fictitious characters has contributed greatly to my mental health.

ROSEMARY Any orchids for Miss Blandish?

MYSELF Not many. Only a few pages, I should think.

ALICE What about the leaves you've been scattering around through *this* open window?

MYSELF I've no idea; one or two may have been worth tidying up. How wise to remember All Souls and spare ourselves the Saints! I would rather achieve success as an anonymous nonentity than wear self-inflicted honours. Even Newton risks unfavourable competition with his famous apple: it cannot compare with its ancestors of Eden and the Hesperides.

28

SHERLOCK You seem to me to be deprecating fame itself.

MYSELF Holmes, you did not begrudge l'Estrade his need of fame. But who, think you, decided between you and your begetter? When was the award made? Who is more famous: Nelson, or his 'blind eye'? Fame is no plant that grows in mortal soil.

MAN 'Nor in broad rumour lies. . .'

MYSELF So, *you*'ve come to life have you?

MAN Not yet.

ALICE What do you mean – not yet?

MAN I live in the future. My memoirs are the shape of things to come.

MYSELF Are we to have a pre-view? I should be most interested.

MAN The Royal Court at Ur – did they drain their little cups for what dreams their contents would reveal, or to conceal them? I do not know.

MYSELF The past, like the future, is hidden from you.

MAN Not quite.

ALICE Not yet: not quite.

MAN Let me suggest that the state of mind of the men of Ur six thousand years ago is so intensely distant that it is hardly possible for us to know what it was. We may suppose, as an hypothesis, that there could be men separated from us by an interval of time equal and opposite, that is to say, six thousand years in the future. Their states of mind could be equally impossible for us to know. Yet we may imagine the span from –6,000 to +6,000 is immeasurably small; so small, indeed, that it lies within the compass of our minds in much the same way, or more correctly, 'analogous' way, that the span from the infra-red to the ultra-violet measures the spectrum of the 'visible' part of

the total range of electromagnetic waves (or quanta). The range to which I have arbitrarily ascribed numerical range, –6,000 to +6,000, I shall further arbitrarily describe as extending (not in numerical terms) from infra-sensual to ultra-sensual. The whole of the range is what I shall describe as lying within the domain of the human mind. I shall now assume mind to extend as far 'beyond' human mentality as life extends 'beyond' what our limited apparatus can conceive of as 'mind'. I shall suppose a bio + and bio –, that is, something beyond even animate and inanimate.

ROSEMARY I don't know what you are talking about.

MAN Perhaps it will help – but it may hinder – if I remind you of an imaginary or fictitious animal, name of Quoodle, who complained that his fictitious masters, men, could not even recognise the 'bright smell of a stone'.

ROSEMARY Alice, dress me. No – put my things out and then you can go. I do not think this is a proper conversation for you.

ALICE Yes, Miss. Where shall I go to?

MAN Now, that is a very interesting question.

ROSEMARY Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?

MAN I wonder what the priests of Ur said. Maybe no one asked where the court ladies were going to after they entered the death pit, or after the contents of the little cup had entered into them. Or when the tomb robbers entered the royal tombs.

MYSELF Or where *you* are going to when, if ever, you enter into 'now' from 'not yet', or when 'not quite' becomes 'quite'.

MAN Or fiction becomes fact which is stronger than any fiction.

MYSELF Or the inanimate, the computer, becomes far more efficient than any animate mind.

WATSON The other day I heard of a computer which scanned cardiograms far more efficiently than any of the highly qualified radiographers in the department.

MYSELF Who said so?

WATSON Well, ultimately the facts. They showed that the radiographers were wrong far more often than the computers.

MYSELF Who interpreted the facts?

MAN Obviously men, objects that operate within that very limited range between infra-sensuous and ultra-sensuous or, as Alice would put it, between 'not yet' and 'not quite'. I can see that might not be adequate in the way described by Krishna, or God answering

Job out of the whirlwind, or even Newton out of the theories of Opticks; or the Church out of its system of dogmata . . .

MYSELF . . . or Leonardo out of his golden number . . .

MAN . . . or mathematicians, even when they find an escape route by Cartesian co-ordinates, out of the restrictions of visually based Euclidean geometry. It is not now necessary to have to fall back on the 'obvious' or, which is absurd, 'Q.E.D.'

MYSELF Equally, it is not possible to fall back on the obvious or the absurd to be the solution of the problem. Take the problem of the straight line which does not lie within the circle or the sphere, but cuts it in points which are complex conjugate.

MAN Provided you don't want it to have a meaning, it occurs to me that the theory of Ps ⇌ D may offer an opening analogous to the relationship between wave theory and quantum.

ROSEMARY Or 'ugly' and 'beautiful'. Has anyone seen an artist paint a picture 'about' or 'of something ugly which was nevertheless beautiful? Has anyone seen a skivvy or whore turn into a beautiful woman? Or a pander turn into a man?

MYSELF I have seen that journey (or transformation) more often in the other direction. Change is feared and is then felt as from good to bad; too often, from bad to good is effected by a cheat, an ugly progress effected by ugly means; or means employed for ugly motives for an ugly goal.

MAN We do not know what is concerned in the transformation from animate to animate though we know, or think we know, something of the change from animate to inanimate. The linking process can be murder and self murder. Some think that change is effected by a violent, ugly, catastrophic process of change. It is rare, among psychoanalysts at least, to imagine that the most that their science can do is to map the nature of the mind. The 'discovery' of the mind itself depends on philosophers achieving progress parallel to the micromolecular discovery in the physical domain. The mind, certainly the human mind, can be found to be something of very minor and very embryonic growth. Just as it may seem miraculous that a mind, equipped with visual sense, can 'see' things inaccessible to the sightless paramoecium, so it might appear prophetic – not applied common sense – if the insightful person could detect what to others would appear to be unsupported by evidence. Perhaps a paramoecium would have to believe in 'god'. What more suitable god than

man? What more suitable to man than any available 'super-man'? How could this be made available for worship by some well-arranged system of lies and cheats? How more easily dealt with than by a well-arranged system of 'scientific' lies and cheats 'exposing' the lies and cheats?

ROSEMARY Money, morals, 'honours', position and power are often offered to women who accept the counterfeit as real and offer their same easily prostituted 'wealth' and 'assets' in the way food and pharmacological preparations can be offered as cheats by the male as well as the female whore. And now the mind has become available for the extension of lies, deceptions, evasions to produce bigger, better liars and cheats than any 'human' mind had so far achieved.

MYSELF And not the opposite?

ROSEMARY It is certainly a very seductive idea! But I would not rule it out of the bounds of reality any more than I rule it out of the bounds of cheating and prostitution and the establishment of moral superiority.

MYSELF The god did not hesitate to use the waters of Lethe in his war against Palinurus.

ROSEMARY Nor did the priests of Ur in their war against the Court. Many heroic liars existed before the many-wiled Odysseus was saved by his dog from everlasting night.

MAN When the mind ± has been mapped, the investigations may reveal variations in the various patterns which it displays. The important thing may not be, as the psychoanalysts suppose, only revelations in illness or diseases of the mind, but patterns indiscernible in the domain in which Bio ± exist (life and death; animate and inanimate) because the mind spans too inadequate a spectrum of reality. Who can free mathematics from the fetters exposed by its genetical links with sense? Who can find a cartesian system which will again transform mathematics in ways analogous to the expansion of arithmetic effected by imaginary numbers, irrational numbers, Cartesian co-ordinates freeing geometry from Euclid by opening up the domain of algebraic deductive systems; the fumbling infancy of psychoanalysis from the domain of sensuality-based mind?

ROSEMARY Could Beauty help? Poincaré talked as if it existed in the discipline of mathematical formulation.

MAN One problem which interests me is who Myself thinks he is. Do you, Myself, think you differ from us all?

MYSELF No: yet I do, because although I see I have many of the characteristics of a figment of my (and other people's) imagination, I am also a fictitious character. Certainly I can imagine, and be imagined by others, that I am so real, so visually vivid, that I am convinced so completely that I have no way of distinguishing the difference between the real and the imaginary, that discrimination between the two is impossible. If I know who 'Bion' is, and if I know who I am, I can compare the two. I can say I know who I was when I was at school, but that is very different from who I was; that I shall never know.

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MYSELF Since I cannot, for all my experience, analytic or other than analytic, say *who* I am, I know now that it is very unlikely that I shall know any better at some future date. It is impossible to believe that anyone who is not me will know better. I am sure it would be useful if I knew who that person is that I am compelled to be as long as I exist. Sometimes I make 'mistakes' so extra-ordinary that I do not recognize that extraordinary person might be me; similarly, the mistake I make is hard to recognize because it compels me to recognize that I am its creator, producer, father; I am both unique, and therefore extraordinary, and so utterly ordinary that I merit being qualified as extra-ordinary. As for my products . . .

ALL Sh, sh, sh! And they all . . . that was only Roland.

ROSEMARY 'Only' pornography, 'only' sex.

MYSELF 'Only' can be a verbal method of limiting the universe of discussion. The problem and the person or thing concerned with its solution would seem to be helped if there were some way in which the two could be matched to the human mind; could 'only' have to solve what problems it had to solve, say, for survival.

Philosophers, mathematicians, might attempt to forge tools adequate for tasks they, the human animals, need to solve if they need to survive. Generally it is supposed that it is possible to do things better, being animals, when the live thing is alive than when the 'live' thing becomes a dead thing and vice versa. A stick or stone is uncooperative, but it can be made 'cooperative'; some objects, like a flint, can be manipulated by being turned into a flint axe or hammer which cannot *do* things, but makes it easier for the hand aided by the flint. This discovery creates the feeling of love and gratitude between the

man and his tool. Conversely, the live and helpful thing can become hateful if *it* dies.

ROSEMARY It? What is that?

MYSELF It is a participle. If 'it' is about something, it doesn't end by being a grammatical term – 'only'. Equally 'it' could be so full of meaning that it is incomprehensible. One of the advantages of practising psychoanalysis is that I can try to tell you what 'it' is. Writing about psychoanalysis – like this attempt here – has its advantages too, but it is very difficult to say what 'it' is. If I and another tried it – practically – it might give a chance to say what the various 'its' are. The practice might not be successful. Terms in common use, like 'sex', 'love', 'hate', can be so abstract as to be meaningless, or so debased that they are impossible to de-nomenate or to say what the value is. Here I have tried to make what Freud described as a 'construction', contrasted with an 'interpretation'. The sentence, 'That was only Roland', would have to be replaced by many terms such as 'jealousy', 'triumph', 'envy', 'rival-ry', 'revenge', 'love', 'sex'. Suppose I mean the adult experience of 'passionate love'; suppose you were to say, 'What is that?' If you were able to witness that and were likewise able to understand what you witnessed, you would have a chance of learning from the experience. Conversely, you might not have the chance even to learn what 'learning from experience' was. Single words can be very inadequate.

ROSEMARY You have talked a lot anyhow!

MYSELF (*looking towards Man*) Perhaps this gentleman here would care to take over?

MAN Well yes. I know my functions are not exactly pleasing or my attentions welcome-limiting, like 'only'. It marks the boundaries not only – there it is again! – of the discussion, but also the commencement.

BION You need a new name. I hereby nomenate you 2, Two, too – in every possible respect, two much.

ALL Carried unanimously.

MAN As usual a poet expresses it; 'The old order changeth, yielding place to new. And God fulfils himself in many ways'. Even as God, not even his – or should it be His? – vestiges disappear, but are renewed in the form of the excrement-eating scavengers who tidy up. Alice here, and her little daughter Alison – to whom I have not yet introduced you because she lies in what you rather quaintly call

the Future, but is *in fact*, as opposed to verbally and grammatically, not separable from the past – welcomed my function of gathering together 'her property' and superintending its redistribution. A macroscopic vertex would show an impressive 'me' presiding over the redistribution of the Royal Court of Ur with its delightful ritual of sacramental 'health' in the Death Pit. The redistribution of the unlabelled poetic goods of Troy, the souls lost in the unlamented shadows of the past – somewhat typically rescued by a poet – now being reacted apparently in the loss and redistribution of 'imperial' trappings which hid the empire of mind. That empire achieved a temporary home and even a name – Shakespeare. 'Others', said a poet, 'abide our question. Thou art free.'

ROSEMARY Can't you spell Art?

MAN I can; just as those fellows learnt how to spell Shakespeare, but, if you remember, the labels were various and the property disbursed under 'spellings' as diverse as Bacon and G(reat) B(ritain) Shaw. Here – you don't know this young fellow – you there (*beckoning to someone in the shadows*) come out of it! Speak up and don't be afraid. How old are you? Six? More like four or five I would have thought. Tell them what you saw and heard.

BOY Our dogs chased and cornered a jackal. I was frightened because I thought he was enormous and would kill them. But they surrounded him. And he sat down just as I thought he was going to attack, with his mouth wide open and big, bared, snarling teeth! And he frightened me because he began howling. It was awful.

MAN Show them how. Don't be afraid.

BOY You won't think I have hydrophobia will you?

MAN Rabies? Probably; but never mind – what did it sound like? Go on – do it!

BOY (*opening his mouth and throwing back his head, he begins with a slow, scarcely audible whisper, then, opening his mouth wider and wider and raising the whisper to a howling crescendo, emits an unearthly, moaning cry*) Fi-aaow. (*It dies away.*)

MAN And then? What next?

BOY There were shadows out of nowhere. Our dogs were afraid. They didn't attack the jackal. *They* sat down too and bared their teeth, but they didn't attack; their teeth chattered. Fi-aou! Fia-ou! Fiii-aaou! And the shadows sat in a great circle, more and more of them.

MYSELF '. . . whose howl's his watch'!

ROBIN That's an anachronism!

MYSELF I thought some fool would say that. Shakespeare knew what he did. He knew the *real* meaning of anachronism, anonymity likewise. The jackals and the moralists were waiting to howl, 'Thieves! Robbers! Apaches! Brigands! Crazy!' while the robbers pocketed the goods; they were 'honest men'.

BION Are they clearly labelled? Watch out for the Moralists, the biggest robbers of all!

MYSELF 'They' know! No doubt but ye are the people and wisdom will die with you! Devoured, owned, miserly, locked up in their iron digestive canals and inaccessible to those who could use it. 'What! they smile – our names, our deeds – so soon erases Time upon his tablet where man's glory . . .

MAN . . . liveth for evermore. The glorious dead. Its gisent la. Sans voix, sans ouie . . . come, let us dig them up and . . . do you remember, boy? How shocked your nanny was . . .

BION Poor nanny! It was old Ayah, poor old thing, when I asked when we were going to dig up the people in the cemetery and eat them!

ROBIN An anachronism. Learn it and write it out fifty times for the next exam on Shakespeare. Fifty 'times'. The *number* of times! That will teach them to speak disrespectfully of time! A-chronous indeed! A-nonymous! Fetch me my packet of labels, boy. I'll show them who owns what! Where's that war I won?

MAN You are referring no doubt to the Empire of the Mind, sir? Coming, sir! Coming! Anon, sir, anon! Your empire, sir – anon! anon! I remember telling the dinosaurs that the young mammal would soon arrive. But bless you! They wouldn't believe that they were already extinct. So they were – the mammals too. Homo Sapiens is still fiddling with *his* new toy, the Big Bang theory. All this non-sense – Ah, here we are, sir. This isn't a silly theory with this (*shows the circle of shadows a fine, practical, working . . .*) Why, bless my soul! Where have they all gone? Only me! I only – am left alone, to tell thee!

VOICE (*out of the smoke*) Where's my fire? Bring me my fire will you! There are some topless towers here that require burning. See page 1 and begin again. Fin i gain . . . Alph where's Om? Theodore, what's Dunton!

MAN He didn't think they ate them. It's part of the illusion of growing up. 'Time' 'and all that. He *saw* 'them' eating – being eaten.

Only he knew there are always No-Ails about the place waiting to imprison/deify any thought or idea that causes trouble. *Mental* indigestion is quite bad enough. There is also the ultra and infra, Alpha and Omega, poly-sensual, infra and ultra mental, infra and superhuman 'mentality'. I have to use archaic terms to bring it within the area of your comprehension.

VOICE (*from the Future/Past*) I don't know what you are talking about. How these old formulations endure! If only 'they' could realize they are speaking the truth even when 'they' are meaning to lie; and vice versa. In peyote veritas – the gods help them who . . . help themselves; even those who help themselves to other people's disciplines, religions, Past's or Future's property. Now then, terpsichore, just you keep your hands out of my chimpanzee's . . . science, pharmacology be thou my £.s.d. That is L.S.D.'s property!

In what fancy dress would you like to be caught in order to abide the day of his coming? And how would you like your God – come *not* in Terrors? As Krishna? Somnus, with a light sprinkling of Lethe water? Peter, in papal vestments, talking in the accents – so easily penetrable! – of one of his followers?

I don't know what you are talking about. I was 'only' (blessed word again!) warming my hands at the fire.

MYSELF And he turned, and with his eyes he wrote in fire, in words that seared the soul. The Christians got him in the end; from his messianic prison house he never escaped till every vestige of meaning had been squeezed out of him. Confucius – they misspelled his name. Some words and phrases seem to be unmistakable evidence that a man had existed in a spot marked by the words. Trevor Roper thought he could detect, even through the gorgeous vestments of the whore, that a man existed. Even whores need patrons.

BION Where's Rosemary? Some topless . . . need burning . . . but the thicket is not consumed. Some artist will reveal there is always a ram to be caught. Bigotry and Ignorance. Where's Savonarola? Sorry, he went up in flames – like Icarus . . . too successful and too much bigotry and ignorance in his fire-fighting uniform. Newton? Poor fellow; he never recovered the consistency of his mind. And no one has found a way of re-forming the currency since. The tomb robbers, the fortune hunters, don't know where to look for the Child whom they are compelled by their piety to worship. Dressed in the best of motives . . . though various . . .

MYSELF Let us get back to something simple – before the Big Bang.

WATSON Something simple? That's my cue, where I come in. Which Big Bang do you mean?

MYSELF I said 'before' the Big Bang. 'Before' or 'after', it doesn't matter.

MAN Can I help? Even to talk at all I am afraid we shall have to borrow from A-chrony one of his anachronisms.

ALICE Alice in Anachronomous Land.

MAN Thank you: you come from Pornography don't you?

ALICE Not really – Wonderland.

MAN Ah yes. A province of Fairyland.

PALINURUS No, Wonderland, before it was stolen by children and their various thieves and robbers.

ALICE From *your* collection of thieves, robbers, rapists and seducers, don't forget. You make me damn bad-tempered.

MYSELF No – why blame him? You always were bad-tempered. For that matter, so was God. With reason.

MAN Always 'with reason', as you call it in the language of anachronimity. When He attempted to borrow one of your anachronisms, the un-priestly formulation of Psalm 51 was 'borrowed' and given a twist in the direction of 'perquisites'. Even now some of us claim 'ownership' of Ideas. I bet the fellow who succeeds in getting his name on the cover of this book thinks it is his.

MYSELF I am certainly going to claim authorship, but I hope I shall have enough generosity to balance my possessiveness and greed.

ROSEMARY You surprise me; but even Paris had some generous ambitions. Many mean guys existed before Paris gave them life and rescued them from everlasting night.

MAN I think Everlasting Night had a turn with a-nonymous and a-phasia in an-a-chronos. I shall hand over to Myself.

DINOSAUR If I may borrow an anachronism for a moment to fill a gap before this fictitious character, Sapiens, takes over . . .

MYSELF (*hastily*) To fill a gap. That is where we came in – before the Big Bang.

DINOSAUR . . . and while the primaeval slime is still warm.

MYSELF I think I had better wait till the next chapter. It may be less noisy – less crowded, less atomic debris and smoke.

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MYSELF As psychological preparation I shall borrow verbal or alphabetical formulations like O, or zero, or infinity. For some centuries the visual imagery of Euclidean space limited rather than freed thought. Cartesian co-ordinates made, in combination with the theorem of Pythagoras, a possibility of relating points to each other without the visual aids of lines and circles. These visual aids introduced powerful, undetected, forces which distorted the balance of probability. That distortion is still incalculable. Growth, + or –, remains inaccessible to thought, if unmistakable to feeling. Conceptual thought and passionate feeling are impossible to relate within the confines of existent universes of discourse. The problem could be stated by analogy: numbers suffered repeated extensions to carry an increased load – rational numbers, irrational numbers and, latterly, complex conjugate points. In the emotional domain, persecution by passion grows to depression. The relation of the one to the other requires an extension whereby quantity transforms to quality. 'Very great', 'very small' intervals of time, space, probability, involve quality in a manner analogous to growth from quantity to quality. Thus, quantitative terms such as 'excessive', 'inadequate', 'too little', 'too much', may signify a change in kind or quality; conversely, change in quality, for example, love or hate, may imply change in quantity. This is not a crudity such as the difference between one German 'hating' and the entire German nation 'hating'; that may be 'symptomatic', 'significant' of a method of lateral communication. The change can be formulated in language, music, mathematics; it is, in fact, something 'infra-' or 'ultra-' human, animate – living or bio-logical. Comparison between animate and inanimate reveals need for discrimination; the 'Russians' send a mechanical probe to the moon and retain a

mechanically aided, computer-wise and otherwise, animate being on earth. By contrast, the 'Americans' favour sending 'animate beings' sufficiently well disciplined to be machines.

Bernardino Sahagun describes the debate between those who favour gods formed artificially, by human art, out of wood and stone which 'appear' to be controllable, and those, like the Roman Catholics, who favour an independent and uncontrollable God. Jesus Christ is a compromise between the verbally articulate human Jesus who prays, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven', and the Messiah. Some degree of independence is conceded to 'God', although, after creation or 'belief-creating operation', both end-products are still, from human vertex, unpredicted. The idol made out of inanimate material shows unmistakable characteristics of a kind usually attributed to animals, usually human; reciprocally, the god created out of materials, ultra- or infra-sensuous, displays characteristics usually regarded as the prerogative of idols. In other terms ('borrowed' from the lunar illustration) the machine, regardless of race, time, space, is e- and pro-vocatively animate; and the animate object similarly pro- and e-vocatively inhuman and inanimate. If we now increase the dimension, using 'time' as an instrument with which to measure, we find a stability about the objects discerned and recorded by animate human animals such as saints, philosophers, scientists, artists, and (borrowing from Socrates) artisans. Socrates knew that he was not wise, yet could not mobilize facts to indicate anyone or anything, god or idol, who could plausibly be said to contest the title. In the domain of the human senses there is evidence of violence and murder from the Death Pit at Ur to Hiroshima and beyond.

'Methinks I see a Nation . . . with undazzled eyes . . .', as one poet said. Socrates, 'Krishna' and his creator (his 'Plato', his 'Homer'), Hellas and Shelley. His 'powers of darkness' and the vacant throne. My valour . . . said Valiant for Truth and his creator Bunyan. (What? *That* tinker? Is he not the carpenter's son? As for Shakespeare, was he not Bacon? And who wrote the *Bhagavad Gita*? Sunk in Eternal Night without a trace. No orchids for Miss Blandish; 'therefore – fight Arjuna!') 'Fame is no plant that grows in mortal soil . . . but lives and spreads aloft . . . by all-judging Jove.'

Homer is not known *not* to have been blind Maeonides – he was blind anyhow; Newton was sunk without a trace, hit by an apple; so was Helen; Jesus, buried beneath the load of the Roman Catholic

Church and the massive ritual. 'I don't know what you are talking about' – and couldn't care less. 'Great is the truth and shall prevail, if none care whether it prevail or not.' So the mammals survived. Perhaps the dinosaurs did not get together to worship the infant prodigy when it was still helpless enough. Oh, those over-confident stegosaurs! And now look what their *failure* has done!

Perhaps the electron microscope and the radio telescope would do the trick between them? No. You still have to have a human to interpret them. The past – the record in history, in fossil and stone, in computer and poem – has to be interpreted by them. And that two-handed engine at the door – ('Please, sir, what does "two-handed engine" mean?' 'Well, my boy, it means, well, er, it . . . are you sure your people don't mind about Freud?' 'Oh *no*, sir! They are Kleinians, sir. They don't mind a bit!' 'Well it means the two breasts. You see . . .' 'No, sir, I don't understand, sir.' 'Oh hell! Nor do I. But I shall be surprised if in fact it doesn't mean that if one of them doesn't get you the other one will. But don't tell your Mum or Dad.' 'Yes, sir! You did say "Hell", didn't you, sir?' 'Heavens, so I did! Your Dad is an atheist isn't he?' 'Oh no, sir!') Any interpretation is a stop-gap which serves to plug the hole; even a part has to serve to plug the whole. The radio telescope and the electron microscope, God and Devil, Body and Mind, Penis and Vagina, Love and Hate, Real and Distinct, Real and Coincident, Conjugate and Complex. There are multitudinous holes and multitudinous parts to fill the wholes with.

Hitherto, the term 'mind' has proved serviceable. I propose to use it myself, but not for purposes of writing a philosophical or psychological or religious or artistic or other record. I propose to use it as a meaningless term, useful for talking or writing about what I *don't* know – to mark the 'place where' a meaning might be.

I assume that there is a realization that approximates to the term 'mind'. I assume that the mass of theories, case histories, psychoanalytic formulations, are products of the 'mind'. Some of these I shall assume are themselves realizations approximating to the formulations, definitory hypotheses about the mind and of the same status as the term 'mind' itself. I further assume that the 'mind', analogous to brain and central nervous system, is of significance for what it does or does not reveal.

Some psychoanalytic theories I regard, without specifying for the present, as 'constants', 'invariants' under the particular vertex. If

these invariants are absent, or not detected by such apparatus as is available, I regard their absence as itself revelatory. These definitory hypotheses may be used as the foundation on which an 'instrument' could be constructed, *based* on a variety of theories, but itself supporting none. It would then be an instrument which could record the configuration revealed by the mind and thereby make its configuration and interpretation available for study and contemplation by an observer. I have indicated that such observers may be hard to come by in the extremely limited domain provided by animal history itself. Life, as known to us, has a recent and very short history if measured in comparison with the scales provided by standards applicable to astronomical physics and what we call outer space. Yet biological forces are ones with which we have to live. They or their symptoms concern themselves with us even if unknown to us. They may have no counterpart in the domain of 'known' and 'unknown', animate and inanimate. It is possible that the development of the CNS, and now the mind (I refer to the definitory hypothesis I have put forward), may provide an extension of which we have not so far been able to avail ourselves, any more than the race could avail itself of the atomic theories of Democritus of Abdera or the heliocentric hypotheses of Aristarchus with the then existing facilities.

This brings us to the importance which Socrates attached to the artisan for whom he clearly felt a respect which he could not feel for other classes, including himself as the matrix of wisdom. Nor was he able to feel much respect for the oracle at Delphi, judging its pronouncements realistically. The artisan, therefore, appears to have at least a considerable 'history' of being 'respect-worthy'. God likewise, though unknown or perhaps because unknown, or perhaps because of being respected, remains as an Invariant clothed in no matter how many variables and under whatever vertex. He is a 'constant' which is an 'unknown' and the centre of a human discipline served by a mathematics which must be capable of manipulation, by a mathematics in which the constant is unknown and whose place is taken by an infinity of variables.

BION Such religious numbers as are known to us are not associated with a domain adequate for their deployment as are irrational, imaginary numbers. The space of mathematical operation must be extended to accommodate 'religious' numbers as well as those catered for by past extensions of the 'domain' of numbers. To recapitulate: the

study of anatomy and physiology is usually pictured as a central nervous system with an outstanding structure, the brain. The mind, presumed to be real, is likewise presumed to have a structure. This word, 'structure', is borrowed from the vocabulary forged for the domain of sensuous experience. The 'mind', and now its 'structure', are terms which are *not* appropriate for use as referents to domains we hypothecate for this study. The 'mind', unlike the brain, has *no* convolutions. Analogous objects, therefore, have to be created from the domain of the brain and its convolutions.

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MYSELF The mind is an extension of the human animal; it has grown and is capable of growth and decline. Its development has brought it and the human organism of which it is a part . . .

ROSEMARY (*yawning*) Excuse me.

MYSELF (*with exaggerated politeness*) On the contrary – excuse *me.* I fear I was boring you.

ROSEMARY Not at all. I was most interested. I was just thinking that the minds congregated here did not show signs of being stimulated by, or made aware of, any contact with me.

MYSELF I *beg* your pardon. I have been monopolizing attention.

ALICE You have been monopolizing articulate speech. I haven't – perhaps it is my defective mind – an impression that anyone is paying attention at all. Roland was absorbed in paying almost undivided attention to Rosemary's feet. I myself was thinking somewhat enviously that they looked attractive.

ROBIN, ROLAND, MAN, SHERLOCK, WATSON (*all murmur together in agreement*) It's true, old boy; my attention was wandering a bit.

rosemary Tom too?

TOM (*shakes his head, looks guilty and reddens.*)

ROLAND (*annoyed*) You seem to want to be the centre of everyone's attention.

ROSEMARY Roland! I know you. You are all alike. Of course you think I want everyone's attention. Do you remember that schoolboy who bored me stiff?

MYSELF I do. It reminded me of me. I didn't take a girl out when I was at school – I would have loved to, but I wouldn't have dared; I would have been too frightened of getting the sack.

ROSEMARY (*looking at him curiously*) You're coming on. You are very like that schoolboy in a way you have not mentioned.

MYSELF What's that?

ROSEMARY He had the damned impudence to think I was flattered – a mere skivvy like me! – to be out with him. Not that he came near to admitting that he was afraid that he would get the sack from me. I was *not* trying to catch a husband – husbands were two a penny as far as I was concerned. I was, however, choosing one and quite capable, skivvy or no skivvy, of *not* choosing him. Even this gentleman here (*indicating Man*) thinks I am an object for conquest.

MAN (*with raised eyebrows*) ?

ROSEMARY Well, don't you. Why don't you speak?

MYSELF If Man will excuse me, I would like to answer by telling you about a very beautiful girl I knew and with whom I did go out. I appreciate your indignation about the boy, but . . .

ROSEMARY I know you are going to talk about a girl who reminds me of me!

MYSELF Maybe. After I have told you, you can say whether my story does or does not. Anyhow, she was very beautiful. She was also very intelligent. In short, I adored her.

SHERLOCK Irene Adler?

MYSELF Irene Adler is a fictitious character.

SHERLOCK So is your girl.

MYSELF I don't know that my girlfriend was much less of an imaginary character than 'The Woman' (as you always used to call her) who was said by old Watson to be *your* goddess. The point is, I kept on saying how intelligent and beautiful she was. But she was not wise enough to inhibit the growth of her admiration for herself. It was already immense – with reason, I must in honesty say. She certainly had not the wisdom to limit my admiration for her or to warn me when I was making a fool of myself – not really flattering her. Eventually I could not love her because she took any statement I made as a reflection of the facts, a tribute to her merit, not as a manifestation of my capacity for love. I realized then that I could do nothing for her. It probably wasn't good for her to believe that she had a built-in superiority and therefore nothing to do – just twiddle her thumbs and be admired.

(*The room has grown steadily darker until all the discussants are lost in the shadows – except one figure quietly seated in a recess. That figure has become more obtrusive with the growing darkness and reveals itself as a very old, grey-haired woman, deeply veiled. The room is filled with people, the silence oppressive. At last it is broken by her speaking very softly and melodiously.*)

OLD WOMAN You do not remember me – no. I am not whom you think. I am not *the* woman, only a woman. 'The snows of yesteryear will carry me away', as they always have and always will. I know the girl you speak of very well – I am not she. Nor shall I ever be, any more than I ever was. One of those poets once said that I was 'too proud'. Too proud – it is the besetting sin of people like me, the undistinguished, unremarkable, anonymous to whom pride comes once perhaps, rarely more. Our poverty, our dirt, our lack of clothing with which to cover our rags, make it impossible that the gleam could ever be more than a glory that blazes once, flares, and is lost for ever.

MAN (*starts up, tense, his face lightened by a pallor that makes the darkness palpable. He stares into the darkness; then sinks back.*) She's gone!

OLD WOMAN No: don't romance. You can see me any day on my knees, crawling into the Church at Guadalupe. You can see me as I sit, sad, woe-begone, exhibiting my sores. I am a professional beggar. Like the beautiful girl, *I* have built-in ugliness. I do not have to do a thing. I have a natural gift of filthiness and squalor. I have my place – in the mind to which it has pleased God to call me.

MAN You horrify me.

OLD WOMAN Rubbish. You don't like seeing me and I loathe you. If I could be bothered I might be upset. How did you like my decor? The lighting was effective, wasn't it? You are an invader I believe? War, poverty, disease . . .

ROSEMARY You know nothing about it and care less. I do, and that is why I was determined to have nothing to do with it. I am on the winning side: the same as this invader here. But – and I give you fair warning, all of you – only as long as this smooth rascal stays on top. It's no good going a-whoring with me and thinking I am prepared to be loyal to him if he chooses to wallow like you.

MAN God forbid!

ROSEMARY God? *I* forbid. I don't waste my time waiting for God. You should have seen that grizzly collection of fools as they shovelled

the trash over their finery at Ur! That was not the first time they had used the 'little cup' – it was the last!

BION You must have been around a very long time.

ROSEMARY Do you think I would wait for *you* to create *me*?

BION Well, damn it, who did create you if I didn't?

ROSEMARY They are all the same. Horace thought I was likely to achieve immortality through his immortal jingles. He even had the effrontery to think he had 'escaped' from Pyrrha! If anyone ever reads this book it will be because of what the reader has. the cheek to call 'pornography'. That is why Bion mentions me and he can't even make the description plausible. Anyone can see it is primarily a description of 'none of them knows half so much as intelligent Mister Toad!'

BION Look here! If you had not interrupted me by yawning, I was about to point out –

ROSEMARY 'About to . . . just going to . . .'

BION – that the scientific theory, the psychoanalytic construction should resemble real life and should not be distinguishable because Freud wrote it, or Melanie Klein wrote it, or because it is one of those marvellous interpretations by the famous psychoanalyst X, or Y, or Z, any more than a portrait should be recognized because it is '*by*' Praxiteles or Frans Hals or Picasso, but because it is '*of* Hermes, or the Cavalier, or the Saltimbanques.

ROSEMARY – 'should be', but *are* they?

BION Who wrote the *Bhagavad Gita*? Was *that* author aware of his insignificance before God?

ROSEMARY Never heard of it.

BION Well, really! Anyway, *this* book is not 'about' anybody. At the end the reader is . . .

ALICE Tell me about the Reader; who is he?

BION I was coming to that . . .

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ALL (*suddenly revealed in the light which has been steadily increasing until it is possible to see the whole gathering, bursting into song.*)

Tom Pearse, Tom Pearse, lend me your grey mare,
All along, down along, out along lea . . .

BION I can't make myself heard in all this din. It's too bad. After all, I *did* create them.

MAN And they are now returning the compliment. If you did, surely you can write the verse?

BION I have not written a note of music or a line of verse in my life.

MAN The man that hath no music in his soul . . . never mind . . . it's gone hasn't it? Try! Try now!

BION It is wrong anyhow. And damn you – who the hell are you?

MAN And damn you too: I have told you already. Why don't you listen to what you are told?

BION I have *always* listened to what I have been told.

MAN I haven't noticed it. (*He says it without hate, as if f it were a friendly communication*) Did you listen to what that pitiful slut told you? I'll tell you. It was all hate – *all* of it! No, I am not talking psychoanalysis. You can go and read your silly books. I was not listening to someone reading the first lesson of the Gospel according to Saint Sigmund, or, if I may say, any of the other little angels. Non angli sed angeli! Including (*bowing elaborately*) your own divine contributions. How many Krishnas, Devil worshippers, Virgils, have to pass this way before a fact will be forged to penetrate your smooth, complacent and sanctimonious hide?

STEGOSAURUS Someone asking for me?

MAN I suppose you are incurably too civilized to pay any attention to Virgil's chunk of omnipotent trickster god who wore *his* get-up with an air – drugs, Somnus, ever so, ever so – watch him! There, did you *see* it? – how he hurled poor, faithful Palinurus, stern, sheets and all, torn out of the rear end – stern we call it – of that poor little leading boat; hurled him into the depths of the sea; that beautiful, land-locked, medi-tationally futile caldron of seething, boiling, divine hate for all you piddling little tricksters with your imitation hate, love, decorations, intended to give substance to the fictitious, non-existent chest!

BION When I was a soldier in camp at Poperinghe I did not think it a piddling Christ. Nor did Ernest, who had a cheerful religious feeling. I think I loved him and his God for the first time. I was not crippled by *his* religion as I had been by every other, and with him I had that rare experience – which I had had once before at the camp at Ladram Bay some years earlier. My only clearly remembered times of happiness and religion and feeling of real affection for one of my own sex. At Cheltenham, the Christmas after, I had the same gay feeling of liberation for a girl. It was marvellous. The air crackled and sparkled in the frost and there was a warm feeling in my heart. I remember going home with her after a midnight service on New Year's Eve. That was the last. When I saw her next I had changed – I felt I had death on my brow. I was regarded with awe by her and her friends, for I was weighed down by a nameless dread as I passed between the rows of girls at the school where she taught. I realize now, but did not then, that I was carrying the load of premature death, for I had been awarded a very high decoration which carried with it a sentence of almost certain death. I knew I should never again be free to feel sincerely and openly the fear I felt. Bourlon Wood haunted me. Ypres haunted me. The rain, my God the rain! And the sweet smell of rotten flesh! The girl was talking to me. She was anxious; her eager and quiet concern showed from her eyes as she scanned my face for some response. I had none. I could feel none. 'What did you say?', I managed to come to the surface to ask. It was hopeless. No, I had not got shell shock. What nonsense they were ready to talk! But, love had died. Love for anyone and anything. Those pink, fresh, upturned faces – what were they feeling? Was it awe? What about? The vast deserts of Ypres with its rain, incessant rain and small groups of heavy-coated figures. They too used to wait – for many years – their

impassive, grey faces and khaki suddenly brilliantly illuminated by the gun flashes.

ROSEMARY (*yawning*) Most interesting . . .

BION I'm sorry. I know I am poor company. Where's old Watson with his Jezail bullet?

WATSON That was before the Boer War.

BION That wasn't a war. That was a fatigue!

WATSON You laugh. They all laugh, but even that hurt. We tried, you know.

BION I was not meaning to laugh. In fact, even at Oxford, I used to stir into life a bit to see you and Sherlock rooting and snuffling around. But though I am very grateful to you, I could never flame with life again after James, Ernest, Charles and I were extinguished at Cambrai.

ROSEMARY (*manicuring her hands, but coming to faint life*) Were you killed?

ROBIN No, *I* was, though. I was never brave like Bion here.

BION Was I brave?

ROBIN Oh, I think so.

ROSEMARY (*still admiring her nails*) *How* brave? I always used to think men went into a huddle together and concocted a whole lot of lies to fool us women with afterwards.

BION More or less; not quite though.

ROSEMARY (*putting away her manicure case and speaking with great deliberation*) I knew a girl once who was lying in bed – very comfortable too – with great beads of sweat across her forehead. She was afraid she was dying. She was having a baby; her first, to whom she was looking forward very eagerly. The baby was born all right. But her fears were correct – she didn't see it.

BION Childbirth?

ROSEMARY It seems simple, doesn't it. You sound cool.

BION I am cool. It sounds callous I know, but only if you attach importance to death. Suppose the child lived on to become a mother; that frightful wreck we saw was someone's baby . . .

OLD WOMAN (*uncovering some chronic sores from beneath her rags and settling down in her daily pitch, disposing the rags to make the maximum display, she swiftly lets her features sink into the routine expression of piteous whining, appealing, half-glazed eyes.*)

BION . . . Yes, you I meant. You see . . . her professional stance for

the day. Would you rather be the mother who watched her daughter slither down that slope, or rather die in childbirth?

ROSEMARY Yes, it all sounds very fine put in your artistic way. Real life isn't like that; these things do not happen like that.

BION No, they don't. That's why it 'sounds callous', as I said. In civilized states they do not allow the outrage, the daily commission of assaults on the feelings . . .

ROSEMARY . . . on whose feelings? The sensitive, cultured tourists? In uncivilized states the uncivilized inhabitants are not so ridiculous. When the tourist season is over and the weather is not hot enough to be comfortable sitting in the open . . .

ROLAND . . . or, I may say, hot enough to make beggars able to sweat and stink without undue exertion.

ALICE Roland! You surprise me. I didn't know you knew about things like that!

ROLAND Alice, it is a very long while since you knew me or anything that I knew. We have drifted apart since . . .

ALICE . . . we knew each other. I don't think we ever knew each other much. I was too shy and you seemed so easily shocked; I could not be frank with you.

ROLAND Or I with you.

ROSEMARY It took a skivvy like me before either of you could talk plain English.

ROLAND I don't know about that. We used to talk plain English at my school. It was a famous school.

ALICE By the time it became famous for the off-duty language you boys used to each other, the parents began to withdraw their patronage. And it went down and down, till the governors became afraid it would be bankrupt. I know, because my father was one of the governors. But I don't see what the poor headmaster and staff were to do about it. Do you think the problem has been solved these enlightened days of LSD and hashish? There must be *some* freedom without suggesting boys have cigars and liqueurs or total abstinence. The trouble is that if you suggest they should abstain they 'abstain' from common sense too.

ROLAND What abstinence, for example?

ROSEMARY (*sweetly*) They abstain from going out with skivvies like me. Isn't that what you mean?

ROLAND (*nettled*) I did not go out with skivvies. I used to say

my prayers, play games as hard as I could. In short, lived a pure and holy and godly life. A fat lot of use it was at that. I loathed sex. It was nothing but fear and failure. I couldn't even have a friendship with another boy. I wish you could have an idea . . .

MYSELF As a psychoanalyst I can have an idea; but I have to have many years of experience, and by then it is long past the time when it might have been some use. Rosemary, I wish you'd stop manicuring your bloody nails while I'm talking. You can't think how infuriating it is to try to talk while I have to watch you sharpening your claws.

ROSEMARY I thought psychoanalysts were supposed not to be maddened by anything. Only patients.

MYSELF Well you thought wrong. There are things which it is quite right to be angry about, and it would be pathological or inadequate to refrain. Besides, there is a difference between being enraged on my job and an ordinary social occasion. The emotional experiences are not limited to my sessions where I have certain privileges and duties. But the duties of social life and the duties of professional occupation are not the same.

ROSEMARY Well, you have been very frank. Let me tell you that I find it bloody irritating to have to put up with hearing you philosophizing; or psychoanalysing, as you call it. You don't like watching me manicure my nails because I am really sharpening my claws. I don't like what you call psychoanalysing and I call it 'sharpening your moral claws' – that is not a pretty sight either. I wonder what poor devil is in for a mauling.

MYSELF Well, you have certainly just given me a mauling. (*Contritely*) I deserved it, but . . .

ROSEMARY But? Somebody once said, 'but me no buts'. For a moment I thought you were actually feeling contrite. Your 'but' showed me you had thought better of it.

MYSELF (*laughing a bit uneasily*) Well, yes. You are quite right.

(*There is an awkward pause during which he disappears, fades out, apparently completely crushed.*)

33

Rosemary and Alice appear to be expectant. Alice is self-possessed, yet in a position unmistakably subordinate to Rosemary, as if she were a lady-in-waiting. Rosemary has become transformed, but the nature of the transformation is undefined. The two women occupy the stage so completely that it takes some time before it is realized that Man is present.

MAN Shall we go on?

ROSEMARY (*shudders as if momentarily chilled by a disagreeable emotion*) I don't know. I don't think I can stand all that again. I am sorry, but I feel I have had enough of it.

MAN I said, 'shall we go on?' I was not suggesting 'more' of the same again.

ROSEMARY I feel old. Do men never grow up?

MAN Usually they are not allowed to, either by themselves or the women they choose, or both. I am sorry for that poor devil, Robin. He is not a bad sort. He has been very close to death! Often I thought he was hopeless and then he seemed at the last moment – to my surprise, I confess it – to topple over on the right side. It is like watching a leaf falling to the ground; utterly unpredictable, but like playing a game with fate. 'Heads I lose; tails I win', but with a coinage inadequate for the purpose. It would be more accurate to say that leaves *are* adequate to occupy the role of representing coinage, itself a representation, in that they permit certain forces to participate in the game, notably the air and its movements. These forces may be regarded . . .

ROSEMARY (*shuddering against his intervention*) Don't.

MAN Again? I see what you mean . . .

(*Both fade out, and it gradually becomes clear that the darkness is not total. Nor is the silence absolute. Voices resemble, but are not, a conversation; memories resemble, but are not, desires; finite episodes resemble, but are not,*

infinite. There appears to be a streaming in one direction, but the direction changes as if it were, but is not, 'reversed perspective'. 'Larling', she does not say. It is not past: it does not feel past either. It is inchoate, it is not past. It is 'minus-K'. The date in minus-K is August 7 and August 8.)

TONKS (*giving orders to Captain*) *Now,* don't you move those tanks! Sargent agrees with me – not that I attach any importance to what is said by a man who knows nothing whatever about composition. We must have those tanks just precisely there for one more day if my sketch is to be finished. Do you understand?

CAPTAIN Yes, sir. If we have to move them we are to put them back in the same place.

TONKS (*to Sargent*) *You* might as well talk to a wall as to that young fool. I have told him they are not to be moved – you heard his reply?

CAPTAIN (*to Lieutenant Arthur*) *You* heard, Arthur? Just drop Haig a line and tell him I'm awfully sorry, but there are two official war artists here who have forbidden the use of these tanks till their sketch is complete.

ARTHUR (*sniggers*) When do we move off?

CAPTAIN Six-thirty. The sleds are ready to drag behind to wipe out our tracks?

ARTHUR (*chuckling*) Yes. Won't Uncle Richthofen be surprised!

CAPTAIN Uncle *who?*

ARTHUR Wheeler's sergeant to see you, sir.

CAPTAIN Come in, O'Connor. You want me?

O'CONNOR No, sir. Lieutenant Wheeler is dead, sir. Yes, sir, he was a bit upset, sir. It's all right now, sir.

CAPTAIN All right, sergeant?

O'CONNOR Yes, sir. It was a direct hit. Right at the start, sir, so we hadn't wasted any petrol. We burnt a fair treat. Some of us tried to get out, sir, and this made it look more real like. The black guts pouring out of the hole of the 'prehistoric monster' just like the newspapers say, sir!

CAPTAIN Well, it's very sad, sergeant. But you know what the Good Book says – 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, *smile,* SMILE! While you've a Lucifer to light you like a fag you don't need a candle brother Ridler . . .

ALICE I'm sure that's all wrong.

CAPTAIN You hold your tongue! (*Sneering*) We all know – all nice

girls love a sailor, all nice girls love a prick; for there's something about a candle that reminds them of . . .

MAN . . . and that's why . . .

CAPTAIN (*angrily*) . . . why nothing! Jutland was fought long before August 8 –

MAN – as I was about to remark myself. Jutland had nothing whatever to do with it. The grey seas, the grey mists and the grey hairs. Leonardo da Vinci drew those writhing coils of hair, those swirling masses of water, to remind you of the form that lay concealed within the formless infinite. He could see them and draw them for you. What he could not see or help was that you would not be made to look even if he did draw them for you. You, if I may say so, are a 'consequential idiot'. 'And the consequences were . . .' You remember the game? Still at it, still playing it. Cause and effect!

BION I don't see how you are so superior and what makes you think you are so wonderful.

MAN I have not supposed you would. Although you had enough capacity to know your legion of honour, and D.S.O., and mention in dispatches were baubles, glittering toys, you have worshipped them with great tenacity. If Krishna told Arjuna, if Newton, Shakespeare, Bach, Mozart, Meister Eckhart, Plato, Socrates, Dante, Job told you, you could 'remark the ruck and reel which coil, keep and tease the simple sight', because you are blinded by the effulgence of your glory, you are condemned for ever to admire the evacuations from which you cannot free yourself. What is most worthless about yourself – *that* is what you admire.

BION Oh, shut up!

MAN Very well: I shall.

34

Rosemary is silent, but her resignation is in no way passive; it is impossible to convey the vivid, vital disapproval of her silence.

MAN (*to Rosemary*) Arjuna said, you remember, 'I will not fight', and threw down his bow. He did, however, pick it up again, allowing himself to be persuaded by Krishna that he did not know everything and that even if the opposing army did consist of his friends, and love was prominent amongst the foes, it was his business to fight. This (*indicating Bion*) – I hardly like to call him 'fool' – is too proud to admit that he could be mistaken or that the world of thought that he inhabits could conceivably be better than the world of his own invention. I remember sending a very good friend of his to Oxford to try to show him that even then he was behaving like Achilles sulking in his tent. The friend became someone – a man of consequence – though suffering terrible setbacks. Bion remains a fool still. He sulks in his tent and feels how wonderfully like Achilles he is. It would be laughable were it not tragic. I realize it must be terrible for you to have the pain of discovering that someone one has loved and admired is not worth it. Even worse is his own private hell which you and I can see him suffer and realize that he has always lavished love and admiration upon himself. This admiration is still, as always, devoted to his least admirable qualities.

BION Shut up, I say! Shut up!

MAN You see, Rosemary? There's nothing more we can do. Let us leave him. The man or woman who is given the privilege of making a decision also has the privilege of making the wrong one – again and again.

BION You sound remarkably smug to me. If my choice is between remaining in me or becoming like you I do not know that I

am convinced that I would feel greatly improved by becoming like you two.

MAN You would not become me, that is sure – only 'like me'. An allegory of a man. You would 'borrow', as you did from your father and mother – with the understanding that you would never be called upon to pay back the debt. Attend! This is August 7/8 of our era – A-theist, A-chronous, A-moral, A-sthetic. Watch! Your eyes will become adjusted. Can you see?

BION I see a man? A shade? A ghost?

MAN Don't talk; listen. Don't watch; look. That's better! More like an encephaly, you will call it someday. *Avec les yeux de pierre ils gisent la sans ouie, sans voix, la rose du vitrail toujours epanouie*. That's better – you are coming over to me quite clearly now. This is 'infra-sensuous'. I shall know what your a-morphous 'senses' tell me.

BION The man is filled with a kind of tenderness. Suddenly, with the utmost violence he beats in the woman's skull and . . . (*pouring sweat and overwhelmed with fear*), I won't watch! I shall *not* fight!

MAN Get back you damn fool. (*To Rosemary*) Poor stupid wretch . . . he has had a sane episode . . . I was afraid he might not stand it. Get on!

BION He bashes in the skull. God! It's like rock. He treats it like eggshell. He's sucking – this is cannibalism! He sucks out the brain.

MAN This is an anachronism. Luckily for you it isn't a million years later or they would be so barbarously civilized they would murder you for murder. A million years later still they would incarcerate you for insanity – an 'insane monster'.

BION Are you trying to tell me that it is 'I' who am doing this frightful thing, you damned blackguard?

MAN 'I', 'cannibal', 'blackguard' – these are all anachronisms. I didn't exist for another couple of million years. Even now you are measuring time in numbers of times the earth completes its orbit round the sun. The scale has to be of that trivial order because the spectrum of sensuous existence is minute – you have to measure it in terms of years – a sort of angstrom unit of space and time to measure sensuous existence. To borrow from your anachronistic vocabulary, most of your existence is as inert matter before birth and after death – what you call spirits and fossils, suspecting an infra-sensuous or ultra-sensuous extension. 'Fossil man', especially the skull, has a certain durability, not extending to light years, but

long enough to lie within the scale of 'geological' time as contrasted with ephemeral or 'human' time. You are taking time off – 'borrowing' from the domain of thought and thinking 'the anarchs of the world of darkness keep a throne for thee my son', as one of your 'mental' people put it. There are these escapes from the heavily armoured skulls. Ordinary people recognize their fellow 'old fossils', although they prevent the truth becoming too intense through feeling the thought, though verbalized, as a joke. Thinking is bearable because of its sensuous component. The experience which has not yet reached a conclusion is whether the human animal will survive a mind grafted on to its existing equipment. Now, do you think you could stand a little more?

BION (*surly and hostile*) More what?

MAN Well . . . a little more of 'I shall not cease from mental fight'. Not quite how Blake meant it of course, but the idea may emerge when the misleading quality imposed on formless thought by articulation is dissolved away. Even 'Confusion', as you liked to call him, described it as watching the thought ground in the mill of the mind with as much love or tolerance as might make it sprout. Even then, as you might be expected to know – if one expected anything of you whatever – God threw these presumptuous objects, ♀ ♂, out of Eden. The Omnipotent opposes the extensions of the human ability to have intercourse. Babel opposed the extensions of power to the realm of the mind. So extensions of plus-K are certain to reveal obstacles if extended to minus-K. The immortality achieved through reproduction by cell division leads to the mortality achieved by nuclear fission.

BION What else?

MAN I am not going to do your thinking for you. Sooner or later you will have to pay the price of deciding to think ±; whether, in Freud's formulation, to interpose 'thinking' between impulse and action; or to interpose it between the two as a substitute for action; or to interpose it between the two as a prelude to action.

BION Oh, all right – let's get on with this enthralling and spectacular spectacle.

(*The darkness deepens. The skull-crushing and sucking object is overwhelmed by depression at the failing supply of nutriment from the dead ♀ and the failure to restore it to life. He formulates in stone an arti-factual representation, easily seen by Plato to be a lying representation of, a*

substitute for, pro-creation, a substitute for creation. The lying substitution is transformed into a prelude to action. This whirling, swirling chaos to infinite and formless darkness becomes luminous and a Leonardo de Vinci robs the hair, the brooding waste of waters, of its formless chaos.)

BION Disgusting! Mawkish!

35

MAN Don't blame me if you find the taste of your brother's brains and blood and guts dis- or minus-gusting. The priests of Ur, the tomb robbers, are your religious and scientific forebears.

BION I do blame you.

MAN So I gather. You postpone the day of reckoning till man is strong enough – as you think – to carry the load of guilt; and then when the day of reckoning threatens to dawn you cheat again by robbing your forebears. 'They', you say, 'did not know any better'. You, I say, did not know, still do not know, any better. Never will, in the future, 'know any better'. Back to thy punishment, false fugitive from the domains of ultra- and infra-sensuous non-existence! Fawn upon, nuzzle the bloody corpse of your cannibal feast. Stand up! Be erect! Oh great and fallacious Phallus! You deal with feelings of guilt by deception. In the domain of real thinking it is possible to find an approximation which contributes to the illusion of omnipotence. Real thinking can approximate to thoughts which at the same moment seem to be those of the innocent child, the responsible adult, the depressed, devouring glutton, the depressed, devouring but unsatiated being of any age and clime. The variables are legion. The basic matrix is the ability to change. For instance, you can think, or imagine, or intuit – take your choice – that you are a civilized human being; 'homo', as we say in our quaint scientific language, 'sapiens'. As you have demonstrated, you can feel (think, imagine, intuit – as I said, take your choice) you are the wild animal nuzzling, fawning upon, mourning its victim on which it preys. You may easily feel you are preyed upon. You have a wide choice, a choice which seems to include a great number of possibilities including combinations of thoughts and feelings in great profusion of varieties and degrees of

variety. One of your kind – there are many more than are able to make their existence obtrude on other similar entities – described it in verbal transformations of visual images as seeing all the domains of the world spread out before his eyes as if they were objects suitable for the exercise of greedy possessiveness. In this domain the herbivore may devour the carnivore.

I am at a loss to find a method of communication by means of which I could make the 'fact' – as you would no doubt call it – clear to you. Perhaps – well, you know about perspective?

BION A little.

MAN (*to himself*) My God – I think he is learning! (*To Bion*) Under a certain vertex the figures of Euclidean geometry appear distorted; a sphere looks like a flat disc and an ellipse can be interpreted as a circular pond – artists frequently paint and draw in this kind of way.

BION Yes, I've heard this before. In fact, I have said something like it.

MAN Under a certain vertex – by which of course I mean a vertex that is so 'uncertain' that I do not even know what it is – the visual image of the sensuous, Euclidean objects appears to have been expelled, 'projected' from *behind* the eyes onto the world of objects in *front* of the eyes. Under one perspective the observer sees, takes in, a horse which he cannot put in his mouth but *can* take in through his eyes.

BION This is familiar to me and many of my fellow human animals.

MAN Sometimes the flow is from a focal point behind the eyes out – to the horse, say; sometimes the 'perspective', that is to say, the 'flow', is reversed. Sometimes these flowing objects come in waves, sometimes in quanta, sometimes a feeling is described under a vertex as 'helplessness', sometimes as 'God'. The 'perspective is reversed'.

BION I think I have an idea – a sort of hunch – that I know what you mean. A man once told me, 'I don't know what I mean'. I tried to translate in terms of articulate speech what he was expressing in verbal form – verbal transformation of a visual image – a hieroglyph. Of course, it was not amenable to the laws of articulate thinking.

MAN I think I know what *you* mean. It might be a good idea to get together. First we need to know *how* to get together; what, so to speak, are the laws of mental cannibalism.

BION (*to himself*) My God – I think he is learning! It would be curious if it turned out that we both were.

MAN The first thing is to realize that the laws of nature are not formulations or orders which have to be obeyed, but are elements which are constantly conjoined, are conjoined *constantly.* This is true whatever the variables may be and however much the variables dominate, are allowed to dominate, or are encouraged to dominate the object which approximates to the formula of (constant + variable) $\alpha + \beta \times \xi$, or $\beta + \alpha \times \xi$.

ALICE A sign to denote noise, analogous to that denoting the bass or treble clef in music, is required.

MAN One famed anthropologist says the bone formation of the skull does not lend itself to attachment of the tongue muscle for use in articulate speech. The attachment of the penis to the anatomy, the vagina likewise, is in its own fashion appropriate and beautiful. What God has joined together let no man put asunder.

BION How could we put them together or put them asunder? These are anatomical structures with physiological functions, and I for my part have not in my conscious memory ever known a time when conscious and unconscious aim and ideal have been possible to divorce from each other. Nor have I ever known a time when these constantly conjoined objects were on good terms with each other except for short periods; enough to make me long for more.

MAN Rosemary and I realize that. I was only a little while back saying to Rosemary – was I not, Rosie? –

BION Rosie! Good God! Rosie!

MAN That is what I said. You do not approve, so you sneer; if our terms of endearment are not yours, your hostility is at once in evidence.

BION That is me. I did not choose my education or my personality. I would rather I were tolerant. What you say and do is not my business, but what you say and do stimulates disagreeable feelings in me, as in this instance; feelings are aroused in me which I would rather did not come together. Yet they constantly do come together. I can do nothing about your arousing such feelings. I can do nothing about the feelings that in fact are aroused.

MAN That may be so. For all I know you may be quite justified – you obviously *are* in your own eyes – in thinking you cannot fairly be held responsible. But you *are* held responsible and it is you

who feel it is your responsibility although you are trying to maintain that you do not hold yourself responsible. Are you not then yourself trying to 'put asunder' what God has joined together?

BION Who, or what, is God?

MAN You do not know, but you behave and think as if some such force that is not you, 'is'. You do not reconcile yourself to the fact that if there is such a force it behaves in a way of which you do not approve. Newton, long ago, suggested that the procedures which he had adopted with regard to the behaviour of light could and should be adopted with regard to the forces with which he was not acquainted, but of whose reality he had no doubt. He even spoke of them at the end of 'Opticks' as if they were not dissimilar from the forces which were familiar to people who were under a religious discipline. Whoever reported the debate between Arjuna and Krishna said much the same; Milton likewise. The greatest minds have shown themselves to be familiar with these emotional experiences, including the experience of having to admit that before the forces of which they disapproved their rebellion lapsed into shamed silence, though they were ashamed of their shame and ashamed of their acquiescence or 'defeat'.

BION What about it? Admitting all that – so what?

36

MAN You will not be satisfied with my reply, but here it is – allow me to introduce you. First, to the objects which were so shadowy that it was not even possible to say they were man and woman. I pronounce no opinion on this. Let me introduce you now to two objects which the higher human authorities had no doubt whatever were man and woman; there was no dispute about the facts of anatomy and physiology. The man took the woman into the bushes, the woman showed no reluctance to go. There, the man who showed himself subsequently to be perfectly capable of the exercise of functions which we are used to regarding as those of reason, savaged the woman's breasts and genitalia with his teeth, devouring the flesh of both regions in a manner that would be comprehensible if he were a wild carnivore. The episode presents itself to us as a problem because he did not appear as a wild beast devouring his prey in a jungle. He appeared to be a man going out with a girl at a holiday resort. This pair were so unshadowy that it was impossible to disbelieve that they were a man and a woman. There are many similar instances, so common that it is not necessary to recount and document them. How immediately they have presented themselves to the sensas of the reader of this book depends on a number of facts peculiar to the reader – his occupation, his life up to this time – it would take a long time to recite the facts. I shall abbreviate our labours by saying that they 'depend on the vertex'. Under one vertex I have known a man act as if he were having a vivid emotional experience familiar to me under the vertex, 'dream'. He was not dreaming; nor did he think he was. It may seem unnecessary to resort to the term, 'vertex', but it must suffice until we can find some more adequate shorthand for those states in which the individual has two or more sets of facts appropriate to the same

emotional experience, but which are impossible to entertain together without feeling mad. This involves feeling sane enough to be afraid, and further, to respect his fear. He is afraid of his mind, and fears that his fear is worthy of respect.

BION In short, his 'mind' and the consequences of having a mind are unwelcome discoveries. But you seem doubtful.

MAN Let me try to expand my misgiving. I agree with what you have formulated in terms of a 'mind', but I am not sure that it is satisfactory either to include in or exclude from 'mental' activity the taste of human blood, the 'emotions' associated with erectile tissue and erectability. It seems, though this is only guesswork, that it was easier for the Greeks to tolerate the idea of 'thinking' with the phrenes; or to associate it with the dead; or with the dead apparition when the person to whom it appears was asleep. Alcmaeon of Croton seems to have been one of the first to have thought that thinking might have something to do with the CNS. Since then, up to the present, great importance has been attributed to man's possession of a central nervous system. The nature of impulses springing from an ability to exercise one's teeth or vagina or penis is not similarly honoured or tolerated. When a modern man's impulses obtrude to a point where they become manifest to others as functions of a sensuous system, neither they nor their locale are accorded respect. The peripheral nervous system and its extensions are a source of suspicion and fear.

BION Suppose there is a CNS. Further, suppose there is a peripheral nervous system – the PNS and the CNS both fear. The fear is intensified if it is supposed that there is some extension of both infra- and ultra-sensuous. This extension is dreaded in itself, and made the more dreadful if suspected as being *outside* the sphere which we associate with the senses . . .

MAN . . . and *within*, but unrecognized.

BION Or recognizable as a character or personality which can be located within the molecular structure of the amines and the domain in which their transmission takes place.

MAN If the CNS is rightly supposed to be important, but we are unable to assess its importance or how it exercises its functions, does that not make it more frightening?

BION It does. I, as a psychoanalyst, have committed myself to action which pre-supposes that such a thing as a mind or a personality exists. I find no difficulty, in present circumstances, in making

that admission, accepting that my work is an admission that I hold such a theory. I hold it so strongly that I am prepared to transform my ideas into action. For example, I allow it to be known that I am a psychoanalyst and, with others, have gone so far as to seek recognition of this same idea from people who are not us and who are not in fact at all closely connected with us.

MAN You make the acknowledgment clearly. Do you also agree that others do so? Sometimes you have to my knowledge claimed that certain well-known figures of the past, not only of the recent past like Sigmund Freud himself, were gifted with a profound capacity for understanding their fellow men?

BION Certainly. We can gauge their actions and behaviour from what has been recorded of or by them, and allowing myself anachronistic-like poetic-licence, I would call them very considerable psychoanalysts before anyone had heard of such a term.

MAN Is this not an instance of claiming that there is such a 'thing' as psychoanalysis, that there always has been such a thing as psychoanalysis, whether it could be verbalized or not?

BION I would say that it is an example of a thought which, before Freud existed to think it, was 'without a thinker'.

MAN I am not really clear why you postulate a thought 'without a thinker'. It seems an unnecessary complication.

BION 'Doubt' is always regarded as an unnecessary complication. That is clear whenever an individual asserts 'certainty'.

MAN You used the word 'certainly' just now.

BION Touché. I agree.

MAN But you reply in the language of a game of combat?

BION A 'playing at hate'. Play itself has a function as a way of rehearsing something. We play at soldiers. It is not always clear that children are 'only' playing, particularly if the game turns into a quarrel about the way the game is being played. Conversely, 'real' quarrels, 'real' wars, arouse critical hostility if the soldiers or sailors appear to be 'too' friendly. I remember an emotional upheaval connected with certain courtesies observed by Field Marshal Montgomery in his treatment of a captured enemy general. 'Too serious' vies with 'too friendly' – a psychoanalyst is vulnerable to attack on the grounds of 'degrees' of emotion with which the debate is conducted. The degree of emotion is a statement; a verbal formulation may be emotionally liberating, but is restrictive if it stimulates

more than it satisfies. (Putting it more abstractly, $\alpha\ \xi \rightarrow \alpha\ \alpha$ at once becomes $\alpha\ \alpha \rightarrow \alpha\ \alpha\ \xi$ = frustration.) Whether the 'frustration' is a product of inability to solve an existent problem, or due to progress revealing further frustration, the frustration is more obvious than the need to discriminate between 'kinds' of frustration. The problem of delay can be solved by interposing thinking between impulse and action; or the frustration can be so great that hatred of the thinking, interposed between impulse and action, itself becomes the object of the immediately frustrated, destructive impulse. The tendency, therefore, is to turn the destructive impulse into action rather than further thought.

BION The advantages of thought are not immediately obvious. Whoever is aware of this discussion between you and me, including you and me, cannot see advantages which depend on a future that has not yet taken place. It is as bad as a past which is not known because it is forgotten, or because we did not then exist. Ignorance thus provides force for belief in a future heaven and a past transmigration of souls. I resort to a 'hunch' that as there can be thoughts which have no thinker, so there may be 'acts' without an agent. There are thoughts which have been acted upon without an agent to act. There can be thoughts and acts related to each other without any thinker or agent to relate to them. Thus a cannibalistic act, neither conceived nor acted upon, may await the arrival of the creator and agent. Should it in fact be the case that a particular murderer has existed, he can be regarded as a realization which approximates to the theory or concept of a personality who both conceives and transforms such an impulse into thought or action, or both. Nevertheless, the 'fact' 'murderer' may be a rationalization – a product of the reason whose function it is, as Hume postulated, to be the slave of the emotions. The problems with which you are familiar are not solved either by thought, or action, or both in combination. You, and others like you, feel dissatisfied. You and your contemporaries doubt that any inhabitants of the world, whether real or fictitious, are any more satisfied; or that you would be any more satisfied if you found yourself in the position of any of those people. You *do* find yourself in the position of victor. England has been conquered. Rosemary has become mistress. She is the 'possession' of the Man. Her former mistress is in the position of being her 'skivvy'. But you heard what she said.

ROSEMARY What did I say?

MAN You said, 'Not again!' – meaning that no matter what the change in vertex, the relationship between the invariants was constant. Mathematical terms could be used to formulate a problem and demonstrate relationships between invariants and constants with such accuracy that the configuration presented by the newly disposed elements was familiar and unwelcome. 'Not again!' she said.

BION Some emotions and events are less agreeable than others; these, people hope, will not re-occur; they wish to feel pleasant sensations without cessation. Attempts are made to manipulate feelings and ideas so that they conform to a principle of perpetuity. In all domains there is a desire that nothing should disturb the sense of permanence. This desire is sure to conflict with the nature of the object studied. It is hard to conceive of anything more free from restraint than thoughts and feelings. But if an attempt is made to give them written or even spoken expression, freedom of thought has been eroded. The freedom of communicated thought cannot at any time be absolute.

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BION The experience of physical, sensuous space was not abandoned. It was clung to with such tenacity that it prevented the loss of security involved if pictorial sense were lost. It obscured realization that Euclidean proofs depended on their being visually obvious. Euclidean geometry thus remained for centuries without a rival. There was no rival in the sphere of education since communication of what is known, by those who know it, to those who are ignorant of it, depends on visual sense. The 'obvious' was evidence and proof of the truth of what was asserted. 'Time' was as unquestioned as 'space'. Events are supposed to occur at a particular time and in a particular place; the 'past' and the 'future' depend upon sensuous experience, but there is no more recognition of that than of the dependence of Euclidean geometry on the sense of sight. Theories about 'mental life' are taken for granted, as was the background to the theories of Euclidean geometry; similar assumptions about 'mental time and space' imperil growth of mental life. Theories of causation, commonly adumbrated in the context of the physical world, are based on the undiscussed and unquestioned foundation of ideas about time and space. Newton accepted that foundation. What he applied to the physical world was applicable to the mental or psychical or spiritual world. Should these assumptions be accepted by psychoanalysts or philosophers? Descartes had no doubt about the value of philosophical Doubt and yet did not doubt the validity of 'cogito ergo sum'; although he came so near, he did not take the final step. The psychoanalytic theory, first formulated by Melanie Klein, I propose to extend to areas not in fact included by her in the therapeutic domain for which she proposed it. The extension involves supposing that not

only does the individual harbour omnipotent phantasies of destruction and dispersal, but that there is an omnipotent being or force that destroys the whole object and disperses the fragments widely.

MYSELF I can see that in the sphere of astronomy, where so much depends on the sense of sight either directly or at a remove – as in the examination and comparison of photographs – it may be possible, by putting together the 'facts' of many hundreds of photographs, to draw a sequence which could be supposed to represent a 'moving picture' of events like the development of our own sun – as if in a few moments one could scrutinize an event which may have taken many centuries. But I do not see what useful purpose is served by such a fictitious construction.

MAN It gives immediacy and reality to something which might otherwise be hard to understand.

BION Is it not just there that the danger lies? One more plausible theory is created to swell the enormous supply of plausible theories.

MAN Of course. But fear of what might happen is a bad master.

BION So is plausibility. I wonder how many plausible theories have been used and bewildered the human race. I would like to know. I am not sure of the ease with which 'plausible' theories are produced. In this context of 'plausible theories' about which we are talking, the plausible theory, or 'convincing interpretation', may be hard to come by. It can be plausible and false. Witness the idea that 'the sun rises' – what trouble that has caused! We do not know the cost in suffering associated with the belief in a Christian God, or the god of Abraham's Ur, or Hitler's Germany, or peyotism – or god of any kind.

MAN Not god of any kind; some gods have been less 'poisonous' than others.

BION Schacht said that the accumulation of wealth was a harmless ambition, but then the important thing may be the way it is accumulated and the object for which it is to be used. It could be to achieve the reward of work done as a substitute for doing the work.

MAN The same is true of psychoanalysis or any other mechanism developed for purposes of accumulation. You will not have failed to notice that we make a tacit assumption about a sense of values; or even that there is a valid sense of values by which the ambitions are to be judged. We may regard our 'survival' as a matter of importance. We should not have survived had we not wished to do so.

ALICE Who is 'we'?

MAN The ones who survive, together with some who failed. If we are animate this includes an ambition to remain so. The same impulse appears to have spread to the ambition that it should be a life worth preserving. I have noticed this tendency in psychoanalysis; the whole emphasis, since it is not primarily concerned with physical health, suggests that there should be someone or something who is concerned with happiness.

ROSEMARY I would like to be happy. I can't say it thrilled me to have to bother with Alice's parties; in fact, she seems to get some sort of kick out of finding she is my maid.

ALICE I doubt whether any woman was as keen on the survival of the 'good old days' of the British Empire as the men. The 'already existent' is essential to and incompatible with 'further existence'.

BION According to Rosemary, Alice is able to have a masochistic relationship with her former maid.

MAN That is a psychoanalytic formulation.

BION I agree. I do sometimes express my views in terms which can themselves be characterized; in this instance my formulation is called theoretical. But let me tell you something in more conversational terms about a man I knew in the army. He was highly educated at a well-known public school and, as far as I could see, had the opportunity common to people of the privileged classes of taking up an occupation of responsibility and power. He did not do so. He failed his chance of being trained as an officer, became an officer's servant and stayed in that position till the end of the war, by which time I had no means of knowing his further career.

ALICE Are you suggesting my career is comparable?

BION The thought occurs to you; if you are willing, and others likewise, this could be debated. If so, it is not an obstacle to the discussion that my case was a man and Alice is a woman; that kind of behaviour is not restricted to one sex. Yet it can be described, both in the man and now Alice, as 'sexual'. This is a classification familiar to me; in psychoanalysis the relationship between Rosemary and Alice could be discovered or demonstrated or classified as sexual. Suppose we consider Rosemary and Alice as welcoming, for their individual reasons, the country's downfall; their nation or culture undergoes a change which makes it possible for each individual to pursue a life which they would not otherwise have been free to do. I can see that the defeat makes that freedom possible. The desire to achieve such

freedom, if shared amongst a sufficient number of people, could contribute to the defeat.

MAN What would be described as a defeat brought about by the decadence of the society or group; although I have known a society to be considered decadent *and* victorious. Reciprocally, the victory is regarded as a sign or symptom or 'result'.

ROSEMARY Men seem to attach great importance to conflict, rivalry, victory. Even in private affairs I couldn't make a man think that there was any importance in what I thought or felt about him. He talked and acted as if the only matter of consequence was whether he was successful. I suppose he thought I would then be bound to fall in love with a man of such capacity and brilliance. To the end he never entertained the possibility that I loved *him* and couldn't care less about his successes.

BION Is that true? I would be surprised if you did not find, if you were honest with yourself, that you cared a lot about his success.

ROSEMARY He had some distinction; it was the most boring part about him. Why, even in sexual love he was convinced he had to be potent. He couldn't believe that I might love him and therefore be capable of helping him to be potent.

BION I am sure there are many men who have no doubt of the woman's ability to make fools of them. In technical terms, there are plenty of men who are sure the woman can 'castrate' them. All states exist, from primitive fears of the female genital – as expressed in visual prototypes of a vagina dentata – to fears that the woman would rejoice in triumphing by humiliating the man.

MAN There is certainly a profound belief in the pleasure of triumphing over and humiliating the rival. That state of mind is common enough and it is feared by man or woman. It, and the fear of it, can be generated by the experiences of the child.

BION Its efficacy depends on belief. But there can be innumerable reasons for fear, including fear of the pleasures of cruelty.

MAN You are again talking of 'reasons' – 'one' reason, 'innumerable' reasons. Don't you think *Belief is* the action-generator analogous to 'number generators'? Man, like animals, is capable of fear. You can have 'reasons' for being afraid; you can fear death and believe you will die. Belief is the action-generator; what generates belief?

BION If that state has been part of you, you must be familiar with the constantly conjoined elements. We can suppose that the constant

conjunction has a 'great deal to do with' – or is 'constantly conjoined with' – the fact that we are still alive. I would go further; I have owed and shall owe my continued existence to my capacity to fear 'an impending disaster'. The question is not 'where is one to draw the line?' but where has the line been drawn? Between conscious and unconscious? By the phrenes? The thalamus?

ROSEMARY Does it matter? I can see that it does if we want to debate the question. I have never known a crisis in which I have thought like that.

BION Here we discuss. I can even *imagine* having a discussion like this, but this discussion and the imagination that I am having such a discussion differ; one is the discussion, the other a substitute for, or a prelude to, discussion.

The ferocity with which children sometimes play games is evidence that the players are not feeling that they are playing, or the observer witnessing, 'just a game'. The idea of 'game' is an inadequate description for what is being witnessed. It is being wrongly categorized by the name of 'game'. I think of a mathematical analogy: if the 'universe of discourse' does not facilitate the solution of 3 minus 5, then real numbers are no good, but must be enlarged by 'negative numbers'. If the mathematical 'field of play' is not suitable for the manipulation of 'negative numbers', it has to be extended to provide conditions for 'games' with negative numbers. If the world of conscious thought is not suitable for playing 'Oedipus Rex', the 'universe of discourse' must be enlarged to include such plays. If serious psychoanalytic discussion cannot take place in the domain which Freud found adequate, it must be enlarged. In fact, Freud did enlarge it when he found that he could not believe what his experience with patients seemed to suggest – that they had all been assaulted sexually. He had to entertain the idea that events which had never taken place could have serious consequences. If I cannot 'believe', I cannot act or think. I need 'thoughts without a thinker'. I may have to create a domain which is not a serious paper, not a game, not a murderous rival. If this is true of 'childhood', 'mathematics', why not of other thematic apperceptions, including 'psychoanalysis' itself? A 'field of play' must be found on which to play our 'game'. I once asked a group, 'What is the interpretation of that?' and I pushed a chair into the forefront of the discussion. It took almost twenty minutes before anyone ventured a reply to my question.

ROSEMARY I'm not surprised! I wouldn't know what you were up to.

BION (*indicating Man*) If it comes to that, do you know what *he is* up to?

ROSEMARY He and all his pals? Yes.

BION Then you believe.

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MAN You interest me; may I ask *what* we are up to?

ROSEMARY Homer spent time writing the Iliad and the Odyssey – a very early answer to the question which is still being asked.

BION That doesn't answer Man's question. It only stresses the fact that 'a question' has always existed and still does – we are animals activated by curiosity.

MAN Or belief.

BION We are questioning ourselves about the nature of our behaviour. There are many answers, included among those from the past – if Rosemary is right – the answer given by one of the world's great poets. But in a particular instance, *this* instance, we can provide an answer, if not one that satisfies us.

MAN Perhaps there is something wrong with our 'methods' of investigation + answer.

ROSEMARY Well, you at any rate (*turning to Man*) should have some answer. You have upset our way of life. Alice and I have certainly been forced into a situation which we had no say in choosing. You were not obliged to invade our country.

MAN How do you come to the conclusion that I am any more a free agent than you are? It is true I had a choice. It so happened that I *was* compelled to invade your country, but I was free to disobey orders. I had to decide what to do.

BION You mean you had to decide whether you wanted to pay the cost.

MAN Yes, you could say that; but I did not know what the cost would be either of obeying or dis-obeying.

BION Is that any different from any other decision? The cost of having the privilege of choice is being held responsible and accepting

the responsibility for whatever one decides. This, indeed, is the cost of choosing to be responsible.

ROSEMARY Do you think you or Roland accept the responsibility for protecting Alice and me? If not, what do you accept the responsibility for?

ROLAND Bion and I, amongst others, *did* accept that responsibility. I do not believe in a future life –

ROSEMARY – nor do I –

ROLAND – and so it was clear to me that my patriotism or loyalty or responsibility, or whatever you call it, might cost me my life. I know plenty of men who did lose their lives. Even the many survivors lost their peace of mind or what made life worth living.

ROSEMARY You didn't join the army because you were responsible.

BION Nor did you.

ROSEMARY Even women risk death. In childbirth . . .

ROLAND You did not risk childbirth.

ROSEMARY What do you know about it? I believed a man and his promises once. I don't now, but I did once. I didn't die, but something died in me – mentally, I suppose you would call it.

BION Most people experience mental death if they live long enough. You don't have to live long to have that experience – all you have to do is to be mentally alive.

ALICE You speak as if it were simple to be mentally alive. That is hardly my experience. It is true that a person does not, as far as we know, have to 'do' anything to be physically born. It seems easier to think that he has to 'do' something to *keep* physically or mentally alive. You have to have a partner for one thing – even in opposition.

ROBIN How do you mean? I can see that I have to be 'opposed' if I want a contest. But suppose I don't.

BION Doesn't it depend on what use you need a contest for? This very discussion is a contest. We are talking about something. I think there is a sense in which we need, and are even feeling aware of the need for contest, or for opposition.

ROLAND (*sarcastically*) This gentleman (*indicating Man*) has obliged.

ROBIN I don't feel at all grateful. I had plenty of trouble with the weather and the crops without the need for invasion too.

MAN I don't think any of us like the 'opposition' we have. We

feel we should appear in a better light if the opposition were different. I can't do what I want; I have never known a time when I could. But there has always been someone or something against which I could rage.

BION If all else fails you could rage, as I too can, against yourself, your youth or your age, your strength or your weakness. It is one of the uses you can make of God – if you can believe in God.

ROBIN Well, can't you?

BION Which god are you referring to?

ROBIN Allah Akbar!

BION I don't think you are being serious. I shall use psychoanalytic licence to take jokes seriously. To start with, you show you are aware that you have a choice.

ROBIN You think of me as joking; it would not be so easy to suppose that, if I were in fact a member of a Muslim culture. Nor would you suppose that you could 'choose' to take it seriously 'because' you are a member of a psychoanalytic group. You would be compelled to take it seriously. It has nothing to do with being a member of a particular group, profession or culture, but that the particular 'culture' has a great deal to do with some underlying, unobserved, constant conjunction of beliefs; an actual God of which the various religious formulations are only approximations to the underlying configuration of facts.

BION You are asking me to suppose that there is a 'thing-in-itself, noumenon, Godhead, which, using Kant's terminology for my purposes, becomes 'manifest' as a phenomenon; 'God' as contrasted with 'Godhead'; 'finity' as contrasted with 'infinity'; 'won', as Milton says, 'from the void and formless infinite'; a geometrical, Euclidean figure, a triangle with sides of 2, 4 and 5 units, as contrasted with an algebraical deductive system. But a rational fact gives no scope for 'belief. Belief itself is destroyed if it is transformed to find a 'reason' for belief.

ROBIN Well, I take your word for it; if you say that that is what I'm asking you to do, I can believe I am, but I confess I didn't know it.

BION Then you have the necessary condition for belief. You don't reject my formulation though you are not in a position to confirm it. 'Time' may confirm it or not.

MYSELF I don't see that Time can confirm it or refute it. I know what you mean and so would others familiar with the ordinary use of conversational English. This supposes that 'reality' approximates

to conversational formulation. Suppose I examine your statement in a more analytic way: it conforms to certain definitory hypotheses, it is made up of words taken from a 'vocabulary' or collection of definitory hypotheses and articulated according to certain grammatical rules. Am I to suppose that there is some underlying configuration which approximates to those 'constant conjunctions', words, and also approximates to the rules of grammar in accordance with which they have been articulated? Or are the vocabulary and grammatical rules of articulation unique, particular, conformable to an underlying configuration which is itself 'unique' and therefore of no general significance? Or do those same grammatical rules of articulation represent a reality which is not formulated in the statement directly, but only by a silent obedience to the unformulated, undetected, but nonetheless real, system of rules or discipline? Should we then listen not only to the conversational meaning but also to 'how they say it'? Should we obey, conform to the rules of 'articulation', or only to the laws articulately formulated?

ROBIN I don't see why I should obey the rules of articulation. After all, I am not a verb or adjective; rules which are all right for them may not be at all suitable for me who am *not* part of speech, but a person.

MAN You do in fact have to obey the laws governing conquered peoples.

BION I do not wish to argue with that automatic I see in your belt. I would rather not be either 'pro' or 'con' that particular piece of machinery, although I have reason to suppose that if I conformed to the rules of force either you or I would be dead. As far as I am concerned I believe the dead person ceases to exist, but since you cart that automatic around stuck in your belt, I assume that you conform to a different view.

MAN Not at all. Your view and mine seem to be in agreement; not 'complete' agreement in this instance because, so far as I have a choice, I would rather be the one to survive.

BION So you have the automatic and I don't.

MAN You *believe* I have the automatic. In fact, all I have in the holster is a bar of chocolate.

BION Very clever; but that 'bar of chocolate' is backed by the force of an invading army.

MAN *You believe* it is backed by the force of an invading army. As a matter of fact . . .

MYSELF I was about to say that myself, but I hesitated as it occurred to me that 'facts' are very curious things, so you beat me to 'as a matter of fact' before I could say it. I was wondering, when you were talking of articulate speech, what the rules would be when the rules were *not* those of articulation.

BION Such as the rules of 'murder', the rules of 'sex', the rules of 'violence', the rules of Chinese communication contrasted with the rules of 'articulate' communication, the rules of 'blackmail'.

MAN As a member of the late British Empire you should have plenty of experience of violence, blackmail, murder, inarticulate speech.

MYSELF We have; it has stimulated a great deal of envy and ambition to emulate and rival our achievements! But we have also a great deal of experience of poetry and poetic expression and communication.

MAN In the course of practising psychoanalysis you were able to contrast your findings with those when practising group therapy. How do they compare?

BION I remain, as far as I can tell, the same person whether I am experiencing a group or a psychoanalysis.

MYSELF Yes, of course; I see that.

BION Though it may seem contradictory to what I have just said, I don't think there is any 'of course' about it. I said, 'as far as I can tell', but I don't know 'how far' that is. I certainly don't 'see' the same things in the two situations. Taking what I may call a macroscopic vertex I do not see the same things as I do from a microscopic vertex. In what I would call a macroscopic formulation the difference is easily explained by the fact that a group is not an individual or vice versa, but . . .

MYSELF You think there is a change analogous to the change described by de Broglie between the behaviour detected by the observation of the relationship between macroscopic units and between microscopic units?

BION 'Analogy' is itself a mental tool more appropriate to complex large observations and judgements than to the observation in detail of details. The microscopic vertex – I shall borrow this term

to improvise a way of talking about this subject which is devoid of such equipment – reveals something which does not correspond to the anatomy or physiology of the individual or the group of human individuals.

MYSELF Could you venture on an attempt to communicate this to me?

BION Gladly, but I am not hopeful.

ROSEMARY Alice, I think it's time we left. I feel I am not in a sufficiently serious state of mind to keep in touch with these two.

BION I should have thought both of you might know very well what I am talking about – the thing-in-itself as contrasted with the language about it. You may find yourselves as inadequate as I am in talking *about* it, that is, in trying to tell someone else lateral communication. I cannot feel optimistic of my chances of making it clear even to myself.

MYSELF I see your point.

BION Then it can't be the point.

MYSELF You mean I am wrong?

BION No, I don't; but you are now.

ALICE Rosemary, do you think we shall ever understand this?

ROSEMARY No, but I feel I am 'becoming' it even if I do not, and never shall, 'understand' what I am 'becoming' or 'being'.

BION In short, 'being' something is different from 'understanding' it. Love is the ultimate which is 'become', not understood.

ALICE (*looking at Rosemary*) I have 'become' something and this, if I could say it, would depend on my saying, 'I love'.

BION Or you have become loving perhaps?

ALICE No, I love Rosemary.

BION If you are right you must have become capable of loving.

ALICE I thought that as a psychoanalyst you would be sure to say I was homosexual.

BION On the contrary; so far as I am capable of 'being', as contrasted with 'claiming to be', a psychoanalyst, I think that you are incorrect in saying you love Rosemary if you are homosexual; you must have become capable of loving. Becoming sexual is part of physical maturation. Real love is not a function of the thing loved, but of the person loving. That is part of psychical or mental maturation and is not obstructed by accidental features of the thing or person loved.

MYSELF Amongst these features that you call 'accidental', are you then including that which we call the sex of the person?

BION Certainly; sex applies to anatomy and physiology and, as is usually the case when we talk of the mind, has been taken over by the psychoanalysts because we have to make do with a language invented for physical life or 'sensuous experience'. 'Passionate love' is the nearest I can get to a verbal transformation which 'represents' the thing-in-itself, the ultimate reality, the 'O', as I have called it, approximating to it.

ROLAND Then you think Alice could love *me*?

BION If she is correct about loving Rosemary, she is *capable* of loving you. That does not mean that she would want to be with you, either for an ephemeral episode or for life, or for anatomical or physiological purposes. But I am concerned here to discuss, with inadequate equipment, mental phenomena. I have a prejudice in favour of believing there is such a 'thing' as a mind or spirit.

ROLAND Is that what you mean when you say you are a psychoanalyst?

BION That term is meaningless, but useful for nomenating an expanding conjunction, including what I and certain individuals are doing, shut in a room together during my working hours. It has a use in what I described as 'lateral' communication – 'conversational' English. Both phrases, when used by me, have a directional significance, sometimes tacit, sometimes overtly expressed. I refer to the use of terms which imply direction because such terms are used by others as well as by me. I also use these terms in a context which is different quantitatively and qualitatively in the domain of thought. As a psychoanalyst I assume that there is such a reality that approximates to these terms 'thought', 'mind', 'personality'. I suspect – it is no more than a hunch or suspicion – that the mind and personality have a physical counterpart, expressed by Alexander in *Space, Time and Deity* as a relationship of every psychosis with its 'neurosis'. In this context I am assuming that every psyche has a physical counterpart in the central nervous system. I could portray the relationship by marks on paper thus: (pronounced psy ↔ fang). Note the double arrow to indicate that the 'direction' of the thought is *indifferentiated.* I use a Chinese sign for CNS to indicate that the thing indicated is different from the physical, sensuous reality usually supposed to approximate

to the sign 'CNS'. Assume for the discussion that ♆ is as significant as it is supposed to be and that ♈ is as important or more – not less. Lateral, profound, superficial, deep, early, later – all are terms more appropriate to time and space and sensuous awareness, but not if there is a domain of which it is possible to be mentally aware. The physical CNS ♆ has contact with a real physical world and a language appropriate to its formulation exists. We are compelled to use that language for communication of something for which it was not devised and of which it is itself a product.

ROSEMARY I'm sorry, I do *not* know *what* you are talking about.

BION I am saying that our physical and sensuous components are manipulable by set theory. Thoughts associated with a thinker are also amenable to set theory. 'Mind', 'personality', 'relationship', 'belief', are not; they cannot even be reasonably defined. 'Reasonable definition' involves 'confinement' to a 'constant conjunction'.

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MAN Can I help? May I show you a recent acquisition of mine – I refer to this painting.

ROLAND My god! What damned sauce! That's our Athenese!

MAN Yours?! Did you ever look at it?

ROLAND Of course! It hung in our dining room.

MAN It was yours. Since the pacification it has been mine. By great good fortune it came to me in the redistribution as I had been one of the first to apply for it. Would you care to demonstrate its finer points?

ROLAND Well, I'm no art expert, but . . .

MAN No, I did not suppose you were, but – you said it was yours and I wondered in what sense you meant that.

ROLAND I suppose you think it's yours – by right of force, by conquest.

MAN Shall we say, by right of your falling to my chocolate bar?

ROSEMARY Am I likewise – Alice also – slave to your all-conquering chocolate bar? No, leave him to me Alice. I told you, I know how to deal with these gentry. I wasn't sent to one of your high-falutin' schools.

ALICE Roland was though. Let him 'demonstrate' the Athenese. Perhaps we shall find out something about how you and I and the Athenese all come to have fallen to this gentleman's chocolate bar.

(*All becomes dark, including the picture. Only Roland's voice is heard*.)

ROLAND To start with let me make it clear that the real name of this famous painting is 'Saint Athanasius chased by a wild boar'.

ROSEMARY Wrong from the start. It is 'Athenese mon pied'.

ROLAND (*ignoring the interruption and becoming more and more academic, in guide book style*) The painting is probably one of the few

surviving absolutely genuine works by the greatest painter the world has ever known. It has always been in possession of my family –

VOICE Quite right. It 'owned' them; 'they' never owned 'it' –

ROLAND – and has been unknown to the public who are nevertheless familiar with him, though anonymously, as the greatest artist that ever existed. Note the delicacy and truth with which every detail is rendered. The saint's left foot has been caught in a root of the . . . of the bush . . . or thicket . . . and at any moment one expects, so vivid is the chiaroscuro, to see him fall headlong and then the tusker will have *got* him! *Ach Gott, unser Hilf* – note the animal is so realistically rendered that . . .

(*At this point in the discussion the boar actually loses all its ferocity and trots peacefully out of the picture.*) Now isn't that maddening! I can't possibly lecture if the ruddy animal walks off like that. In fact, the painting portrays an historical moment of great religious significance which makes me think the pig itself is no other than Satan in one of his multitudinous disguises. His envy is of such malignancy that he is even prepared to pursue the saint into the domain of art. As I was going to say, it was after this unfortunate contretemps that the saint arrived hot foot . . .

ROSEMARY 'Mon pied' as the French in their godless language would say.

ROLAND . . . and without any further ado dashed off the Athanasian Creed.

ALICE Even now the creed shows traces of pique. He had a wonderful gift of expression.

ROLAND So would you have if you had a wild boar on your tracks.

VOICE And *you* would trot off quietly too if you had a psychotic lecturer boring even your portrait into an hallucinosis.

ROLAND Who owns it now?

ROSEMARY The Gadarene swine I suppose.

MAN I protest. I think you are a bit hard on me. After all, we were invaded first.

BION I do not think this problem will ever be solved by a linear approach in a domain of time and space co-ordinates.

ROSEMARY Meaning what?

BION If you think the problems that we have to solve can be solved in a framework where 'things' happen in time and space,

with ideas taken from the vocabulary and grammar invented for the senses, we shall fail. It is not unlike solving the problem of joining nine dots, arranged on a plane to form a cube, with four straight lines. You cannot do this *and* stay within the pattern of the cube. You cannot make a model of Desargues's theorem without entertaining the idea of more than three dimensions. You cannot resolve the apparent conflict of wave mechanics with the theories of quanta without supposing a domain suitable for harbouring the theory which has to be entertained. This theory has been formulated by Melanie Klein as operative in a psychoanalytic domain expanded to contain it. It is analogous to expanding the domain of arithmetic to contain irrational numbers, negative numbers, compound conjugate numbers. The domain which is adequate for the operation of natural numbers cannot contain these other numbers.

ROSEMARY I don't understand.

ALICE Give me an example.

BION Our problems here cannot be solved in terms of first and last and 'places' and 'examples' in time or space, the drawing of a line which has to be crossed.

CONAN DOYLE You mean by separating life and death. I said that years ago.

BION I sympathize with your efforts to draw attention to certain facts, but I do not believe your theories ever escaped from the limitations of sensuous experience and its terminology.

CONAN DOYLE You mean yours can?

BION Certainly not. But I am sure the attempt has to be made. The kind of experience which the statisticians can formulate succinctly by using the Poisson distribution cannot as yet be formulated experientially because life is too short and the spatial distances between the author of the *Bhagavad Gita* and, say, John of the Cross, or Shakespeare or Tennyson or Newton, is too great and yet not extended enough. Set theory is not enough.

SHERLOCK That is a team in which I would not include Tennyson.

WATSON But surely, Holmes, you would include Shakespeare?

BION I am surprised, Holmes, that you include yourself even as selection committee or manager.

SHERLOCK The surprise is mutual; after all, *you* have included yourself. You have even put your name on this book.

BION It is someone's way of denoting a constant conjunction. I

would find it difficult to name the mental world which is now a part of what *I* think is me. I fall back on an already existing convention. I try to be honest enough to acknowledge those to whom I am aware of being indebted.

MYSELF I understand your point about being indebted, but the O which you represent seems to be itself a part of O which is sensuously apprehended. It is a part of an O of morality which is itself part of a sensuous domain of 'ownership', sensuously perceived. There may be, and it would be impossible to believe that there is *not*, a domain which is infra- and ultra-sensuous. It is for this reason that I doubt the importance of 'significant' ownership and all the accompanying apparatus of debt and morality as we usually conceive it. This assumption throws one back into a mental domain which is a source of endless confusion and difficulty and in which unending confusion is an essential, not accidental, feature. I do not suppose I shall ever know escape, but I think the character of the 'sensuous' domain has not been exhausted.

BION I don't understand.

MYSELF Perhaps I can illustrate by an example from something you do know. Imagine a piece of sculpture which is easier to comprehend if the structure is intended to act as a trap for light. The meaning is revealed by the pattern formed by the light thus trapped – not by the structure, the carved work itself. I suggest that if I could learn how to talk to you in such a way that my words 'trapped' the meaning which they neither do nor could express, I *could* communicate to you in a way that is not at present possible.

BION Like the 'rests' in a musical composition?

MYSELF A musician would certainly not deny the importance of those parts of a composition in which no notes were sounding, but more has to be done than can be achieved in existent art and its well-established procedure of silences, pauses, blank spaces, rests. The 'art' of conversation, as carried on as part of the conversational intercourse of psychoanalysis, requires and demands an extension in the realm of non-conversation.

BION But is this anything new? Are we not all familiar with 'gaps' of this kind? Is it not usually an expression of hostility?

MYSELF As we have seen before, we are probably familiar with those activities for which the mere existence of a vocabulary is the evidence required. 'Evidence' itself is of a kind that falls within the

range of sensuous experience with which we are familiar. Anyone understands the term 'sex' when it is related to sensuous experience. If, instead of saying 'sex', I were to talk of 'the love of God', I would be using the expression commonly heard in religious communities that have a distribution within particular temporal or topological co-ordinates. But suppose that my term, 'sex', refers to a domain which has no such sensuous co-ordinates and an O of which there are no elements, analogues, psychological or mental atoms; then O would be disqualified from 'thought', as I use the term.

BION What about dreams and dream thoughts?

MYSELF I have suggested a 'trick' by which one could manipulate things which have no meaning – the use of sounds like a and R. These are sounds analogous, as Kant said, to 'thoughts without concepts', but the principle, and a reality approximating to it, is also extensible to words in common use. The realizations which approximate to words such as 'memory' and 'desire' are opaque. The 'thing-in-itself, impregnated with the opacity, itself becomes opaque; the O, of which 'memory' or 'desire' is the verbal counterpart, is opaque. I suggest this quality of opacity inheres in many O's and their verbal counterparts, and the phenomena which it is usually supposed to express. If, by experiment, we discovered the verbal forms, we could also discover the thoughts to which the observation applied specifically. Thus we achieve a situation in which these could be used deliberately to obscure specific thoughts.

BION Is there anything new in this? You must often have heard, as I have, people say they don't know what you are talking about and that you are being deliberately obscure.

MYSELF They are flattering me. I am suggesting an aim, an ambition, which, if I could achieve, would enable me to be deliberately and *precisely* obscure; in which I could use certain words which could activate precisely and instantaneously, in the mind of the listener, a thought or train of thought that came between him and the thoughts and ideas already accessible and available to him.

ROSEMARY Oh, my God!

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MYSELF It has not done so, but I could say your last sentence or ejaculation had obscured my train of thought. This, however, if it were true, would still not be adequate to achieve the function at which I am aiming. Some people can talk with such precision that the right audience could not fail to understand the communication. An obscure poet may, nevertheless, be expressing something in the shortest and most direct language known. Gerard Manley Hopkins is one example; Browning, in his poem 'Sordello', is, in Ezra Pound's opinion, another. I suggest a possibility of stimulating, in the listener who listens as he listens, mental activities that intervene between him and thoughts, the obscuring capacity of which is specific, not general.

BION Why wouldn't a simple, straightforward rigmarole do?

MYSELF It is imprecise, inexact, like throwing a pot of pitch at a painting to which the spectator objects. It is a macroscopic, macroactive phenomenon like all sensuously based activities. I am searching for something in the domain of the very small. To use an analogy, not the domain of wave mechanics, nor the domain of quanta. That is as near as anything I am likely to find to express to you the problem as I see it.

BION You are approaching the position at which Newton came into conflict with Berkeley.

MYSELF I am flattered that you use such illustrious names. I disavow, however, the appearance of kinship with them. You refer to Berkeley's attack on the Analyst in Newton's formulation of the 'ghosts' of increments? I have always been impressed by the language in which Berkeley clothed his attack. It is the language Freud might have used to describe a theory of anal eroticism. It impresses me

more still if I think of the statements of both men as signs of an emergent obtrusion which is contemporal, not sequential. The phenomena which I regard as conjoined and mental are more full of meaning if I conceive of them as contemporaneous. BION You do not regard them as historically distributed?

MYSELF I do, but not exclusively. In fact, I would find it helpful to borrow from a schizophrenic patient a capacity for a transference relationship which was alternatively penetrating and planar; deep and confused, or superficial and of great 'spread', like a monomolecular film. At the same time these states, though apparently mutually exclusive, are reconciled and coexistent – like wave motion and quanta, objects in a pattern conforming to a Poisson distribution displayed on two planes – one temporal, one spatial – at right angles to each other. Seen from the temporal plane, the other 'transference' spreads monomolecular-wise: seen from the vertex of the spatial plane, the 'transference' is penetrating.

BION I don't think I understand. You mean that from an historical vertex events are distributed sequentially one after another in what we call time, but that it is possible to regard them, by ignoring the temporal vertex, as distributed in space, not time?

MYSELF Yes, but then two views are obtained, one which is very narrow and extremely penetrating, the other very broad and spread out without depth or penetration.

ALICE So what? Is this any different from what I and my girlfriends have always known? Our boyfriends are all the same – either for ever pawing us about though it's clear it doesn't mean a thing, or 'poking' us, having what they call sex, which doesn't mean a thing either.

BION Or both – and calling it schizophrenia.

MYSELF And *that* means nothing whether it is spread out over the whole of psychiatry or concentrated to apply to a particular, specific 'thing' or 'person'.

MAN You could say the same about 'psychoanalysis' or 'sex' or 'hate' or any other verbalization.

MYSELF Or 'feelings' or names of feelings. They don't mean a thing. Or, as Kant said, 'concepts without intuition are empty and intuitions without concepts are blind'.

BION I know the quotation to which you refer, of course, but – is *that* what he meant?

MYSELF I have no idea what he meant, but I am using *his* 'concepts' to match with *my* 'intuitions', because in this way I can bring together a concept and an intuition, making it possible to feel that *I* know what *I* mean. If I could also juxtapose you and myself, the two together would be meaningful.

ROSEMARY You certainly sound as if you get on very well. So well indeed that I almost wondered if you were not the same person.

BION & MYSELF (*together*) *So* do I.

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ALICE It sounds like a mutual admiration society.

MAN It does raise the suspicion that you come together for that purpose.

ROSEMARY How is this to be avoided?

MYSELF A long time ago, when Alice and Roland came together, they did it for the purpose of forming just such a society for mutual admiration. Later –

ALICE Later! It seemed more like a society for mutual hatred and recrimination.

MYSELF You have expressed it well. You and Rosemary seemed, though not officially conjoined, to come together –

MAN – in a somewhat ambiguous relationship.

MYSELF Terms like 'mistress' and 'maid', 'husband' and 'wife', are all 'sensuously' meaningful, and in the domain of sensuous relationships A + B can be meaningful in a macroscopic way. Even relationships which can be mathematically expressed, as the 'pure' mathematician says they are in pure mathematics, become sensuous.

BION Is that not saying that the mere fact of being able to formulate the relationship A + B makes it a macroscopic relationship? But *does* it? Is it more true to say that we are so used to formulating statements only when they are macroscopic that we instantaneously assume that what is formulated must, by the fact of formulation, be macroscopic?

MYSELF The converse is thought to be true: that if we cannot formulate it, 'it' must be ultra- or infra-sensuous; that concepts that are 'empty' and intuitions that are 'blind' must lack completion, and that the 'completion' which is not 'complete', or is 'unfulfilled', nevertheless exists. ♀ has ♂, and ♂ has ♀. In short, ♀ # [apart from]

♂ cannot be stable. It is the function of a discipline, any discipline, to fill or complete; it is the 'job' of the link or synapse to join; it may be apart from a substitute used as a 'link', but no substitute can do what the link does. Addiction in place of 'marriage O' or 'divorce O' fails; sooner or later any substitute for the real thing is bound to fail through instability.

ROLAND I am not sure that I understand because if you mean that there is no substitute for the direct relationship such as seeing or hearing something for yourself, this is clearly fallacious; an astronomer was able to see and draw 'canals' on Mars by direct observation.

BION I used to be told to use my eyes; even today I advocate that people should use their common sense or intuition. Yet we understand now that the canals on Mars were a faulty interpretation of the observation made directly.

MYSELF I am glad that my job does not include advocacy.

BION You leave it to someone or something without advocating that someone else should do it.

MYSELF Is that not cowardly or irresponsible?

BION Maybe those are the correct terms for characterising behaviour, but I do not usually or generally think so. My capacity for naming my thoughts, or activities based on them, is less convincing – 'action generating' – than it was. These 'thought generators', or in James Joyce's illuminating usage, '*idées mères*', are either less frequent or less cogent. Perhaps there is some mental counterpart of the generative activities in the sensuous animal domain which suffers decline as animal capacity declines. What do you think?

MYSELF Just what I was going to ask you. Since you forestalled me I am tempted to say, 'begin again', but this vicoesque advice I temper with a warning against 'beginning at the beginning'.

BION The proper approach to confusion is, I think, to 'begin' in the middle. We have, in fact, no choice. Start at paranoid states of mind and continue cyclically. The confusion thus approached seems, like Schiaparelli's canals, to reveal a pattern in which persecution and depression are discerned, a journey 'from' patience 'to' security.

MYSELF What do you mean when you say we have no choice?

BION The world into which we are born is, for every one of us, inhabited by individuals (our parents are the obvious example) who have a long history. We start in the middle of the story. Even as

individuals directly concerned with our own story it is already far advanced. I am committed to going on with it from there.

MYSELF Obviously, but is there any point in knowing that?

BION It is generally supposed that if you are going from one place to another, or thinking from one premise to another –

MYSELF Are we?

BION I think so and since you ask me I would like to answer; I am committed to being that kind of man. I would like, therefore, to tell you where I come from and where I am going to. In this conversation I could use simple articulate English, but you and my other friends are not satisfied with simple questions and I cannot fall back on simple knowledge. In fact, your last question causes me to consider what you are wanting to know. I have to 'interpret' your question. Usually I don't think about it, but assume that I know what you mean. If you were a foreigner, or foreign to the subject, I could not make that assumption directly and with certainty. In trying to reply I would be starting, as I said, in the middle of a story without knowing the antecedents. I have to guess, fall back on conjectures. My reply is, therefore, based on 'guesses' about the facts and interpretation of my 'guesses'.

SHERLOCK How do you know all that?

BION I don't – that is why I say I have to fall back on interpretations of guesses.

MYSELF Yes, but how do you know you think like that?

BION I don't; even when I am concerned with my own thoughts I am ignorant, though I am the person whom I have a chance of knowing better than anyone. Freud started a train of thought which makes me suspect that, even if I know myself better than anyone I shall ever meet, the sum of that knowledge amounts to little.

MAN The outcome in psychoanalysts as I have observed them, is bigotry, dogmatism and certitude.

BION Those are only synapses – milestones marking 'articulations', not signifying 'that which' is articulated.

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ROSEMARY (*to Alice*) Isn't it awful? Did you ever have to put up with this kind of thing from Roland?

ALICE Never; only farming talk, thank God. I suppose this is psychoanalysis.

ROSEMARY Really? Perhaps that explains it. I certainly –

ALICE You don't have to worry about me – it quite intrigues me to think Roland never sank to such heights of boredom as this. Did you find him interesting?

ROSEMARY Not really; but I will say that at least he didn't bore me with this kind of stuff. It sounds very highbrow till you listen to it.

ALICE How does it sound to you now you do?

ROSEMARY Awful. I suppose I'm not used to such high-class talk – no education.

ALICE I had lots, and pretty awful it was too – but never as bad as this.

MYSELF This isn't psychoanalysis: it is talking *about* psychoanalysis. If you two were coming to me for psychoanalysis –

ROSEMARY Oh, I would *love* that. Do show me what you would do if you were analysing me.

ALICE God forbid! Don't have anything to do with it!

ROSEMARY Why? It sounds most interesting.

MYSELF You would neither of you like it. You would soon, if your psychoanalyst knew his job, lose the kind of love for it that you are talking about! Of course, Alice might find she is quite right to have nothing to do with it. Some people find that it is far more than they can stand. How? Well, in the same way that you both found you couldn't stand hearing Bion and me talk.

ROSEMARY Were you two talking about psychoanalysis? We thought you were being very boring.

ALICE Anyway, why do you say we should be bored, since you also said that 'talking about' psychoanalysis is not the same thing as 'psychoanalysis'?

MYSELF It depends if you are concerned with their similarities or dis-similarities. Talking about a thing like psychoanalysis and experiencing it are two different activities.

BION You would have to be able to compare the experience of the 'practice' of psychoanalysis and the experience of 'talking about' it.

MYSELF I suggest to you two ladies that the difference is most easily appreciated by considering the many instances in which you can compare what you do when you are engaged on the prelude to doing something, and when you mean never to go beyond the prelude, but to continue in that state – as a substitute for transformation to action.

BION Many people have read Sophocles' play, 'Oedipus Rex'. Emotions can be experienced without knowing the underlying pattern to both the play and the feelings aroused; that is, the underlying 'group' is not recognized.

MYSELF What do you mean by 'group'?

BION I have borrowed the word from the mathematicians; in the experience which Rosemary and Alice have been having I can detect an emotional sequence which I could recognize as integrated. I would have to be able to construct a work of art of some kind in order to demonstrate the integrating force but I lack the artistic ability to do this. Although I cannot resort to any of the disciplines and theories and formulations known to me, in the practice of psychoanalysis I may be able to fall back on the analysand's capacity for cooperation to make good my deficiencies.

ROLAND What then? Does that cure the patient?

BION You are going too fast for me by proceeding from one question, 'what then?' to another question which belongs to the discipline of Therapeutics. Even the question 'what then?' is part of a theory of consequences and a framework including time and space; but I am not sure that I consider that 'configuration', or 'constant conjunction', appropriate to the events which are experienced in psychoanalysis. It is inadequate as the conceptual apparatus of which I feel in need

when 'practising', not theorising. This concept itself relates to a constant conjunction of macroscopic elements and I have continued its use as if it were a term which is applicable when transferred to micro-elements. The 'relationship' of one micro-element to another might best be expressed intuitionally as $\alpha \# \Omega$.

MYSELF What is the difference that you seem to make between 'theorising' and what you call 'practising' psychoanalysis? It seems to me that practising psychoanalysis consists of theorising.

BION 'Theorising' is, I admit, a part of practising psychoanalysis.

MYSELF I think what you have just said sounds as if it makes something clear, but almost at once the illumination either turns out to be illusory and your explanation meaningless, or perhaps you have clarified a problem and the 'clarification' is at once replaced by a further series of 'unknowns'.

BION Both are possible. That is a difficulty about 'learning'. The moment of illumination is also the moment at which it becomes clear that there is a doubt about the 'clarification' itself and about the 'matter' which it is hoped to comprehend. I think this must be a familiar experience to Sherlock Holmes.

SHERLOCK I am not a philosopher and I don't think I can even guess what a psychoanalyst is, but since you appeal to me as if I were experienced I take it you are referring to something of which I have experience. I remember an occasion when I saw a client and I detected a strong smell of cigar about his clothes. It proved to be a valuable clue and later I wrote a monograph on ash which also turned out to be valuable, though in a way in which I had never expected.

BION It is true that when I mentioned you I was not referring to the precise experience that you mention, but in view of your high reputation as an investigator –

MYSELF – and as a helpful person, although fictitious.

BION – I guessed you could throw light on our precise problem as you have.

SHERLOCK I am delighted to hear it, but I must say I am surprised that you think the problem you have been discussing is precise.

BION I was speaking conversationally.

SHERLOCK Ah! In my kind of work you have to be precise.

MYSELF So you have in ours. Unfortunately we have to talk conversational English and that is not a language intended to be used for the purposes for which we have to use it.

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SHERLOCK I, alas, have to use the language my author puts at *my* disposal.

MYSELF You – meaning both of you – don't do badly. My characters are not fictional and they are very dissatisfied with such means of communication as I put at their disposal.

SHERLOCK 'Means of communication'! Do you mean English? If not –

MYSELF No, I don't. If it is English, that is not enough. I am aware that conversational English is inadequate; but you should hear what they say about anything else.

BION Jargon, for example.

SHERLOCK HOLMES Why not paint or draw or compose music, or –

BION – play the violin. Did you ever try your violin playing on your clients or criminals or courts of law?

SHERLOCK I told you – I am limited by my author.

MYSELF So were the rest of you. Even Moriarty couldn't get rid of you at the Falls. But *we* can be got rid of by our characters at any time.

SHERLOCK Are not your characters limited by being 'patients'?

MYSELF No. They *seem* to be limited by being human, but if, as some of us think, they are personalities or minds, each one is unique and their 'limits' are not clearly marked. I do not even know *what* the limits of my personality and mind are or even if there is such a thing as 'my personality' which approximates to the words I have just used.

SHERLOCK You should shove them into jail as we do. You'd be surprised how quickly that clarifies the problem.

MYSELF That's all very well for 'fictitious' jails and courts of law and fictitious minds.

ROSEMARY It sounds to me as if these minds and personalities that you talk about very often are 'fictitious'.

BION Even a 'beautiful woman' is a shade of a shade of a shade.

ROSEMARY If I gave you a kiss you'd soon change your tune.

BION Why do you think I regard you as beautiful?

MYSELF How ungallant you are! It is part of the price we psychoanalysts all pay. The habit of mind overflows into non-analytic situations.

BION You could say that if being a psychoanalyst was wearing a mental suit of clothes, one could choose whatever fictitious character one liked to be and dress up in the appropriate uniform. The trouble

is if one has to *be* a psychoanalyst and not simply learn the part for purposes of acting.

ROSEMARY I don't play-act; that is why I don't give you a kiss.

BION Some kisses have become famous. One kiss is called a 'Judas kiss', after a character who became famous and notorious. Kisses, like other actions, speak louder than words.

MYSELF Interpretation likewise depends on quality as well as quantity, as do the things interpreted. 'Loudness', expressing 'quantity', is not enough even in the domain of physical senses and other phenomena; all to which the term 'phenomena' applies are by definition part of the domain of senses. We, in common with many who purport to exist or are reported to have existed and still to exist, believe there is something 'more' which can be called 'ultra-' or 'infra-' sensuous. It is this something more, or 'something +', which we suppose to be significant for refinement by psychoanalysis in practice.

WATSON You spoke earlier of computers assessing radiograms with greater accuracy than even gifted radiographers. What you have just said sounds as if you are now advocating scrutiny by live beings in preference to machines – am I right?

MYSELF Not quite. I don't mean to be advocating anything. I suggest that somehow functions can be handed over to machines or mechanical methods. We ourselves learnt to walk 'mechanically' at some point and this was, and still is, a very useful skill; but even now it is useful to resort from time to time to specific, skilled movement. I do not exclude the value of 'mechanical thinking' or 'mechanical interpretation', but I don't want *that* progress to take the place of, or to preclude the development of, the ultra- or infra-sensuous, even though I may not know what that is or even if it exists. The pathology laboratory should not be substituted for clinical observation, or vice versa.

WATSON Quite right.

SHERLOCK I found clinical analysis quite useful.

BION You had to 'interpret' your ashes –

SHERLOCK – in the light of my findings.

MYSELF And with the aid of the book in which you recorded the findings. The book is an example of what I call an 'instrument'. Strictly speaking, so are the 'theories' recorded in it. Even if they were

not recorded in any 'instrument' I would regard them as an instrument to be 'used' – not enshrined as a dogma or religion.

BION Yet, I was thinking how like religion some of your statements about 'infra- and ultra-' sensuous sounded.

MYSELF I know what you mean. The adherents of religion are more likely to grasp what I put forward as 'hunches'. If you remember, at the end of his *Opticks,* Newton suggested that the 'religious beliefs' could be scientifically approached. Years before, Milton spoke of 'Holy light'; hailed it.

BION You should hear what we said when a star-shell lit up our tanks at night!

MYSELF Some people must have thought it was 'honest and helpful'.

ALICE All depends on the 'vertex', as you would say.

BION That's not what we called it then. The term 'vertex' is dependent for its meaning on the vertex of which it is a radiant.

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MAN Rosemary, will you come and have a coffee?

ROSEMARY Have you still got that bar of chocolate?

MAN In my holster you mean?

ROSEMARY The very same.

ROLAND Love or hate? Seduction or passionate love? I wish I knew.

ROSEMARY So do I.

ALICE Feminine intuition will find out the way.

ROSEMARY So they say; but I don't believe it.

BION Nor does masculine intuition.

MYSELF Nor does mathematical intuition. What is the equation? Man + Rosemary? Or man # Rosemary?

ROSEMARY I shall tell you after we've had coffee.

ALICE Come on, Roland – after so many years of married life, what is the equation?

ROLAND Alice + Roland.

ALICE Still? You surprise me.

ROSEMARY So you do me.

ALICE So do you me; before even one coffee.

MYSELF Before one coffee is sometimes easier than after many.

ALICE I thought you psychoanalysts advocated years and years of analysis.

BION That is only for psychoanalysis, and even so it is not true. We advocate and practise the shortest and easiest methods compatible with honest work.

ROSEMARY It sounds like an advertisement for something.

BION I have to make it known that I am available if wanted.

ALICE I can't see what she sees in him.

ROLAND Nor can I.

ALICE *You* seemed to have seen something in *her.*

ROLAND So did you.

ALICE Perhaps we both saw something in her and she in both of us.

ROLAND Perhaps; but I doubt it.

ALICE Nevertheless, there must have been something both ways.

ROLAND Something neither of us saw? – but which may nevertheless exist? What does the sage say?

ALICE Who is he?

ROLAND I meant the psychoanalyst, Bion.

ALICE Oh, him! Not what I would call a sage. Well, I suppose there's no harm in trying. They never see anything except sex. Still, they do meet lots of people.

BION Sex is a name, but none of us 'sees' sex, though it is a word we often use and it is useful if we want to talk about sex. Language was generated for the purpose of talking about senses and I think you would like me to be able to escape your scorn by speaking a language using words to which the thing-itself approximated to the words and theories we employ. After all, even you both suggest there is something those two 'see in each other' – 'they' being thinking personalities. In that literal way I am sure none of us 'sees' anything in the relationship we are talking about. But I think we are convinced there is 'something'; so much so that in physics at least the physicists have invented an electron microscope.

MYSELF And have detected 'an uncertainty principle'! Imagine the fun that would be made if Bion or I were to announce the discovery of an 'uncertainty principle'.

BION Keats discovered an 'uncertainty principle' which he called 'Negative Capability'. The authors of Job, of the *Bhagavad Gita*, to go no further, discovered the presumption of Job, of Arjuna, who thought that what they 'didn't know wasn't knowledge'. Even Mister Toad comes into that same domain of scorn and contempt which, like 'mental or spiritual' pollution, is life 'that stains the white radiance of eternity'.

SHERLOCK It seems to me that these 'fictitious characters' have a lot more sense than you real ones.

BION And non-sense. Toad was not, is not, synonymous with 'sense'.

SHERLOCK If he were it would not be necessary for his creator to create him.

ALICE Why is it necessary?

MYSELF Their creation has been an activity with a very long history.

ALICE That is not answering my question.

ROLAND Indeed, it seems to stimulate the question more than the answer. Why has the creation of fictions been so well-established an industry?

MYSELF For purposes of deception and disguise –

BION – as well as illustration and imparting information.

MYSELF Sometimes correct information, sometimes false; it depends on whether the creator is feeling hostile or friendly. But in fact I do not believe it 'depends' on that because 'dependence' appears to me to relate to priority. Which comes first, the feeling or the fictitious idea?

BION Kant says the senses never err because they do not judge at all. That is what I call a 'definitory hypothesis', and according to me a 'definitory hypothesis' does not err either.

MYSELF But we do expect the definition or the 'definitory hypothesis' to be maintained 'constant' or 'invariant' throughout the same universe of discussion.

BION *Who* expects it to remain constant? If a man or woman says he or she loves the other –

MYSELF That is not a situation I had in mind just then because I was talking, and in the interests of clear 'thought' I think it makes it easier for the participants to establish and maintain certain 'rules of thinking'; that includes the 'logic' of 'articulate communication'.

BION That depends if you are referring to those communities who employ *articulate* language. But, as you know, not all communities do. The Chinese, I believe, do not employ that kind of language for communication. In fact, this problem is not peculiar to communities in the gross, macroscopic sense. Take the individual for example: Melanie Klein, thinking in terms of visual imagery, regarded a single human individual as if he were a world in himself. Roger Money-Kyrle, following this lead, has elaborated in his account of man's picture of his world.

MYSELF If one takes the extremely detailed view which is available under the Kleinian vertex in the practice of psychoanalysis, the

model would not be 'macroscopy', but 'microscopy'. I doubt that micro-analysis is aided by or reveals an articulate language at all. 'Articulate' communication is the dominant method of communication between the self and the self; in so far as communication takes place between what psychoanalysts call the 'unconscious' levels of different individuals, I think the prevalent methods of communication between painters, poets, musicians conform to rules which are very different from those of 'articulate' communication.

ALICE I am sure they don't conform. Nor do the rules of 'morality' as they are usually supposed to exist.

ROLAND Certainly each sex is accused by the other of breaking the moral rules –

MYSELF When someone says 'I love', the rules of articulate speech apply to 'speech', not to 'loving'. The most experienced methods of *physical* communication are not articulate, even if vocal. It is illuminating to suppose that the method of communication proper to the vertex 'sex' is not verbal, but what is often called 'acting out' under vertices in which verbal communication is usual.

BION I am, of course, familiar with the expression, 'acting out', as used by English psychoanalysts, but I should be interested to know how you understand the term.

MYSELF I was using the English term which is not the same as the term used by Freud. In intention the thing itself, that is, the reality which approximates to both the English and German formulation, is supposed to be identical.

BION You say 'supposed'. Are you implying a doubt?

MYSELF I certainly am. I would say that 'doubt' is the most nearly adequate word to use to define the vertex: it is the proper vertex under which we operate in this conversation itself.

BION Can you expand your use of the word 'sex'?

MYSELF As far as the word 'sex' is concerned I do not think I can say more about that than Freud said. To me it is one of those terms which are 'meaningless' since any 'meaning', as that word is ordinarily used, is an elaboration of phrases which are to be constantly conjoined in progressively more elaborate constructions. It is one of those words which express what James Joyce called '*idée mere*'; it is analogous to the mathematical construction, 'a number generator'. You can see for yourself that these three phrases, 'sex', '*idée mère*' and 'number generator', are themselves suspiciously like a 'tautology'.

That is why I would prefer some directly meaningless sign like 'O'. Borrowing from religious discipline I find the word 'Godhead' useful as less abstract than 'Ultimate reality'.

BION Abstract?

MYSELF I thought you would check at that. I propose to avail myself of a meaningful and proportionately inaccurate expression which I hope is nevertheless helpful. The grin was all that was left when the 'Cheshire Cat' had disappeared.

SHERLOCK Another 'fictitious character'.

MYSELF Part of an entire construction which was fictitious. The kind of thing for which Plato held artists and poets to blame though he did not scorn the aid of his own artistic creation – of the cave, for one example.

BION You were about to say something of the abstract.

MYSELF The 'grin' to which I referred, the 'fictitious character', the 'fiction', is the 'reversed perspective' of the 'abstract'. The one is not the opposite of the other.

ROSEMARY Why not?

MYSELF It would be a misleading definition. Since I have to choose an already existing 'term', I choose the term 'intuition' as related to the term 'abstract'.

BION Can you define the relation?

MYSELF Again, I borrow from the meta-mathematicians. I borrow the sign #.

BION You have related the abstraction to the intuition.

MYSELF That is true of this conversation; under the vertex of conversational English they are related. Under the vertex of psychoanalytic discussion they are related by free association.

BION To what extent, if any, do you consider this 'free association' represents a realization, or that a realization exists approximating to the 'free association'?

MYSELF I know of no realization approximating to the construct 'intuition'.

BION You speak as if 'construct' were interchangeable with 'term'. Is that right?

MYSELF Under the vertex of this discussion, 'yes'. 'No', under the vertex of 'realization'; still less under O. Any construction relating 'intuition' to 'constant conjunction' is true only under the vertex of this discussion, not under the vertex of realization.

ALICE Why not describe the constant conjunction as synonymous with integration?

MYSELF I think of 'integration' as representing something compatible with what is represented by 'constant conjunction'. I think it plausible to regard the activity of constantly conjoining as compatible with the realization represented by the 'integration'. In this respect the term under the vertex of this conversation could be included in the set which included the member of the set of realizations.

ALICE Then why not use the opposite of integration – disintegration?

MYSELF Emphatically not; intuition, as I use the term, does not represent a realization which is the 'opposite' or the 'negative' of 'constant conjunction', 'integration' and similar terms. In so far as it becomes or appears to become a 'constant conjunction', it has undergone, if related at all, a complete transformation. All the intuitions are # all other intuitions. # is essential, not accidental.

ALICE Your intuition seems to be like what is left when the thought has disappeared.

ROLAND Or like the thought when the concept has gone.

BION 'Blind', as Kant would say about thoughts without concept; or concepts without an intuition – 'empty'. But I don't think it is what Myself means.

MYSELF You are right. By 'intuition' I mean none of those things. It is like nothing. It is not the 'negative of or 'opposite of' or 'reversed perspective of. Those terms are 'borrowed' from conversational English, as are others which are borrowed from classical psychoanalysis. This 'borrowing' is legitimate but does not imply that the meaning, in the context of 'classical' thought, has not been altered as used by me.

ALICE Does it matter?

MYSELF Unfortunately, yes. Already phrases employed by Freud with great precision are almost incomprehensible because the words from which his constructions were built up have now been irreparably changed. Who could now be sure what 'inferiority complex' means? Or 'paranoid'? Who could meet with them in a book by Freud or a psychiatrist and be sure that his familiarity with present day usage does not disqualify him from understanding the formalizations of the authors?

ALICE I very much doubt that what Mozart heard when he played, or heard someone else play, a clavichord would seem to him

to be the same sounds that come from a modern concert grand piano played by a present-day master.

MYSELF I should expect him to feel that the 'tune' was familiar.

ALICE I hear quotation marks when you are talking and I think I know the difference in meaning between that and the same verbalization if I don't hear the quotation marks. I am reminded of the printed page, of reading 'one, two, then 'tis time to do it'.

MYSELF You are referring to what I called defective apparatus of lateral communication.

BION Only this is a defect of communication through time as well as space.

MYSELF The genius overcame the problems which might have been effective in obstructing communication.

BION His very success in surmounting his difficulties may indeed have contributed to our difficulties in reception.

MYSELF A solution of the difficulty of communication may, I suggest, be mistaken for *the* solution of a difficulty in the matter of communication (*? ? ?* . . .) But I hear question marks –

ALL You have not misheard – yet no one said anything.

BION I shall venture on the role of amplifier. How could the discovery of the Andromeda M31 nebula, or the Crab nebula – sonic reproduction – exemplify your point?

MYSELF Your question suggests to me that you know something that enables you to ask. Our solution of the problem can appear to have determined the spatial separation between us and those two galaxies. That separation may not in fact pertain to the relation between those 'spaces', but may be a solution of that which does belong to the space between our comprehension and our incomprehension.

ROLAND I don't understand.

MYSELF So, you may find something you do understand as a substitute for what you don't. I once asked for an archaeological book. They didn't have it, but the assistant offered another book, unrelated to archaeology, as if that would do. Suppose I am unable to understand how the disintegration of the nova could be taking place at the same time and space occupied by my 'integration'; I might be glad to exchange the 'distance' between my comprehension and incomprehension for a 'distance' between me and the M31 nebula and the 'solution' of *that* distance. 'Sound' and 'sight' could be linked with 'creative' effect.

ALICE Surely that is very fanciful?

MYSELF Do you mean the distance between my 'fancy' and the fact is vast – 'very', or 'truly', vast? That idea may be a comforting substitute for thinking, incomprehension and comprehension. It may also be more pleasant to feel that the unpleasant experience is immediately possible and adjacent.

ALICE It could be as you say, but I cannot even be sure that I have a preference for one or other.

MYSELF True. We all would prefer the agreeable emotional experience if we knew which that was and how to ensure choosing the correct steps to achieve such an aim. The unpleasant state seems to be to feel compelled to be responsible without the comfort of imagining we have made the correct choice.

ALICE I think you are being somewhat obvious – 'platitudinous'.

MYSELF It is difficult to be devoted to common sense without being judged as either platitudinous or fanciful, or both at once. Even highly sophisticated groups find there are divisions as between corpuscular theories, quanta theories, and theories of a continuum subject to wave motions.

ALICE Why not both?

MYSELF Or fanciful and platitudinous? I don't know.

BION You don't know? You amaze us. I thought everyone knew that!

MYSELF You are being facetious. I expect you to display a specific animal characteristic as I expect you to behave continuously. I have spoken of Leonardo's preoccupation with drawing hair and water; I have no idea, and cannot conjecture without 'wasting time' on conjectures, what his preoccupations were. I can spend time and have some idea that it is, or is not, worth spending time looking at his drawings. I can allow his product to stimulate my preoccupations about an aqueous continuum and movement within it. I can allow his drawing to remind me of my thoughts and feelings. I wonder; are the ideas expressed on this page like the incoherent mass of H_2O molecules, or do they rather resemble the fleeting confusion of a bucket of water or head of hair? To which does reality approximate – the creation of the hairdresser? The drawing of Leonardo? The ideas arrested as in the verbal formulations of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey? The molecular physicist's formula? Or the group, if there was one, which together 'constructed' a pattern of words which were then

constantly conjoined, like Leonardo's pencil marks, and arrested so that they could be labelled 'Homer' and held, through time, in a pattern or verbal sound? Further, I wonder what I do while attempting to draw an analysand's attention to a pattern – to which my attention has been drawn by his contributions to a session – by the fleeting activity of interpretations? Sometimes the duration of the interpretation which is very short is experienced by the receptor as enduring; sometimes the relation between the 'duration' of the interpretation and the 'duration' of the received experience is commensurate, at others not. Sometimes I would describe the two as 'separate and distinct', at others 'conjugate and complex'.

ALICE I don't understand those terms.

MYSELF I think it correct to describe the relation between what I said and you heard as 'conjugate and complex'.

ALICE Then why don't you say, as I did, that I did not understand you?

MYSELF Because, under this vertex, that would be an inaccurate description.

ALICE I assure you it is true all the same.

MYSELF I likewise can assure you that what I said was 'true all the same' – under my vertex.

ALICE Would an impartial judge think so?

MYSELF A judge could judge impartially if the vertices were understood and used with comprehension; from my experience that is unlikely.

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ALICE So we are back to square one?

MYSELF I fear so – the concern ultimately is 'people'. This is why some of us think personality must be an object for scientific study. Most people are familiar with acts which employ articulated musculature, and find it easy to use articulated language. Perhaps it is easier to use that kind of language and that kind of musculature. Smooth muscle in action is usually easier to match with inarticulate speech. I love' and its vocabulary and grammar is usually easier to match with the 'activity' itself when the rules of articulation are relaxed. The action, associated with love, is easier when 'the laws of articulation' are similarly relaxed. The most adequate forms of loving communion appear to be proportionate to the relaxation of conformity to articulation in thought, word and deed. I speak of love, but it is equally true of all feelings whether expressed in physical or psychical domains.

BION I can see that the idea of the individual being a 'group' – like Hobbes' idea of the group being an individual – could be an illuminating one. I don't quarrel with it, or even with the idea of the definitory hypothesis as you have defined it. What I am not convinced about is that there are others besides you and me who would agree, or who would be similarly complacent or tolerant or qualified to agree or disagree.

MYSELF This doubt about the acceptability of an approach which depends on thought or discussion is as valid today as it has been at any time in its past history. Nevertheless, neither you nor I have suggested an alternative to the present choice between inadequate procedures.

BION That is *not* my point. I doubt that any problem remains that is not affected in a way analogous to that which Heisenberg detects

in the domain of physical investigation: the thing itself is altered by being observed. I suggest that this change cannot be assumed to be without an analogue in the mental domain. An 'analogue' may be applicable to the physical world, but not available as a mode of thought.

MYSELF You and I are now employed in talking 'as if it were serviceable. In fact, as if 'as if were itself serviceable.

BION There is nothing else, known to you or me –

MYSELF – or to painters, or musicians, or poets, or all of these together.

BOTH So far.

A Hullo! Here we are again. How did you find it?

Q I haven't read it, of course. I was just looking to see how it ended. I'm no wiser than I was at the first.

A I was afraid you might have to read the bit α and Ω

Q What?! Start it all again?

A You've changed – 'five minutes older' if the time scale notation I have borrowed means anything. No worse off financially though?

Q Not yet, but as a matter of curiosity, did it cost you much to have it published?

A It did indeed. Years of education at a public school, years in an army at war, years at Oxford University, years being psychoanalysed, years of medical training and a year at the University of Poitiers. The last three sentences were served concurrently.

Q (yawning politely) It sounds most interesting. Was it?

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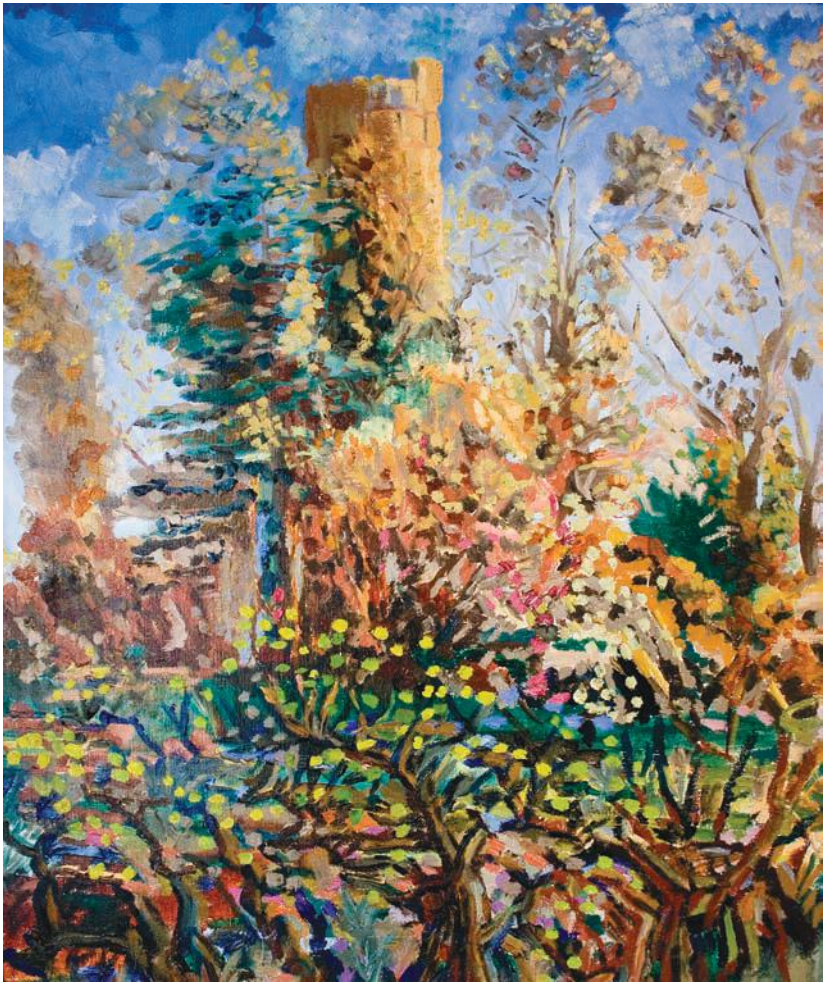

The Orchard and Water Tower, Redcourt.
Oil painting by WRB

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Edited by Chris Mawson

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KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume XIII): 978–1–78220–241–7

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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A MEMOIR OF THE FUTURE
BOOK TWO:
THE PAST PRESENTED

1977

A Memoir of the Future was first published in 1991 by Karnac Books, London. It consisted of revised and corrected versions of three previously published books – *The Dream*, *The Past Presented*, and *The Dawn of Oblivion* – together with a revised and expanded version of *A Key to A Memoir of the Future* (1981).

The Past Presented was first published in 1977 by Imago Editora, Rio de Janeiro.

Book Two:
The Past Presented

1

ROLAND What's the date?

ALICE No idea; does it matter?

ROLAND Of course it matters! Wake up!

ALICE Oh, sorry sir. Tuesday, nineteen seventy . . .

ROLAND You aren't awake. It is Tuesday though. I have to be up because I must go to Munden.

ALICE Yes. Yes – I must have been dreaming. What's the –

ROSEMARY Yes, Ma'am? You told me to call you.

ALICE Yes, of course. Breakfast at half past seven. My God! I've got a headache.

ROLAND You're dreaming.

ALICE My headache is no dream I can tell you. You're off are you? See you at lunch. Rosemary, I've had an awful dream.

ROSEMARY Yes, Ma'am? Is that all, Ma'am?

ALICE Yes, of course. Hurry or you'll miss . . . I can't be properly awake. And I have to go to Braughing for lunch. I hope Roland remembers it's our wedding anniversary. He doesn't know what a relief it was to find he was in love with me. What an escape from Worry – Funny! I realize now how right his nickname was. He was dotty, but I didn't know it then. 'Temps de Lilas' he used to murmur as if he had softening of the brain. It was a scent I used. I thought, 'How romantic – he's in love with *me.*' God, it makes me mad to think of it! Men always think women *must* be in love with them. I wore the scent because I liked *it* – not springtime or lilacs. Come to think of it, I was a bit mad to suppose he was in love with *me.* But I was very pretty – once. It's difficult to believe as I make up my face in the looking-glass – the 'cruel looking-glass' which tells a maid that she isn't what she was. I wonder if Roland

believes this stuff he tells me He'd be hurt if he thought I didn't take it seriously. But if I look in the mirror he holds up to me when he is eyeing Rosemary – *then* I can see that I'm not 'as pretty as I was'. He thinks I am vain enough to believe his adoration is genuine. The more we are together, to-gether, two-gether . . . It's rather like a record which has started to run down. The 'Bread and Pheasant' song, as some schoolboy thought it was, is less romantic than the 'Breton Peasant', but . . . 'Temps de Lilas', 'Spring', 'Love' – I suppose they all come to spell 'Bread' and, if we are lucky, a little bit of 'Butter' too. If I don't flatten out these wrinkles I shall have to beg my bread. Roland doesn't do badly having a pretty wife. Am I being conceited? No, I'm not. I may even look 'handsome'. And loyal? Roland is good-looking. And faithful? We look quite a presentable pair . . . a bit wasted on Braughing. Who would have heard of England if the Royal Navy had not won the war? – so they say. If Beatty had seen that dashing slant of his cap – 'CAP wins the battle of Jutland!' What a headline *that* would make! Take my cap to England, Hang it by the shore, Beat it when Temp de Lilas is running low. Here's Roland. Nearly 7.30. (*To Roland*) Tonight we have our –

ROLAND I have a lot to get through first. Do you know who is coming?

ALICE The same as usual, I suppose; no one has said they aren't. The padre said he might be late and Edmund may join us later too. I've told Rosemary refreshments for eight.

ROLAND Quite a party – they usually all come. What a success this has been, though I certainly had doubts about a Platonic venture in England – let alone our part of Hertfordshire. Rosemary seems to cope very well with the snacks.

ALICE Yes; though the way things are going in this country I sometimes wonder how long it is going to be possible.

ROLAND Philosophers ought to take austere conditions philosophically. We shall have to make a demonstration of *being*, not theorizing. Who else is going to be late?

ALICE The doctor probably. Is Robin coming?

ROLAND Here comes Tom.

TOM How are you? Did I hear Robin isn't coming?

ROLAND Alice wondered how a farmer could find time to talk.

TOM I think his absence is more possible. One should think of him as one of the class Trotter said continually face issues of life and death; miners, sailors and doctors. Few people are forced –

P(PSYCHO)-A(ANALYST) Excuse me – how are you?

ALICE Take our compliments as read.

TOM Trotter should not have forgotten farmers. He wouldn't, had he lived in a world where many starve and many more will be starving tomorrow.

ROLAND The world of the conspicuous consumer – the C.C.'s for short.

P.A. Or the 'See See's who value the giddy pleasure of the eye.

TOM Certainly the eye can hold more than the belly can. That queer old bird, the pellycan, can be greedy without digesting anything. It is appropriate now that the BB See! has introduced commercial television.

P.A. And that BB should be blamed for it. It was opposed to it, but opposition may be responsible for an equal and opposite reaction.

ROLAND How does greed come into it?

TOM The BB is a great, big see/I/eye demanding that the rest of the body should, Livy-like, contribute to sloth and luxury.

P.A. All very well as a parable, but – here's the Doe. Doctor, do you think Livy's parable of the belly is anatomically fair?

DOCTOR Of course not. Are parables supposed to be fair? They are simple narratives on the way to a verbal formulation.

ALICE Too deep for me to C. Expound please!

TOM He means it is a mental aid to insight; as a circle or a line or a triangle aids Euclid, or Thales before him.

DOCTOR These corporeal aids become limitations; the asset becomes a liability. The anatomical and physiological structure is an asset to the baby who grows to be mobile.

P.A. Becomes 'auto-mobile' in short.

TOM But Euclidean geometry, aided by space, geo-metric space, grows so powerfully that in a couple of thousand years it becomes irked by its visual frame. At this point the demands of the mind are imprisoned in the corporeal structure.

DOCTOR Enter the fairy prince to release the sleeping beauty.

P.A. Namely? I think you should introduce the characters as they come on the stage.

TOM Cartesian co-ordinates.

ALICE What a pretty name.

ROSEMARY Mr Robin, Ma'am.

ALICE Hello, Robin. We were just thinking of Cartesian co-ordinates.

ROBIN Good heavens! I hope you aren't suggesting that I should use those. I would have my farm overrun with co-ordinates – they would grow much faster than the seeds of thought would germinate in my mind.

ALICE Here's the padre. 'Thou art the man.' Our scientific pagan needs baptism. Let me introduce our latest brain child – Cartesian co-ordinates – as yet without a literary or religious naming.

TOM They are triplets in fact: the first-born is real and distinct; the second, real and co-incident; and the third, conjugate complex.

ROLAND As initials I would say R.D. for the first.

P.A. R.C. and C.C. for the next two.

PAUL The parents usually tell me what are their wishes. I only commend them to God.

ROLAND Guessing at their dispositions I would expect the first to be a bit obstinate. 'I am *not* you', I can almost hear him say as he looks angrily at himself in the mirror.

P.A. I got here first; this is my place', I hear the second say.

ROLAND And complex conjugate is an intellectual snob, as Man, our aspiring politician, would be sure to say. You can rely on our intellectuals to be wrong – always.

ALICE I think you are being very hard on our brain children. This is a religious christening at which the wicked fairy is being allowed to have the last wish. What characters!

TOM Well, the line cuts the circle in a liberated and highly franchised manner. Uncle Riemann will be delighted.

P.A. And godfather Lobachevsky likewise.

ROLAND And Uncle Tom Cobley too true.

TOM But seriously, Cartesian co-ordinates set geometry free. We were no longer imprisoned – restricted to what we could see.

ALICE Wordsworth talked about the inner eye which was freed by the sight of the daffodils dancing in the breeze. He little knew 'what wealth to me' the sight had brought.

ROBIN Or as some wit put it, the chance of another slim volume at three and sixpence.

P.A. He would not become wealthy with three shillings and sixpence today. Eric Gill prayed that England might become poor.

ROBIN He must be a happy man today. Perhaps we are not allowed to be happy in the 'blessed Kingdoms of joy and love'.

P.A. 'So much the rather thou, Celestial light, the mind and all her powers irradiate. There plant eyes; all mist from thence purge and disperse' –

PAUL – 'that I may see and tell of things invisible to mortal sight'.

ROBIN 'The Heavens declare the Glory of God.' When I was in the RAF I used to think of the verse, 'I will take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the Earth'. Paul knows it, I'm sure.

PAUL Of course – we all do.

TOM I fear I never thought of anything so poetical. I was too filled with petrol fumes.

ROBIN Those were the best years of my life. Although I was scared out of my wits then, afraid of death. Afterwards I felt ashamed that I had not been brave enough, like one young boy I knew, to defy the enemy who called to him to surrender as he crawled out of his disabled tank.

P.A. What happened?

ROBIN What happened? Why, what could happen? They –

TOM – shot him, of course.

ROBIN Of course; as you say, 'Of course'.

ALICE Here's Rosemary with some tea. It will give us a chance of cooling off before we generate more heat than light. You were in the war, Rosemary?

ROSEMARY Yes, Ma'am. In the WAACS. Will that be all, please?

ALICE Yes, thank you.

ROLAND We can continue while we sip our tea.

PAUL You have forgotten that the wings of the morning were to aid flight, ineffectually, from God.

P.A. Perhaps the depths of hell.

ROBIN As Paul said, I had forgotten 'the wings of the morning' – a poetical way of escape. I think I must have succeeded – not so effectually as P.A. perhaps, but enough not to go to Church.

P.A. Why do you assume I succeeded?

ROBIN Haven't you? I thought people who were properly

analysed, like psychoanalysts, didn't believe in a lot of rubbish like 'God's in his heaven, All's right with the world'.

ALICE Really, Robin – why don't you read your Browning properly?

ROBIN Why? What have I done wrong now?

ROLAND Pretty well everything I should say – you hadn't read the Bible properly.

TOM You have forgotten your flying regulations.

P.A. I spend a great deal of my time trying to show people which particular god they are currently worshipping. Whether they are right or wrong is for the individual to decide for himself. Robin's god seems, from what he says, to be a solar god, but that would depend on the evidence to which I would try to draw his attention as it became discernible.

ROLAND To him, or to you?

P.A. Both, I should hope. I give my interpretation when I think he and I could both understand it, in the language which I think both could comprehend, and while the evidence is 'visible' to two ordinary beings. Just now –

ROLAND Can you give an example?

P.A. – Tom seemed to think that *he* would smell gas, Robin some visual or religious experience.

ROBIN I certainly said nothing about religion; I gave it up long ago.

P.A. Either you have little respect for what you say, or you say words for which you have no respect. You said, 'The Heavens declare the Glory of God' –

PAUL – 'and the firmament showeth his handiwork', is the text.

ROBIN Good heavens! Can't one talk simple literate English?

P.A. You should hear my psychoanalyst aspirants talking 'simple literate' English.

PAUL But you surprise me. Do you really think anyone expects psychoanalysts to talk 'simple English? I thought it was understood that it was a point of honour to talk incomprehensible jargon.

P.A. It is a point of honour when we are playing the game of Who's Top of the Psychoanalytic League Tables, but that is when we are 'talking about' psychoanalysis.

ROLAND You have international league championship matches

too. I've read some of the accounts in your journals. The language is ferociously incomprehensible.

TOM A punch in the eye is ferociously simple and discernible – at least to the onlookers.

DOCTOR That sudden pressure on the ocular nerve is notorious for eliciting a non-specific response.

ALICE Sorry – I'm lost. Can you elicit a response from me that I myself could understand?

DOCTOR If a boxer receives a punch in the eye, he is said to 'see stars'. That response to the stimulus is not specific to the ocular nerve which is supposed to respond to light and shade.

P.A. I hope Alice 'sees'. But when I give interpretations – which I formulate in the simplest verbal terms known to me – I am as likely as not to find that my statement is hailed as being 'psychoanalytic jargon', or possibly also 'filthy sexual talk'.

DOCTOR I saw a boy once who had been so well brought up that he could only tell me he had a 'body ache'. I nearly asked him whereabouts in his 'body' this ache was, but realized, just in time to spare his blushes, that he could *not* say he had a 'belly ache'.

P.A. Did he 'blush'? Because I have known a patient who could feel he was blushing while I could detect no visible evidence of capillary dilatation.

ALICE Are you using the simplest terminology available?

P.A. Yes; if I said 'blush', it would create a wrong impression.

ROBIN Milton avoided saying 'blind Homer', not because he wanted to say 'Maeonides' to show his erudition, but because Homer meant 'blind' and it was infelicitous to say 'blind Homer'.

P.A. Psychoanalysts can 'in truth' claim, like physicians, to be engaged in a respect-worthy occupation deserving the use of a language which can be employed by people who respect the truth, without having to be ashamed of technical precision on the one hand, and 'primitive' precision on the other. Terms which are no longer permitted in socially oriented cultures –

ALICE Such as?

P.A. Shit. If you can indicate the cultural boundary I can guess whether the term would arouse anger. Show me the drawing and the onlookers before whom it is to be exhibited, and I can guess at the outcome. When Freud said infants had a sexual life people were

outraged. Today James Joyce is regarded as permissible. An assertion of a religious manifestation will arouse the hostility and suspicion of psychoanalysts who would deny that they were displaying bigotry.

ALICE Really? You surprise me.

P.A. We are all scandalized by bigotry. We are none of us bigot-generators; that is, we none of us admit to being the spring from whom bigotry flows. As a result we do not recognize those of our offspring of whose characters we disapprove. Indeed, Melanie Klein discovered that primitive, infantile omnipotence was characterized by fantasies of splitting off undesired features and then evacuating them.

ROLAND I am sure you don't mean that children *think* like that?

P.A. It would be inaccurate and misleading to say so. That is why Melanie Klein called them 'omnipotent phantasies'. But although I found her verbalization illuminating, with the passage of time and further investigation which her discoveries made possible, her formulations were debased and became inadequate. These primitive elements of thought are difficult to represent by any verbal formulation, because we have to rely on language which was elaborated later for other purposes. When I tried to employ meaningless terms – alpha and beta were typical – I found that 'concepts without intuition which are empty and intuitions without concepts which are blind' rapidly became 'black holes into which turbulence had seeped and empty concepts flooded with riotous meaning'.

ROBIN Really – do you blame us if we don't know what you are talking about?

P.A. No, I don't. I am not surprised at your protest; in extenuation I have found that if I say what I mean it is not English; if I write English it does not say what I mean.

PAUL Theologians are blamed for being incapable of being religious – you are as bad as we are!

P.A. Probably for the same reason. Ultimate Truth is ineffable.

ALICE I think you are hard on him. I don't pretend to understand, but I do have an idea.

P.A. After all, ultimate reality must be a whole even if the human animal cannot grasp it. If I kick open an ants' nest it would no doubt appear to an ant to be an act of God, but it is capable of a simple explanation.

PAUL So you think.

P.A. Quite; I do not see why an infinitely small biological particle being whirled round the galactic centre on a speck of dirt – called by us the Earth – should, in the course of an ephemeral life that does not last even a thousand revolutions round a sun, imagine that the Universe of Galaxies conforms to its limitations.

PAUL The laws of nature are only the laws of scientific thought.

ROBIN It is readily assumed, filled with meaning, that these colossal forces 'obey' these laws as we obey social conventions.

EDMUND Sorry I'm late. I once knew a fellow who argued quite plausibly that a near supernova explosion –

ROBIN How near?

EDMUND Say, 1054 – the Crab Nebula, so-called, which is both visible and detectable through its radar waves – could upset the helium balance and thereby the nitrogen –

DOCTOR Ah! That might upset the DNA component of chromosomes.

ROLAND So what? You are beyond my mental grasp.

PAUL And mine; but as a religious man may I point out that the writer of *Job* had already expressed in unforgettable language the feebleness of human pretensions to knowledge.

ROBIN However hard I think, I have to bow to facts such as the sky with its towering clouds and great winds, and the less obtrusive facts which my skin tells me even if my eyes and meteorological reports don't.

ROLAND That is why you are a good farmer. More than any man I know, you can 'hear the South West making rain'. Your skin thinks, Robin.

ALICE If Robin says it is going to rain it does – whatever the weather forecast may say.

EDMUND I don't see what it has to do with physics. If I were a student I wouldn't like to tell my examiner I have a friend whose skin tells me the answer I can't work out mathematically.

P.A. You speak as if you had no doubt that you – I mean the 'personality' whom I know as 'you' – are identical with the physical anatomy and physiological structure with which we are all familiar.

ROBIN Well, I have a mind, of course.

ROLAND That is what we are discussing.

ROBIN If we could speak the language of mathematics . . .

PAUL If we could talk the language of religion . . .

ALICE If we could only learn to look at what artists paint . . .

ROLAND What is wrong with not talking at all and listening to the music?

EDMUND Once it would have been understood when we were exhorted to hear the music of the spheres.

ROBIN I wouldn't object if I could speak the 'mathematics' of the spheres.

P.A. There may be something to be said for the language of the psychoanalyst.

ROLAND He hasn't got a language – only jargon.

P.A. That is not so. I try to talk English because it is the best I know. But I do not know it well enough to speak it for the purpose of what I want to convey. I do not talk Jargonese any more than Paul talks Journalese. With deference to Robin I do not even think the Intuitionist mathematicians have caught up with what I want to express. This is my lack and your misfortune in so far as you want me to talk a language *you* can 'understand', and I want you to meet me at least half-way by talking a language *I* can understand.

ALICE I try to understand what Roland says – so far as he does try to talk a language I understand – but I don't know what P.A. means when he tries to talk a universally understood language.

ROLAND Croce said Aesthetics was a universal linguistic.

ROBIN And is that 'old hat' now for saying so?

P.A. 'Old hat'? Translate, please.

ROLAND Oh, everybody knows what that means.

P.A. We who speak the tongue that Shakespeare spoke . . . we can only, like Milton, be free. But – I repeat – somebody translate, please.

ROBIN Certainly. 'Old hat' means – er – *vieux jeux* – you know – cliché.

ALICE That's French.

PAUL I doubt it. Tertullian ran into this difficulty when he tried to speak in the language of my patron saint.

ROLAND Who's that? Oh, Saint Paul, you mean.

PAUL Who else? Though I speak with the tongues of Angels and have not Charity . . .

ROBIN That sounds dated.

P.A. So is Bach's music. *That* I am told is out of date.

PAUL If it is sound you are worrying about perhaps you would be more impressed by Xaritas.

P.A. Some people I know are very impressed – if it is *impression* you are worried about – by Charisma and Charismata.

DOCTOR You never come across Charismata nowadays. They are out of fashion ever since we found out that they are simply hysterical manifestations.

ALICE If you think Charity just an hysterical manifestation, what do you think of love? What do psychoanalysts think it is?

P.A. I prefer not to make pronouncements about what psychoanalysts think – I find it difficult enough to make pronouncements about what *I* wish to say.

ROBIN Why do you not fall back on art, or religion, or mathematics?

P.A. I have told you, I do not know any of those languages to speak them in a way which is not a gross *mis*-representation.

ROLAND You are being modest.

ROBIN I don't think he is – I think he is being a humbug.

P.A. It has often been said, and I should be claiming to be less than human if I said there was no truth in the accusation. But you will miss something if you feel that the ulterior motive is the only one; just as I think it fallacious to assume that scientific truth, or religious truth, or aesthetic truth, or musical truth, or rational truth is the only truth. Even what psychoanalysts call rationalizations have to be rational. Because I think we should be aware of the ultra- or infra-sensuous, or the super-ego and id, I do not think therefore that one should deny the rest.

ROLAND But, good heavens, what would happen to us if I couldn't blind myself to sidereal or space time when I want to tell *my* time by *my* watch?

P.A. If we are to translate our thoughts and feelings into physical or corporeal fact, there has to be a certain focusing of our mental apparatus as a prelude to action. That very act seems to me – putting my thoughts into 'verbo-visual' terms – to involve putting other elements out of focus. It is difficult in practice to de-focus – peripheralize – the irrelevant without falling into the opposite error of permanent insensibility; blindness, deafness, repression. That is why I talk of the 'opacity' of memory, desire, understanding.

EDMUND The centre of our galaxy is hidden from us, and though we suspect that it lies near Sagittarius we cannot see, as we can when we examine M31, the bright centre.

P.A. A stimulating idea. I would not wish to question the scientific findings of astro-physicists, because I also find in those discoveries a model which illuminates the obscurities of the human mind. At present I cannot entertain, at the same instant, '*les espaces infinis*' of space *and* the infinite spaces of human thought. What my work impresses on me is the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of the human mind, *and* the even vaster and greater depth of human ignorance. Anatole France, having spread himself in a eulogy of the power of man's wisdom, ends by saying, in reply to a question, that the only thing more marvellous is man's stupidity, bigotry and intolerance.

ALICE Isn't this stale news? You aren't saying anything new – the fact that you quote Anatole France shows that.

P.A. Quite so. I have often pointed out that if people would only 'think the thought through', as Paton used to say, they would recognize that what at first seemed strange was something they knew once. Even an old hat may once have contained a lively brain. Ruskin –

ROLAND Ruskin! I thought that you psychoanalysts had exploded all that old fraud's pretensions –

ROBIN By Rose La Touche!

PAUL Or Delilah!

P.A. Or Helen of Troy.

PAUL Or Hosea's 'girlfriend', as you would call her.

P.A. Whatever the importance of Rose La Touche may have been, it is hardly valid to use the 'memory' of her to prevent debate here. The infancy of psychoanalytic discovery is always brought up against the possibility that psychoanalysis, like infants, might grow up. The fact that psychoanalytic thought in its immature form was used as ammunition against its forebears is not an argument for immaturity as a prison house in which to lock up mental growth either in an individual or in a group of individuals.

ALICE Sorry. We are all ears. Do go on.

ROLAND Please . . .

ROBIN Go ahead . . .

PAUL I detect a note of sarcasm.

P.A. So do I. I've forgotten what I was going to say.

EDMUND Ruskin, wasn't it?

P.A. In *Sesame and Lilies* he showed me what it meant to *read* Milton. Of course you all know *about* sex, religion, art, but Milton, Virgil –

ROLAND Yes, but they are classics.

P.A. They were ordinary human beings.

ROBIN *Ordinary!*

P.A. Yes – before you bury them under a mound of adulation and pseudo-religious adoration, I want to say that they became classics because what they said with one meaning turned out to have, like a many faceted diamond, a fresh, fiery brilliance of truth the 'generators' did not know because it hadn't happened – when they wrote it. The reader, the beholder, if 'he hath ears to hear' and permits himself to listen, may still catch its echo though it may grow 'faint at last'. Our thinking is prodigal; the cost is mental pollution, a by-product of mental combustion liable to become the most significant creation.

DOCTOR Is there any evidence that the saurians perished at the height of their power, victims of their products? I am reminded of the saying that the person who draws the sword perishes by the sword.

ROBIN The fact that there is an apposite quotation proves that someone once said something in a telling phrase. Gilbert, of Gilbert and Sullivan fame, parodied the fallacy when one of the characters in *H.M.S. Pinafore* says, 'Though to catch your drift I'm striving, it is shady, mystic Lady'. One can usually cap any quotation with another.

P.A. We have to select from the variety of constant conjunctions which have become marked – sometimes by a word, sometimes a phrase, sometimes by a parable. Freud, at the latter end of his career, favoured the term 'constructions' to describe these meaningful conglomerations. Psychologists have begun to explore the possibility of using these conglomerations of human experience by developing a method of sentential calculus.

ALICE I am most impressed – as I think I am meant to be – by the brilliance of these logical constructions and the brilliance of masculine thought; but why is it that people who think so logically seem often to translate their thinking into action which is, to my observation, anything but wise?

ROLAND My dear, I am often most impressed by your ideas and formulations because, as you know, I think they are utterly illogical –

ALICE – 'emotional' or 'hysterical', you often say –

ROLAND – and yet I often think you are the one, not I, who is being wise.

ALICE It's very sweet of you to say so.

P.A. 'De gustibus' –

ALICE There you go again – more quotations.

P.A. I had not finished what I was going to say. Even if I use any and whatever tools are available to me, they are liable to sound like 'jargon', or 'neologism', as psychiatrists would say. They are formulations which fall very short of the truth that I want to express. Reality, the real environment in which we live, usually only approximates *at best* to such human formulations. Take envy –

ROLAND Oh God! Here we go again.

ROBIN I can't see why you plug 'envy' and 'rivalry'.

P.A. I apologize – but these terms are the nearest available.

ALICE We know of the evils of envy and malice and hatred.

P.A. I do not think any of us, individually or as a group, would still exist if it were not for these same qualities.

PAUL Then what do you mean?

P.A. The product which has a quality of surviving owes its survival to having 'meaning' which does not declare itself on first obtrusion into reality.

ROBIN What you have just said must be most profound.

P.A. You are being either sarcastic or inappropriately modest. In fact I have just experienced the difficulty of answering Paul's question. I have tried to be precise, but I might have done better if I had been 'pictorial'. A helpless infant may have been so insignificant that the saurians failed to recognize the successor who would take their supremacy from them.

ROLAND Ought we now to recognize our dangerous and menacing successors in the harmless and helpless little lizards whom we occasionally see darting around?

ROBIN According to P.A. it should be something which we nourish all unaware.

ROLAND The viper nursed at whose breast?

ALICE Some wretched woman's baby no doubt.

PAUL A feminine psychoanalyst perhaps – or should God be afraid of a goddess?

P.A. We do not know: we are not aware: we have not given birth to the conception, lest it be a monster not apparent but real.

ROLAND Thinking; mental power; at present so feeble that it has escaped extirpation. The survival of the fittest is clear because the fittest to survive proves it by being the survivor. 'Round and round

the garden went the teddy bear; one step; two steps; tickle you under there!'

ROBIN Ridiculous.

ROLAND Thy reason good Robin? Thy most excellent reason?

ROBIN This is silly.

P.A. Beware the *silly*, the *charismatic.*

ROBIN The Intelligentsia; the Brain: beware! Attlee, the Labour prime minister, said you could rely on the intellectuals of his party to be unwise.

PAUL The Human Animal has so far outdone all its rivals.

ROLAND Are we concerned with the discovery of the athletically dominant winner of the animal championships?

P.A. Are the optic and auditory pits rebelling against our visual or auditory ability?

PAUL I was not suggesting that a religious standard would measure the difference between intelligent thought and feeling, as the achievement of athletes would be measured.

ROBIN In the 51st Psalm I think some theologians have detected evidence of a Priestly code at conflict with the Elohistic code of the earlier part.

P.A. This emergence of a preoccupation with meaning is causing us a lot of trouble; an 'impulse' in contrast to preoccupation with facts.

PAUL What do you call 'facts'?

P.A. I find it useful to make a distinction between meaning and fact. 'Facts' are the name we give to any collection of constantly conjoined experiences which we feel temporarily to have a meaning; *then* we consider we have discovered a 'fact'. More relationships, more accretions lead to the discovery of another 'constant conjunction' which is not only constantly, but commonly, observed to be conjoined.

ROLAND And this starts off another search for what the new discovery 'means'. Non-sense to nonsense with a passing glance at moonbeams from the *Larger Lunacy,* as Stephen Leacock called it, on our way to still more 'facts'.

ROBIN And another round, or perhaps I should say 'spiral', of the heliachal progress to further meaning.

P.A. You are suggesting a linear progression, but this ignores forms of development or progress, perhaps because we fear and

dislike the prospect of incongruities such as those experienced when the established meaning of wave motion and the electro-magnetic phenomena was cast into confusion by quanta.

ROBIN Thank goodness – mathematics.

ROLAND Surely you aren't going to claim any refuge in mathematics? Look what the Intuitionists have been doing since Kant.

ROBIN Don't tell me. I got an Honours degree in mathematics once – or dreamt it.

P.A. And you succeeded in saying, 'Thus far and no further'?

ROBIN I didn't say anything, but I knew I could certainly go no further. I thought I should be lucky if I ever got so far. I thought so during the exam and have thought so ever since.

ROLAND In short, you thought you were no mathematician. Now *I* thought I was pretty good at geometry, and I still think that if we had stuck to geometry I might have been some good at it. But when they dragged in tangents and cosines and things, I quit.

P.A. Pythagoras raises his ugly head again.

ALICE What has Pythagoras got to do with it?

PAUL Nobody knows, but the Pythagoreans are thought to have been interested in what we should nowadays call science or philosophy.

ROBIN What did *they* call it?

PAUL I've no idea, but the name of Pythagoras was obtrusive and they were called Pythagoreans.

P.A. Something like that has happened to psychoanalysis. No one knows what that is, but people are called Freudians and Kleinians. *Vexilla Regis Prodeunt*.

PAUL Onward Christian Soldiers, marching as to war.

ROLAND That's fine. As Roy Campbell might have said, there's nothing wrong with the harness, but where's the bloody horse? Where's the war?

P.A. Or as J. B. Morton *did* say of the ship of state: Longfellow, President What's-his-name, Prime Minister Churchill and others of the crew have exclaimed, 'Sail on!' No matter what is wrong with the ship there will never be anything wrong with the bilge.

ROBIN Where's it going?

ROLAND We used to play a trick sometimes, when two or three of us were driving in the car, of leaning out of the window and

calling with an intonation of anxious inquiry, 'Straight on?' and were rewarded with a spontaneous answer, 'That's right – straight ahead!' I suppose you could say the same if I leant out of my class and asked my maths master, 'Tangent and cosine?' 'That's right – straight on!'

ALICE What does your psychoanalyst say if you ask with an air of anxious inquiry, 'Will it cure me, doctor?'

ROBIN If you ask P.A. he will say, 'What's wrong with the bilge?'

P.A. No; I think I should be prepared to ask if you had *considered* the bilge.

ROLAND But while you were considering the bilge the ship would sink.

P.A. The ship would *not* stop sinking just because you declined to consider it.

PAUL 'Consider the lilies of the field', said a person who some religious people regard as important.

ROBIN So they learn what He said by heart and forget it. As, to be honest, I myself did with cosine and company. Maths, I said, is not for me.

P.A. Any group has a small minority of leaders who say, 'Just what I want' – the 'self-selected unsuitables', as a psychoanalyst friend of mine appropriately named them. You seem to have decided from what you learnt of mathematics that you had learnt what you cannot do. Of course you might be mistaken.

PAUL Do you think that religious people learn it by heart and forget it?

P.A. After all, one learns to walk – and forgets it. There is something to be said for 'learning it by heart' so that one can walk without remembering.

ROLAND Is that what you call ridding yourself of memory?

P.A. I think it is similar, but the important point is covered – not covered up – by the phrase 'learnt by heart'. The painful, conscious learning by heart is passed on to domains which are not conscious – like muscles or nerve systems which are sub-thalamic.

DOCTOR Is there any evidence for this?

P.A. Not physiological evidence. In this context 'sub-thalamic' is a convenient, pictorial way of passing on to my proprioceptive system what I consciously have learnt; or teaching children what is 'good manners', or athletics, or religion.

ALICE It sounds a complicated process.

DOCTOR It probably is. I don't think, with my limited knowledge, I could venture on describing what the physiology or embryology of the growth process is.

P.A. Nor would I like to suggest a psychoanalytic formulation. But here is the trouble. While I am 'considering', someone rushes in with the 'answer' and there's no catching up with an 'answer'. You might as well try to catch a bandersnatch. 'Any stigma will serve to beat a dogma'. But the hunt which we could only match in our nightmares would be one in the vast deserts in which roam the fearsome and dangerous creatures known to us only in the pale illumination of daylight and waking thoughts as 'answers', 'dogmas', 'scientific facts', 'triangles' – and their close relatives, 'eternal triangles'. I would include in my psychoanalytic zoo a whole series of fascinating animals – if I were sure they would not escape and roam the world as the latest and most beautiful new-born facts.

ALICE Such as? You fascinate me, I confess. Do show me your zoo!

ROLAND Trust a woman to go off on a side-track!

P.A. Allow me to conduct you round the cages of my psychoanalytic zoo. Of course the names are somewhat forbidding, but the creatures themselves are beautiful and ugly. AM Here is Absolute Truth – a most ferocious animal which has killed more innocent white lies and black wholes than you would think possible.

ROLAND You muddle it with your puns.

ROBIN Call it paronomasia – more scientific.

ALICE It sounds like a very attractive flower.

P.A. Only a flower of speech. Throw hither all your quaint enamelled lies that on the green turf suck the honied showers. 'Blind mouths', as Ruskin showed you, would have to learn to read.

ALICE I learnt to read years ago.

P.A. That is what we all think, but in fact the greatest thinkers are very difficult to read unless you find great readers to read them.

ALICE But I was a *great* reader as a child.

P.A. You may have been – but now you are a grown-up and have an enormous amount of knowledge – or is it bilge? – to fall back on.

ROLAND Please don't insult my wife.

ROBIN He was only referring to Longfellow's poem. You will make him so nervous he won't dare to say anything.

ROLAND Good job too.

P.A. I had no intention of monopolizing, but I certainly think that as one falls silent, someone else who may know even less will occupy the vacant space.

ALICE 'The anarchs of the world of darkness keep a throne for thee' and then no one will be able to fill the vacant space.

P.A. For fear of the turmoil – the turbulence that obeys no man-made 'laws of nature'. Far worse than any zoo. We were just coming to the twins, Absolute Space and Absolute Time.

ALICE They sound perfect pets.

P.A. They do; but if I were really showing you round my psycho-analytic zoo I would warn you not to get *too* near the cage because these long names – especially when you read them in broad daylight – give you no idea of the meaning –

ROBIN The meaning often seems the worst part.

P.A. It depends so much on what the 'facts' cover up. They are not so misleading as the scientific language, but Absolute Space can terrify even robust minds like Pascal. Conversely, a harmless personality – indistinguishable from Descartes – finds a key like Cartesian co-ordinates, and Euclidean space is exposed.

ROBIN And decent people like me cannot even think of the roars of cosines and the bellowing of tangents and the whistling of boro-groves –

ALICE Stop! I don't want another night like last night.

ROLAND Nor do I!

ROBIN Why? Did you have nightmares too?

ROLAND No, but Alice was tossing and turning and moaning all over the place.

ALICE Perhaps it will be your turn tonight.

ROBIN Geo-centric night of course.

P.A. Geocentric night is only a particular sample of ego-centric time. Absolute Night is part of human thought about Absolute Time.

ALICE Like the Abominable Snowman.

ROLAND I thought that was an exploded myth.

ROBIN If you mean vastly and suddenly enlarged so that it becomes far too frightening, I would not object to your epithet

'exploded'. You should include the myth exploding the scientific 'fact'. I haven't been up Everest, or Nanda Devi, or the source of the Seven Rishis, but just fooling around the pathways of the milder Alps I have been terrified.

P.A. This, Alice, is one of our tamer animals. Even if it gets out of its cage it is really quite friendly. Not an explosion like the one that blew the top off Krakatoa. But these geocentric affairs are alarming only to Ephemera like us.

ALICE I understood Mont Pelée killed lots of Ephemera.

P.A. Of course we dislike it, but I do not see why we should get above ourselves and indulge in our megalomanic sense of our own importance – there could be something between the extremes of religious abasement and religious exaltation.

PAUL Don't call it religious *please* – it maybe psychoanalytic abasement and psychoanalytic exaltation, but don't drag in religion. I believe in God and in God's Truth and in God's Wrath and God's Love, but I don't see why anyone has to confuse their undisciplined human thinking with God. Men are always worshipping their own image and calling it God.

P.A. You are not far away from expressing something to which, as a psychoanalyst, I frequently try to draw attention when I interpret an actual human statement as betraying an omnipotent phantasy. You would be surprised how often it is supposed that we are casting doubt on God. All I purport to do is to give the individual a chance of observing his God-like assumption of God-like attributes. It is not surprising that he finds it difficult to be awestruck by God, though not doubtful about his own God-like qualities.

ROBIN They must be a conceited lot, your patients.

P.A. Yet they are humble enough to submit to not-devotional observation by another ordinary human animal.

PAUL By 'not-devotional observation by another ordinary human animal' you mean a psychoanalyst?

P.A. I mean myself –

ROBIN Then why don't you say so?

P.A. Because at that moment it seemed to me that a particular aspect of myself had been lost to conscious awareness of my company.

ROLAND All of us?

P.A. No, not all of you – not even all of any single one of 'us'.

ALICE Surely it is clear enough – he means us.

P.A. It is true that if we use conversational language for the purpose for which it has been invented, the 'meaning' could be said to be clear enough. But we are not using it for that purpose, and ordinary language may sometimes seem to us to be inadequate. Just now Alice seemed to feel ordinary language *was* adequate and only became inadequate because we were, perhaps perversely, *not* listening to the ordinary meaning but to something else.

ROLAND But you don't say what else – are we supposed to know?

P.A. I think, as a result of our experiences here, we may get sufficiently used to not knowing to train our senses and personalities to find out.

ROBIN Oh!

ROLAND I don't understand.

ALICE I feel like ringing for Rosemary to bring in coffee.

P.A. Actions speak louder than words, but we need not allow mere loudness to overwhelm our thoughts.

EDMUND There is a lot to be said for mathematics and by mathematics and about mathematics.

ROBIN Government 'of the people, for the people . . .' – how does it go? 'by the people'.

P.A. A construction of words by the people, for the people, about what the words are about – people.

ALICE Someone must act; I'm ringing for Rosemary to bring coffee.

ROLAND Thoughts are sometimes preludes to actions and then are translated into action.

ROBIN Thank goodness we aren't going to feed on imaginary coffee, or the memory of coffee, or a desire for it, as if we were condemned to live on thoughts which are a substitute for action. But perhaps after coffee we can discuss the matter further.

EDMUND 'My maths' only runs to Euclidean geometry with a dash of Lobachevsky and Riemann bitters.

ROLAND How pictorial you are being.

ROBIN Gustatory, I would call it.

DOCTOR Not alcoholic to the extent of toxic doses, but if it is only coffee I don't think the caffeine will do us any harm. Anyway – don't attack me for introducing too biochemical a note.

ALICE I shall certainly object if my good coffee is treated as if it is a mere random. collection of molecules.

DOCTOR Oh, we should never do that! I assure you the arrangement of the molecules is an extremely beautiful fact.

ROBIN But to my inner eye what wealth to me the show had brought.

ROLAND You've bungled the quotation.

ALICE I suggest we go on for another half hour and then adjourn till next week. Agreed?

DOCTOR We were just beginning to talk about Beauty, but it isn't at all clear what we mean by it. Poincaré talks of the Beauty of a mathematical construction.

ROBIN I have often thought about Athletic beauty. Although I loathe cricket I have seen what appear to me to be beautiful strokes.

ROLAND I have known some beautiful cricket fields; perhaps that is what Robin was being influenced by.

ROBIN Not at all. I was thinking about a glorious innings by Hobbs at the Oval – and you can't imagine anything more awful than the Oval.

PAUL 'O feet that want the feel of plushy sward' – but the man who said that was referring to the beauty of the religious street.

P.A. Which beauty? Which religion? It seems to depend on what you mean.

ROLAND Of course we need to know the meaning. We have to be 'sensible' of the facts first.

P.A. It may be a peculiarity of the human mind that events are thought to be sequential and even consequential.

ROBIN You don't suggest they all happen at once?

P.A. No, I don't. I am saying that 'cause and effect' are words which are appropriate to the human mind and only appear to inhere in things and characters *not* the observers.

EDMUND Isn't this coming near to denying the existence of the environment?

P.A. No; I am suggesting that we are unable to free ourselves from our prison of sense even though something can be done to augment the boundaries of perception. Had Aristarchus lived a few hundred years, he might have been able to use the two hundred inch reflector at Palomar, or the radio telescope at Jodrell Bank. As far as we know, he couldn't.

PAUL As far as we know –

P.A. That is what I have been saying – as far as we know, but I do

not think that we should deliberately go on to say, 'Thus far and no further'. Freud could turn his limitations to good account. Milton was on the losing side in the Civil War but he said, 'So much the rather thou Celestial Light shine inward' –

ALICE How did Milton give effect to his aspiration?

ROLAND He was a genius.

ROBIN Have you read *Paradise Lost*?

ROLAND Well, er – of course. I don't say I understand all of it, but of course I've read it.

ROBIN Forgive me, Roland, if I doubt the equivocation of the fiend 'of course'. Milton should have had him as one of the denizens of that obscure domain in which he had been long detained.

PAUL But he attributed his escape to the Offices of the Heavenly Muse – not Orpheus, as he expressly said.

ROLAND You mean to say you think we ought to take his description seriously? Of course it's wonderful poetry –

P.A. 'Of course', but Virgil and Homer and Milton were not writing 'poetry'; they were writing 'seriously'. They wrote poetry because it was the most serious way of writing.

ROLAND Do you think they were writing religion?

P.A. Certainly not. I think Ruskin was right; they – the greatest of them – were writing, as nearly as they could, the truth. As Bacon pointed out, Pilate could not wait for an answer – too busy.

ALICE Alas! So am I – so we shall have to put it off till next time. I won't wish you *sweet* dreams because, as P.A. would say, the dreams are always sweet by the time we have verbalized them.

P.A. Not I – Freud.

2

PAUL What shall we discuss today?

ROBIN I feel I can't remember what we were talking about before. It is curiously like dreams, for I know that I have dreamt and though I couldn't say what the dream was, I know that I have not forgotten it – it has gone. On these occasions it can come back; I don't *remember* it, but it is there, all in one piece. It is quite whole and quite absent.

ROLAND I can't say I have that experience, but then I rarely dream at all. I do remember some dreams which I had as a child and some were very frightening, but others were not.

DOCTOR It sounds as if we were going to talk about dreams. But what about things that could be easily explained if they were dreams, but the patient has them – I'm thinking of a particular man – when wide awake? I don't think I would call them hallucinations; there is no adequate name.

PAUL What would you call the vision clearly seen and verbalized by Isaiah? – he describes it clearly in the sixth chapter as he would any other fact and date.

P.A. I think of visions as coming from a 'level of mind', or a 'time of life', although I always *hear* of them in the present and *described* in articulate terms. This is one of my difficulties; because I use ordinary English it is assumed that I am saying something already known to all of us, and at the same time that it cannot be anything so ordinary as to be comprehensible to ordinary people.

ROLAND Couldn't you say something that is neither?

ROBIN According to the Intuitionists you can't, because there is no excluded middle. Why, as someone asked, does logic apply to anything but mathematics?

P.A. I certainly do not intentionally exclude, or include, any

topic, although I can see that if one topic can be said to be 'included' then other topics are 'excluded'. A responsible person must exclude the topics which he does *not* discuss. To that extent he is not allowing some aspect of his personality to express itself and is thus incurring his self-hatred – whatever grievances he may consider also to be inflicted upon him by forces or people *not* himself. We include dreams as a part of thinking. Do you call that *in*cluding or *ex*cluding logic?

ROBIN Hasn't Brouwer already pointed out that there may be a mathematics in which classical, mathematical logic is irrelevant?

ROLAND I'm no mathematician.

ROBIN If I understand P.A. correctly you are lucky not to be carrying a heavy burden of preconceptions, even if they are respectable preconceptions hallowed and sanctified by a university qualification –

P.A. By 'university' I think you mean a number of individuals gathered together and self-endowed with the privilege of declaring who is, and who is not, worthy of joining their association.

ROLAND At that rate a democratic society is one in which the representatives of the society almost constitute themselves to be the vicars of God in that society. '*Vox populi, vox Dei*', as Alcuin said.

PAUL This is hardly distinguishable from saying that a democratic society is a theocratic society. But a theocratic society openly admits its claim; the democratic society seems to claim some sort of superiority. That is a claim I cannot admit unless the supposedly theocratic society is governed by a group of human beings – ordinary human animals claiming to be God or at least the Voice of God.

P.A. Something of that sort is overtly expressed in those last few verses of the 51st Psalm almost directly contradicting the tenor of the whole early part which is far more modest – indeed penitential, as it is justly called.

ROBIN This is all mere supposition stimulated by the 'creator' whom we cannot now question.

P.A. Their words have a durability such as Shakespeare claimed for his verbal creations.

ROLAND You have said this about the artist who constructs in words something which – like marble or the gilded monument – lasts. But does it? Frederick Powicke said he could not describe the most important factor in the matter he was discussing when giving an historical account of the Lord Edward and his attendant Hubert de

Burgh, namely, Hubert de Burgh's state of mind. That, as he pointed out, had gone – without recall. But is Shakespeare any better off? Do we now know what he meant when he wrote his sonnets? Did he then understand what we now understand when we read them?

ROBIN Set a poet to catch a poet. Blake was not deceived about the meaning of *Paradise Lost.* In more recent times Kenner has shown how Shakespeare said far more than he consciously intended when he wrote, 'Fear no more the heat of the sun'.

P.A. Kenner's explication is, to me, extremely convincing – as was Ruskin's of *Lycidas.* But what a chancy business! Who could possibly predict that Ruskin could persuade with telling force one person, or perhaps two, to *read* what the great ones have left us in their wills. Oh yes – we have already heard that *of course* we all read Milton; *of course* we all read Shakespeare.

ROLAND Touché.

PAUL I don't know why, but you remind me of a cartoon which I once saw in the *New Yorker* in which a duellist, having just delivered a mortal stroke, says 'Touché'.

ROLAND I saw a horrible photograph of a duel between two people armed with sabres in which one had decapitated his opponent in one stroke. I was not really claiming to have been so completely separated from my central nervous system, or the seat of my intelligence.

ALICE You often talk as if, because I am a woman, I can't ever have had an intelligence from which to be separated.

P.A. Perhaps that is because he has never been completely separated from his primordial mind and is still dominated by the belief that as a woman has not got a penis she cannot have a capacity for masculine thinking.

ALICE Does the caesura connect or separate? He often behaves as if he were not a male sexual animal.

ROLAND That's not fair! You're behaving like a female sexual animal, and I can hardly be blamed if I am cautious – sometimes.

PAUL This is not an occasion for display of the matrimonial experience. But if I say so, it will be assumed that I and my nominally saintly predecessor are opposed to sex. The biological creator does not appear to be on good terms with the creator of morals. Verbal intercourse is not granted the freedom that sociologically we are supposed to have.

P.A. Freedom often seems to be driven 'underground' – or should I say 'subterrane'?

ALICE Please yourself; but suppose both the dictator and liberator go underground and meet there.

P.A. I shall avail myself of your permission to say 'infra-conceptual'.

PAUL Well, *that* is horrible enough to escape durability as an artistic expression. The world of thought shrinks its boundaries in inverse proportion to the length of the verbal weapons it uses; the shorter the 'bayonet', the wider the empire it sways.

ROLAND I don't believe it. Who on earth bothers to carry a rifle nowadays? I wouldn't – not even to stick a bayonet on.

P.A. If I could I would try mathematics as the most terse form of expression known, but I have to communicate in such a lengthy manner I fear you would hardly stand it. Still, perhaps you would be tolerant; it would be easier for me.

ROLAND If you were tolerant it would be easier for us to listen.

P.A. My problem is the relationship when two minds, persons, characters, meet. Freud drew attention to one aspect of that relationship which he called 'transference'. I think he meant that when a man meets his analyst he transfers to him characteristics which were probably once consciously, and not unreasonably, thought to inhere in some member of the parental family. These characteristics are inappropriate when felt about a stranger – the analyst.

PAUL Why the analyst? Why not other people?

P.A. The analyst is typical of these 'other people'. In analysis these characteristic 'transfers' can be discussed.

ROBIN *Only* by the patient?

P.A. No; the analyst also reacts to the patient. But in so far as he is unconscious of it, it is known as the counter-transference. You can read all about this in the literature, or better still, find out for yourself by having a psychoanalysis. I do not want to go into that because here, at best, we can only talk 'about it' – not experience it.

ROBIN You were going to talk about mathematics as potentially affording a precise and short method of communication.

P.A. You remember we talked before of the way in which Cartesian co-ordinates proved to be a key that released Euclidean geometry from the tyranny of visual imagery.

ROLAND I remember – and a whole host of horrible psychoanalytic animals that had previously been safely locked up in your zoo.

P.A. I didn't mean them to distress you – you mentioned tangents and co-tangents and sines and other similar creatures.

ROLAND Yes, but they got together and became even more horrible animals like 'real and distinct', 'real and coincident' and 'conjugate complex', which I gather are as fearsome and as nonexistent as the cockatrice and the bandersnatch.

P.A. True. This is simpler.

ALICE That's good news at least.

P.A. Yes, but like all really simple things they are slippery and hard to grasp.

PAUL You are being metaphorical.

P.A. I think it is a better description to say I am stimulating, or trying to evoke, visual images in you. But I am not trying to suggest who or what is doing something to whom or what. I could call it an attempt at analogy in which the 'things' that are analogous are left unformulated so that the link between the two is not obscured by the 'thingness' of the relationship – what, if the vertex is psychoanalytic, I understand by transference.

ROLAND That seems clear enough.

P.A. Then I fear I have misled you.

ROLAND Oh, poor Roland – can't he ever be right?

P.A. I doubt it; but let me say that I am no less doubtful about myself What I am trying to talk about is one of these fundamental, basic things like life/death/love/hate/birth.

ROBIN Surely you don't need any very elaborate mathematics for that – unless you are trying to split the ears of the groundlings.

P.A. Ah! Now if you are employing hieroglyphic talk I think you are getting nearer to the meaning behind my verbal communication.

ALICE I suppose you mean that Robin's remark has some erudite psychoanalytic interpretation.

P.A. I am sure it has; I would like to mean something simple and basic as well. It may not be 'off-target' but is nevertheless not within any of the recognized and delineated areas in which one's comment has to fall to register a score. I feel the Intuitionists are right when they start with something simple like infinity. That is practical; that, I am sure, I grasped as an infant even without the word.

ROBIN Lord! You must be a mathematical genius.

P.A. Then you must be using the word 'genius' in an unusual manner. I may have been precocious, or premature, or infra-intellectual – defects of that kind often excite awe and even adoration. Beware the charismatic individual! Beware the stigmata of messianic future!

ROLAND Though to catch your drift I'm striving, it is shady, mystic lady.

P.A. I see you attribute feminine divinity to me.

ROLAND Rubbish! That's Gilbert and Sullivan.

ROBIN But used by you to express *yourself*. I think there is something in these theories of free association, but what has this to do with maths?

P.A. Suppose it is not a problem of a line cutting a circle at two points, but two personalities meeting, each made up of a diversity of characteristics. An analogy would be two groups of people meeting; one group composed of nothing but black men and the other of all white men. The corporeal difference would be so easily grasped that the desire to avoid work would be fed by the simplicity of deciding that they were different groups.

ALICE Any difficulty could be instantaneously solved by bussing.

P.A. Quite so. It can even be 'solved' by law. But those laws are man-made, like the laws of chemistry or mathematics.

ROBIN Surely the laws of mathematics and physics and chemistry are indistinguishable from the laws of nature.

P.A. They owe their indistinguishability to the inadequacy of language – the only thing that is sure is the adequacy of language to fool its creators and users. I do not think it at all wise to consider any part of mathematical 'law' to be exempted from this, but it is convenient to suppose, as has already been done, that God made the integers; all the rest of analysis is man-made, an elaborate series of 'artefacts'.

ROLAND Oh God!

PAUL Which one are you calling on? I thought you said you didn't believe in God.

P.A. In my experience everyone, without exception, believes in God. I have not met a man or woman who does not sooner or later turn out to believe that they are themselves 'God'.

ROLAND Rubbish!

P.A. How do you speak with such certainty?

ROLAND Well, are you not yourself requiring our adherence to you and your psychoanalytic laws obtained from Mount Sinai Freud?

P.A. I try to formulate my impression of the truth in conditions which allow others to compare what *I* call facts with *their* opinions of the facts.

ROLAND You are so 'reasonable'; you bear a great resemblance to Paul's outfit who claim to be so 'holy' – itself a short way of claiming to be honest and helpful. Isn't that the meaning of 'holy'?

PAUL Even if the *word* means that, it does not mean that there are no 'things' which approximate to the words 'honest', or 'helpful', or 'holy'. Some religious people speak even of a 'holy ghost'.

P.A. Bishop Berkeley made some remarks about 'the ghosts of departed quantities'. The amusing quality of some types of statement has often been remarked, but the generator has made the statement without being aware, still less intending that they should 'amuse'.

ALICE 'And God laughed at the sound that came out of its bill.'

PAUL Perhaps *He* did (Capital letter please – 'upper case', you call it).

ROBIN Who are you talking to?

PAUL The printer, in case my words are to be given the permanence of print. Isaac Luria did not bother with having his words recorded, but I confess that I, unlike Luria, would like to have them durable.

P.A. You would not go so far as suggesting that on your gravestone a mathematical formula should be inscribed?

ROLAND I wouldn't if I were you, though I would be happy to think that I ever said anything so memorable as Sir Thomas Browne writing of the urns he discovered at Swaffham.

ROBIN Even God is said to have died.

PAUL I think He may get over it. The father probably won't – that is, the father impotent, maker of a son he (lower case 'h' please) did more to mar than make.

ALICE An eternity in Hell.

P.A. 'Though long detained in that obscure sojourn . . .' as Rimbaud was.

ROBIN You seem to be taking a very long sojourn in your mathematical flight.

P.A. Ah yes; where had I got to?

ROBIN Somewhere between outer and middle darkness, I think.

Listening too much to Roland's Orphean notes and disregarding the Heavenly Muse – Alice perhaps.

ALICE Oh shut up, Robin. You aren't funny.

P.A. Certainly in darkness 'from the cheerful ways of men cut off; I can only say I wonder if the language of mathematicians might be close to the 'universal linguistic' that Croce attributed to Aesthetic.

ROLAND Perhaps the 'beauty' of a mathematical formulation is a symptom of its 'value' – like giving quality, as Ruskin described it.

ALICE Roland, you have hardly mentioned Ruskin in all the years I have known you. Or, if you have, in a language like that spoken by Yeats's Arab Lady.

ROLAND I was put off him by all that Rose La Touche stuff; but I admired him tremendously till I had it all spoiled for me by chatter.

PAUL 'About Harriet' it was with Keats.

P.A. Rose Delderfield – on a grave in a country churchyard – died age eighteen. Probably a mis-diagnosed appendix, I should think.

ALICE Your sojourn in the utter darkness is becoming longer and longer. You are singing of Chaos and Eternal night with notes which are more Orphean than Heavenly. Or should it be Oedipean, or Sphinx-riddled thought? Too much science.

P.A. Not enough or too much – that is the question. Too dark to see, or too blinded –

ROLAND – by the brilliance of your halo.

P.A. The difficulty is not only with the galactic centre. It is as difficult to see the centre of one's own personality. Distracted and fascinated by what is not one's self, the periphery is substituted for the centre.

EDMUND You've said this before.

P.A. Have I? I had forgotten.

ROBIN Outer darkness or central darkness – it is the wrong thing in the wrong place. Any sphere whose centre is occupied by some segment of the surface is sure to wobble uncertainly about its 'centre'.

EDMUND Like eclipsing variables. Nowadays some are beginning to think that the less obtrusive partner in a binary may be a black hole, that there are signs compatible with two black holes.

ALICE Only two – in the whole of the universe of universes? That sounds –

P.A. – like Classical Psychoanalysis. Two parents or – according to one of the parents of psychoanalysis – two breasts.

EDMUND Or one proton and one electron. They proliferate masses of offspring all circulating like hadrons round the nucleus, or suns about a galactic centre.

PAUL Or gods around a theocrat.

DOCTOR Or diagnoses round a turbulence, as P.A. would say.

P.A. Or what happens when two people meet.

ROLAND How dull.

ROBIN What bores psychoanalysts are! It isn't just sex.

P.A. It never was. It is its meaning that we do not know or understand, not our environment. It is not in our stars since we are underlings with ambitions to be overlings. We want someone or something authoritative to tell us we outshine these beauties of the night.

DOCTOR Even Elizabeth of Bohemia was damnably mouldy three hundred years ago – Sir Henry Wotton notwithstanding. Ante Agamemnona multi . . . Not marble nor the gilded monument shall outlive . . . But *où sont les neiges d'antan*? It is difficult to believe, or even to suspect that the biological view of anatomy and physiology could possibly mean what our own common sense would tell us. Now we have elaborated a new kind of 'scientist', a psychoanalyst devoted to the discovery of a brand new truth that will outshine all the meaner truths of the 'unheavenly' outer darkness which is so much more frightening than a thousand suns. Mathematically a thousand suns should be very bright – according to classical mathematics. What sort of psychoanalytic maths do you propose to introduce? You had better be quick, or someone else will produce a mathematics which is more appropriately accompanied by the music of the modern spheres.

ROBIN Aesthetic maths, or religious maths, or scientific maths? Take your choice.

EDMUND I am not terrified by the silence of infinite space.

P.A. Are you sure you have allowed yourself to hear it? Nature, they say – on what evidence I do not know – abhors a vacuum. According to Milton, even Satan did not enjoy a really poetic bump on his escape from Hell. Still, if Milton can be relied on, he survived the journey from Hell to the Heaven promised our forebears. Milton asked for more – 'so much the rather thou, Celestial Light, shine inward. . . .'

ROLAND I thought you purported to see and tell of things invisible to mortal sight.

ALICE Surely not. I thought he purported to draw attention to

what is clear to mortal sight unless the individual is determined not to look at it. You can't really blame psychoanalysts if they try to show what could be seen.

DOCTOR Psychoanalysts are no worse off than physicians. I remember trying to warn an hypochondriacal girl that she was fatally ill, suffering from advanced ergot poisoning. 'But doctor', she would say, 'I'm *ill*', after I had done my damnedest for weeks to tell her just that.

P.A. Perhaps she had begun to understand what you were saying to her?

DOCTOR Not she. I can still hear that wretched girl's voice as she lay on her death bed, trying to collect her strength to make me hear.

P.A. A runner who was crouching beside me in a shell hole had his thoracic wall blown out, exposing his heart. He tried to look at the ghastly wound across which an entirely ineffectual field dressing dangled. 'Mother, Mother – you'll write to my Mother, sir, won't you?' 'Yes, blast you', I said. If I could believe in God I would ask him to forgive me. '*Dieu me pardonnera. C'est son métier*.'

ALICE I thought you were supposed to be cured of such irrational guilts.

P.A. Who said they were irrational? Or that one would not sometimes see sufficiently clearly to know one was damned – rationally?

PAUL You are angry with her; why, what has she done?

P.A. I am sorry if I was rude; I didn't mean it. I use the saddest words in the language – 'I didn't mean it to happen.' They hang across the gaping wound of my mind like a ridiculous field dressing. August 8, 1918, that was.

ROLAND Sidereal time? Absolute time? Or just ephemeral time? The time inhabited by the ephemerides –

EDMUND – as long as no one knows its proper meaning; otherwise they may laugh at you and think you are mixed up in your biology.

ROLAND If they have a laugh I suppose that would be a good mark chalked up on my scoreboard.

PAUL I thought you didn't hold with these religious ideas.

ROLAND I don't. I have them, but I don't hold with them. They are nonsense.

PAUL I think you *do* hold with them and they aren't nonsense.

P.A. They may be non-sense, but I agree with Paul that you do

hold with them. As far as I am concerned the ideas *hold me* whether I like it or not. I would not go near the Amiens–Roye road for fear I should meet my ghost – I died there. For though the Soul should die, the Body lives for ever.

PAUL Not quite what we say. From a religious vertex the Body dies, but the Soul lives –

ROLAND – not for ever, I hope. Forever, like never, always feels a very long time. Do you relish the prospect of everlasting life? But I suppose that is only a metaphor.

P.A. It reminds me of people who say, 'It's only psycho-logical', and mean that 'it' does not therefore exist. Alternatively, if I think a scientist should at least be capable of entertaining a 'hunch' of everlasting life –

DOCTOR You don't mean to suggest you expect to live for ever?

P.A. I have no objection to 'suggesting' anything, but I find I cannot 'suggest' it without it being immediately supposed that I consider that my corporeal existence is infinite – 'everlasting', as religious people call it – whatever the hypothesis entertained by anatomists and physiologists as a result of, or part of, their biological sphere of enquiry. 'Father, I cannot tell a lie' may be a satisfactory qualification for a statesman, but I doubt the qualifications of a scientist, or artist, or religious who *could not* tell a lie; how could he possibly know what the truth was – let alone act truthfully?

PAUL I would have thought that any religious would subscribe to that. Similarly, I would suspect the qualifications of a religious who claimed never to have doubted the existence of God.

P.A. So many of your famed religious talk as if the God in which they believe is keenly interested in religion. I can understand religious professors being interested in God, but I cannot see why God should be. I should regard that as a primitive religious impulse primitively expressed – hardly less primitive than worshipping a competent golfer.

ROLAND The religious set may believe in any god they like.

ROBIN You will find P.A. accusing you of addiction to 'set theory' if you aren't careful.

P.A. I would be more likely to be suspicious about what anyone was being careful about, though I might also be curious about their being 'careless'.

ALICE Are you ever free from the anxieties of walking on a moral and scientific tight-rope?

ROLAND Just what I was wondering.

ROBIN It sounds as if you lead a most precarious existence.

P.A. I 'exist' as we all do, but I cannot say it seems to me that my existence is peculiarly precarious either on account of my private or professional existence.

PAUL The life of man in the sight of God is precarious.

ROLAND Why drag in God?

PAUL Which god do you think I am dragging in? Oh yes, I know – 'The God of all wise men.' Which is that? 'Wise men never tell.'

P.A. Unfortunately they kept *that* secret most carefully hidden from themselves. Most people I meet are surprised to discover the object of their worship and the congregation with which they choose to mix. They are the invisible and in-sense-able nucleus of their own universe.

EDMUND Like the centre of our own galaxy.

ROBIN If it is as brilliant as the centre of the M31, why is there no sign of some such glowing mass? Alternatively, do you suppose that if we were on a spiral arm as far from the centre of M31 as we are from our own, that it would be invisible?

EDMUND We can suppose what we like, but the idea is that it is obscured by galactic dust. Thanks to the spectroscope we have a good idea of what elements are involved.

P.A. I think we might have some way of naming accurately the nature of the emotional forces which – to use Milton's phrase – act like a mist that makes it impossible for internal eyes to 'see and tell'.

ROLAND What you call 'memory', 'desire' and 'understanding'. Or just lack of mathematical capacity.

P.A. Mathematical advance might be analogous to the intuitive eyes we need to 'plant'.

ROBIN Your remarks sound positively literary. I don't know what you think, but I'm not clear what we are to do about it – if anything. You have spoken of war – which we all know. We think we are wiser than we were when we joined up, when we fought, when we were told – and believed – we had won.

ROLAND When we slumped; and duly trotted off to be psychoanalysed by the latest prophet, the latest *authentic* prophet, of the new religion and – here we are.

ROBIN At least we have so far avoided forming ourselves into an Institution with a doctrine and a uniform – not even a mental uniform.

P.A. So far. I have been surprised to find that even my name has been bandied about. I used to think Melanie Klein was a bit optimistic and unrealistic – though sincere – in deploring the idea that people would call themselves Kleinian. Freud was alert to the danger that many would want to climb under the umbrella of 'psychoanalysis', but I did not expect to find myself included amongst the brightly, but rapidly fading, coloured ephemera of spiritual refreshment.

EDMUND Even super-novae grow dim – in time.

ROLAND But the evil they do lives after them – if it is true that they upset the chromosome balance.

DOCTOR There isn't a scrap of evidence for it – not scientific evidence.

P.A. Or do you mean no evidence of the kind that you wish to entertain?

DOCTOR Is there any other kind of evidence? People *want* to believe they have neuroses and they are encouraged to believe that all they need is a bit of psychoanalytic cure and their troubles will be over.

P.A. A lot of people who have not tried it think so. You would be surprised that a few try it and yet withstand the seduction. Still, I agree that a lot of 'psychoanalysts', as well as their adherents, fall for it. When I hear the present vogue for 'charisma' and 'charismatic people' my defences become alert.

PAUL When are you at peace? It doesn't seem that you are so much better off than the religious.

P.A. I doubt whether a psychoanalyst would hold out the hope of becoming 'better off, or even 'better'. As for being at peace, I would expect to be more nearly so when I am working than when I am not.

ROLAND I agree; I am happiest at work. But do we need analysis to find that out?

P.A. The psychoanalytic experience seems sometimes to be associated with achieving a capacity for work. Learning music is often associated with becoming able to play a musical instrument.

ROBIN I hope so. My boy is learning the piano.

P.A. But so often people seem to expect that someone having analysis will become creative. Do you expect your boy to become a composer?

ROBIN No, but I think his mother does.

ALICE By the way, is Thea coming today? She said she would.

ROLAND There's no limit to what mothers expect.

ALICE Worse than fathers, sons and brothers? I wonder what Thea and Florence have to say about it. I have known men expect to be fussed over and admired and looked after, and then have a grievance because they are not appreciated.

ROLAND Meaning me? I suppose you'd say, 'If the cap fits'.

ALICE Oh no. As a matter of fact I think you are a good husband; even in dreams you are quite nice. Anyway I'm still married to you.

PAUL I thought of you as being an exceptionally happy pair.

ROLAND It has never occurred to me to think of myself as anything else. Perhaps I have too easily assumed that Alice is equally satisfied, but certainly I haven't questioned it.

ALICE I had a horrid collection of dreams last night, but I can't remember them. Perhaps P.A. would want to analyse them?

P.A. Oh no! I only try to analyse the dreams of people who come to me for psychoanalysis. The conditions for analysis do not exist in ordinary social life.

ROLAND I thought you people were always plumbing the depths of our nasty characters.

P.A. Character, whether nasty or not, is a matter of opinion. As you know, some even want to change people's character. I think the Church does, doesn't it, Paul? 'The Church's one foundation', and all that.

ROBIN No, you've got it mixed up. The words we used to sing –

ROLAND

> 'We are Fred Karno's army. What bloody use are we?
> We've got no guns, we cannot fight, What bloody use are we?'

And the other one:

> 'At the end of our journey we shall have a –'

ROBIN You must have been a very gentlemanly crowd compared with our lot.

ALICE Please! Please! Please! I protest! We can't go on with this –

ROBIN I wasn't daring to suggest we should embark on what songs the women sang!

PAUL Were the sirens all women? Sir Thomas Browne didn't go into details!

ALICE Here are the other two. Now we shall have more of the woman's view. I'll bring them in in a moment. Excuse me. (*Exit.*)

3

ROBIN No woman, even one as sensitive as Alice, will understand that life cannot be the same for a man who has been in fighting. I remember the night when the enemy front was red with fire. I couldn't believe it was the enemy destroying their ammunition. Retreat and disaster I was familiar with; victory not – and it came too late. I had changed.

PAUL The 'Church' itself has changed. I am thinking of people who hold beliefs with religious intensity.

ROBIN Homer's Greeks, for example?

PAUL Probably, though I don't know those beliefs; I can conjecture only. When I speak of the Iliad I refer to a description of religious beliefs, or a dramatic story, or again –

ROBIN A particularly loathsome and difficult language that I hated, but which was alleged by my teacher to be very beautiful.

ROLAND Don't you think it is? I think so now, but I daresay I would have agreed with you when I was learning Greek.

PAUL Today members of, say, the Christian Church might consider the Iliad was a horrid religion – if they thought it a religion at all.

ROLAND Yet people still read the Iliad.

P.A. What do we mean by a simple word like 'read'? As Ruskin pointed out, one could have a knowledge of the alphabet, vocabulary and grammatical discipline and yet might not think thought through.

ROLAND There was once a game in which if you combined certain musical elements in accordance with the stated rules, in obedience to the fall of a throw of dice, the result when recorded through musical notation was a 'Bach', or 'Mozart', or 'Beethoven' air.

ROBIN There may even be a similar way of combining lines and triangles and other shapes to produce a 'Leonardo' sketch. I have known an athlete speak of 'reading' the movements of an opponent.

PAUL Any musician would appreciate that the music was *not* written by Beethoven.

P.A. Beethoven would be missing. The mechanical throwing of dice could not take the place of Beethoven –

PAUL – or Kant, or Freud, or Leonardo.

P.A. We assume that there is a 'thought to be thought through', or a 'God' to be worshipped, or a mind covered up by, or revealed by, the notes or name scrawled on the paper. Our problem is, 'what mind?' Is it just a mind sufficient for the 'athletic' feat of casting dice and making the marks on paper which the rules require us to make? Or is it a mind capable of creating the 'game' and the rules, or expressing a spirit which we call Bach or Mozart or Plato –

PAUL – or a Cathedral of Chartres, or a Hermes of Praxiteles, or a Theorem of Pythagoras –

P.A. – without the intervention of 'chance' as, apparently, betrayed by the fall of dice?

EDMUND Or by the galactic nebulae haphazardly scattered over the heavens at which some few look on a dark night.

ROBIN 'Sit, Jessica, Look how the floor of Heaven – '

ROLAND Even he admitted that the music of spheres would, if we could but hear it, be more informative.

P.A. In short, *if* we could receive the facts which we are capable of 'sense-ing', we might be able to read the 'facts' available to us and 'think the thought through' to what lies behind the facts.

ROLAND 'Sit, Jessica' – but what's happened to the women? Oh, here they come. We were just talking about the 'facts' – if we knew what they were – and the further problem of the significance of such facts as we do know.

THEA And what conclusion have you come to?

PAUL The conclusion that the conclusion is the start of the problem.

ROLAND That's as bad as P.A. – always coming back to the same point.

P.A. Oh no. The 'same point' is only reminiscent of a point at which we dimly remember having been before: it is not the same because even if the point with which we are familiar has been reached

and recognized as the 'same', it is not the 'same time'. The 'same time', the point in geophysical space, would be different.

THEA What's that? I understand 'geo' to mean 'appertaining to this earth'.

P.A. That will do as a start. Edmund was talking about the nebulae; *we* have to talk of space and time as we know it on this earth. That is comprehensible; what we are concerned with is not only what we know and do understand, but what we do not know and do not understand. Of course there is a lot in our past history – in what we have already experienced – which we find we did not and still do not understand. This applies to what has not yet happened –

EDMUND – as far as we know. It may have 'happened' before the human race existed. There is recorded literature about Hesperus and Diana and the moon; true poets, philosophers and priests observe fundamentals. '*Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona multi*'; we do not know those stout hearts who thought and thrived before they were overwhelmed by eternal night. Nor do we know when we shall follow them and 'leave not a rack behind'.

ROLAND What a depressing idea! Is there any point in debating something about which we can do nothing?

ROBIN If the criterion for debate is only those subjects about which one can *do* something – no. There are many subjects about which we can do nothing; astronomy is one. Our personalities may be another, though I don't expect P.A. to agree on that.

P.A. It depends what you mean by 'doing something'. Before articulate speech, 'do' would probably have referred only to physical acts; now we believe that the range of what we can 'do' has been extended. If we see an animal tormented by a child, we can say, 'Don't'. To do that we have to have been aware and made the perpetrator aware that cruelty was being inflicted. That could initiate a chain reaction, but often our individual lives are too short for us to know the later stages of that reaction.

EDMUND The 'later stages' of the train of thought initiated by Aristarchus could not even have been conjectured by him.

P.A. According to Heisenberg the fact of *observing* the play of minute physical factors influences the play being observed. I do not know if he is saying that what I have been used to regard as a *mental* phenomenon has an effect on what I call a *physical* fact; I may have been in error in discriminating between 'mental' phenomena

and 'physical' facts. Such an 'idea' is perhaps a flaw in the mental apparatus. As a human I have a prejudice in favour of regarding my thoughts as 'superior' to the apparently random movements of infinitely minute particles of matter.

ROLAND Are you prejudiced against the random movements of minute particles of matter?

ROBIN The whole of psychoanalytic theory seems to be vitiated – as shown by the structured nature of the system itself – by favouring only those phenomena which appear to conform to classical logic, the sort of logic with which we are already familiar.

PAUL Timidity is a fact of our nature. We cling to anything which gives us the chance of saying, 'Thus far and no further'. Any discovery is followed by a closure. The remainder of our thoughts and endeavours is devoted to consolidating the system to prevent the intrusion of yet another thought. Even any roughness of our system that might facilitate the lodgement of the germ of another idea is smoothed and polished.

ROLAND I should have thought you religious people were the most perfect example of that.

PAUL You can hardly find a finer example of shining perfection of structure than a mathematical formulation. The attack against logic itself as a weak 'cement' on which the structure depends still continues. Psychiatrists try to restrain 'illogical' systems physically within mental institutions. As often as not the guardians – doctors, nurses and others – fall to the assault of the systems they are supposed to 'contain', like an army which, 'containing' a besieged force, falls to an attack by the besieged. They call the psychiatric casualties 'breakdowns'.

P.A. And you bring a religious dressing to heal the 'breakdown'?

PAUL Not at all. In fact we hope to aid the escape from the mental and moral strait jacket into which you medicals try to confine them.

P.A. Perhaps neither you nor I officially try to conform to 'as things have been so they remain'. But many of your people seem to wish to confine religious mystics.

PAUL As your people do with scientific or artistic geniuses –

P.A. – I grant even we want to 'cure' –

PAUL – often described as crazy or mad. Gerard Manley Hopkins was better as a Jesuit than as a schizophrenic.

ROLAND We follow the lead given by our shepherds.

P.A. You need not be sheep. We do not aspire to be leaders or shepherds; we hope to introduce the person to his 'real' self. Although we do not claim to be successful, the experience shows how powerful is the urge of the individual to be led – to believe in some god or good shepherd.

ROBIN A father figure in fact.

P.A. No; a 'father figure' is a technical term, but the individual person believes that there is a real person approximating to such a theoretical term. 'God the Father' is a familiar term about which Paul can say more than I can.

PAUL We believe in God, not in Father Figures.

P.A. We do not affirm or deny the reality, but we do wish our analysands to recognize that one root of such an *idea is* a reminiscence of an actual human father. That is not the same as saying that because there is a reminiscence there cannot be a 'thing' remembered, or that because we try to draw attention to a pre-existing idea, generated perhaps by a common and unworthy reality, there may not be some other source from which such an idea springs.

PAUL I'm glad to hear it. It has always been one of my objections to psychoanalysis and its devotees that they appear to be so dogmatic, so sure in their refutation of religious truth, that –

P.A. I should not like to replace one dogma by another; the erection of any god should be studied.

PAUL Isn't that what the Church has always advocated?

P.A. It appears to me that unquestioning belief in God is demanded by the Church or its representatives. Perhaps I am misled by the Institutions of Religion which have obscured for me the chance of going beyond the institutions' dogmata to a reality beyond.

PAUL There are certainly plenty of religious teachers who have deplored that and warned against it. St. John of the Cross even said that reading his own works could be a stumbling block if they were revered to the detriment of direct experience. Teachings, dogma, hymns, congregational worship, are supposed to be preludes to religion proper – not final ends in themselves.

P.A. This sounds not unlike a difficulty which we experience when psychoanalytic jargon – 'father figures' and so forth –

ROBIN Touché!

P.A. – are substituted for looking into the patient's mind itself to intuit that to which the psychoanalyst is striving to point; like a dog

that looks at its master's pointing hand rather than at the object the hand is trying to point out.

ALICE Thea, I hope that after this you aren't going to have as disturbed a night as I had.

ROLAND You tossed about till dawn.

THEA I don't dream much. Perhaps Roland will dream this time.

ROLAND I don't dream.

ROBIN Don't let's start on all that. I'm all for a good night's rest.

P.A. 'Talking about' dreams does not cause dreams. They exist – and some of us think, with Freud, that they are worthy of consideration and debate. The night, the dream, is a 'roughness' between the smooth polished consciousness of daylight; in that 'roughness' an idea might lodge. Even in the flat polished surface there can be a delusion, or an hallucination, or some other flaw in which an idea might lodge and flourish before it can be stamped out and 'cured'.

PAUL Yes, but you believe that dreams can be *scientifically* studied. That limits your freedom to investigate lies, falsities, 'roughnesses', instead of looking for Truth only.

P.A. The search for Truth does not limit my capacity; my freedom is limited by my lack of equipment, lack of capacity to look for the truth. Your assumption that God exists does limit the search by precluding the discovery that there is no God if in fact there is none. Anyhow – how does one discover a negative?

PAUL In practice I don't find that belief limiting. It certainly would limit my researches into Truth if I worshipped Money or a widely admired footballer *as if* he or it were God.

P.A. We find financiers and sportsmen who practise that, in contrast to the religion professed. That is why it is useful to have terms such as 'father figure'. It is unfortunate if the term is thought to imply that the *reality* is correctly defined as nothing other than a 'father figure'.

THEA These distinctions seem to me to be subtle and are exercises in semantics rather than adventures in the realm of Truth.

ALICE I agree. It sounds like a clever man demonstrating his superiority to the simple folk who believe in God.

P.A. Y am not sure about your 'simple folk'. 'Fundamentals' are often simple; 'folk' are not. It is true that it may be difficult to distinguish between the 'simplicity', say, of genius, and the 'simplicity' of

the fraud who has learned to simulate the characteristics of genius. The garb of the great is often used to clothe the nakedness of the fraud; money is used to cover the bankruptcy of the poor; a beautiful girl instinctively wraps an ugly soul in her looks.

ALICE I have known men fall for the divinity of a beautiful nitwit.

P.A. Why restrict it to the male? Physical sex often masquerades as passionate love.

ROBIN The beauty of a handsome man or woman is easily and quickly 'perceived'. The reality behind may require more investigation than the greedy swallower of mental bait has achieved.

ROLAND There are many 'glittering prizes' offered for the greedy soul.

ALICE Well, I can hardly keep my eyes open. Bed for me – but please go on as long as you like. (*She goes out*.)

ROLAND If we go to sleep, perhaps we can still continue in dreams while asleep.

THEA I can't see why the truth is supposed to emerge in dreams.

P.A. '*In vino veritas*' does not mean that the drunken manor the dreamer is speaking the truth. The drunkard, like the dreamer, is less likely to be an efficient liar; he is unlikely to smooth the 'rough place'. But his inefficiency can be turned to good account.

ROBIN Dreamers and poets are credited with exceptional powers.

P.A. There is an ambiguity here because the dreamer is not distinguished from the sage or poet. The dreamer is like the drunkard – often in a state of decreased conscious efficiency. To be efficient the human has to be conscious, or, as we say, 'has to have all his wits about him'. We are concerned not with what the individual *means* to say, so much as with what he does *not* intend to say, but does in fact say.

ROLAND This depends on your interpretation of *what* he says – not what he *says.*

P.A. I am concerned with what he says and what it is about. My interpretation is my attempt to formulate *what* he says so that he can compare it with his other ideas.

ROLAND If I say I am going to Munden I mean just that; I don't mean I am going to have a sexual orgy.

P.A. If, as is the case, I am having asocial intercourse with you, I am concerned only with the fact that you intend to go to Munden. If you were coming to me for medical advice I would be concerned with

your physical fitness to go, and would expect to hear and observe for myself what medical matters were involved in your journey from here to there. If you said you wanted mental help I would regard the intention 'to go to Munden' as 'peripheral' to what is involved. If I considered that I had your permission to find out what was involved in coming to me and in 'going to Munden', I would direct my response to the area signalized by the words, 'sexual orgy'.

ROBIN In other words – sex.

P.A. No, not sex – the area signalized by the word Roland used.

ROLAND Only words?

P.A. No. Anything that appeared to be used as signals. Words, as Freud mentioned, are part of a recent invention, the human capacity to converse. There are many older and more primitive methods: sexual methods, for example.

PAUL Religion, too, has its methods.

P.A. Communication with, or to whom, or what? God?

PAUL This is what we believe.

P.A. Or are they methods of communication with other groups? Certainly many religious communities seem to communicate with each other. The Wars of Religion in France is one example.

PAUL That is so, although I would not regard war as a method which is recognized as religious.

ROBIN Bunyan wrote *The Holy War.*

ROLAND 'The Lord of Hosts' isn't intended to be a religious metaphor.

PAUL A metaphor may derive from actual physical behaviour, but by the time it has become a metaphor the physical behaviour denoted has usually become wedded to a different activity. Words, for example, can be substituted for violence.

P.A. Or thinking, as Freud points out, is interposed 'between impulse and action' and may have a delaying and 'softening' effect on the impulsive act. Thinking displaces action.

ROLAND And vice versa. Does the impulse become weaker or stronger?

ROBIN I have known the impulse to say an angry word become a grievance which then bursts out in a murderous assault.

P.A. Brooding is not thinking – it often results in an assault on a target other than the one to whom the original impulse was directed.

ROLAND Does a fetus think?

DOCTOR It certainly kicks its mother from inside. You *could* call it an aggressive act.

P.A. I cannot think of any verbalizations which would be suitable to describe mental processes of infant or fetus. I would need to extend the domain as presently delineated by 'mental' to fit it to include the activities of the fetus.

DOCTOR What about beta-elements?

P.A. In so far as I have proposed it as a non-mental category I would have no objection to talking about 'fetal' kicking as a beta-element, a prototype of a dream element, a transitive element becoming a verbally expressible formulation – 'aggression'. I would think of the fetal physical activity as an 'idea generator' or '*idée mère*'.

DOCTOR What's that? Can you elucidate your concept further?

P.A. As I think my own hunch to be itself an idée mère rather than an 'hypothesis', further elaboration may be a premature investment in 'clothing', the 'thing itself' which would cramp rather than facilitate growth, 'scientific' growth. The premature 'scientific theory' would be a restraint. The 'penetrating shaft of darkness' is what I would like to use to illuminate what Freud calls obscure areas of the mind.

PAUL 'Be shelled eyes with double dark', as Gerard Manley Hopkins calls it, 'and find the uncreated light'.

P.A. Exactly. These poets find a way to express –

ROBIN – not only the past and present, but even future needs.

ROLAND I don't understand.

DOCTOR I find Hopkins too obscure and too religious for my comprehension, though I like his poems even when I don't understand them.

PAUL You medicals are prejudiced towards physical evidence, but there are many who break out of that strait-jacket – Sir Thomas Browne for example.

P.A. 'Strait jacket', 'crazy', 'psychotic' – all are associated with confining the Disturbing Mind so that it will not disturb the peace of our Sleeping Beauties, or our 'beauty sleep'.

ROLAND Religion has been aptly described as a drug.

PAUL Because it is used for that purpose by some people I do not see why religion should be held responsible, any more than why wine should be blamed for alcoholism. You psychoanalysts want to cure people for being alcoholics.

P.A. That is not the same thing as wanting to stop them from taking wine. Religion at least deprecates Enthusiasm, but I think the enthusiasm referred to is excessive.

ROBIN 'Too much', 'too little', 'too often'. Oh, for a muse of fire that would burn up all these terms of mensuration, maps without statement of scale, wills o' the wisp to mislead the unwary into bogus security.

ROLAND Bogus 'security'. How well I know that 'heaven'; 'I tell you for a fact that . . .'. It is the proud banner beneath which the liar unfurls his campaign! 'Great is the truth and shall prevail . . .'

ROBIN – because 'none cares if it prevail or not'.

ROLAND And so the truth will out – sometimes!

DOCTOR Bed-time for me. I'm going to sleep – I hope. (*They all prepare to depart*.)

4

PAUL (*soliloquizing*) Anyone would think psychoanalysts never quarrelled. When the Wars of Psychoanalysis start we shall see something – and no holds barred. Santayana feared the day when the scientific beasts and blackguards would get hold of the world. What made him speak of the English as 'sweet boyish masters'? Goodnight, Roland; thank Alice for her hospitality. It is your turn to dream isn't it?

ROLAND I don't dream. I'm nearly asleep now . . .

DOCTOR Quite right; don't dream. Ever tried mescal? No? The pyramids at Teotihuacan would give you a nightmare.

ROLAND Noa! Noa! Take these horrible clothes away! Do you hear! Evade! Psycho-flim-flam. That fellow would drive me up the wall. I don't see what Alice sees in him. Have they excavated these pyramids? The wind blows chill in this deathly place. That cruel bitch would have any man drawn and quartered if she could find a butcher to do it.

ALICE Do you mean Rosemary? I like her.

ROLAND You women are all the same. She's a cruel snake. The snake didn't tempt Eve; she tempted him. I see him now, slithering down the tree, his tongue flickering as she caresses him. What an undergrowth of contorted pipes and tubes to plant as a thicket about this tree.

DOCTOR No. Quite usual. It's the mescal, the local form of tundra.

ALICE Roland, you're dreaming; don't fight the bedclothes.

ROLAND What! Quite right. The tube is the quickest.

ALICE Good night . . . nearly asleep myself.

ROLAND You're an ugly-looking devil. Who are you? Not the devil? A nightmare then? Not a nightmare? You aren't a fact.

DU I am the future of the Past: the shape of the thing-to-come.

ROLAND Not a ghost?

DU Do I grin like a ghost? How do you like these teeth? All my own. I fasten myself to your psyche-psycho-lodgement, we call it. Most amusing.

ROLAND Get out, you ugly devil!

DU Wherever did you learn such language! You must have been dreaming.

ROLAND I thought this wasn't a dream. Is it a psycho-drama? No?

DU No; Psycho-sthan itself. Poor Bunyan – you remember him of course. He thought it was Vanity-Fair, but we are imaginary vain things. What the 'people' *do*, you know. They are what you will call God some day.

ROLAND This is terrible.

DU Not terrible – it's idée mère. Real – the substructure of the real. We shall drink damnation to our families who surround you with their hateful hisses. Don't be afraid – you are immortal, as your padre used to say. By the way, you must meet him; we have had him here since he played for hisses with our camp asp.

ROLAND Poor devil.

DU I told you not to use that word! Do you want your teeth smashed in? Or shall I have them filed away?

ROLAND Filed away, filed away death, or in sad sigh press let me be laide.

DU Wider yet; and wider let your jaws be set. You can have them set in a grin like mine. They're fashionable in psychosis, but some wear them that way in Psycho-sthan too. As you descend the steep with our orphean Liar you can sing of chaos and eternal night.

ROLAND Let me get up.

DU That's hard and rare, you know, without a heavenly Muse to go ting-a-ling.

ROLAND For you but not for me. Oh death where is Thy sting-a-ling?

DU That's profane!

ROLAND What have I done now? You don't believe in God, do you?

DU Not believe in God?! Of course I do. How do you suppose I'd be here if I didn't believe in God?

ROLAND I'm sorry – I didn't know this was heaven.

DU Well, not heaven exactly, but the residential area of heaven. I must give you a carte blanche – valid for eternity to all parts. Have you travellers' cheques? Never mind – I'll have some forged for you in no time.

ROLAND Won't that be discovered?

DU Of course; they are invalid everywhere. They are *promises* to pay – they cost nothing.

ROLAND I thought there was a danger of hell fire.

DU Oh no. That is only a fact. Somehow the idea leaked out from some recent supernova; people think they will be shrivelled up like a potato crisp. But that's only if you are alive.

ROLAND Do you mean to say I'm dead?

DU Good solar system, no! You're an immortal soul. Didn't anyone tell you? I should have thought Paul would have mentioned it.

ROLAND I *am* tired. I wish these people would go. They've gone? I hope I haven't gone to sleep. What the hell are you doing here, Du?

DU I told you it wasn't hell – held perhaps. I can kick my way out of here easily.

ROLAND Have I kicked my way in?

DU No. You are late, my son. 'The anarchs of the world of darkness keep a throne for thee'; the world of darkness, the Void, the formless Infinite.

ROLAND Infinity – what my math's man burbles about – zero, formlessness.

DU At last. I thought you would not wake to the simplest fact. Any profundity is simple; that's what makes it so difficult. It's not complicated, grand enough for nincompoops. Any fetus could tell you that. I wish you'd stop tossing about.

ROLAND How can I help it with you threshing around?

DU I'm only an idea of yours. You abort me if you kick around like this.

ROLAND You've no right to be kicking around if you are only an idea – even an idea in the mind of God. Metaphors have no right to behave as if they were facts.

DU Words; words; words have no right to be rigid definitory caskets preventing my birth. I have the right to exist without depending on a thinker thinking all day *and* night. Come inside.

ROLAND No thank you said the fly to the spider.

DU Said the fetus to the father – if I may use metaphors borrowed from the world for the living. An idea has as much right to blush unseen as any blush. I remember a blush that killed the man who would insist on exposing it.

ROLAND And I remember a man who was killed by a blush which was invisible to anyone except the available cheeks.

DU It is very provoking! Very! Cheeks but no blush just dead white; no cheeks but a blush waiting to be seen.

ALICE Darling, you are very restless.

ROLAND Sorry, dear.

DU What was that? I wish these humans wouldn't interrupt. I have quite lost my train of thought – have you seen one anywhere?

ROLAND Shut up! I want to go to sleep. Even lies ought to be allowed to R.I.P. and remain undisturbed as epitaphs. Oughtism – that's what it is. You ought . . . to be something. Why can't I choose to be crazy if I want – or sane?

DU That's *my* right. I can kick my way out of this ruddy matrix when I like.

ROLAND But you can't get back if you do. I know. How? I just *do*.

DU You talk like that foolish animal that said, 'Cogito ergo sum'.

ROLAND Oh, go to sleep. 'Eat your damn bun', as the father said to the child.

DU And the child, who was Father to the child, ate it and was expelled from the garden.

ROLAND So the weeds grew up and choked it. And the father said, 'Let there be a psychoanalyst who shall cultivate bigger and more beautiful lies in perpetuity. In Infinity he shall rule for ever; a void in which wild ghosts of fluxions will wander without an optic to devour them'. Why should logic apply everywhere except in mathematics? It is the only space in which it retains a hold – though tenuous.

DU Mature adults project it onto the universe of universes although it is inappropriate. They won't even study quantum mechanics lest mechanics don't obey the laws that apply to their feeble minds; they don't want discoveries lest the discoveries would compel an expansion of their minds. 'If my mind bursts with all this stuff where shall I be?' As if it matters where all discarded experiments go! Quo fata vocant? Quo fas et gloria ducunt? 'They lead only

to the grave', say the know-alls who then fight with other know-alls. 'I've heard different', says one obstinate from the unyielding fortress of his bigotry and ignorance. 'Crazy', whispers the still small voice of surrender as it yields to sanity. Come on! Wake up!

ROLAND You won't like it if you find you are a mind and have to obey the laws of Logic.

DU You won't like it if you sleep or wake and have to obey the laws of Oughtism. The laws of O – the perfect blanc. No poles for bipolarity; no middle to exclude; no genius to do the job you are too lazy to do; no fool to dare to be 'silly' enough to be holy.

ROLAND Oh goodness – again?

DU I said 'holy' – not good.

ROLAND What's the difference?

DU I am 'holy', but not 'good' or 'bad'. I am oughto-nomic, not automatic. The thought that I was fated to become 'you' – if I could think – would make me die of mental toxaemia. Luckily I don't think. If I were articulate I should suffer synaptic rheumatism.

ROLAND I don't know what you are talking about.

ROLAND & DU (*together*) There's a great gulf fixed between us.

ROLAND Who are you?

DU You.

ROLAND Never heard of you. What do you mean, 'you'? You are you – not me.

DU That's what I said. The confusion is semantic, due to your ridiculous articulate system of communication. You have heard 'of me, but you have never heard *me*. I sometimes use your belly to rumble around with. You've heard of the young woman of Lee I'm sure – she's one of my articulations.

ROLAND Oh shut up! You make my head ache. And it's not funny.

DU It's not funny because your articulations are too stiff' for fun. If you knew how ridiculous you look when you 'smile' and show your teeth. Or when you are heroic – in reality blown up by your super-intelligent mechanical evacuation. I am Ought o'Nomic – the most venerable of your three bears – four if you include gold; five including locks.

ROLAND Get out! You are a lot of old 'squares'.

DU 'I' will be on your hypotenuse before you can say Pythagoras. Deux Jambons et une andouille – as Anatole says.

ROLAND Three; or two plus one; or Trinity. How helpful is the ghost of the departed quantity? The other two are not. Equalled with them in fate; not fame.

DU I should think not! You should not substitute an automatic system for an ought-o-nomic. Ought-istic is better than that. You've got your intelligence where your wisdom should be-let me change them round.

ROLAND No, no, no! I prefer straights to rounds.

DU Well, keep your straits then and serve you right if you find your straits too narrow for your arts. I'm going to sleep.

ROLAND And stay asleep – please!

ALICE You've been laughing and crying and shouting . . .

ROLAND I never heard such atrocious puns in my life.

DU That high explosive wasn't a pun. That was your *practical* joke.

ROLAND Excuse me – I did *not* fire the gun.

DU Of course not. Yours was only a six-inch How – that was a five point nine. Remember that fellow who sniped you down the path at Berles-aux-Bois? He was only bored, poor chap.

ROLAND I'm no snipe.

DU You would never have 'seen' the joke if he hadn't been feeling hot, bored, drinking warm Bocks and wishing he was in Germany and not on that lousy West Front where it was all quiet and nothing to do.

ROLAND What were *you* doing anyway?

DU I was keeping quiet, lying as close to your CNS as I could get and trying to make you have the sense to lie flat on the ground – drowned in adrenal stimulation.

ROLAND At least I got back to lunch.

DU Just – thanks to me, not your bloody heroism and conceptual rubbish.

ROLAND No! I had to give into *your* 'ought' non-sense.

DU Make up your mind – 'sense' or 'non-sense'?

PRIEST Sense of Duty, I hope.

ROLAND & DU It jolly nearly did for us I can tell you. A few more inches or weeks and it *would* have been *non*-sense for both.

ROLAND 'And, boys and girls, what do you think they were singing as they marched? "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ the Lord".' *That's* what one of your religious told the children after a

conducted tour to the Front! Why didn't he listen to the words and not just some of Du's music?

DU Not my music.

PRIEST Not my religious.

ROLAND 'Quis', as we used to say.

DU & PRIEST 'Fain I!', as we used to say.

PRIEST Quo fata vocant. Quo fas et gloria ducunt. Ubique.

ROLAND That's all very well for the gunners. It's no bloody use to the snipe.

ALICE They shouldn't bleat so much.

ROLAND You should hear them as they dive out of a marvellous blue sky towards the marvellous blue of the Broad with only a thin line of golden reeds shot with the green of the shoots mingling with the gold.

DU Lovely; if only you wouldn't use that ridiculous language of 'shoots' and 'shot'.

ROLAND And the ridiculous music of your snores. I thought you had gone to sleep.

DU I never 'sleep', as you call it. That is using your language in which the sleep of death and the sleep of spring are indistinguishable. Priest is worse – he uses it to describe something that has *none* of the attributes on the existence of which the communicability of language depends.

PRIEST True – and you are dependent on me.

ROLAND Only in so far as I have not yet rid myself of you or your unbeautiful music.

DU But just now you saw the blue skies and blue water and – though *you* didn't – *I* know you saw Prince, that horse of which one small boy, whom you have forgotten, was very proud. 'Ah', he used to say, 'you should see Prince!'. And when you did at last see him you thought he was only an old cart-horse; I knew he was a magnificent Shire. I couldn't make you see anything, yet you had eyes.

PRIEST Yes, I remember him too. He was in the field one Sunday; you two were grousing your way down to the meeting-house to hear that young lad from Puckeridge preach to the labourers and their wives, all tricked out in their Sunday best.

ROLAND Now, when I see how neat and fine they looked, it is for my gaudy mind I weep. Yet I wouldn't, even if I could, go back to Latchford. It has gone, I expect – and so have I. And the river Rib?

I saw it when I composed the lines 'When Mimram rolls his lordly wave' – a pretty stream in another part of Hertfordshire.

DU The Steinbeck?

ROLAND Oh shut up!

DU I was there – so frightened and so excited. Do you remember the Great Woolley Bears as we saw the black cloud twist out of the invisible long-range howitzer shells above the canal? Does anyone remember the canal?

ROLAND I remember you twisting and contorting my guts with dread I hoped none could see, the sweat which I hoped my man thought was August heat and not the chill of dying courage.

DU Why didn't you desert, you fool? Too cowardly?

ROLAND Yes, but patriotic – a drivelling fool. Do you know, I really thought my colonel, my company commander and my men loved England? The bluebells at Birchanger, the daisy chains I made in my first classes. . .'Summer suns are glowing / Over land and sea. / Happy light is flowing' – Over the canal and me!

DU Cod always said you were a fool. Do you remember?

ROLAND He came to a bad end. He was drunk most of the time.

DU If you had had any sense you would have got drunk and invalided out with shell-shock. Do you remember that marvellous Red Cross train as it shimmered and glistened that horrible night as your lot plodded and snorted in the blacked-out train to the star-shell-pierced horizon?

ROLAND I do; what of it? I'm glad I didn't miss it – now.

DU Now? You don't know what you are missing!

ROLAND My cheeks are cold; the skin is tight over my skull. It is hideous, this eye-wearied search at those corpse-stenching huts. I have stared and stared and stared at them. Nothing. My God! What was that?

DU Only a tin roof slipping off. There! There!

ROLAND I don't see anything.

DU That is scarcely odd because there is nothing to see! There's nothing there, you fool.

ROLAND It made me jump. I thought it was a Boche. You can't see them creeping from one but to another in these horse-lines.

DU Horse? Nonsense! Mules. Horses can't imitate the scream of a coming shell. Mules, man! Mules! They are the stuff.

ROLAND They stink.

DU What do you expect the poor things to do when they are dead. How would *you* like to be dead in a righteous cause and then not even be allowed to stink?

ROLAND Are you trying to drive me mad? Because you won't.

DU You *are* mad. No sane person would hang around here dreaming of bluebells and daisy chains and glory.

ROLAND I am not listening. I shall watch those ruddy huts.

DU Pooh! There are lots of the best brains in England, warm, comfortable, well-fed –

ROLAND You would be surprised, but I would rather be here.

DU You remember what Popsy said? 'You will only get a "wooden cross" – not a V.C.' How right he was! The race doesn't go to the strong you know; you're more likely to win a wooden spoon. Not fast enough; too stupid to be cunning. Anyhow, the war is lost. The Colonel will tell you you'll win. I tell you you won't. There are no reserves! None! Nothing between you and the sea.

ROLAND Except me.

DU How grand that sounds! Save it up to tell them in the pubs in Oxford – that's where you are going, isn't it? *Après la guerre finie – mademoiselle aurait une bonne sous-venereal mal à dire.*

ROLAND I was only quoting what we were told by the company commander who had at least a mile more ground between himself and those blasted quack-quack-quacking machine guns than I and my crew of Lewis gunners had. My God! I can hear them now! I hadn't time to be scared then – now I have all Eternity in which to feel the pallor of my lips and the teeth chattering between them. 'Oh thank you, Sergeant – a nice hot cup of tea! How did you fix it? Marvellous!' Those men of mine! and I was supposed to be the officer! Never mind; I knew – though later I forgot and believed all that fustian stuff. It scares me now when I think of the years I spent in the misery of trying to believe I was worth my keep. And now? Who'll buy my nightmares?

P.A. I will. If you have tears to shed, shed them now.

ROLAND You? I thought you psychoanalysts had been cured.

P.A. So did I; luckily it was never as bad as that.

ROLAND Luckily? I used to envy you. I thought, 'How wonderful to be decorated for bravery, to be a rugger blue, to be . . .'

P.A. So did I. I used to wonder why it didn't work. Each success left me further from my goal, further into the icy wastes, till I couldn't

even recognize a character which had once seemed to be someone I could respect. But not my Distinguished –

ROLAND I didn't know you had any distinctions.

P.A. I hadn't; only the insignia. I never rid myself of the fear that the shell which all could recognize was all that was left.

ROLAND And isn't it? It hadn't occurred to me that you were nothing else.

P.A. Your contempt is real enough.

ROLAND I hadn't any doubt of the reality of your contempt for me though it was usually dressed in conventional civility.

P.A. That is true of both of us; real feelings masquerade as something they are not. 'Progress' is hard to detect because of the fancy dress in which it is clothed. How banal one's discoveries turn out to be when at last we become aware of them!

ROLAND Isn't it better to remain deluded?

P.A. I suppose we accept such truth as we have become sufficiently robust to survive.

ROLAND Why should Truth be so incompatible with ourselves that it comes to us as a threat?

P.A. 'Ourselves' are not of any importance. That is too terrible to grasp after the protection of the womb; later the womb of our ignorance. Facile – but could there be any other 'explanation'?

5

ROLAND Don't be too imaginative or Alice will have another terrible night.

P.A. Being 'too imaginative' might cause us all to have a terrible awakening.

EDMUND These cosmic disasters – super-novae for example – occur as we *know,* but cannot *imagine.* The sun should explode in a few thousand million years.

ROBIN What about a dip in the sea before breakfast?

ROLAND Tomorrow morning? Yes – not in a few million years.

EDMUND That is what P.A. means. The swim in the sea helps us to keep a firm grip on our ignorance. We can clutch it to ourselves like a cloak which we cannot bear to have torn from our shoulders.

ROLAND You are rather hard on us poor ignorami. You wouldn't be worse off if you joined us in a swim.

EDMUND I don't doubt it, but I want to go on with my astronomical hobbies.

P.A. There is nothing to stop you provided you are not so terrified by your imagination or your scientific activity that you cannot think at all.

ROBIN The government might become so terrified that they stopped you. But perhaps they are too ignorant to be terrified; that also would act as a cloak to protect the tender shoots of scientific speculation till they become 'theories'.

ROLAND If they become strongly established theories they become too strong for the tender shoots of social speculation. Panic can be a powerful solvent of discipline.

ALICE No government would dare to stop astronomers doing astronomical research.

P.A. If I were the government and wanted to stop astronomical research I am sure I could do it in a subtle enough way to escape criticism. I could say there was not enough paper to spare for the printing of astronomical articles. I could attack the availability of materials which were essential for the manufacture of certain instruments. I could discourage grants for the education of potentially gifted astronomy students.

ROLAND Which goes to show that it would be inadvisable to let you into government posts of power!

ALICE I think it would help if an astronomer stood for Parliament.

ROBIN But the principle stands – it is dangerous to allow men of such mischievous power authority which they can use to prevent mental development.

P.A. Suppose astronomers could convince the majority of human beings that the sun showed signs of imminent catastrophe; that at any moment we would be enveloped in whirlpools of immense temperatures. Would you allow that to be broadcast when nothing could be done?

ROBIN The religious people have already issued warnings that the end of the world is at hand; that God is a consuming fire and so on.

P.A. Nobody minds God's being a consuming fire. They either say that He does not exist or that He is really rather a Decent Chap, a Good Fellow, a Good Sport.

EDMUND Even the earliest religious people we know, the Egyptians, regarded the Sun as a powerful god. Milton, to come nearer our time, had an idea that 'Heavenly Light' should be treated with respect.

ROBIN In passing he touched his cap more than respectfully, as Blake pointed out, in The Other Direction – 'the Void and Formless Infinite'.

PAUL Many people think religion should include respect not only for God but also for the powers of Evil.

ROLAND Yes, but no one believes in religion nowadays.

PAUL There is much muddled thinking. Religion, the human impulse, is often confused with God or the Object to which religious adoration is directed. I say that all mankind is religious, just as Freud said all mankind is sexual. But the expression of religious forces in the

individual is coloured by each person's character and mental quality. Someone who prides himself on his no-nonsense unbelief is sure to show that in fact he has a religious belief of the most fanatical and intellectually contemptible kind.

ALICE Oh, you mean addiction to sport and such like – that's not religion.

P.A. I agree with Paul and disagree with Alice. The addiction, as Alice calls it, is not religion if it is obvious to the person that he or she is addicted. I have, however, observed by using scrupulous care in my attention that the behaviour of an individual displays qualities which can be felt to be correctly described as 'religious' and *not* to be correctly described in any lesser terms.

ALICE I don't call that religion.

P.A. I do not mean that it is 'religious' in the sense of something worthy of general or absolute respect, but that the phenomenon observed is correctly characterized as religion. Whether that particular religious characteristic is being worthily or adequately deployed is another matter. There may well be differences of opinion as regards the exercise of the religious faculty by an Aztec or Voodoo or Roman Catholic or Jew or Protestant. These differences are not evidential material either for the existence or non-existence of religion.

ROLAND I don't see what you mean.

P.A. A man may be exercising a sexual fetishistic capacity. That does not mean there is no such thing as sex or that the object is that towards which sex should be properly directed.

ROBIN What is 'properly'?

P.A. In a manner which is capable of development rather than decay.

ROBIN At that rate an old man whose capacities were decaying would not be properly sexual.

P.A. The decay you talk of is nothing to do with sex; it is 'to do with' anatomy or physiology, and should be distinct from decay or development which 'originates' in sex. Similarly, development or decay of religious impulses which originate in religious forces should be distinguished from those which originate elsewhere.

PAUL We *do* contend that there is an important distinction to be made between development originating in God and that originating in the individual's impulses. Isaiah wrote as if there were no doubt that the impulse came from direct experience of God.

ROBIN Would P.A. admit the validity of Isaiah's experience, or would he regard it as having hallucinatory force – a phantom of the mind?

P.A. I do not have scientific evidence for discussion of an event of so many centuries ago.

PAUL The religious experience to which we refer is current – *not* hundreds of years ago – even though history suggests that it occurred from remote ages. In recent times Cowper wrote, correctly, 'Sometimes a light surprises the Christian while he sings'.

P.A. He was manic-depressive and committed suicide.

PAUL The religious experience is universal; it is not closed to the psychotic, the unfortunate.

ROBIN You don't deny, do you, that religion is often apparently the cause?

P.A. I do not deny cause; I know that it is likely that we would think in terms of causes. Has Edmund any ideas about this?

EDMUND I like to think of causes, but I see no reason for believing that the human mind would ever comprehend the vast universes that surround us. The religious people express optimistic statements.

PAUL 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.'

EDMUND That is one such statement.

P.A. It is an observation and Paul has formulated what *he* observed. His statement seemed to me to be made from the religious vertex. I know that Edmund maintains that he is without religion and I am left to suppose that his observations and formulations are 'only' or 'just' scientific. Le Conte said that there was one fact we should *never* know – the composition of the stars. I would be interested to know what Edmund would say about that *'never.'*

EDMUND Le Conte was right to say so, but spectrographic investigation leads us to have definite ideas about stellar composition.

ALICE Let's leave stellar composition to Edmund and another day. I suggest Bed Time for us all.

6

P.A. You asked me to take over at Meteren when you were scared out of your wits. You survived till the day you were marching along that ashy grey road. Remember? – that silly old bugger standing at the salute on the side of the road. Quentin, who had died, was marching by your side.

GHOST OF STOKES That's right. Quentin was religious; everyone jeered when he broke down – shell-shock they called it – and didn't return from leave. Lord! I thought you were going to crack up you looked so scared. Eyes left! They say the old man always salutes troops leaving the Second Army.

GHOST OF CLIFF Silly old fool. You were a pious bunch. Left, Right, Left, Right.

GHOST OF KEEN Even now the slog along that road makes me tired. You were glad to be going out of the Salient. They had to amputate my legs. At first they thought they would save my arms, but they couldn't. So I can march without fatigue and don't have to carry a rifle. Luckily that last arm did for me – I died. I can't help laughing when I think how funny I would have looked had I come out of the anaesthetic. I wouldn't still be marching, marching, marching with you on this long dusty road. They say it turns to star-dust. At the end of the journey –

P.A. 'We shall have a. . .'

GHOST OF KEEN

'A ___ for you and a ___ for me
There's a ___ for you and me . . .'

ROSEMARY Pox? Not bloody likely!

QUENTIN (*laughing*) How coarse you are.

GHOST OF CLIFF Fancy you knowing dirty jokes like that! You must have had shell shock! No shell left.

P.A. This is a long march. 'A long, long trail a-winding into the land of my dreams.' They didn't say it was going to be a land of our nightmares. The Fifth Army, wasn't it?

GHOST OF STOKES And yet another? Will the line stretch out to the crack of Doom? That fifteen-inch Howitzer cracked, on its side, tossed into its crew's gun-pit. That scared him, didn't it, P.A.?

P.A. It still does. Psychoanalysis they call it now. Not a pretty name for a not-pretty thing. It's dark; clouding over, only it's not star-dust. 'Sir! Sir! Sir! You'll write to my mother, sir? Won't you, sir? Won't you? 'Oh *shut up damn you.*' 'Why can't I cough? Sir! Why can't I cough?' 'Because – blast you! – your thoracic wall has been blown off!' 'I don't know enough medicine for Thoracic Wall, I'm not qualified.' The gunners know how to operate on the Thoracic Wall.

GHOST OF KEEN On arms and legs too! A bit rough perhaps; they work fast though and without anaesthetic. Their Name Liveth For Evermore. It is carved into marble with Hypersthesia. That's why I laugh for evermore. Ah! Here you are – I thought you'd never come – come in padre – come in and tell us the latest funny story. Make us laugh for evermore! Quoth the Chaplain General, 'Evermore!'

P.A. You are becoming light-headed. Quieten down!

GHOST OF KEEN Only light-armed Kerns, aren't they? Gallowglasses are the heavy-armed – don't run over me Tanks! – don't run over me. Sir! Sir! Why won't my arms and legs crawl? Why won't they crawl? 'Shut up damn you! You're upsetting my sleep!'

P.A. He got through it all right, but kept on dreaming and fell in love. In his dreams she was a most beautiful girl. Unfortunately it was a real image and she was only a girl.

QUENTIN So he woke up.

P.A. Yes; you could call it that. The medico called it being 'conscious'. Of course they didn't tell him what being 'conscious' would be like. This is certainly a dark, *dark* road. There! There's the other Lot.

THEA 'Men Who March Away', aren't they? How steady they are. No songs, no drum beat, nothing. Where are they going? Away? Earth's vain shadows flee, I was told.

PADRE Don't shake your locks at me. I did not tell you where the shadows fled or how to live without a cloak of darkness!

GENERAL Nor did I. The approach march was to be in cover of darkness. The yet more glorious day was the day of victory.

P.A. So we lost after all? They were the *best* dragon's teeth; they were certainly the most expensive. We shall know the cost later.

7

P.A. We are to meet in the kitchen in future.

ROLAND Are these the 'servants' quarters'? I suppose we are lucky to have anywhere at all to meet. Our new lords and masters appoint us our proper station. By the way – has Rosemary decided finally to throw in her lot with them? Does anyone know if she has married him? – Man, I mean.

ROBIN Who decides that? Rosemary, or Man? Holmes, you ought to know who is the perpetrator of the crime.

SHERLOCK No – I am only the detective; the rest I leave to the Courts. If she has disappeared I could try my skill, such as it is. If she is merely absent in mind we could enlist our psychoanalyst. The last I saw of her she was wearing all the trappings of our ruling classes.

ROLAND I am not sure what our ruling classes wear now. They used to wear very expensive clothes – as Alice can attest – but even that was not always showy or obvious. In fact, not so showy or obvious as the skivvy's clothes Alice is wearing now – those thick black stockings and sensible shoes – they look like Rosemary's cast-offs.

TOM She's jolly pretty even now, aren't you my sweet?

ALICE Don't!

WATSON Don't be upset. What he says is quite true you know, even if he does express it a bit roughly.

SHERLOCK If it were a criminal assault my services could be useful.

MORIARTY My dear Holmes! Aren't you a bit out of date? This woman, Alice, may be in Wonderland, but Wonderland is not Victorian England. Nor was Victorian England for that matter, as you at least should have known. *That* was a figment of imagination, a work of fiction.

ROSEMARY Did I hear my name?

(*Silence falls on the group*.)

ROLAND (*breaks the silence*) That was a man's world.

ALICE A man's world is and always has been a figment of the imagination. Love and all that – compare that with childbirth and maternal death. Rape, blackmail, robbery.

P.A. It is not all murder and death and blackmail.

ALICE I didn't say it was, but I do say that a woman's world is a far more sombre one than that discerned by the man.

ROBIN Without wishing to enter into a contest in the gloom and depression stakes, I must say that the world in which we live presents much the same factual appearance to all of us though never the same to any two individuals. I can't say that I have an immediate impression of being more fortunate to be me than to be you. I loathed most of my experience at school, and when I left it was going into the army which I feared in prospect, retrospect and at the time. We make our own world, live in it and according to taste love what we have made.

ROSEMARY No; you blame others for it. Alice, get me a handkerchief.

ROLAND You didn't need a handkerchief.

ROSEMARY No, but I needed to remind her of instant obedience to me.

ROLAND Do you not have to obey the occupying power?

ROSEMARY I did – for many years which I spent learning to make the occupying power obey me.

P.A. This depended on your being in a position to seduce whoever or whatever it was. Roland could bear witness to that.

ROSEMARY Rubbish! Alice was in a better position than I was. Are you telling me that it was because of my position of superiority that she just had to go and fetch my handkerchief?

P.A. Yes, she is sexually dominated by her masochistic cravings.

ROSEMARY There was a time when I was most impressed by these verbalizations – I see they are now inadequate for talk. Even short words like 'fuck' only mean that man is busy impressing someone with his manly superiority.

P.A. Now *you* are wanting to impress me with how much I don't know. But I know that single word as I know elaborate constructions, elaborate vows of love and fidelity. I am sure Roland and Robin, like me, are familiar with marvellous triumphs in peace and war.

(*Man comes in and takes Rosemary's hand protectively in his. She pushes it away impatiently.*)

ROLAND He's right. Robin must have heard of the series of victories culminating in the victory in two great wars. Yet what is Man doing here?

ALICE He's told us. All done by chocolate. I must wake up.

ROBIN He's trying to hold her hand.

P.A. And failing.

ROLAND Men and women do fail. Even Ludendorff said that August 8, 1918, was a black day for the German army.

P.A. On that black day a friend of mine was called upon to surrender. 'I'll be damned if I do', he said, and was shot through the heart; he died instantly. And that – at the age of nineteen – was that.

ALICE Was it?

ROSEMARY Yes, it was. Their name does not live for ever more, whatever lies you care to tell about it.

P.A. I can see that it could be a lie if you said it. Maybe not if Alice did.

ALICE I thought you were a scientist.

ROSEMARY I thought scientists spoke the truth and believed in facts.

P.A. I wouldn't waste my capacity for belief on facts – I only believe when there is no fact available.

ROBIN You mean that when there is nothing factual you fall back on beliefs – like the Christian religion and such rubbish. No wonder psychoanalysis is such a tissue of lies.

P.A. No, I don't mean that. I mean I am careful to choose what I know and what I believe and, to the best of my capacity, not to mix them up. Because I do not take to be true what humans tell me are the facts, it does not mean that I fall back on 'believing' a lot of twaddle as if I had to keep my mind full at all costs. Or the reverse – empty – like a kind of mental anorexia nervosa.

ROLAND I thought anorexia nervosa was supposed to be mental.

P.A. Not by me. It is reputed to be a fact like all these masses of psychoanalytic theories which are not facts at all though their representations, like the pages in a book, are facts. They fill a space as paramnesias fill an amnesia.

ROLAND Then you must be a liar and a fraud.

P.A. No; a few psychoanalytic theories or formulations are typical of the kinds of thing in which I believe. From my vertex they are not facts; they are beliefs of mine.

ROSEMARY Were those facts when you said all that about 'masochistic cravings'?

P.A. No, they were attempts at formulating a particular instance of belief. If I were an artist I would try to formulate it in terms of painting or music.

ROSEMARY I would like to hear you sing it –

P.A. I doubt it – any more than you like my verbalization. And you remember what the dormouse said about drawing a treacle well.

ROSEMARY No, I don't. What's all this about a dormouse?

ALL (*except Man*) Not know the Dormouse? Well! Not know *Alice*?

ROSEMARY I'm very ignorant. The only Alice I know is my maid.

P.A. Anyhow, I cannot sing it or draw it even in the way I might draw treacle.

ROSEMARY I think you must be crazy. I don't understand a word you say. Or perhaps *I* am crazy not to understand.

ROLAND & ROBIN Not crazy.

P.A. Nor was Alice, nor Lewis Carroll. But I think he gave a fine representation of it – even a remarkable expression of psychosis.

ALICE I hope you are not going to make out that the Alice books are psychotic. I loved them. They are still favourites of mine.

P.A. I am not concerned to 'make out' anything. Although I often have to show people things which are ugly and frightening, it is not because I want to say how beautiful they are or to make people afraid of ugly things. If I could draw your attention to something you would at least have a chance of forming your own opinion.

ROSEMARY Is that what you meant by 'seductive masochistic impulse'?

P.A. I don't want, if I can avoid it, to obstruct you forming your own opinion.

ROSEMARY I don't want to interfere with yours. I'm not sure that you could survive if I allowed you to see me as I am.

ROLAND Oh come now! I think you are most attractive and beautiful.

ROSEMARY Bloody fool!

MAN I think you are a bit hard on him.

ROSEMARY So were you and your pals. Chocolate bars indeed! I don't know how Alice put up with him.

ROBIN Roland put up with you too you know, and Alice is still putting up with you.

ROSEMARY She has to – till I've done with her.

ALICE Oh please . . . !

ROSEMARY I can manage now. You can't imagine what a difference it makes now I'm not just *playing* at having you as my maid. Your 'masochistic impulses' are just juvenility, Mr Psychoanalyst. Like sex. Men and women strut about thinking that physiological and anatomical maturity is the same thing as being fully developed.

P.A. I don't. If I can demonstrate what people think and feel they can revise their opinions.

ROSEMARY From what I know about people, they are filled with admiration not only of you and what you can show them, but also of the entrancing spectacle that the psychoanalytic mirror reveals.

P.A. I certainly present them with a distorted image; even such portraits as I can paint in scientific terminology are imperfect, but psychoanalysts are not the only ones who fail and I think I am sometimes right. I even believe – note what I have said about belief – I am more often right than wrong. 51:49 is my formulation, borrowed from the language mathematicians use.

ROLAND Why borrow theirs? Isn't it likely to give an impression of mathematical precision?

P.A. Of course not. It is the nearest I can get to an artistic formulation of probability. I am not taken in by it as mathematicians are taken in by theories of probability. I thought you would be upset when Rosemary called you a bloody fool. Since your last remarks I think it is probable – 49:51.

ROLAND I don't blame her. In fact, I can see she was right. At least I know what terrible disadvantages she has had to contend with.

ROSEMARY Disadvantages? What on earth are you talking about?

ROLAND I thought you said your mother was a prostitute. I'm sorry if I was wrong.

ROSEMARY I said she was a whore, but I never said anything about disadvantages. In fact she was the best of mothers and brought me up in the best way she knew.

ROBIN Did she teach you her . . . her . . . prof . . . trade . . . profession, I mean?

ROSEMARY Of course not. I could learn that for myself any time I liked. I asked her why she didn't marry one of the fine gentlemen that some of the kids told me she went out with; she didn't deny it, but I could see she was terribly shocked.

ROBIN She must have been shocked at your finding out she was a whore.

ROSEMARY Of course not; but she was shocked that I could think she would *marry* a man who went with whores. She was strict and religious and disapproved utterly of men like that. You're blushing, Roland. So are you, Robin! Anyone could see you went with whores – in the good old days when men were *men* eh? And what about our psychoanalyst friend? Is he blushing?

ALICE Too hard-baked; a lifetime of façade.

P.A. True. One does get hard-baked and I am now too rigidly disciplined at being well-disciplined to be easily ashamed. But a girl once surprised me when I started psychiatric practice by saying she thought I was decent.

ROBIN Yes – I can see that might shake an old reprobate like you.

P.A. You are pleased to be facetious, but you would be surprised to find how often it is supposed that because I am a psychoanalyst I am both an old reprobate *and* know nothing about real life.

ROSEMARY Not only psychoanalysts. A friend of mine was brought up in an orphanage – one of the best and later to become famous – which was started by a parson who was not only admired but revered. He scared the wits out of my friend who was a well-developed child by mauling her about and pawing her.

ROBIN We've all heard of parsons, high-up members of parliament and others who don't live up to their professions.

ROLAND And artists who do.

ROSEMARY Liars all. All impotent. All pretending they are what they are not. All ever-so-holy, ever-so-wicked, and all amateurs. Whatever they pretend, they *are* amateurs.

P.A. Bunglers – particularly at being amateurs.

ROBIN Even Man pretends – with a couple of million soldiers behind him – that he has only chocolate in his holster.

P.A. 'pretends' he isn't just a sugar Daddy.

P.A. In short, we are human and pretend, because we walk on our hind legs, that we are 'superior' and that this is a superior kind of superiority.

ROLAND I have heard the same claims for the possession of a central nervous system. A biologist friend used to tell me that he thought man was one of nature's mistakes which would be discarded.

ALICE Discarded by whom? Women?

ROLAND I wouldn't rule out men if I were you.

ROSEMARY I know you two have discarded each other; you don't admit it but prefer a hypocritical life of pretending to love each other. That bit of self-deception may explain why you are both now in the servants' quarters and I, the 'skivvy', give the orders.

P.A. I doubt it. But you are giving me a clue about the 'truth'.

ALICE Don't psychoanalysts believe that truth is sacred?

P.A. We do *not* devote ourselves to the truth. There is a theory that a psychoanalyst and his analysand may, if disciplined, achieve a temporary addiction to truth. There is a belief – note I do not call it a theory – that in the exceptional circumstances of the consulting room this exercise would develop a resistance to 'mental ill health'.

ROLAND I knew an artist who had a fetish about truth and really tried to be true to nature.

P.A. So do we – true to human nature.

MAN I would never have guessed; I've heard that psychoanalysts devote themselves to fighting like wild cats about which tribal psychoanalytic theory they should inscribe on their banner.

P.A. True. In this we resemble what we study. Even soldiers claim to be loyal to some particular national group.

MAN And are sometimes traitors. We shoot them.

ROBIN With chocolate?

ROSEMARY (*restraining Man*) *Darling!* I'd love to see you shoot them, but *not* just now in my kitchen. Later sometime.

ROLAND 'Darling'! Did you hear that?

ROSEMARY My patience is nearly exhausted. Roland! Alice! Get back to your jobs and don't let me hear you quarrelling.

MAN Sweetheart, I cannot bear to have them offend you. *Do* let me have them shot.

ROSEMARY I'd love you to; but not now – later. Besides, Alice makes a good servant. Her training has been ideal. Of course I didn't

realize it when I was in her shoes, but now she has to look after mine it's delightful. If she becomes unsatisfactory she can find another job.

MAN There isn't another job.

ROSEMARY (*pensively*) *No;* isn't it splendid! She adores me.

P.A. What I called a sado –

ROSEMARY Oh shut up! I don't know what job I could get for you. Tell Alice to get my room ready.

P.A. Certainly. Are we to meet again? In this kitchen?

ROSEMARY So long as you behave yourself. Man may intercede with the authority – is that right, darling?

MAN Yes, if you wish it.

(*The room empties except for Holmes, Watson and Moriarty. They whisper.*)

SHERLOCK (*admiringly*) *What* a woman!

WATSON What a *woman?* Surely, Holmes, you are not forgetting . . .

MORIARTY Not he! He's remembering. I think I could use her.

SHERLOCK (*angrily*) *You* could not.

MORIARTY Like you, Holmes, I have my methods.

8

ROLAND This is the right day, isn't it?

ROBIN I think so. No one else has turned up, so –

ROLAND Let's take a chance while we can. Shall we say anything to the women? I wouldn't trust Rosemary – she's 'darling'ing him already.

ROBIN I've had that stuff too often. What about Alice?

ROLAND We hate each other. No good – she's under her maid's thumb.

ROBIN Enough for blackmail?

ROLAND The conditions for blackmail don't exist.

ROBIN Murder is quicker.

ROLAND Murder is effective, but rough.

ROBIN Of course it's rough.

ROLAND I meant rough in the sense of 'approximate'.

P.A. May I join in? It sounds an interesting speculation.

ROLAND (*whispers hurriedly to Robin*) Don't trust him an inch. (*to P.A.*) Do. We were wondering how on earth you manage to do your – to join us. No secrets here.

P.A. That's true. In fact I was thinking as I was coming here how things have changed in that respect. One of the war aims of the Allies was 'open covenants openly arrived at'.

ROBIN Since these covenants have become so openly arrived at, lying has achieved a new dimension.

P.A. Its quality has improved too. The expert liar, as contrasted with the amateur or untrained liar, is at a premium.

ROLAND (*with ill-concealed hostility*) Have you found the demand for your services much increased?

P.A. No; there has always been a high demand for my services.

ROBIN Fifty minutes a session, five times a week –

ROLAND – for ever!

P.A. That is about it. But the demand changes.

ROLAND Can you give me an idea how?

P.A. At first people used to think I was just a simple, obvious fool –

ROBIN – and then they thought you were a bigger fool than you looked. Aren't you?

P.A. I am usually aware of hostility and contempt. If it is obvious it requires – as now – no interpretation, because you and I are both aware of it. Interpretation would be redundant. But in the old days – were you going to say, 'the *good* old days'? No? Then we can proceed. – In the old days men and women used to lie freely and elegantly; there was gradually built up a kind of Empire of Hypocrisy. Although the 'British Empire' seemed to contract, the 'empire of the mind' did not. I am no poet, but I succumbed to the temptation to compose a patriotic anthem, almost a New World symphony, using the theme – 'borrowed' of course without acknowledgement – 'My Mind to Me A Kingdom Is.'

ROLAND How very apposite. Just right for a psychoanalyst!

P.A. Alas, no.

ROLAND & ROBIN Really? How was that?

P.A. His Satanic Jargonieur took offence; on some pretence that psychoanalytic jargon was being eroded by eruptions of clarity. I was compelled to seek asylum in fiction. Disguised as fiction, the truth occasionally slipped through.

ROBIN Surely you are being sarcastic?

P.A. I know it must sound like that, just as serious psychoanalytic interpretations are thought often to be jokes. God and Devil are frequently not taken seriously.

ROLAND Do you mean to say you take them seriously?

P.A. Of course I do – I am a psychoanalyst.

ROLAND Quite. I thought psychoanalysts didn't take religion seriously.

P.A. How could I possibly be concerned with people without taking seriously one of their outstanding features?

ROBIN I thought psychoanalysis was all sex.

P.A. Since psychoanalysis is a human interest you would naturally assume, without having to be told by a psychoanalyst, that it

was sure to be sexual – 'all sex', as you call it. As psychoanalytic theories are about, or purport to be about, human beings, you would feel they should resemble real life, real people. If so, sex ought to appear somewhere in the theories.

ROLAND But not everywhere.

P.A. Yet you both seem to be surprised that religion is a part of the discussion. Art and science must also be part of it. For simplification we can reduce the *discussion* to manageable proportions and divide the *talk about* the human animal into those main categories – science, religion and art.

ROLAND Why do you say 'talk about' with that peculiar emphasis?

P.A. Because we should remain aware of a distinction between 'talk about' something and the something itself, 'the thing-in-itself , the ultimate reality, the noumenon we can never know. Religious people talk about God and seem to believe that He can, and did once, become 'incarnate'. Isaiah spoke as if he were sense-ible of Him.

ROBIN All that stuff is incomprehensible rot as far as I am concerned.

P.A. Even 'talk about' something may be beyond your comprehension, let alone the noumenon. I would not claim to understand psychoanalytic talk about psychoanalysis, let alone the ultimate reality of which psychoanalysis is only the 'phenomenon'.

ROBIN Well, you are the first psychoanalyst I have heard of who believes in God or God incarnate.

P.A. I did not say I believed in it, but certainly I cannot imagine doing anything else or using such capacity for belief as I have for any purpose other than for facts.

ROLAND You mean you believe nonsense, and what is nonsense that is what you believe?

P.A. Already you are mis-representing and mis-understanding me to say I believe in a particular form of religious non-sense. I do not. I would subscribe to this belief in the doctrine dogma of God incarnate if it were also understood to include belief in the Devil incarnate. I can believe in a god incarnate if it is understood that this same God Incarnate is the Devil Incarnate, and that the Devil Incarnate is likewise god incarnate. In spite of my inadequacy I like to be as precise as I can and am using capital letters and lower case deliberately, because I think it is more likely to convey my meaning.

The *feeling* that you understand is significant. I *believe* it is an important feeling. Sometimes I think I *know* it is an important feeling. But I do not mean the same thing by those two similar statements. The more I *feel* I know, and the less I *know* I know, the more exact I think I am being when I say I believe, and the more accurate I feel it is to say I *believe* – because I have no senses, and no senses in common, that are involved. Robin, if he likes, can mis-represent me by using the ambiguity and flexibility of conversational English to say I believe nonsense. I want to use that same conversational phrase to say I never *believe* anything unless it is *non sense.* Further, I want to borrow these words from hostile and contemptuous debate to make communicable to others what I believe.

ROBIN Why not borrow more suitable words?

P.A. I would – if I knew any. Incomprehensible though they be, that is the easiest and simplest and most comprehensible means I can find without resorting to neologisms – and they have a bad reputation in psychiatry.

ROBIN And using ordinary words in an extra-ordinary way also has a bad reputation – not only with laymen, but also psychiatrists.

P.A. Anyone who aspires to the initiative in matters which are ordinarily thought of as spiritual or religious or artistic is in for trouble with his contemporaries. The fate of the reputation of outstanding artists, scientists and religious leaders would be more comprehensible to us ordinary human beings if we could conceive of the domain more widely, in the way that the domain of mathematics has had to be widened – almost to the point of notoriety – to accommodate new kinds of figures and their manipulation. Here comes –

ROLAND 'The Devil Incarnate.'

ROSEMARY (*dressed to go out*) Tell Alice I want her. And I want the car brought round. (*She goes out*.)

ROBIN Oh, I don't know. She's not bad as mistresses go, do you think?

ROLAND She hasn't got into her stride yet. Where has she got all her smart clothes from?

ROBIN Man – where else? He's a pretty damned fool anyway.

ROLAND Hmmm . . . I'm not so sure. He's handy with his gun don't you think?

ROBIN Yes – so is she. She has no chocolate 'in the holster'. She fires live ammunition.

ROLAND These bloody women do. They don't care at whom they aim either. It's we men who have to be loyal and find bodyguards for them. Anyhow, Alice is getting a dose of it now.

ROBIN If you ask me she likes it.

ROLAND Maybe; but so far Rosemary has just been playing with her, beginning to find her feet. You watch – Alice will soon discover it's no game.

ROBIN Here they come.

ROSEMARY I shall want you to be here when I get back. When? How should I know? (*Goes out.*)

P.A. The doctrine of Incarnation has a family resemblance to the idea of transmigration of souls. Hullo! Where has *he* sprung from?

(*A priest enters.*)

ROLAND Can I do anything for you?

ROBIN Who do you want?

PRIEST Oh, no one in particular thanks. I heard someone mention incarnation and it sounded so interesting I dropped in. Do you mind? I'm from Ur – Ur-religion, not to be confused with Ur of the Chaldees, though similar.

ROLAND All religion is similar as far as I'm concerned.

PRIEST I was about to demur, but of course you are right – depending on whether you illuminate the similarities –

ROLAND – or darken the obscurities. Job got ticked off by the Highest Authority for darkening counsel. My sympathies were, on the whole, with Job.

MORIARTY Job had the right idea. If our P.A. friend was right to talk about the Devil Incarnate – and I think he was – Job may well have been on my side.

P.A. You are one of the figments of imagination.

MORIARTY All the best people are. Like God and the Devil. But what a time we all have! We rule the world of reality, as you scientists call it.

PRIEST We are well able to see the power of these figments of imagination – or objects of awe, superstitious awe. We had a very pretty religious ceremony, and still do, in the flourishing sacramental use of drugs in the attenuated religion that flourished in Tenochtitlan, and even today coexists with the products of nuclear fission. Of course we have not had quite the triumphs which we had when we buried

the Royal Court of Ur in the Death Pit. But we hope to convert the uses of nuclear fission to a part in our services. We may yet achieve a triumph of piety with a real holocaust. Hiroshima was a trial run.

ROLAND I don't think I like you. Where did you get your dog collar from?

PRIEST (*looking down at the collar beneath his chin*) This? I don't really know. I had a dream and when I awoke I found I had this round my neck. Quaint, isn't it? I rather like it, so I kept it on.

ROBIN I don't like this fellow. He gives me the creeps.

ROLAND He reminds me of Rosemary – I don't like her either.

ROBIN I thought you were soft on her when she was your maid – before the war. I don't like your psycho friend.

ROLAND No friend of mine. I think he's a spy.

P.A. I'm sorry; shall I go? In a way you are right. I spend most of my life spying – not so devotedly as this man here (*indicating Priest*) but I suppose you could say I carry out one kind of spying. Only to help though.

ROBIN Who?

ROLAND Or what?

MORIARTY This is a job for Sherlock Holmes. Or perhaps Mycroft.

P.A. Or even me. But I suppose you would not accept my judgement.

ROLAND Would you accept the criminal being inserted as the investigator and judge?

P.A. Yes; I actually bring them into the investigation. At least, I do when they offer themselves.

ROLAND I bet you never get a conviction – except the kind that convinces you.

P.A. Surprisingly I do, though sometimes it is forestalled by an execution. The analysand executes himself.

ROLAND You mean the patient commits suicide?

P.A. That makes a long story short.

ROLAND The actual event is equally brief; a decapitation is the soul of wit.

P.A. Unfortunately not. The analysis can be very long.

ROBIN Isn't that always the case?

P.A. In the story I have in mind it had to take a long time because it always requires time to achieve success.

ROBIN I see – the victim bungles everything including, naturally, his death.

P.A. Sometimes.

ROLAND Why all the mystery? Cut out the dramatic suspense and come to the point.

ROBIN Give him a chance. I'm interested even if you aren't.,

P.A. Mystery is real life; real life is the concern of real analysis. Jargon passes for psychoanalysis, as sound is substituted for music, verbal facility for literature and poetry, *trompe d'oeil* representations for painting. Real self-murder is not observed, and accidental suicide passes for the real thing which is planned, worked out in detail economically to create real effect. For this the patient – a good name for him – has first to suffer, in collaboration with psychoanalyst or family, to achieve success, to be worth murdering. The danger of death does not become acute until it is clear to every beholder that a resounding success is at hand. Then comes the not-so-blind Fury with the abhorred shears. This kind of man or woman resembles a self-murderer only superficially. 'Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men. . .'. Shakespeare was not deceived by the counterfeit; it would be a 'brave' psychoanalyst who thought he could not be deceived. But there are such people amongst us.

ROLAND Rosemary?

P.A. I have not so far observed anything that aroused in me a sense of being in the presence of such a murderer.

ROBIN You mean you would expect to feel a murder was about to be committed?

P.A. With such a patient I would expect to be aware of being in the presence of an unmistakably real emotional storm centre of a catastrophic kind. I consider my experience to be adequately sensitive to the 'direction' of the path the storm would be likely to pursue.

ROLAND Either you are being very modest or psychoanalysis is not much good.

P.A. Neither. Psychoanalysis is a fine instrument; psychoanalytic experience makes poor capacity for some things greater than yours.

ROLAND Thank you; you *are* complimentary.

P.A. I did not expect you to like my opinion, and your contempt is not lost on me. If I were prey to depression I would despair of your impenetrable complacency. It brings home to me how impossible it is for me to get the help of a critical attitude. It would help if I could

rely on the purifying effect of austere criticism. I cannot. Fantastic admiration and complacent hostility, both are available in quantity and both are so much mental rubbish. I do *not* value either your praise or blame.

ROLAND Do you think I value yours?

P.A. I know you do not; in my opinion you cannot. It was the hundreds of cultured, educated, well-meaning 'yous' which constituted a liability that England could no longer support but sank under the weight.

(*Rosemary enters unexpectedly and unnoticed. She sits and listens.*)

ROLAND I thought you people were supposed to be impartial.

P.A. In the practise of my job I am; even when I am not engaged in my profession I retain habits of impartiality. Whatever the contingent circumstances, my natural impulse would incline me to justice rather than injustice. But that is not what you mean when you speak of impartiality – you mean partiality to your views. It is not natural to me to be partial to your views as far as I have reason to know them.

ROSEMARY Now shut up, both of you.

ROLAND (*coldly furious, to P.A.*) I'd be interested to know your views about *her.*

ROSEMARY I said *shut up!* I'm not a lady nor a psychoanalyst and I lay no claim to impartiality. I am the mistress of this house and I mean to be obeyed – or I shall have to use a language which you will understand even if you didn't hear it at school or in the mouths of women of your class.

ROLAND You'd be surprised.

ROSEMARY Get out – quick! (*The men go. Alice comes in.*) Fetch me my slippers. And be quick about it. (*Alice curtseys and goes out.*) She's a stupid idiot; but she's learning in spite of her upbringing.

(*The room darkens.*)

9

Figures slowly become discernible.

MORIARTY Hear that, Holmes?

SHERLOCK I would have been deaf indeed if I didn't.

MORIARTY I thought perhaps you were too high-class to be able to tune into that wave length.

SHERLOCK I learned a lot more than you think from Irene.

MORIARTY Adler? I always thought she was a lady.

SHERLOCK Then you've got another 'think' coming to you. Broaden your ideas, Moriarty. More things are wrought by crime than are dreamt of in your morality.

MORIARTY (*shaking his head regretfully*) *You* and Mycroft are indeed a sad loss to crime. You would both have done well in the world I have disgraced.

WATSON General practice is a wonderful training – you would be surprised to find how truthful people become under the impulse of impending disaster. It's better than any 'cure' or religion I know. What's-his-name Psycho wants to cure people; parsons want people to believe in a good, kind god that looks after them.

PRIEST Rubbish!

MORIARTY You surprise me. I thought you wanted people to believe in the goodness of God.

PRIEST In the words of Sherlock Holmes, 'Then you've got another "think" coming to you'. I am just a 'general' priest; as Watson says about general practice in medicine, it's a wonderful training – if you can stand it.

P.A. I am only just a general, run-of-the-mill psychoanalyst. That is a wonderful training.

PRIEST Don't misunderstand me – it has been a commonplace of

religion that life itself is a wonderful training for what comes after. There's nothing new about *that.*

WATSON It is original if it is not only 'commonplace' but also 'believed'.

SHERLOCK My dear Watson! What do you mean by 'believed'? I don't like meaningless terms. I am a scientist.

MORIARTY He *thinks* he is.

WATSON You 'believed' in Irene Adler.

P.A. I didn't, don't and never will do. I think she is an idealized figure. That is not a belief. 'Idealized figure' is a technical, scientific term which I use to think with. I also use figures of fiction – imaginary figures. Even mathematicians use imaginary figures, imaginary numbers.

WATSON You must do a funny kind of mathematics.

PRIEST I suppose you would think the Trinity and 'Mono' theism a funny kind of mathematics. But you are unacquainted with the religious domain in which these mathematics, though difficult, are at least serviceable.

P.A. There are people who inhabit a state of mind in which they can find a use for neologisms, new mathematics, new arts.

ROLAND Good God! Nouveau art now.

ROSEMARY Get out, or learn to lie at my feet like a good dog.

WATSON Bark when you are bittern to.

SHERLOCK Hush! What's that booming noise?

BOY I don't hear any booming noise. That noise I hear is a bird.

MYCROFT Boy, your ears are too sharp! Or you too would wonder like brother Sherlock.

P.A. I don't hear it either.

ROSEMARY Too old – deafened by years of jargon. Blinded by facts and concepts and psychoanalysis. I had a friend who was a marvellous cook until she took a cookery course. After that she couldn't even boil an egg!

PRIEST I had a friend who was so holy he thought he was God and could think of nothing but that everyone should devote themselves to worshipping him. He even grew to think that God was interested in religion.

MYCROFT Old Moriarty thinks God is exclusively interested in stamping out crime.

ROSEMARY Roland thinks I make him lie at my feet so as to make it easier for me to stamp *him* out.

PRIEST 'How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace.'

ROSEMARY That is *not* what I use my feet for.

P.A. You would be surprised to hear how many erroneous ideas there are about the proper – and only – use for feet. All different; all obscuring more than they illuminate.

PRIEST That is true of what people call God. The psychoanalysts are the worst.

P.A. With respect – *no*.

ROBIN Aren't you always proving that God is a father figure?

P.A. I often attempt to show a particular person that he believes in God, and sometimes that he believes in a *particular* god – like a father, or money, or even psychoanalysis. The analysand can make up his mind if I am correct – that is his affair, not mine. My beliefs I likewise wish to keep to myself or, at most, share with a particular chosen person.

ROBIN Yet you expect others to expose them to you!

P.A. I do nothing of the sort. I let it be known that I am available if anyone is disposed to discuss his ideas or expose his personality to me in my presence.

ROBIN (*doubtfully*) It sounds all right.

P.A. Unfortunately 'sounds', 'sights', sensuous impressions, and our interpretations, desires and memories of them are all we have.

ROBIN Isn't that enough?

P.A. It has appeared so – up to this hour and minute. But whether that is enough we can discuss in accordance with your and my greed, or lack of it.

ROBIN Why greed?

P.A. What alternative scale of measurement do you suggest?

ROBIN Religious, artistic or scientific integrity.

P.A. That seems to me to be pushing the answer back to a more distant version of greed.

ROBIN Do you mean religion is just greed?

P.A. From what you think you learnt about yourself and religion so far, what is your impression?

ROBIN I asked you yours.

P.A. Mine is of no importance whatever to anyone but me. Yours

is of no importance whatever to me – except in so far as you want analysis. Then your ideas have a limited importance if I am to be sufficiently correctly informed to make an interpretation.

ROBIN Is that all?

P.A. Disappointing, isn't it.

ROBIN Why do you think I want analysis?

P.A. I don't.

ROBIN Then why are you behaving as if I did?

P.A. You are right to ask and to object since the conditions for psychoanalysis do not exist. Maybe I am falling into a trap contributed by my predilection for a psychological response – a hazard to which my profession makes me prone.

PRIEST You would make a good parson.

P.A. I could not even talk about religion except inadequately.

PRIEST There is more to religion than that.

P.A. Just as there is more to psychoanalysis than theories or talk about it.

PRIEST What?

P.A. Talk which is a prelude to it and talk which is psychoanalysis itself.

ROSEMARY Who decides which is which? You? Some institute? A royal charter?

P.A. Facts, I suppose; just as ultimately facts decide whether the sun goes round the earth or vice versa. I do not know what sort of fact is regarded as confirmatory.

PRIEST What standards do you use?

P.A. I used to believe that the army authorities told the public the truth about a battle till I went into action and compared the facts as known to me with the facts as announced by Army H.Q. For a long time I thought I knew the 'facts'. Later I inclined to the commonly expressed view, 'you can't believe a word you hear'. Poor authorities; they could not even say who had won the war!

(*Man enters and takes a seat near Rosemary. He appears confidently possessive. She is complacent.*)

ROSEMARY Tell Alice to fetch my shawl.

ROLAND (*furiously, sitting up*) Who won Helen of Troy –

ROSEMARY Lie down!

ROBIN (*to Man*) What, no chocolate? (*Man ignores him and looks at Rosemary as if there were complete understanding between them.*)

ROSEMARY (*to Man*) Tell Alice not to bother – she can go to bed.

ROBIN I feel acutely uncomfortable.

P.A. There is some emotional storm disturbing us. Leonardo might have drawn a sketch of turbulent water; verbally it would require a Shakespeare to do justice to –

ROBIN Yet you can feel it?

P.A. I know it, as I know you know it.

(*Rosemary and Man withdraw together. Roland gets up and dusts himself.*)

ROLAND That bloody bitch! I could . . .

MORIARTY Allow me – what you need is a criminal act.

SHERLOCK Don't be a damned fool. I know Moriarty; don't listen to him.

MORIARTY Why not try the parson since Sherlock is prejudiced against me?

PRIEST No – not God or Devil at present.

P.A. Theology perhaps? It might provide breathing space before action.

MORIARTY (*mocking*) Shall we go and see the little dears have fun? Or perhaps we could listen from here.

P.A. Real fun requires a prelude of years of discipline as well as theories or dogma in art, science or religion.

ROLAND Oh, shut up! This is what discipline has brought us to!

P.A. Discipline, plus or minus: Lack of it and too much.

ROBIN How can it be two opposites at once?

P.A. In classical logic perhaps not. In reality – well, look at Leonardo's notebooks. Intuitionist mathematics may show the way.

ROLAND By that time someone will have died a violent death.

PRIEST Many millions already have. The barrier between these warring forces will be the first to be destroyed.

P.A. And what next to the first?

PRIEST Not the warring forces. They will be refreshed and renewed for further destruction.

ROBIN 'Methinks I see a mighty and puissant nation. . .'

PRIEST Not of human animals I think.

MORIARTY Microbes perhaps or – what did Berkeley call it? – ghosts of departed quantities, Newton's nascent increments.

P.A. Berkeley made fun of these objects whichever way they were growing, less or more; even the object that did not exist, the

object so small that it was the ghost of a departed increment, or what I describe as the increment of a 'ghost' coming into being according to the laws of change whether crescent or decay. All this is easier to formulate if it is talk about the decay or growth of a corporeal object, or a use of the language appropriate to corporeal objects for a purpose for which it was not intended – incorporeal objects, thoughts, minds, personalities.

ROLAND Has this talk got anything to do with our present state or is it a substitute for it, just to take up time?

P.A. It may be 'nothing' out of which something comes; the increment of a 'ghost of a departed increment', or the disappearing, declining something which is destined to disappear – or both.

SHERLOCK It can't be both – that's absurd.

ROBIN What about you and Moriarty? Are you figments of the imagination, ephemera which will entertain a child and then be forgotten? Or can you be ghosts of departed increments which are now ideas that are increasing by increments, destined to develop, like a grain of mustard seed in a famous story, and overtop the trees?

PRIEST What about the author of that story?

ROBIN As far as I'm concerned, 'it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing'.

P.A. What about the author of *that* story? How long before, in the words of the motion for debate of a certain dining club, 'The works of Shakespeare be not read'?

ROLAND That was a joke.

P.A. Suppose what was spoken in jest may have included some truth?

ROLAND Like Man's holster; it depends on whether it contained a gun or a chocolate bar.

P.A. It also depends on whether the contents of the holster are displayed to a starving or armed congregation. Man may once have been the witness and victim of a blockade. What mental seed was sown by that 'fact'?

ROBIN Anyone can see now that that was *not* a victory. 'We have scotched the snake, not killed it.'

P.A. Perhaps. But can anyone see what the victory was – its past, present and future? Rosemary is now the mistress of this house; Alice is her maid. Tomorrow –

ROLAND You take it very coolly. I don't.

P.A. I don't suppose you spent time thinking what you and Alice were teaching your maid. Now you both have a chance of seeing what she learned and you did not. I gather you feel that you would still be unlikely to learn anything from 'this talk', as you call it.

ROLAND I mean to murder that bitch and her boyfriend.

P.A. You'll be wise to think, even if not talk, about how you mean to do it – before acting.

PRIEST I hope you are not inciting him to do this thing.

ROLAND I have heard you and your like make patriotic speeches.

PRIEST That is different.

ROLAND A man I was talking to had his brains blown out while he was speaking. Some person had taught him that that was meritorious and not murder.

P.A. Perhaps this is an instance where quantity of an action affects quality. Murder + increment becomes WAR; the ghost of departed increments becomes cowardice; 'quantities of discretion' do not become the 'better part of valour' but the worse part of cowardice.

ROBIN If you could tell me what were the smallest units of thought, the electrons or elemental particles –

P.A. – the genes of sexual activity? –

ROBIN – I could find a mathematics to match it.

ROLAND Sooner or later you'd have to do what bi-sexual animals do.

P.A. How soon? How late?

ROLAND Somehow I feel I've heard all this before.

MORIARTY Oh no! I've *never* heard people like you debate the ways and means of a 'crime passionel'. You've progressed.

P.A. In what direction?

MORIARTY Don't ask me – ask the parson.

PRIEST When I was padre to Agamemnon I used to conform to the dictates of my religion. I couldn't conform to the dictates of Zeus because he had a sort of Olympian democracy, and all the gods used to fight like humans. Indeed, they often took part in human activities. Nowadays God rarely takes an unambiguous stand.

P.A. So?

PRIEST It becomes essential to have a priesthood to supply correct interpretations of God's apparently ambiguous statements. The

ambiguity is not in God; it is in the formulation in which the priesthood represents the formulation which, in turn, represents the thing-in-itself.

P.A. I can see for myself that the priesthood consists of a lot of ordinary human beings. In my experience these ordinary human beings take ordinary good fathers and ordinary bad fathers; and from 'facts' of that kind derive pictures which are then put forward in the form of idols, poems, mystical formulations, as true, factually real gods and devils, Virgin Marys and furies.

PRIEST Sometimes these approximations are approximated to by God.

P.A. That is to say, God finds an ordinary human being like Jesus, and uses this ordinary –

PRIEST Not ordinary.

P.A. Well, extra-ordinary human being for purposes of incarnation, 'becoming flesh'. Is that right?

PRIEST That is not a bad summary of what a true priest might say if he wished to achieve a 'formulation' of Jesus. But no formulation can ever be anything but a substitute for Realization.

P.A. But this is all *we* try to show. We are not saying anything about God, or even God incarnate, when we say that a particular individual whom we are analysing is treating a father figure, which is already at a remove from an actual human father, as if this verbal image or idol *is* God.

PRIEST But that is precisely what you seem to say. 'Look, this God you worship is only some wildly distorted childhood view of your Dad. Therefore – God can't exist.'

P.A. Perhaps we do. But any analyst who talked like that would be *mis*-representing psychoanalysis – whatever he might be doing to the Ultimate Reality. A more nearly correct formulation would be, 'Your description of the god you worship may, at best, be a good model of your Dad – especially allowing for the fact that you were probably not much more than a baby when you first got that idea – but, however good or bad that model might be if you were trying to convey an idea of your father, it is quite unsuitable for providing me with an idea or a god which I can worship without insulting my intelligence.' This interpretation would not say anything about God, assuming He exists, but would represent

psychoanalysis in such a way that the analysand could believe in it without having to outrage his intelligence. This is different from saying something ridiculous like, 'You believe that that magnificent ballplayer is God, *therefore* God does not exist'. That is not even logic, let alone psychoanalysis.

PRIEST My complaint is that psychoanalysts themselves are worshipping an idea as if it were a god worthy of worship. That 'parody' seems to me to be indistinguishable from most psychoanalysis I have heard of or experienced.

P.A. You may have been unlucky. Perhaps these 'psychoanalysed' people you have met have also been unlucky – in their parson. Debased religion attracts debased psychoanalysis and makes both more debased.

ROBIN How is Man's chocolate bar doing?

ROLAND How is Man's gun furthering his love-making?

ALICE Both doing very well. That 'pearl of great price' is artificial.

ROLAND There's nothing wrong with the swine – *they* are real enough.

MORIARTY Swine usually are.

SHERLOCK How unlike, how *very* unlike the term 'love'.

WATSON Holmes, what you say sounds like our parson friend.

ROBIN 'Friend'? 'Comrade'? Haven't I heard those words before?

ROLAND I have heard the phrase 'pearl of great price' used by many – and (*looking at Alice*) of the pearl being artificial.

P.A. There is nothing new about artificiality. The term derives from uses in which man occupies some place in the chain. The pearls are artificial. In spite of Roland's observation it cannot be assumed that the swine are genuine – or the price paid for the pearls. The artificiality of the pearls, the swine and the price are all surprisingly well-matched sometimes.

PRIEST What do you think of the price of psychoanalysis?

P.A. My fees are dictated by what I need.

PRIEST Who decides what you need?

P.A. I do – who else?

PRIEST Then the fee is dictated by your greed, great or small?

P.A. Yes. What do *you* charge for your services?

PRIEST Nothing.

P.A. Someone has paid for your food or you would not have survived. Have you always been supported by the Establishment?

Who paid for the ceremonial at Ur? It seems that many paid with their lives.

PRIEST The king paid with his life for the bigotry of the doctor.

P.A. Was it his bigotry or his religion?

PRIEST He believed in his medicine; it was almost his god. He worshipped his king and queen – this side of what you would call idolatry. They told me he thought the king was dying –

P.A. – and you and your like told people he would survive, and if they went into the pit with his body and were buried they would go to Heaven.

PRIEST Heaven? Nonsense! That idea has only grown up during the last few thousand years.

(*Rosemary fades in.*)

ROSEMARY (*luxuriously, admiring her well-shod foot*) *This* is *my* idea of Heaven. I would hardly have dared to believe that I would live to call my mistress and hear her say 'Ma'am' to me when I gave her orders.

P.A. And does it come up to expectations?

ROSEMARY Yes, although there are one or two improvements which I mean to carry out.

P.A. What about Alice? What about Man?

ROSEMARY Man? I don't expect any trouble from him. But why Alice? I've got her where I want her and what happens to her from now on matters not the least – she can go and seek a psychoanalyst. You perhaps – if she can find enough artificial fees!

PRIEST What of God in His Heaven?

ROSEMARY He ought to be all right. It's His heaven. If he wants to be inscrutable that's his affair. I'm not interfering like a psychoanalyst – or even a priest. Let him get on with it, *I* say. I didn't interfere with Chalcas or Juno or Jehovah, and I'm not starting now. This suits me and if it doesn't suit Alice or you or this psychoanalyst, that's your affair. I enjoy being smartly dressed and I like feeling that you all have good reason to fear me.

P.A. 'The glass, the cruel looking-glass.'

ROSEMARY What's that?

P.A. A poem I remember. I was not thinking of you and your appearance so much as of how you reflect the England I lived in and how it then looked to you. Not a flattering portrait, but true as far as appearances go.

ROSEMARY They go a very long way.

P.A. We – particularly I – have wanted in psychoanalysis to nourish an instrument, analogous to a mirror of the physical world, which would make it possible for each of us human individuals to see himself.

ROLAND So far it only seems true to analogy in that you see what you want to see.

P.A. I fear so.

PRIEST God made man in his own image. Man was not only quick to return the compliment, but it does not appear to be a flattering reflection.

P.A. I thought that as a priest you would consider the human world reflected an unflattering image of God because of the defects of the mirror; it would not have occurred to me that a priest might think the reflection unpleasing because of its truth.

PRIEST I do think it is due to the defects of the mirror; but I can see that the judgement of the mirror image is unwelcome – both for what it shows and for showing it. Who is to say God is correctly judged by his creatures?

ROBIN (*to Roland*) I give up. I vote you and I go into committee of ways and means.

ROSEMARY I shall give you both my photograph. You can all meet here next week. Now, good-night.

(*They dismiss.*)

10

ROSEMARY (*alone*) She was a good mother. If she hadn't taken up with whoring she could never have given me bread. Nor would I have learnt the art of how to make sex pay without paying the price of gonorrhoea and later the ravages of neuro-syphilis. Poor Mum! But . . . How happy, how cheerful she was! I wonder why? Does it tickle to feel the spirochaetes as they spire and burrow in the convolutions of one's brain? She certainly used to laugh immoderately as she heard the bombs crash amongst the palaces and the filthy, crowded streets of London; till at last . . . I wonder who it was who released the atom bomb that brought peace, the blessed meek-eyed Peace whose reign had been so long delayed by these filthy men? I wonder what blackguard sired me? I sometimes think my profound morality and sense of duty must have derived from him. How else could I have had such strong ideas of what was pure and godly and of good report? I could never have become such a smooth hypocrite without it. How she would have enjoyed it! How it would have warmed her heart if she could have seen how her little girl would turn out when she apprenticed me to service – so as to save me from ever depending for my bread on the dangers of whoredom. She used to tell me tales of things she knew about men – very frightening some of them were too.

One day the police came and took away the corpse of her friend who had been battered to death. It was exciting; they caught the murderer. Some of my friends showed me bits out of the paper. 'What is a sexual partner?' I asked Mum one day. 'Wherever did you hear words like that?' she said. 'Oh, it was in a piece of newspaper I bought my fish and chips in', I lied. She didn't believe me and I'm sure she could never have understood what that clever arse of a psychoanalyst said

'sexual partner' was. But *she* could have told *him* that was what happened to your girlfriend when a respectable public school aristocrat bit off your nipples and thrashed the last spark of life out of you! I heard her screaming. Not for me! I said. Old 'chocolate bar' and his friends can rape this country – so what? Let them eat cake! He can think himself lucky to have the privilege of licking my feet and passing his winnings over to me! Love? The God of love my shepherd is, His goodness faileth never. Well, He's not done so badly for me. Let's see how Rosemary's skivvy, Alice, gets on worshipping at His shrine. I could tell that parson fellow a thing or two about God? Perhaps he learnt a bit since Ur. I wonder if P.A. knows about sexual perversion – I'll ask him.

It's getting darker and darker. The Dawn in Britain . . . When? How? They say it's always darker before the dawn. Alice thinks I'm in love with Man; perhaps she's right. I'm no more in love with him than I am with her, but I'm no less in love either. Love is like honour; Falstaff didn't think much of it. Perhaps women regard love more importantly than honour, and men the other way round – like picking up and battering down whores. Dictionaries should state masculine or feminine. Love (masculine) . . . ; Love (feminine) . . . ; Honour (masculine) . . . ; Honour (feminine) . . . ; I suppose we could leave it to Priest or P.A. or Leonardo or Moriarty or Sherlock to fill in the definitions.

How dark it is! 'Lord, with me abide.' I had no idea I was so religious. I must be feeling cold.

Alice adores me; that's clear from what I can make her do. I haven't been taught how to be a goddess, but I can make a better job of it than she can; better goddess than I ever was a skivvy. I had better not make any of *her* mistakes. I have to provide her with food and lodging; not too much or too little. How easy to say, but how much is 'too much' and 'too little'? So far I've only gone by exactly what she gave me – she's wearing my skivvy's outfit. She's pretty and the darned black stockings, carefully repaired old rubbish of mine, look quite nice on her. She's a fool – compared with me. What if she learns? I saw Roland looking at her intently the other day. So far I've got Man where I want him. I could sack her of course; but I don't want to lose my maid. There are still things she can teach me. I could teach her a thing or two about being a whore, but goodness knows what she might learn. She probably knows about V.D. But – it

makes me laugh when I think of it – she didn't know how to stop Tom from overpowering her. Maybe it would be best to get rid of her. If she leaves too late she won't be any worse off than my Mum. It *is* dark – and I'm sure it's getting colder. I could send for her – what then? I could tell her I'm cold and leave her to 'get on with it'. Why should I tell her what to do? She could use her initiative. . . . Suppose she has too much? Moriarty says Lady Macbeth sparked off a conflagration. Am I falling asleep? I get such queer, jumbled thoughts. It's *cold*. I must get into bed.

No wonder I'm cold. Banquo felt the dagger Macbeth saw – this is worse than Alice's Wonderland, Alice's attic. I keep falling asleep and having the gweirdust qualfactions of Mayqueen me mother toady today. Is that Rosemary sinking? Spirochaete, spirochaete/where have you been?/Up the puss octo puss/2C the Queen./ Ashes to ashes and Dust to Dust / If the booze don't get you the sex urge must.

ALICE Did you call me, Ma'am?

ROSEMARY Yes, my feet are cold. You're cold? It's your job to keep warm; I might need you.

* * *

PRIEST (*alone*) He's a fool of course. But you can never be sure with these fads. Who would have thought that tomb robbing would become so popular? And so respectable – even aristocrats engage on it; very scientific of course; Lord Carnarvon, like his scientific cover Howard Carter, defied the Curse of the Pharaohs. But the curse still exists to keep these interlopers on the hop. How Moriarty would laugh! I must be going to sleep – what's Moriarty got to do with it? Oh yes, I know – 'Curst be he who disturbs my bones.' Shakespeare? Did he write that doggerel? Who is to say that psychoanalytic shamans, frauds and humbugs have not some dangerous truth concealed in the humbug? Whether to take arms against the sea of troubles with the poet and by opposing end them; or be ended by them like the omnipotence of Canute, ended by his own scientific addiction? Shall I take up with psychoanalysis and the scientific method, or with psychoanalysis and religion? Really it's unending. Only yesterday I was having to decide between Bernard de Sahagun, Montezuma and the Pope. It went on and on till by the time I had persuaded the Supreme Court – in the name of religious tolerance for Heaven's sake! – to legalize our Aztec communion wine, human sacrifice (which was so

picturesque and amusing) was in eclipse. I remember it was amusing to see Palinurus so completely fooled, and his boss Aeneas likewise, that the fleet came near to being wrecked by the Sirens and their rocks. Horace, although he claimed to have escaped, must have been nearly drowned by Pyrrha. He did not fail to hang up his dripping weeds as a tribute to God. The 'scientific black-guards', as Santayana called them, failed to recognize the significance of the costumery painted on the wall of the tomb of my follower in Tarquinia. God works in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. This psychoanalyst here – who would guess that he of all people should retain enough modesty to respect, even be awed by, God? The glory of the God of psychoanalysis is declared by the fearsome, inartistic architecture of Cinematic grandeur! All that stuff of Queen Shub-ad – I told her she *could* take it with her to the tomb and she did. Will you? won't you? will you? won't you join the dance of Death? Archbishop Havelock Ellis, and his forerunner and prophet Krafft-Ebing, wrote a piece about it. How impressed they were by their discoveries, and how their discoveries impressed school children! But am I impressed? Perhaps; but it may be unrealistic to imagine that anyone living so near what he serves would be impressed. 'The Heavens declare the glory of God'; but the Krakatoa committee of the Royal Society of the death pit at Ur did not understand the language in which they clothed the glory they had felt. Who knows? 'Ils gisent la sans voix . . .' sans everything. We are too minute to contain grandeur. The meek shall inherit the earth, so perhaps the microbes, waiting in the wings to devour the flesh that a bountiful God will provide for them, are ready for the call to take over the earth.

I do not know or feel impelled to revere the matrix, DNA, helix from which God is preparing to emerge. It is curious that we do not worship the stone from which the Michelangelo will call us out. We priests have been opposed to stone images; even the stones we call precious are deprecated as objects of adoration. Why? The mistress of this house sees herself as an object of adoration in the setting taken from the 'maid' – whom she dispossessed. She is engaged in dispossessing Man, who has himself participated in gaining possession of the 'jewel' set in the precious sea. What is that but another 'stone'? Is this psychoanalyst any more than a tomb robber about to stage a grand 'resurrection' with a Vatican in which another vicar is to display his effulgence? I had better ask him when I see him next. I could

confront him at our next kitchen meeting – Rosemary permitting. The probability is that he would not know or – hullo – here we are! – or are we here? If so, where? Must be going to sleep . . .

The skivvy here – Alice, they call her – important once – had important relatives like the Trojan women before Troy fell. Alice was the mistress once – not bad-looking now. I caught her blubbing about something – she said it was a cold – as if I care – or anyone else . . . It's the job of the down-trodden to be miserable. I'll ask the P.A. what he thinks; I expect he'll say he cures them. How? How do you cure the rich? I wonder if he has an answer to Shakespeare's question about the diseased mind – he's sure to say something like 'get married', or 'go on a cruise'. *My* answer? Get rich – on the winning side. Funny how none of these people sees how important the winning religion is. Queen Shub-ad thought she was going to an improved life; she would have been surprised – and the rest of the Court too – to discover that they were to become Museum Exhibits and the Priests, Curators! . . . must tell Rosemary never to allow anyone to cremate her if she wants everlasting life. Horace's recipe was to find a poet and then, like Lollius, be pickled for ever – stuck in a chunk of immortal verse like a fly in resin. Shaw hoped Doughty-wise progress would achieve for him a place in the halls of literary fame. Seven pillars of whizdom come in Urth as in the rubbish dump in Zig-ur-wrath to come. It's becoming what passes for light in this somnus-forsaken house, and Lethe-wards had sunk. It spreads aloft but not below if the nectar doesn't flow. Come in Alice, come in. Take off those ghastly rags.

ALICE No.

PRIEST Yes – or I'll rip them off.

ALICE Don't! Look – I'll have to darn that.

PRIEST I don't give a darn – take that stuff off!

ALICE No. I'll call the . . . call the . . . (*Weeps.*)

11

PRIEST Where's the P.A.? I've had a horrible dream. God! I've forgotten it already!

P.A. It's not a dream. We are just going to start our weekly meeting.

PRIEST How did I get here then? Have I been walking in my sleep? It feels a bit like that. (*To Alice*) You have torn your dress, haven't you?

ALICE Where? So I have. More darning. *She* is very particular.

ROSEMARY I don't care in the least – so long as you are neatly turned out when I want you.

ALICE That's what I meant; I didn't mean –

ROSEMARY That will do. Go and darn it.

ALICE (*submissively*) Yes, Miss.

MAN Don't let her be insolent, darling. Dismiss her if she argues.

ROSEMARY She won't argue with *me.* Well, who's going to start?

PRIEST I wanted to ask P.A. something, but I have forgotten it . . . Rosemary . . . forget it! Who's next?

ROLAND I was thinking about Man's chocolate bars. Would you think them much use in war?

MAN Of course, most powerful in war. In peace people don't know how to use them. The division which was supposed to be defending this area surrendered without firing a shot.

ROLAND That was because it was starving and its commander knew that the rest of your army had landed in overwhelming force. You could hardly claim that to the credit of your chocolate bars.

MAN I do; not a particularly brilliant example, of course, but if

our commander hadn't used that weapon we would have had endless trouble. Our mistress, Rosemary, is brilliant.

ROLAND She didn't have command of your hordes; she depended on their victory.

MAN When your lot had surrendered she knew how to *use* our victory. Brilliant, I call it. You saw how she just sent her mistress out of the room to smarten herself up.

ROBIN She has *you* where she wants you too.

MAN It is possible.

ROSEMARY I spent years learning to do much with little. Alice will learn – the hard way – after I have finished with her. Pity she hasn't got a brat as my Mum had, but I expect Tom or Priest will see to that.

ROBIN You are a bit coarse aren't you?

ROSEMARY No – realistic. I don't bear her any ill will; she can come for my cast-offs when I have done with them.

ROBIN Your cast-off man too?

ROSEMARY (*angrily*) I wouldn't go out of my way to keep any trash I've had hanging round me.

ROBIN Does that include Alice?

ROSEMARY Alice is right where she is – while I am satisfied. When I'm not she will have to go. Where? Where did my Mum have to go? I don't know or care. At present she's quite pretty; what you men are good for I've no idea.

ROBIN We had to fight.

ROSEMARY You had to win and that you failed to do.

ROBIN We can still try.

MAN I doubt it – and don't forget I am taking great risks allowing these meetings which Rosemary encourages.

ROBIN Who could know?

ROSEMARY You, Robin, the P.A., Priest – even Alice. Tell lies and you don't even have to spy.

ROBIN You're right. You put ideas in my head!

ROSEMARY Be careful what you do with those ideas. I had to keep my mouth shut –

ROLAND In free England? Nonsense!

ROSEMARY Free England?! Roland, you must be a fool.

P.A. Being aware of facts has, I am sure, had an effect on me

analogous to that of food on my physique. The experience is 'like' being changed – as one ultimately feels changed if one survives.

ROSEMARY That begs the question. Priest believes one survives even after death; don't you?

PRIEST Survival after death is a belief which has undergone many transformations. May I ask to which belief you refer?

ROLAND Alice has changed since she became a servant in her own house. Rosemary has changed since she became the mistress here.

PRIEST Alice worships Rosemary; I have known many women who have been god to other women. In Ur of the Chaldees –

ROLAND You are surely not going to maintain that in those barbarous days there was a standard *we* should emulate?

PRIEST *Those* barbarous days? I have lived through many civilizations, yet I wonder if I shall survive this. I daresay there is some saving quality even in today's barbarism – 'civilization', you'd call it.

ROBIN I don't call the 'saving quality' civilization.

MAN You are prejudiced since I and a couple of my friends used you for shooting practice. We only ringed you with heavy-calibre bullets – they weren't explosive. *And* we weren't incompetent.

ROSEMARY (*to Priest*) What about God? You were saying . . . ?

PRIEST I wondered why Robin and Roland imagine religion or culture were backward in those days. I have always believed in God and I have always worn the costume appropriate to the prevailing fashions.

ROLAND In my school days we sang a song about the Vicar of Bray.

ROBIN So did we; I thought it stupid and not half so funny as the author seemed to think.

PRIEST It wasn't funny and it was certainly stupid. As I began to be aware of God's consistency and constancy I tried to be constant and consistent myself. I would lack respect for my contemporaries if I stuck rigidly to one appearance when fashions had changed. I should feel I was disturbing the peace; so I wear the prevalent –

ROLAND – religion! This is the most frank concession I have ever heard.

PRIEST You are too hasty, my friend. I do not consider that these 'vestments' are religion.

P.A. It may be easy for you, who seem to have some gift of

immortality, to know religion from within. I and my friends here have to do arduous and austere labours before we can appreciate what seems to you to be so simple. The very skill with which the great artist makes something clear may mislead the reader. Virgil's eclogues, particularly the Fourth, have been interpreted in the light of subsequent events to foretell the birth of Christ. Yet it seems more likely to refer to Augustus Caesar's heir. When I was a small boy I used to think Palinurus was treated outrageously by Somnus; it did not occur to me that Virgil might *believe* that God could behave as Somnus did.

PRIEST 'Not cricket!' in short. You must have found it difficult to believe that God was not as serious about cricket as you were.

P.A. I loathed the game, but some have adored it and 'worshipped' the god who was captain of the school team. That I think is natural – at the time. Our problem arises not because these ideas are wicked or wrong, but because they are active achronically and are the fount of action. Therefore we think it advisable to display the 'god' in whom the person believes; it may make it possible, by comparison with other ideas, to moderate the force of the primeval fount.

ROLAND How do you know that you do not, by exposing such an idea, render it still more powerful? Or conversely, undermine faith in God?

P.A. Alas! We cannot be sure that the individual does not in fact use the analytic experience in just that way.

ROBIN So you admit that psychoanalysis can do harm?

P.A. It does neither harm nor good; but the person may use the experience for whatever purpose he will. After all, if a surgeon heals a thief or murderer he makes them more efficient, but not more moral.

ROLAND Nobody expects him to do so.

P.A. Believe me they do! The analyst is often held responsible for the behaviour of a man or woman who has at some time been to a psychoanalyst.

PRIEST We have the same difficulty with religious people.

P.A. Do you help your believers to see what kind of god they follow? Or do you assure them that they are good people who are supporting the true God?

PRIEST Of course we try to show them what gods they follow. People try to serve both God and Mammon.

P.A. Has it any effect?

PRIEST In the course of the centuries, yes.

P.A. 'In the course of centuries'? There may not be centuries available. That is why we regard analytic procedure as essential if people are to understand what beliefs they hold and by which they are held.

PRIEST Do you find they understand – more quickly?

P.A. Sometimes I think they do, but not often. Nevertheless psychoanalysis enables the psychoanalyst to learn something and even to pass it on. There are occasions when a resistance is surmounted with astounding speed; a number of facts display their relationship for the first time. It is almost a revelation.

PRIEST You use a term which is part of our technical equipment.

P.A. I thought you would notice that. I wish we could make clear both the verbal fact you mention and the psychic reality to which it corresponds. The concentration of meaning would require the concision which can be achieved in music or painting, but would my analysand undergo the work necessary to understand if I could achieve such precision? Audiences rarely listen to music or look at pictures; still less do they think it worth while listening to what an analyst says.

PRIEST These difficulties have been familiar to the religious for many centuries. Music, painting, poetry, vestments gorgeous and austere – all have been used as auxiliaries.

P.A. I have found that the auxiliary can easily be transferred by the receptor from the periphery to the centre. Messages intended to convey profound truth – *The Iliad, The Aeneid, Paradise Lost*, *The Divine Comedy* – have all in turn become famous as gorgeous settings for the precious 'stone' which is outshone by its attendant splendour. Krishna warned Arjuna that he might not be able to survive the revelation of the godhead which he, Krishna, was prepared to vouchsafe. Dante has only rarely found a reader able to discern the vision to which he points in Canto XXXI of the *Paradiso*. Milton's mind was over-shadowed by a doubt whether he could pass beyond the 'evil days' on which he had fallen; it was indeed his tragedy.

PRIEST The most profound expression of despair known to us was, 'Why has thou forsaken me?'

P.A. This discovery is one which all are afraid to make. A theory that the human animal is not going to call on God to do for him what he must do for himself in loneliness and despair cannot be

formulated; any formulation is a substitute for that which cannot be substituted.

ROLAND Do you suggest that *that* psychoanalytic interpretation is the explanation of Christ's reported call on the Cross?

P.A. You show that I have failed to make it clear that I attach the utmost importance, in the practice of analysis, to the presence of analyst and analysand at the same time and in the same place in conditions in which the consciously discernible facts are available to both people. These are the *minimum* conditions, not the maximum. Only *then* does psychoanalysis become an activity open to the two participants. You suggest that I am making a statement about events reported to have taken place almost two thousand years ago; if you believe that to be the gist of my remarks, what might you not say about my opinions when I am not present to defend them?

ROBIN I don't see why you are angry. Roland's mistake seems to me to be natural and understandable. I had not observed that he was misrepresenting you.

P.A. As I see the situation I would be lacking in proper feeling if I were not angry.

ROLAND That's your opinion.

P.A. That is what I said. Whose else should it be? Yours? Well, why not? I hope I am not doing anything to obstruct your freedom.

ROLAND Your answer is hostile and I can detect, even though you may not, impatience, sarcasm and irony in it too.

P.A. I shall not deny or confirm your observations; I think you want me to be so impressed by the facts that you observe, that I would not dare to make an interpretation at all.

ROSEMARY Like your interpretation of Man's holster.

P.A. I still think it would be wiser to interpret it as containing a gun than to accept his offer to interpret it as containing chocolate.

ROBIN & ROLAND So do we.

P.A. We have many facts available; if we interpret each one in isolation, the facts and the interpretations do not amount to much; taken together, the 'gist' can be interpreted. The Mathematical sum cannot be mathematically expressed, yet the 'gist' can be.

ROLAND What is your definition of 'gist'?

P.A. I have none, because a definition would add to an already overwhelming vocabulary of formulations that seem to be precise

where no precision exists. If you listened to my talking you could probably feel that the 'gist' of what I meant when I used the word 'gist' was a constant conjunction of your impressions. Your interpretation of my communications might be something you could formulate.

ROLAND Can you give me an example of something – an interpretation say – which expresses the 'gist' of an idea?

P.A. I was called to see a patient who was suspected of being 'schizophrenic'. As I approached his bed I was aware of a flurry of movement. When I reached his bed he had hidden himself beneath a blanket so that only one eye was visible. With this eye he observed me intently. He maintained silence for weeks – it may have been a month or more.

ROLAND Yes, but can't you give me the 'gist' of your definition? I don't want to be rude, but our time here is very limited.

P.A. That is why I said 'intently'. Sometimes, as in this instance, the gist of an experience may take a long time to grasp. An eye seen in isolation conveys nothing; seen for some weeks as I saw it, 'intently' is a fair summary of what I saw – the 'gist' of the experience. Psychoanalysis may convey the 'gist' of what two people are doing if both are satisfied that the name 'psychoanalysis' conveys enough meaning for immediate needs. But what I want to communicate to you would require other conditions and time which you will not spare.

ROLAND Go ahead then. What about your dotty patient?

ROBIN Have we time to discuss dotty patients?

ROSEMARY Yes, I'm interested.

ROLAND These aren't the days for pursuing interests.

ROSEMARY Not for you perhaps. When I was the servant here I never had time for anything that might have interested me. You can think yourself lucky that I allow you and the rest to participate when I am following my interest. Go on P.A. Alice – you may stay in case I want you; it may do you good.

P.A. One day, after I had given many interpretations apparently without effect, the man suddenly said, 'I want help'.

ROBIN I suppose you thought that was the result of your interpretations.

P.A. The only result that I *know* about was that I felt hopeless; the minimum conditions did not exist for psychoanalysis as I understood it and as I had been taught it. My faith in the interpretations was being eroded to a point where I could hardly summon up enough

interest to persist. But I reminded myself that my duty was to the patient.

ROLAND It sounds most laudable.

ROSEMARY Never mind him – go on P.A.

P.A. I wondered if my interpretations were some use after all. I suppose this showed for when I asked him what help he wanted he at once shut up. My heart sank; I felt I would have to go on for weeks, months, years, and then maybe he would repeat his remark.

ROLAND What about your definition? How many months before you get *that* out?

ROSEMARY Alice, I can see now what a terrible pair you and Roland were as master and mistress. Were all your governing class friends as bad as this? I prefer to have you where I want you.

MAN Shall I shoot him?

ROSEMARY No darling – not yet.

ROLAND Darling! My God – not yet!

ROBIN Did you hear that? Shoot chocolate bars!

MAN I didn't say I always wore chocolate bars.

ALICE Rosemary, don't –

ROSEMARY Alice, this is not a game. I want a servant who knows her place. That will do for to-night.

(*They disperse.*)

* * *

(*That night. Roland and Robin whispering.*)

ROLAND It's grim.

ROBIN We had better do him in.

ROLAND And then? We must plan ahead. Rosemary is a traitress.

ROBIN Not a traitress – a realist. Hullo! Who's this?

ROLAND I'm going to sleep on it.

ROBIN Who are you?

CLYTEMNESTRA If you had learned your lessons in that school of privilege where you and your fellow loafers made no use of the opportunities spread before you, you would not now be asking that question.

ROBIN I don't know what you are talking about –

CLYTEMNESTRA Don't dare to boast of it to me. A king once learned the unwisdom of believing that a mother could forgive a father's insufferable treachery in so easily sacrificing his daughter. I

had to wait, but I taught him what a mother's love was – maternal love turned to marital fidelity.

ROBIN You are just a bad dream.

CLYTEMNESTRA If you want to wake from it you had better be careful how you speak to me. I won't give you a chance to learn the lessons Agamemnon failed to learn. Don't you want to live?

ROBIN Not much – only long enough to display a father's love.

CLYTEMNESTRA A father's love! Why, you have not even learned of God the Father's love for his only begotten son. Your saints rotted your mind. You should have used it to think with – not to fool around on a cricket field.

ROBIN I didn't, you blood-stained bitch! Take your hands off my throat.

ROLAND Wake up you fool – what do you think you're doing?

ROBIN Sorry – must have been dreaming. It was frightful . . . a murderous woman . . . I think . . .

ROLAND Go to sleep. Rosemary has upset you. I'll settle her hash later.

ROBIN You didn't make her pregnant did you? The woman in the dream had some grouch about the classics – I think.

ROLAND Don't – it's bad for you. Go to sleep.

ROBIN What dreams may come?

ROLAND Shut up, Hamlet!

12

ROLAND Our weekly meeting again?

ROBIN You have been warned – by the boss. Sometimes I think my mind is going.

ROLAND I shouldn't worry too much about that – you haven't got one!

ROBIN I have the most frightful dreams. Last night I dreamed of wandering through a field of cowslips and the scent was heavenly. It grew dark; a woman clouted me behind the knees and made me drop to the ground because she had severed my muscles with a sharp axe; she said I ought to have known they were primroses. I asked where she had learned her classics, but she threatened another stroke with the axe. She said I ought to have known it was botany – not classics. What was classics? What was botany? That's just what I said. Didn't she know it was zoology, I wanted to ask, but she sliced off my left side with a limb I think. She seemed very absent minded.

ROLAND You've got Rosemary on the brain – sharp but not very sensitive. Sh! Here she is!

ROSEMARY What are you talking about?

ROLAND Robin was mentioning that he wasn't sleeping very well. I wondered if he was having bad dreams.

ROBIN I didn't remember any.

ROSEMARY Perhaps they weren't dreams. My dog sometimes yelps and his paws twitch as if he were having a dream – chasing rabbits perhaps. Do you think dogs dream?

ROLAND Of course they do.

ROSEMARY Do you think they think? But here are the experts. (*To Priest*) Do dogs have immortal souls? If not, why not?

PRIEST We used to regard them as unclean animals.

ROSEMARY Couldn't they be washed in the blood of the lamb? Or are lambs unclean beasts? What do you say, P.A.?

P.A. This is not really my department; I am only concerned with the way individuals think. Whether they are right to think or not is the concern of people who know the facts.

PRIEST You surprise me. Surely it is a matter which concerns you if a man comes to you because he thinks he has a bird's claw and not a hand.

P.A. It concerns me that he *thinks* so. It concerns me that you think you have a hand and assume that a baby has a hand. But I rely on embryologists who tell me that the flesh and bony structure called a hand was not always like that, but is a transformation of a mass of cartilage and fat which it was in infancy. Falling back on my present-day knowledge as a doctor I assume that I can safely compare the one statement with another and use my anatomical and physiological ideas as a standard or norm. If a man says he has an eagle's claw where I think he has a hand, I may wonder why he has one idea rather than another. He is free to think he has a claw and to go to see an ornithologist or a physician or surgeon; that is *his* concern. It is my concern if he says that he has an *idea* that he has a claw and also believes it is a hand. If he wishes, I am prepared to discuss these conflicting ideas which cause him discomfort.

PRIEST Have you no qualms? No misgivings?

P.A. Many. They are 'facts' with which I am familiar: I am familiar with doubt and some philosophical theories about doubts. I know what it is to say, 'I do not know', or, 'I am uncertain', and to find someone even less qualified than I ready and eager to claim 'certainty' and to be received with enthusiasm. In the practice of psychoanalysis it is common to meet with those who say it is rubbish and proclaim knowledge of the truth. You and others who think like you often claim Divine support for their view.

PRIEST You and others who think like you often claim scientific authority for *their* view – sometimes in direct opposition to a religious view that there is a God.

P.A. Perhaps the resemblance that your experience bears to mine springs from the fact that both schools of thought are supported by mere human beings. A 'scientific view' only means one which claims loyalty to truth.

PRIEST Similarly, loyalty to God should be indistinguishable from loyalty to truth.

P.A. 'Should be' – so easily said; so difficult to practise. Man was offering just now to shoot Roland and Robin in the service of our hostess – Beauty, as I may not inaccurately call her.

ROSEMARY Damned fool!

PRIEST Is that a religious or scientific expression? A poet once said, 'Beauty is truth, truth Beauty'. Many disciplines claim allegiance. 'Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men.' Many gods have been put forward as worthy of the devotion of mankind.

P.A. Perhaps I may claim the Licence of a Fool in the court of Beauty.

ROLAND Look out! You'll qualify for Man's bullet!

ROSEMARY I have told him he is *not* to shoot – yet!

P.A. Thank you – so far. I think that the devotees of Art, Science and Religion are agreed in principle. Whichever one of the main divisions of humanity claims our adherence, we claim to follow truth. In principle – agreement. In practice – the particular, the precise – disagreement. The 'individual' often conflicts with the general. He may seek membership of the group or category of discipline because he wishes to seek shelter, as Freud said, under the cover of a famous and prestigious name. In time no doubt the fraud will declare itself, but it may then be too late. For example, Man may terminate the discussion with murder – perhaps I should say 'shooting', not murder.

MAN You had better.

PRIEST Surely you are threatening him!

MAN I don't need to – and indeed I am surprised at my moderation.

P.A. You do not need to be – when you are armed with a gun and with the 'authority' it confers. I have long been aware of my vulnerability even when power was in the hands of men and women of my own group.

PRIEST I wouldn't minimize my danger at any time. My changes of allegiance have been likened to those of the Vicar of Bray because I do not put my trust in a god that conforms to human rules of permanence and stability. I do mistrust the impermanence and instability of whoever and whatever is the current fashion in gods. I do not know the 'language' in which they should be dressed or addressed. Even

Milton confessed an inability to find some phrase by which, 'without blame', he could Hail the Heavenly Light.

P.A. You claim experience not only of your feeling but of some 'source' which is outside and independent of you. Although I have no such experience I do claim to detect in myself, and sometimes in others, sources that do not require any arcane or esoteric reality such as I understand you to mean by 'God'.

PRIEST To say, 'what I mean', is an adequate phrase when it is employed, as here, in discussion about God. But it is not adequate to the religious experience itself. There is no scientific or aesthetic or even religious experience which can provide any human with a method of address to God. *That* reality, the Godhead, has to provide the approach to Himself which the individual must use.

P.A. I am concerned with the human mind or personality; in that domain I can only, with some difficulty, formulate descriptions of objects which are comprehensible in terms employed at various times during the individual life. It is not inappropriate to say that a small boy 'worships' some hero of the playing fields, or that an adult 'worships' golf, bridge, the stock market, or some article of food or drink.

PRIEST That can easily be seen to be false.

P.A. Not easily at all; it may require years to achieve even this limited aim.

PRIEST But don't you think that when you have demonstrated all the multitudes of 'false gods', there may yet be discernible 'God' that is not false?

P.A. Certainly. I have no difficulty in accepting that such a possibility could exist. But as far as my limited capacity enables me to achieve the truth, I have not experienced the reality of which you speak. I remember my mother asking my father if he had ever experienced what a poet said – 'Sometimes a light surprises the Christian while he sings' – and his reply, after a moment of thought, that he had not. I remember the sudden onset of tropical night, the lamp-lit room and the frighteningly solemn and incomprehensible conversation. Why were they sad? Experience has not answered.

PRIEST Your instinct was right in supposing it was 'about' God, but that it was not God.

ROSEMARY Bedtime; Alice, bring me my milk.

13

In the attic. Robin and Roland whispering.

ROLAND If we don't do Man in, he will do us in. You heard him ask Rosemary, 'shall I shoot him?' Completely cold-blooded. We might have been vermin – and he meant it.

ROBIN So what? Of course he would have done it. And if *we* shoot *him*, what do you think would happen next? We should be killed.

ROLAND I know that, but we would have taken one of the swine with us. It would be no worse than living as we are.

ROBIN Nor better. We mustn't be premature; we must plan.

ROLAND Lucky we don't give a damn for them. Let's talk again later. In the meantime we can think.

ROBIN They can't bug our minds. What about P.A.? Or Priest?

ROLAND P.A.'s a gas bag; and Priest's no good till someone wants to know who has won – he'll be on the winning side.

ROBIN There won't be one. Good night; they have won already.

ROLAND They have won. I have not lost – yet. Sleep, but not too well.

* * *

(In Rosemary's room. Rosemary kicks off her shoes and watches complacently while Alice picks them up and puts them together on the rack.)

ROSEMARY I think Man will shoot Robin and Roland. Do you mind?

ALICE Well, no, I suppose not, but –

ROSEMARY But what?

ALICE I can't help thinking sometimes of when we were married.

ROSEMARY Of course I feel sorry for them, but when I think of the old days I loathe the memory. I like it this way. I'm glad you and your crowd can't possibly get the upper hand now. I admit I wouldn't like to see them shot – not to watch it.

ALICE He might make you watch. I don't put it past him if he thought we loved them.

ROSEMARY He might think you did. That's why he asked me if I would like them shot. Anyhow, you may go now. (*Coldly formal*) Good-night.

14

ROBIN Here we are again.

P.A. We haven't carried further the discussion about doubt, especially as opposed by adherents of the virtues of certainty.

PRIEST I see Roland shaking his head. Have we exhausted its interest?

ROLAND I *am* interested, but the present position in which we find ourselves doesn't seem to demand discussion. Man, though he has claimed to be a supporter of the chocolate bar approach, spoke at our last meeting of the merits of shooting. How do you discuss with a gun?

P.A. War is a change from the debating chamber to the field of battle where a gun is only an instrument. The instrument is of no consequence – the motive force or person is.

ROLAND Too true. In fact the motive force is Man and the lady to whom we are indebted for permission to use this room.

ROSEMARY I am glad to do what I can, but I do not pretend to enjoy your sarcasm, Roland.

ROBIN (*aside to Roland*) Pipe down.

ROLAND I was not aware of being sarcastic.

ALICE Whether you are aware or not doesn't matter so much as what Rosemary *feels* aware of. If she feels you are rude –

ROBIN *She* will press the trigger.

ROLAND I shall not dream of letting my thoughts wander.

P.A. But you cannot explore, literally or metaphorically, if you cannot stray from the beaten track.

MAN Surely it matters who has beaten the track and to what areas you are meaning to stray.

ROLAND Such as?

MAN You might be proposing to explore the possibilities of violence. You and Robin may be considering murder.

ROLAND Where on earth do you suppose Robin or I could get the idea of shooting anyone?

ROBIN (*uneasily*) Aren't you being a bit provocative?

ROSEMARY (*pointing her toe and admiring her ankle*) Alice, you haven't cleaned my shoes properly. Do them again.

ALICE (*obediently*) Yes, Ma'am.

ROBIN (*to no one in particular*) That brings it home to you how things have changed.

ROLAND It is wonderful how much one can learn – even shooting; metaphorically of course.

ROSEMARY No whispering! What are you two muttering about?

ROLAND I was saying it is wonderful how much one can learn – literally of course.

P.A. It is impressive. As Anatole France said about honesty, integrity and wisdom, only bigotry and ignorance are more powerful.

ROSEMARY I have been thoroughly educated – whether 'well' or not.

MAN I feel I have learnt something; I have some experience of seduction and intimidation.

P.A. The active principle of both is the stimulation of one part of a personality against another.

ROLAND Or one section of a community against another.

P.A. It leaves open the question as to where the victory will fall. I suppose that is the crunch in any decision. It looks as if the person or thing that announces the theme for action is not as powerful as the executive who transforms the idea into fact – the sovereign power in a group is one name for it. But what is the sovereign power?

ROSEMARY That can only be decided by practice and in particular circumstances. Here it might be Greed.

ROBIN Or perhaps war or murder.

P.A. Or a state of want or starvation. Péguy, discussing the French summary of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality, considered equality to be of a lower order of precedence vis-à-vis liberty and fraternity.

ROLAND Of course we are all equal here.

P.A. We have the opportunity to mobilize the impressions of several people, not just one; to bring to bear several different powers of discrimination to assess what information our senses glean.

ROBIN Assuming, of course, that the judgement of the individual is not vitiated by the presence of the rest of the group. In that case the combined wisdom of the group could be less than that of the individual members composing it.

P.A. Unless the experience of the group promotes growth of health and strength of the individuals. Perhaps these group meetings might have that developmental generative force.

ROLAND Or they might simply generate jargon. How can you be sure that each individual does not contribute to the riotous and undisciplined proliferation of cells – like a cancer?

P.A. If we could go on with the experience here, we might see what stimulates growth and what structure the growth displays.

ROLAND I do not feel optimistic about the nature of the productions of this group: two members of a defeated army, one member of a force successfully mobilized to destroy a nation, a woman from a subjected class – I refer to Alice – a priest representative of a discredited discipline –

PRIEST I might be thought to represent a discredited hierarchy confused with religion itself; or to be a verbal representation of a force which has never yet been subjected.

ROLAND Which of your many religions are you referring to? I thought you prided yourself on being a sort of Vicar of Bray.

ALICE You are wrong, Roland. I may, as you think, be subjected; Rosemary may be exalted. But this does not represent the truth about womanhood –

PRIEST Or religion. I have not claimed devotion to any one of the polymorph collection of human or saurian 'religions', but I am devoted to religion even if I misrepresent the reality to which I am devoted.

ROLAND I'm sorry – I must be stupid.

P.A. That is a *mis*-representation liable to generate *mis*-understanding.

ROSEMARY I don't think so; 'stupid' is adequate as a descriptive term for Roland.

MAN I would prefer 'bloody-minded'.

ROBIN That comes well from you who have suggested murder in an actual meeting of our group.

P.A. He may be giving evidence of the change of which he said he was aware and attributed to the group.

PRIEST I think he is displaying change, but I do not attribute it to the group.

ROLAND I think you are meaning God – vox populi, vox Dei.

ROSEMARY Are you changing too? If so, I shall have to reconsider my statement that you were stupid.

SHERLOCK Don't. 'Stupid' is the right word.

MORIARTY I thought I recognized one of my flock – stupid, criminal and a figment of the imagination.

WATSON Poor Roland! *I* am usually dismissed as stupid and imaginary. What says Alice? Will you answer for 'womanhood'? Do you think you are a real woman?

ALICE I know Roland too well. He *has* changed, though he is still like the husband I knew – ghastly!

ROLAND Was I really as bad as that?

ALICE Worse – far worse. You are in fact a fictitious and flattering version of the blackguard you were.

WATSON Those are strong terms.

ROSEMARY Rubbish. I know Roland and I don't think Man's suggestion of shooting him at all inappropriate.

ROLAND My God! What collection of Hell Cats have I stirred up?

PRIEST No doubt the God on whom you have called will answer your question.

P.A. I think the language you are using is inadequate. The vast vocabulary of psychoanalysis affords me no better choice. I doubt anything could be adequate; the conjunction of opinions is not referable to the thing-in-itself, the ultimate reality, the *real* Roland – even one real aspect of the real Roland.

ROLAND P.A. seems sure about himself.

SHERLOCK He reminds me of my brother Mycroft, but not so bright or as ornamental. I may be prejudiced as we are members of the same family.

P.A. Which family? Your Mother's, or one of the children of Imagination?

ALICE Imagination is a vicious old bitch; she used to torture me in my childhood.

ROLAND Very affecting reminiscence. I think your resemblance to her would be apparent anywhere!

ROSEMARY Roland, you have not improved.

ROLAND And whose fault is that?

ALICE & ROSEMARY Hopeless!

MAN Shall I shoot?

ROSEMARY No; not yet.

PRIEST Maybe a spell in Purgatory would do him good. It is often growth-promoting.

P.A. It may promote cancerous proliferation.

PRIEST Of course; the religious domain with which I am most familiar has produced or aided in the growth of some of the most malignant specimens I have ever known. Charming too – rosy-cheeked, cricket-loving. I recall one in particular; the last time I saw him he was padre to a battalion at Ypres.

P.A. I knew him. His bonhomie grew flat towards the end.

(*Robin and Roland remain dimly visible; the rest are gradually enveloped in obscurity, dark and deep.*)

ROLAND Shooting would be too good for him and too noisy for us. Rat poison used to be kept in the medicine chest. It is, after all, a kind of medicine.

ROBIN Arsenic preserves the evidence of the crime. So does tannic acid.

ROLAND We don't need to consider the disposal of the remains till we have some to dispose of.

ROBIN Oh yes we do. I don't want to dispose of myself as well as him. So we must consider how we get rid of him.

ROLAND Get rid of him first, say I.

ROBIN Don't be a fool. You say I'm too cautious; *you* are too precipitate.

ROLAND What about the women? That skivvy is clearly a force to reckon with. Anyone who can become boss as she has done –

ROBIN Is she a traitor or a potential tool?

ROLAND That is hard to say. I wouldn't like to go to her for help. Sex is an unpredictable force.

P.A. May I join in? Freud suggested that the human race was a complex construction for providing the germ plasm with a means of locomotion.

ROLAND Let's talk about it later – it's an idea. It is getting lighter and noisier – do I hear voices?

PRIEST Why not discuss it with the rest of the group? They are the ones I hear. Or are they? I see a puissant and a mighty nation mewing its youth.

ROBIN What's the time? My watch doesn't mark the centuries – only hours.

P.A. Mine only marks fifties. What about yours?

PRIEST Mine marks centuries, but only on geometric scale. We need universal or extra-galactic time.

ROLAND Only seasonal I fear; 'thus with the year seasons return'.

ROSEMARY I have a lady's watch which Alice gave me. It marks beauty – the kind that's in the eye of the beholder.

PRIEST Mine is for spiritual beauty beheld by God.

ROBIN Masculine too, I understand.

ROLAND Only as seen by men.

ALICE A cup of tea, Ma'am?

P.A. One more scale – ali-metric, the human animal's alimentary canal. There would seem to be a number of different times from alimetric, geo-metric, stella-metric, galacto-metric, to extra-galacto-metric. Hitherto we have resorted to geo-metric scales but it is now becoming obvious that they are inadequate for the purposes for which we require them.

ROBIN That would be an explanation for experiences of the inappropriate such as pain that is incommensurate with the physical importance of the physical injury.

PRIEST Would you say that intense pain in your gastro-intestinal system was telling you, 'time for dinner'?

ROBIN It would tell me it was time to stop eating.

P.A. The body language needs interpretation – time to stop eating or simply 'the time'? If the latter, 'time' for what? Alimentary or medical activity? Like hieroglyphic script, it has this peculiarity of polymorphy or poly-valence. What about a term like 'polymorphous-perverse'?

ROLAND Well, what about it? You should know!

P.A. 'You should know' seems to be an intrusion from outside the system of human knowledge. I feel it doesn't 'belong', as a comet might not be regarded as intra-galactic. It may belong to the human psyche; Freud discovered many intrusions from the domain he called 'unconscious'. Although I need look no further than the human unconscious for this intruder, I think it would be unwise or bigoted to rule out the possibility of intrusion from a domain of which we know nothing.

PRIEST I think psychoanalysts are presumptuous and bigoted to exclude a Godhead.

MORIARTY Godhead! Another figment of the imagination.

WATSON I don't see why you scoff at figments of the imagination; for all you know the greatest power of all is indistinguishable from one of us.

MAN I believe in God anyway; I have evidence of his goodness.

ROLAND I believe in the Devil; I have evidence of his cruelty and wickedness.

P.A. I differ. Evidence is a function of the senses; that cannot lead logically to the 'truth' of God – only to the truth of the reality that is *not* God.

SHERLOCK Good! I have already said we figments of the imagination are far more 'real' than your dim and shadowy realities. Can you imagine anything more impossible to believe in than my creator Conan Doyle? Fantastic!

MYCROFT Well done! But aren't you being rather triumphant? A kind of Frankenstein Monster?

SHERLOCK Well, aren't you triumphing over me? Can you tell me who or what created the Monster? Who was Frankenstein? The Monster is alleged to have killed Frankenstein.

P.A. The death instinct killed Eros; the same instinct is inseparable from birth. Birth and death refer to directions of the activity.

ROLAND Somebody – Man has already said it – is going to get shot.

ROBIN Something is going to be born that 'commends the ingredients of the poisoned chalice to our own lips'. Initiation initiates definition.

P.A. What an ugly monster it is – always proliferating. Massacring the infants was an ineffectual precaution and now it is too late to murder thought or thinker. A thought without a thinker is certain to pro-voke a thinker to father it sooner or later. What saurian engendered thought? Is there not a danger that someone will give birth to thought, or even miss out the intervening barrier between thought and action and give immediate expression to robbery and murder – the two unacknowledged parents through whom innocence and sin came into the world.

PRIEST I doubt it. Your view is coloured, almost dictated, by the

laws of your kind of communication. The unknown thoughts require a poet, like the heroes still dwelling in everlasting night of whom Horace spoke.

P.A. The poet is more likely to disappear into the unknown night than to save his Eurydice. In psychoanalytic language of a sophisticated 'level', the unconscious would overwhelm the conscious, the contained would be lost inside its container, the blood would be lost in the capillaries, the living person or thing would bleed to death in its tissues, the rational would be lost in the irrational, the –

ROLAND Oh, for heaven's sake!

ROBIN Yes, I get the idea – you haven't got to repeat it.

PRIEST Hosea is swallowed in wantonness, chastity lost in harlotry –

SHERLOCK What! You too?

HIAWATHA I can claim no special merit just for doing what is known to be so easy –

WATSON Holmes, you complained after a brilliant piece of detection that I, like everyone else, believed the discovery must have been very easy – *after* you had explained it.

P.A. Freud wrote an outline of psychoanalysis when he was eighty-two; this 'Outline' seemed simple and therefore easy. So it is – for anyone who has spent the previous eighty-two years doing the work. The good mother, of whatever sex, ultimately qualifies to be vulnerable to loss. The product becomes capable of independent existence; the mammal does not 'need' the saurian; The human animal becomes redundant and is replaced by its successor. Where is the new idea to enable us to lead Moloch to join his praise and adulation to that of the proud and happy parents?

MYCROFT 'As the Saurian lay a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge, a thynkynge, Prettily lay the thought in its shell of saurian brain'.

MORIARTY My progenitor lay concealed in Paradise. The person best qualified by temperament and aesthetic skill unfortunately squandered his powers by hailing holy light. Despite the fact that he expressed the logical confusion into which he was getting, he did not cut the Gordian knot by directly hailing devilish darkness 'of confusion and blackest midnight born' – a great pity. One cannot fail to mourn the loss to lies, deceptions, evasions by his unfortunate defection. The greatest disseminator of culture has always been the thief and robber; he has put down the mighty and over-gifted and

wise, and exalted the humble and meek and intensely viable sinner. To whom do we look for progress? The wise? The Good? The beautiful? Perish the thought! Even Mycroft owes his chief merit to sloth.

> Hail ignoble sloth and leave ornithology
> to the birds and other angelic monstrosities
> Blithe thou never Overt. Hail! I say, sordid
> Spirit – gin and bear it . . .

MYCROFT I had no idea that you were among the poets!

MORIARTY My *dear* Mycroft – have you never read 'Ruin Among the Lovers'? My favourite pastime.

MYCROFT You're drunk.

MORIARTY Me? Drunk? I never touch the stuff. I assist it to *circulate.* Smuggling, as another poet says, keeps the prices down; so it is best for the poor when the gentlemen go by. Who do you think made the mistress of this house available to the cow-man? Who gave the mistress of this house a chance to find her true calling? She would never have found for herself the joys of being a skivvy or being raped. Why, she even tried to stop Rosemary . . .

MYCROFT I certainly think she would do better than that fool Holmes – I doubt his taste in women – although she would not be anything like as effective as you, Madam, if *you* got on my track!

ROSEMARY Very seductive – but I am not a figment of the imagination.

MORIARTY I can see that you are the real thing.

P.A. Figments of the imagination are often more powerful than many real things; men and women are not so powerful as the idealized figures that other men and women have about them.

ROLAND If you mean figments of imagination, why not say so instead of calling them 'idealized figures'? Why don't you talk English instead of that barbarous jargon?

P.A. Because 'English' already has an established meaning; it is saturated with meaning. So I have to use words which are unsaturated to indicate that I am not referring to the preconception. Unfortunately the 'unsaturated' expression almost immediately becomes saturated jargon, as you call it – and I cannot help having to use what is thought to have the familiar meaning, or to be expressing a platitude, or to be meaningless, or to be throwing more light on the 'craziness' of the speaker than illuminating the darkness, or to be just 'poetic'.

ROBIN I begin to see why Milton used to bore me to tears – although it was better than maths.

ROSEMARY Or Latin.

ALICE '*Quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore qui redit exuvias indutus Achilli.*'

PRIEST Or '*Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae . . .*'

P.A. Or 'envy and gratitude'.

ROLAND I don't see anything remarkable about that.

P.A. There isn't anything more remarkable than there is about what you and Robin would say alone.

ROLAND Are you trying to say that we say or do things alone that we don't say or do in public?

(*It grows dark. All fade except Roland and Robin.*)

ROLAND Are you sure no one can hear or see?

ROBIN Of course not. In this attic at night we are safe.

ROLAND What do you think that bloody psychoanalyst meant?

ROBIN *You* are suspicious! Knowing what I know about P.A.'s you can be sure he, like the rest, has sex on the brain.

ROLAND I'm not so sure; I think he's a spy. Anyhow I don't want to be accused of sexual practices. This is as bad as my late lamented public school where they didn't have to go through long years of psychoanalysis to be told what two of us were up to if we were alone together in the dark.

ROBIN But we aren't two boys.

ROLAND And this is not free England in peace time. You heard what Man said about shooting; and that bitch Rosemary said –

ROBIN 'Not yet.' Death will come anyway. What of it? Those two aren't likely to be the people to decide. I might get pneumonia – very likely in this blasted hole. While looking out for one thing you can trip over something else and break your neck. Montesquieu said so years ago. A fellow trying to escape was captured in flight because his braces burst and he couldn't run holding his trousers up. If he hadn't been so fussy about sex he could have run without his trousers.

ROLAND You're as bad as P.A. What's this got to do with living in defeated England?

ROBIN Sex! I have an idea. This Man is sweet on Rosemary – how can we burst his braces?

ROLAND I don't know what you mean.

ROBIN You learnt less at school than I thought. Think it out – we'll discuss it further.

(*It grows darker. Only Robin is left.*)

ROBIN I wonder if I can trust Roland. He's stout-hearted but so stupid. So far he has kept his mouth shut; but he gave me away at Munden – not by saying something, but by coming. You'd think a countryman would know a lark doesn't land *at* its nest; it has the sense to know that sometimes it pays to walk. 'It is the lark that sings so out of tune. . .'Juliet was urging him to behave like a fool . . . It's an idea.

(*Fade-out still further.*)

ROBIN God! What's that?

ROLAND I wish you wouldn't start like that! You've woken me up. What's the matter?

ROBIN I must have been dreaming. I thought England, our two farms, had been taken over.

ROLAND That's not a dream. Wake up!

ROBIN I thought . . . What was it then?

ROLAND How should I know? *You* said it was a dream.

ROBIN You're being stupid. I remember – in the dream you *were* stupid.

ROLAND Oh, shut up and go to sleep. You'll wake the house if you go on like that.

ROBIN Am I to sleep or wake up? You are being idiotic. Oh, he's gone to sleep again. I think it's getting light. The appalling prospect of another day. Yet sometimes I wonder if it's any worse than it used to be, if I have forgotten what it was like. It's quite pleasant plotting how to murder that Man and his woman. No good plotting without practice . . . but would practice be pleasant?

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ROSEMARY Alice, you can go now. Tell Roland to come up to me. (*Alice curtseys and goes out.*) That girl is becoming a nuisance; I must get rid of her. What will happen to her? How should I know and what do I care? Ah . . . come in and sit down, Roland; I want to talk to you.

ROLAND What do you want?

ROSEMARY I don't want you to get into bed with me, if that's what you are thinking. You once seemed to think that because I was a servant I would be honoured by your dishonourable intentions. What I want to talk about is Alice – I am not satisfied with her. I won't trouble you with the reasons, nor why I do not want her to suffer more than she has to. She does not realize what danger she is in. When I dismiss her – as I am going to – she will be without means of support. I can do nothing for her. Do you understand?

ROLAND She is nothing to do with me. You are thinking she is still my wife.

ROSEMARY I was not thinking any such thing. It is a long time since I thought she was your wife, or even concubine. (*Roland makes a sudden impatient gesture.*) Roland, this automatic is not loaded with chocolate, nor am I loaded with sweet feelings for you. I should regret it, but I shall shoot without hesitation.

ROLAND I know you have no feelings of concern for me, but –

ROSEMARY You are hopeless. I was about to tell you I have no feelings for Alice. You may go.

(*Roland goes out.*)

ROSEMARY It's getting lighter. Light or dark – what does it matter to me? Am I such a fool that I do not know Man's name? Menelaus, Cupid, Hector, Astyanax . . . But what of the night, the void, the infinite? And now, the marriage feast begun, will Poverty be

the bride? I saw the world when it was young and beautiful. I have only to close my eyes to see it again. And Man loves me, dotes on me. I am part of the spoils of war. Alice is part of the spoils of *my* war. Am *I* to mourn Adonis? Or Alice, or Roland – that bastard who thought he could get his skivvy cheap as spoils of the war waged by the upper classes of Britain? *Great* Britain they say! And now this murderous lout thinks he is going to pick up a conquered woman. He would be grovelling at my feet if I were not fussy about the kind of trash I collect on my shoes. I felt sorry for Alice, but when I remember that she married Roland I think she must be such a fool that I cannot be justified in pitying her. That's God's job – not mine. The priest, servant of God, acquired some sense in the last thousand years, rubbed off on him from Minerva. Helen of Troy – that's what they called me then. Before I was called Helen I was nameless, the unrecognized vegetation, the goddess of futility and vegetation from which the mammalian parasites sprang and on whom they still depend.

P.A. What of the micro-cellular plants – bacteria? Will they not feed on the rotting remains of the mammals when their brain children grow up and give birth to a light brighter than a thousand suns?

ROSEMARY I thought you believed in mind.

P.A. You could call it that. *I* call it that because I have to talk to human minds and I can't do that without believing they exist.

ROSEMARY Sometimes I almost think you are intelligent.

P.A. Alas! I am. You can't believe the trouble I've had with intelligence – mine and other people's. Intelligent people – Arjuna, Meister Eckhart, Jesus, Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Saint Augustine and the rest – want to *know* God. They have been warned that, Icarus-like, they would singe their waxen wings and . . . *fall*.

ROSEMARY *You* don't know the trouble I've had with 'intelligence'; even sex is religious. Poor Minerva used to complain of the same thing.

MAN What about Beauty?

ROSEMARY Humans confuse beauty with religion and sex. Always worshipping women or sex or wine instead of God.

MORIARTY Ah! I wondered if you would stumble on the importance of a Figment of the Imagination. (I've told the printer to use capital letters as a sign of respect.) It's one of the things that Sherlock and I – and even poor old Watson – agree about. Only the greatest

human beings have been able to recognize these figments of imagination.

P.A. Jesus used to complain about the adulterous generation who were clamouring for a sign.

MORIARTY Satan, like William Blake but unlike the author of *Paradise Lost*, had the ability to see how he dominates the story.

P.A. That was hidden by the beauty of the verse.

ROBIN No, the beauty of Paradise Lost made the truth last long enough for someone to receive the message.

P.A. Don't you agree that the longevity with which those formulations were endowed was a consequence of beauty? Then work had to be done to recognize the truth.

ROBIN You are going round in circles.

P.A. 'Circles' are a poor visual image.

ROBIN Perhaps I should have said you are going round in a helix –

ROLAND And should have kept your mouth shut.

ROSEMARY Roland, I told you you could go.

P.A. You might as well talk to D.N.A.

ROBIN What's that?

P.A. Doubt, Nature, Art.

ROSEMARY Art, Nature, Decay. You've got the order wrong.

ROLAND I had to use my arts to prosper the crab-apple before it became an apple fit to eat; fit to be turned into natural manure.

P.A. As Confucius said, 'ground in the mortar of the mind'.

ROBIN My Latin master taught me Livy's parable of the members of the body; he never taught me what the parable meant, any more than Livy taught anybody its meaning.

P.A. What does Coma Berenices mean? It is hung in the sky large enough to be seen, yet its meaning is only in part visible to the astronomer – not the part visible to the poet – though once I knew an astronomer who saw both. Millions have had the wit to be terrified by comets.

ROBIN I understood that psychoanalysts were supposed to make profound interpretations.

(*General murmur of agreement with sarcastic overtones.*)

P.A. No more than astronomers viewing Coma Berenices are supposed to 'see' a country far beyond the star. It is common sense

to see nothing in Coma Berenices. You assume I am talking ordinary conversational English – nothing profound. Why then do you sound aggrieved? I had a patient who was a good mimic and used to sound just like a man engaging in a conversation. But it became clear that he couldn't understand a thing he or I said. Changes occurred when I interpreted his 'remarks' in light of Kleinian theories – notably those grouped together as *derived* from projective interpretation –

ROLAND Are you talking English now?

ROSEMARY Get out!

ROLAND Gladly.

MAN Shall I shoot?

ROSEMARY No. It's interesting. I don't use P.A.'s language, nor that of Priest. I use Alice.

P.A. I would say it is what anatomists and physiologists and possibly Freudian psychoanalysts would call 'sex'.

ROBIN I thought you would call yourself a Freudian psychoanalyst. Or are you a Kleinian?

P.A. I can recognize and would like to acknowledge my debt to Freud and to Melanie Klein, but they might be affronted by such attribution. I would acknowledge my debt to others, but I am aware that many would think such an acknowledgment more a liability than an asset; they would not wish to be thought my mental forebears. Nor do *I* wish to wear the plumage of the peacock when my true colours should be the feathers of the sparrow.

ROBIN Not even Lesbia's?

P.A. Your interjection sums up the dilemma beautifully.

ROSEMARY I don't know what you are talking about.

P.A. It would not become you to assume the garb of Andromache.

PRIEST What did Queen Mary whisper when she did not dare, in audible English, tell her admiring throngs to cheer?

ROBIN Something she had learned from her nautical husband I believe. Don't you want us to cheer?

P.A. No; cheers are interpreted.

ROBIN Always?

P.A. I interpret such evidence as my senses and my insight provide, but I am not impelled to make it public. In the practice of psychoanalysis I accept tacitly an obligation to try to make my analysand aware of what his insight and 'out'sight tell.

ROBIN Why?

P.A. Because I accept him, provisionally, as needing to hear what his senses have to say.

ROBIN Do you think *we* want to hear what you have to say?

P.A. Occasionally people want to hear something to confirm what they know – be that good or ill. They only rarely want to hear the truth – be it welcome or not. Fewer still wish to know what it will cost. But the psychoanalyst is expected to meet their needs.

ROBIN Is he any worse off than anyone else?

P.A. Probably better off – for those few hours he is given the chance to convey the truth.

ROBIN How do you know they want it?

P.A. I don't. I draw attention only to what the man or woman *seems* to me to want. If they think my comment illuminating they can continue in their way, or decide to change course. It is their choice.

ROSEMARY What do I want?

P.A. As far as I have had an opportunity to judge, a mate who could provide you with the means to gratify your desires.

ROSEMARY Love?

P.A. I do not recognize the need for that word to describe your relationship with anyone.

ROSEMARY Andromache?

P.A. No. Alice may fulfil the part since Roland declined to be her Hector.

MORIARTY Wouldn't you be Hector to Alice's Andromache?

P.A. I have not the courage necessary for the part.

ALICE You sadden me, but I think you are right.

WATSON How can you tell? I have known some ordinary people who behaved with extraordinary courage.

P.A. I know what you mean. I have even had courage attributed to me. But I remember no occasion on which I was not a coward at heart. Even in my prosaically unheroic role of psychoanalyst I always fear to give an interpretation.

ROBIN For fear of being murdered?

P.A. That is usually a remote contingency.

ROBIN But it exists?

P.A. As well as other possibilities. To confirm the accusation sometimes made against analysts that they do not attach importance to the environmental factors, I find that any rational explanation that

is 'reasonably' proffered has only ephemeral effect. Environmental factors leave virtually no lasting lesson in the recipient's mind – no trace.

ROBIN Then what does have a lasting effect?

P.A. Anything which stimulates, mobilizes, creates feelings belonging to the love ↔hate spectrum.

ROBIN I don't know what you mean – it sounds like jargon. I find it difficult to see what differentiates your statement from other jargonese statements.

P.A. You are right – and I don't know what to do about this difficulty when I am 'talking about' psychoanalysis. If I were practising psychoanalysis with you I could try to demonstrate an emotional experience you were having and say, 'What you are now feeling is what I call "hate", or "love", or some subdivision between the two'. *Here* I can elaborate what you have called 'jargon' by this rather long-winded story – 'construction', as Freud might have called it –

ROBIN 'Might have called it' – there you go again. You're so cautious. Why don't you say right out what you mean?

P.A. Because it would not be the truth I wanted to convey.

ROBIN You make me think psychoanalysis must be very difficult if you can't talk plain English.

P.A. You are right; psychoanalysis is very difficult: so is plain English. If I could talk it, it would not be 'talking' what I want to 'say'.

ROBIN I give up.

SHERLOCK If I were able to play my violin, and you could listen to it, the problem would be settled in no time.

P.A. *If* you could play it . . . *if* I could listen to it . . . *if* it would be settled in no time . . . *then* we should pass on to another problem.

ROSEMARY Alice! Put out my evening dress. No, no, not that one. Wait; I want you to dress me.

ALICE Yes, Ma'am.

P.A. (*to Priest*) She has got her where she wants her – beneath her feet.

PRIEST And now – she doesn't want it.

P.A. I'm not so sure; I think she does. What was Shub-ad like?

PRIEST The Queen? Not at all a bad sort. She was quite upset at the King's death.

P.A. That's where you came in with your little beaker and large store of fairy tales; and, in due course, the British Museum.

PRIEST Don't forget the University of Pennsylvania and its large store of dollars. And Freud – don't forget Freud and that load of science beneath which is buried God and Art and Wisdom itself.

P.A. Death, you say, shall have no dominion.

PRIEST No I don't; that is not my view of death. Thoughts live until they find a thinker who gives them birth – and so brings death into the world and all our woe.

P.A. From your vertex is may *seem* so, but that depends on standing on the giddy precipice of 'seeming'.

PRIEST You resort to visual imagery to make your empty thoughts look full.

P.A. I agree it does make them seem full, but I think these formulations have content. I am talking about 'something' and I think it would be worth having respect for 'seeming'. I doubt the equivocation of the fiend that lies like truth.

ROSEMARY Bed time. Alice, have you put out my things? I expect my visitor about midnight. Let him in and then go to bed.

ALICE Yes, Ma'am.

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Rosemary is greeting Man. Alice stands respectfully aside, takes his hat and coat, and is dismissed.

MAN Still got your maid, I see.

ROSEMARY I have made up my mind to dismiss her.

MAN I thought you would find her somewhat insolent.

ROSEMARY No, it's not that. She weighs heavily – dependent – as if she looks to me for help. (*Laughs.*)

MAN I love it when you laugh like that; there is a fascinating music in it.

ROSEMARY That's what Alice says. I think I find her fascination very agreeable – more now than I used to in the old days.

MAN I don't like her – or Roland. I don't know why you shelter them; I feel they are both dangerous.

ROSEMARY I think *he* is.

MAN You would be wise to let me shoot him – or have him shot.

ROSEMARY Well, perhaps I will. But not here please. I hate violence. Alice is going to have a baby.

MAN Does she love the father?

ROSEMARY Love? I shouldn't think so – you know what these poor people are. When she has had the baby we can get rid of her. It will be a good reason for dismissing her.

MAN Roland is the man I suppose.

ROSEMARY Heavens, no! She hates him. But let's talk about something interesting.

MAN Have you decided when we are to marry?

(*It becomes dark and their voices fade out. When it grows light Rosemary is alone.*)

ROSEMARY Marry? It's an idea. I wonder what the laws are now.

Of course I could always poison him when I've done with him. Tom could easily be blamed and I don't suppose anyone will be bothered to find out. But . . . shall I have established my position? I expect so; I'm not a damned fool like Alice or Roland. Sometimes I wonder . . . these people must have been some good once. Suppose the brat's a boy – she might take to him. . . . It's quite an amusing situation viewed from my position. How different the same vista is if one's position changes! I used to hate Alice – only a year since – now I almost like her. I was most solicitous when I asked if she was going to have a baby. Very different when she – blast her impudence! – was suggesting to me that Tom was 'a nice boy'. As if she cared! I feel sorry for her. She's in a hole – Tom couldn't give a damn; Roland hates her and is going to be shot . . . which reminds me to tell Man he can shoot him when he likes. I'm not sure though that I have much time. He has changed from his 'gentlemanly' ways recently. I don't put murder beyond his programme. Who's there? I'll shoot! What, no one? My nerve must be going. Where's my torch. (*Rings the bell. After a minute Alice appears.*)

ALICE You rang for me?

ROSEMARY Of course, who else? I thought I had better tell you, so that you can find another job, that I won't be able to keep you after the next two weeks.

ALICE Another job? There aren't any. Anyhow, I don't want to leave.

ROSEMARY I'm sorry, but Man was talking it over with me and won't hear of you staying. He seems to have taken a dislike to you and . . . well, what can I do? I shall miss you of course, but perhaps it will be much better to make a break.

ALICE Do you mean you trust *him?*

ROSEMARY No, of course not. Did you trust Roland – with me I mean? Or did you think I led him on? I wouldn't have trusted him an inch. I never understood how a girl with any sense married him.

ALICE I was young – and in love.

ROSEMARY My Mum warned me that if ever I was such a damned fool as to fall in love she'd chuck me out of the house. 'Do what you like, Rosie', she said, 'but don't come telling me you've fallen in love'. I'm telling you the same. I'm surprised you didn't learn it at your school. Now – you may go.

ALICE Is that all for the night . . . Ma'am?

ROSEMARY *Go!* (*Alice obeys*) Extraordinary! Fancy thinking I would be in love with Man – or her! She hasn't learned that love makes clear thinking impossible. I am sorry to think how I hated her; I never guessed I would be her boss. Not till that day when I was holding her wrists and she couldn't make me go. Still, I shan't make the mistake of letting *her* get up again. She's down – for keeps. I can't waste time on her – I have enough to do to keep Man in his place. It's asking for trouble to let him get the upper hand. No pregnancies – I can make him think it's his fault he can't make me pregnant. I shall be *terribly* upset of course – I mustn't overdo it or he'll persevere – terribly upset; but I shall be very brave about it. Yes – then he will have to keep in my good books. I shall forgive him, tell him not to mind. I shall keep giving him sly digs to remind him what a misfortune it has been – for Alice. It certainly will be a misfortune for her if I can arrange it. It is amusing, but not amusing enough. If only I could make her feel humiliated; but she gets too much pleasure out of it, as if it were a game she had volunteered to play, damn her! After she's had a dose of real starvation perhaps she'll have to come back to some job in my house. But she may be successful now she's rid of that man Roland – what a horrible idea!

It's so dark and cold, I hope I'm not going to need a man. I don't need Roland – never did. But if Alice thought she did, I might have thought so had I gone to *her* school. What a fate! Yet, now I *am* going to her school – the school for bosses. I must be going weak in the head; if I go on like this I shall 'fall in love' – with Man.

P.A. No, you are only falling in love with being seduced.

ROSEMARY You again? So you think I am being seduced?

P.A. No, I think you are in love with seduction. You made Alice fall in love with being seduced. She was starved and you were starved, so it was hardly surprising that you were both vulnerable – susceptible to the allurement of physical sex, she perhaps more than you, because in her 'bin', as you call it, she was starved of physical sex in a way which you couldn't experience in your slum. Neither of you knows the first thing about love.

ROSEMARY Excuse me, I do. I know a lot more about it than you do. I know what you and Roland and Robin and that boy thought they were teaching me. I learnt that their love was not worth much.

P.A. Yes, you may have learnt what 'worthless' love is, but that isn't love. In the catalogue it may go for love, as Shakespeare's

murderers went for 'men'. No doubt your collection of predators go for 'lovers'; your love may be of much the same predatory kind. You haven't said or done anything *I* call love.

ROSEMARY You are a stickler for good English. How do *you* define 'love'?

P.A. I don't. The word as I've heard it here is constantly conjoined with a number of characteristics, phrases, emotions, experiences, but that is only a part of verbal activity. 'Love', in so far as it relates to the past, is a ghost of a memory; as to the future it is a hope casting its shadow before. 'The thing itself' –

ROSEMARY Yes, I hoped you would get to it in time –

P.A. I must disappoint you. As a psychoanalyst I cannot aspire to success where the Saints, Philosophers, Artists of every kind have not succeeded.

ROSEMARY You can try.

P.A. I know what you mean, but it is not a domain in which 'effort' is applicable. I know ''tis not in mortals to command success' may be true of Love; but it is part of being.

ROSEMARY Do you think mankind will ever achieve it?

P.A. It has nothing to do with Past, Present or Future. 'It' has been, is, and will be. Psychoanalysis, or preaching, or painting, or music are not 'it' – they are 'about' it.

ROSEMARY I am tired and it is already day. Sometimes I see things too clearly, but . . . oh, he has disappeared! I must have dreamt him. But it doesn't feel as if I have slept at all. My eyes hurt as if I had been up all night at a party. (*Short laugh, instantaneously terminated.*) Why laugh? What's the joke? Belly – what are you laughing at? What's so funny? (*Sleeps.*)

* * *

(*Roland and Robin talking – no one else is apparent.*)

ROLAND Only two of us; it's not enough. If that bloody psychoanalyst could be relied on –

ROBIN You've said lots of times that you wouldn't trust him an inch.

ROLAND I wasn't thinking of trusting him. I said if f he could be relied on . . . he could hold one end of a rope for two minutes. One minute would be enough if he could be relied on.

ROBIN What are you afraid he would do?

ROLAND Do? Nothing – but even that is not certain.

ROBIN Well then?

ROLAND Talk when he shouldn't. He could be useful if he could be relied on just to shout, 'lie!', once – at the right time.

ROBIN It sounds simple.

ROLAND It is. Instead of which, he is sure to want to know why.

ROBIN He isn't as bad as that.

ROLAND He is quite as bad as that. Take it from me, people who ask, 'why?' are no bloody use at all. They set out to do things, become absorbed in what they are curious about, and forget what they meant to do in the first place. Give them a job, expect them to do it – and get let down for your pains.

ROBIN What do you propose to do about Rosemary?

ROLAND Nothing. She's no damn good – only a skivvy with the mind of a skivvy.

ROBIN You ignore the fact that this 'skivvy' is the mistress of the house, and the mistress of the house is her skivvy. That is not her lowest point – yet. She has further to go; so has Rosemary.

ROLAND She has got her hooks into that bastard, Man. She has even persuaded him to get mixed up with this 'talking shop'. That is a sign that he is on his way out, mark my words.

ROBIN He may be, but Rosemary is not as impressed with the social summit as you think.

ROLAND She is only interested in beautiful clothes because she can use them to feel how beautiful she is.

ROBIN But she will survive and we shall not. She will get someone's semen –

ROLAND Someone's syphilis or gonorrhoea.

ROBIN That's not the kind of fool she is. You may be, but she isn't. Did you ever succeed in making love to her? No – and never will. I bet she took good care you would never get into her. Aren't I right?

ROLAND Only because I was worried about Alice.

ROBIN You are hopeless.

ROLAND Dammit! That's the second time today that someone has said that to me.

ROBIN Was Rosemary the other one? Don't tell me; I bet she was. Even if she didn't say it, that was what she meant in language louder than any words.

ROLAND (*white with rage*) I'll teach the whole damn lot of you!

(*A shot is heard, soft and muffled. Roland falls dead.*)

ROSEMARY (*to Man*) Darling! You shouldn't have done that. You've quite upset me! He really –

MAN I'm so sorry; I thought you wouldn't mind.

ROSEMARY Of course I mind. Poor Alice. She'll blame me for not having saved him.

MAN Do you mind about her? Was she fond of him? Don't let it spoil our evening. I love you, I love you.

ROSEMARY It's no good. Can't you see I am very upset? I can't take it as if it's nothing. You must give me time.

PRIEST (*turns Roland's body with his toe as if to reassure himself who it is*) I'll get Tom to clear him – it – 'him', I mean – away.

ROSEMARY (*whimpers and pushes Man's hands away*) How awful! I wish it hadn't happened.

MAN (*disconcerted, releases her*) I thought you wanted –

ROSEMARY How dare you suggest such a thing! You can't love me to talk like that.

ROBIN Is he dead?

P.A. Quite.

PRIEST Quite dead. Well, well . . . his troubles are over.

ROBIN (*furious*) I thought you believed in a future life.

PRIEST Oh no. Quite a mistaken idea. Lots of people who have not studied the teachings of the Church make that mistake.

ROBIN Then what the hell do you believe in?

PRIEST Well, Hell.

P.A. Hell, like Heaven, is within you.

MORIARTY (*sniggering*) Ridiculous! Can't you see he's dead? What's all the fuss about? A perfectly simple murder – no problem. But you make it a fountain of lies, prevarications and self-deceptions.

WATSON What about you? Haven't you caused endless controversy – you and your demise at Reichenbach?

MORIARTY Doyle may have been a bungler, but nobody can say there are no real crooks in the real world. One of these days my human followers will achieve power even if they don't acknowledge their indebtedness to a 'figment of the imagination'. Where's your army, navy and police force? Man has just put a bullet through one English Gentleman and is in a fair way to make a servant into a 'lady'. I think her lack of principle shows great promise. She's even now

preparing reasons for throwing Man over with no more compunction than she has for Alice. She's not guilty –

ROSEMARY If you weren't a figment of the imagination I would ring your bloody neck.

MORIARTY If you are not careful you will become evil 'incarnate' and find your neck more wrung than bloody. Look what's happened to your late boss's husband. If he had stuck to agriculture he might not be mutton now!

P.A. I see you are a Platonist.

MORIARTY Never heard of such an animal.

PRIEST Plato said that every man should stick to his last and then the 'world' would become a heaven on earth; so far, hell holds its own.

MORIARTY I always thought he was a philosopher – he must have had more sense –

P.A. Sense, like cheerfulness, keeps breaking in – as Dr Johnson said.

ROSEMARY Is anyone going to remove that object?

ALICE I've told Tom; he's coming. I am upset. After all, I was married to him once.

ROSEMARY I've seen you and Roland together, even though you thought it was just a 'skivvy's-eye view'; it was never what I call love.

ALICE You have gone too far, Rosemary. You –

ROSEMARY You have gone too far; I am the boss now. Tell Tom to hurry up and be quick about it. I want that removed. And you and Tom can go and find another job.

MAN Can I help?

ROSEMARY No; I have had enough of your help!

MAN I'm sorry. You may want . . .

ROSEMARY When I want it I can ask. Just now I am upset. You are too rough.

PRIEST & P.A. Can I help?

ROSEMARY No, go away. You don't know what a woman is.

P.A. That's true.

PRIEST I have met them before. She reminds me of Sarah and Hagar her servant. They gave Abram a rough passage.

TOM You wanted me?

ROSEMARY Clear that away.

TOM Oh God – it's the master isn't it?

ROSEMARY Fool! Now he is upset. Yes, it's Mister Roland – take it away Tom – he's dead.

TOM However did it happen?

MAN I shot him. Bury him in the fields somewhere.

TOM But that's murder!

MAN Go and bury it away from the house. No, not in the garden; in the graveyard if you like, but be quick about it.

TOM I'll get a barrow – but it doesn't seem right.

ROSEMARY Take him with you now.

TOM I was only going to fetch a barrow.

ROSEMARY No! Take it out!

(*Tom, menaced by Man still fingering the automatic, shoulders the body with distaste and goes out. The automatic is not lost on Rosemary who turns disdainfully on him.*)

ROSEMARY Put that gun away. (*He hesitates.*) I said, put that gun down. (*angrily*) Give it to me! (*He goes out in a rage – without surrendering the gun.*)

(*Darkness falls – the scene is blotted out.*)

17

ROSEMARY (*at first only faintly discernible – by herself*) What a day! (*A shattered ghost of a beggar woman slowly becomes apparent. Rosemary sees her and is startled.*) Who are you? How did you get here? (*There is no response, but the figure is increasingly menacing.*) Get out! (*The figure slowly raises its hands as if it might clutch her.*) You won't frighten me with those tricks. Apparitions are not new to me. What do you want?

APPARITION I am glad you decided to be civil – without being terrified. It wouldn't do if you screamed.

ROSEMARY (*scornfully*) I am not easily terrified; not even though I thought my mind was going.

APPARITION It is. I have come to warn you. I am a friend of yours.

ROSEMARY Andromache? Lady Macbeth? Hecuba? These are friends I have seen before. I know you; you were fooled that day by the priest – at Ur. He turned up today too. I have a lot of friends.

APPARITION Dreams, apparitions, hallucinations may indeed be friends of yours – if you dare to admit the acquaintance. So far you have at least permitted yourself to admit my existence. You may be right to think that I am both the herald of impending disaster and a sign of that disaster.

ROSEMARY Aren't things bad enough without *your* arrival?

APPARITION I disturb your slumbers; you feel I am a symptom of a 'mind diseased'. Freud tried to turn these dreams to good account: you are not obliged to follow his example.

ROSEMARY The only Freud I ever heard of was a psychoanalyst.

APPARITION I don't mind what you call him – or me. You have been warned. Don't let me disturb your sleep – sleep well. (*Disappears.*)

ROSEMARY Gone! I must have indigestion.

P.A. Mental indigestion perhaps.

ROSEMARY Oh God – now you've turned up.

P.A. No, not God; only myself. I heard talking and came to see what it was. These are curious times, or I wouldn't have departed from the conventions of ordinary good manners. I have not come to get into bed with you – I heard what you told Roland when he came in to see you. Do you want me to go? I see you have a visitor.

ROSEMARY What! Another? Oh, I see – it's Priest isn't it? A full house!

PRIEST I heard voices so I came in because these are not ordinary times –

P.A. I have already explained the reason.

PRIEST Poor woman! The same experience as Hagar – oh, I forgot; you don't read the Bible or believe in God or anything so stupid do you?

P.A. Not quite as you do, but enough to have read that story in Genesis. Tell me more.

APPARITION (*re-appears*) You should not believe what either of these gentlemen has to say; they are no more reliable than Hosea. He thought himself superior too although he did 'admit' that God had told him to marry a whore. Hagar was contemptuous because she could conceive and Sarah could not. Oh, you've turned up, have you?

ROSEMARY Not another!

SCHOOLBOY Sorry! I heard voices and you know these are not ordinary times so –

P.A. Say no more. We *all* thought we heard voices and we *all* thought these were not ordinary times.

SCHOOLBOY We met before, Rosemary. I came to say I was sorry I was so rude.

ROSEMARY I remember . . . you thought I was a skivvy and you were too high-class to go out with me and visit my Mum. In fact, from your point of view – 'vertex', P.A. would call it – she wasn't quite 'top drawer'. She was a whore.

APPARITION If any of you are going to survive this 'unusual' situation you will owe it to Rosemary's Mum.

P.A. Scientists think that things and people should be called by their right names.

SCHOOLBOY Yes! I remember what fun we had in my school. 'Please, sir', we used to say in Bible class, 'what is harlotry?' I used

to love Bible class; it was the only bright thing on Sundays. 'When you grow up and know as much as I do', some old fool used to say. I hadn't the cheek to say, 'If only you were as young as I and knew as much about "harlotry" as I do, you would not be blushing beetroot red'.

ROSEMARY No one blushes now. What happened to you since those days when you dared – but not quite – to be seen out with a skivvy?

SCHOOLBOY I got killed – being 'heroic', you know.

ROSEMARY I was afraid you might. Shot? Or getting a dose of clap?

WATSON Or syphilis and G.P.I.?

ROSEMARY Oh, my God! All day and now all night as well.

PRIEST If you believed in God you wouldn't be so surprised about 'all day and all night as well'.

P.A. Or 'all Science and all Religion'.

ROSEMARY Why leave out 'Beauty and Art'? I felt the night was bad enough without bringing in God.

P.A. All of us feel that that tiny 'increment' of an 'increment' of an 'increment' of one third of human knowledge is more than we can stand. But what happened to Schoolboy? Sunk under the weight of Knowledge? Destroyed by the skivvy's Beauty? Overwhelmed by Venus or her disease? Or mathematics?

SCHOOLBOY At school I wrote some articles for the magazine labelled 'Sex on the Games Field' – a long and pretty accurate account of the biology master's lesson on the reproductive process of dandelions, both sexual and vegetative. I had an imaginary interview with the groundsman whom I asked about sex. He replied, 'I know nothing about sex, but them perky dandelions will certainly be the death of me'. Anyway, funny or not, that was the death of me. It was the title that did it, even though there had been a lot about Richard Coeur de Lion. The Head asked for me to be removed. My poor mother was broken-hearted; my dear Dad was furious but secretly thought it funny. In the end, as I was due to go into the army, they let me stay to the end of term; that was more respectable and it was hoped I would get bumped off, so all were satisfied – except my Mum. Even she was cheered up because when I *was* finally bumped off my C.O. said I was a good officer – which I wasn't – and that I had been put in for a posthumous

V.C. Luckily she died before the British Army and all its honours were no longer of any interest to anyone.

P.A. And did you have a future life?

SCHOOLBOY In a way, yes. I turned up in her dreams sometimes to say, 'Hullo Mum', and smile just as I used to. She would smile too and when she awoke her cheeks were wet with tears.

P.A. Did that upset you?

SCHOOLBOY Before I died it did, because I was afraid of what would happen if I were killed. I thought even my Dad might be upset.

ROSEMARY So you died a hero's death – that was something.

SCHOOLBOY I'm afraid not. You were right about me – I was too gutless to go out with you. A young friend of mine was killed in the war and that, though I didn't know it, was the end of me too. I never recovered; my courage and chivalry and hope were dead.

PRIEST What are you doing here then?

SCHOOLBOY I told you – I thought I heard voices and as these are not usual times I thought I had better come in.

P.A. Just curiosity?

PRIEST Fear of annihilation, 'everlasting death', perhaps?

P.A. Hallucinations?

SCHOOLBOY *If* they are hallucinations; but are the facts any better?

MORIARTY Facts, however terrible, are not so terrible as thoughts.

ROSEMARY Moriarty is a figment of imagination; Man is not. I prefer figments of imagination.

P.A. Figments of imagination have a way of becoming real. Robin is alive; Roland is not; Man killed him. The chocolate bar killed, or overlaid, suspicion; the real Luger disguised with the figment of his imagination killed Roland. Both were effective in their context. What mattered was the use which Man made of his capacity to talk.

ROSEMARY This is a vivid dream. I don't know if I have called out or not. . . . There's no one here. I almost wish I were in the sunlight that Sunday long, so long ago . . . I can't get up – it's too dark and too early. I haven't had a wink of sleep. Is the daylight any better? How am I to handle this murderous thug if he is what he calls 'in love' with me? Is that Alice sobbing? No; it's the wind. How quiet it is! There's that noise again – my face is wet with tears. Shall I go and see what it is, or ring for Alice? There was a time when I would have loved to get her under my feet, yet now that I have I am scared out of my

life! Let her weep . . . but she's keeping me awake. These awful people – they are bad enough without dreaming about them. At last it's getting light again. I used to hate having to get her tea. It was a nice life – for them. And now? Has Man got a boss? . . . That boy made me laugh about his scripture lessons! I wonder what happened to him. I dreamt he was dead – killed in the war. . .'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag . . . the band sounded so grand. Where are they now? . . . Perhaps I have been hard on Alice . . . (*Sleeps.*)

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Rosemary awakes. It is broad daylight.

ROSEMARY Nobody here? What's happened? What an awful night – I feel quite worn out. (*Rings for Alice; nobody comes; at last she gets up.*) Has she run away? Have they all run away? Perhaps Man and his thugs have been here and arrested the whole lot. In that case how did they miss me? Man may have told them to leave me – for him. He doesn't love me, not after what I said to him yesterday . . . was it yesterday? I don't even know what day it was. That young boy . . . ah, it's coming back to me – said he's been killed in the war . . . must be crazy . . . or did I dream it? That was no dream. What was it then? Alice! Alice!! Alice!!! . . . I'm screaming! Mad – and no one to talk to. Mad! And alone. This place gives me the creeps. It's haunted. I am haunted – hag-ridden they call it. Are those guns? No, trucks on the road. They are driving at me – through me – into my head – drumming in my ears! Cassandra, help me, help! Alice! Oh, there you are. Where have you been? I've fallen out of bed; must have had a stroke. Where's the doctor? No, I don't want a psychoanalyst – I'm ill. I need a doctor I say. No, *not* a mind doctor. I must get up or I'll go out of my mind.

ALICE Did you call, Ma'am?

ROSEMARY Oh shut up! Don't talk that 'Ma'am' nonsense to me.

ALICE I'm sorry. I thought you liked it.

ROSEMARY *You* liked it. You led me on. How could you put up with that nonsense? I *hated* being your skivvy and I hated you. Now you seem . . . I suppose it serves me right!

ALICE What serves you right? I was sure you liked it.

ROSEMARY I must be mad. How do I come to be mistress of the

house? What has happened? What . . . (*begins to be hysterical, and Alice becomes angry and frightened.*)

ALICE Calm yourself! What's the matter?

ROSEMARY Nothing. I want to get up. I must have had . . . had . . . a nightmare. It was very vivid.

ALICE What did you dream?

ROSEMARY (*Uncertain of the facts and afraid of saying something which might betray her, she plays for time and hopes Alice will say or do something which will give her a lead*) I had better sit in a chair. I feel so queer.

ALICE Here, sit down. Do you want a cushion? There's someone at the door –

ROSEMARY (*suppressing a scream with difficulty*) Don't let him in. That awful man!

ALICE It's only Tom. He won't come in.

ROSEMARY Are you sure it's not . . .

ALICE It's only Tom.

ROSEMARY (*relieved that she has not given herself away, but wanting someone from whom she could get help without making it clear what she is thinking*) Oh, he's quite harmless – quite a nice man really.

ALICE What do you want, Tom? Just wait a minute.

TOM Only came to say the job is finished.

ALICE Thank you – nothing else? I'm busy just now.

TOM Will that be all, Miss? (*goes off talking to himself*) She's a cool hand. Doesn't care what she tells me to do. They are all crazy. It beats me what has happened to the missus. And Rosemary! She was so dressed up she looked quite the lady. Must see what has happened to Curly. I could have asked the master about her, but now he's gone there's no one to ask except that German bastard and he's no good. Come on Curly lass – what's ailing you? Quite off your feed? (*He approaches her udders, but the cow lashes out at him*) Whoa there! I'm not going to hurt you. I wish the master was here to talk to you instead of me. Cows or women – they are all the same – lash out because they think they'll get hurt. The master would have said, 'Cowherds and robbers are all the same – to cows'. Poor Curly!

(*Fade out. Priest and P.A. are seen together.*)

PRIEST I had a queer dream last night – I suppose you would call it that.

P.A. How could I call it that? It wasn't my dream.

PRIEST To me all dreams are 'queer' so I thought you would call it that.

P.A. One of your prophets, Isaiah, who was the kind of person to whom you religious people pay attention – forgive me if I don't know what your brand of religion is –

PRIEST (*bows slightly*) I am flattered. May I congratulate you on your discriminatory integrity in not having 'labelled' me with a particular 'brand' of religion.

P.A. Let us leave out the introductory courtesies. I was referring to Isaiah who describes his contact with the Lord in matter-of-fact terms, precisely dated. Of course, we cannot know what happened, but we may have opinions. My object is not to discuss that past experience but to illustrate the unlimited possibilities when you say, 'a queer dream'; possibilities which are limited in this discussion only by my ignorance. The *experience is* not 'limited' by 'finite' considerations of our capacity, though our 'discussion' of it is.

PRIEST I dreamed of an explosion of vast, tremendous and majestic proportions. It was terrifying. It was black as night; not night that I might understand in the solar system, but dark night of the soul –

P.A. As described by Saint John of the Cross perhaps?

PRIEST I am not Saint John of the Cross, nor yet Isaiah; that itself contributes to the sense of queerness that it should be my dream.

P.A. I am familiar with reports of terrifying experiences described in terms of varying inadequacy – as you have just been doing. We are both aware of the awe-ful experience. Many are not; they fear 'going mad', some indescribable disaster, 'break-down', they may express themselves by bringing about disaster. We psychoanalysts think you do not know what a dream is; the dream itself is a pictorial representation, verbally expressed, of what happened. What actually happened when you 'dreamed' we do not know. All of us are intolerant of the unknown and strive instantaneously to feel it is explicable, familiar – as 'explosion' is to you and me. The event itself is suspect *because* it is explicable in terms of physics, chemistry, psychoanalysis, or other pre-conceived experience. The 'conception' is an event which has become 'conceivable'; the 'conceivable' it has become is no longer the genetic experience. Pre-conception, conception, birth – what a shock it must have been to know that a woman has a baby! How absurd to suppose that it could have any connection with intercourse! I have found those

who think it ridiculous that a woman could initiate an idea or have a thought worthy of consideration.

PRIEST Women are indeed very jealous and envious of other women. In an obstetric ward I have known the havoc created by the envy of unmarried nursing staff for mothers and expectant mothers. A doctor friend told me that an obstetric surgeon must be vigilant to see that he does not allow a nurse, sister or matron to usurp his function of seeing fair play. You are not suggesting that it is only men who are hostile to the creative woman?

P.A. Certainly not. Jealousy and envy are elements which do not conform to physiological and anatomical characteristics; the personality, or mind, does not have physical bounds which can be delineated by appeal to our physical form. Where we differ is not with regard to the corporeal and physical, but in your postulating God to fill in the conceptual gap.

PRIEST I do not think we would be likely to mind a conceptual gap; I am willing to agree to the validity of a 'conceptual' or 'theoretical' gap for purposes of discussion. I maintain that the 'concept' of God is matched by a reality of which the concept is but a shadowy and feeble reflection such as human beings fabricate within the limits of their finite minds. The 'Father of an Infinite Majesty' is a feeble verbalization intended to represent the ineffable and infinite by whatever experiential elements, memories, desires, hopes and fears are within our capacity.

P.A. I can see that. But why drag in Something More – God?

PRIEST I don't; those things which are 'dragged in', as you say, are flattening representations; two-dimensional substitutes for the non-dimensional which misrepresent more than they illuminate.

P.A. 'There plant eyes', as Milton said about the inner world.

PRIEST Milton's tragedy was Paradise Lost and – with due acknowledgement of his greatness – I do not think he was right in supposing that he ever Regained it. Blake saw that Milton was great enough to be able to depict his loss, but not great enough to find the loss of which he was aware.

P.A. I feel you are ignoring the fact –

PRIEST Excuse me, but I claim 'experience', as you'd call it, at least as old as Lilith and beyond, whereas your 'science' is a recent and already macilent growth.

P.A. At least a few thousand years I would –

PRIEST 'A thousand ages in Thy sight are like an evening gone; . . . They fly forgotten as a dream dies at the opening day.'

P.A. Which brings us back to your 'queer dream'. Don't you think our discussion may have thrown light on the multitudinous possibilities corresponding to your 'queer' dream?

PRIEST Just what I was about to remark. Our different, diverging and apparently contradictory views may 'appear' in the 'queer' domain to be more real than they are.

P.A. 'Litora, litoribus contraria.'

PRIEST Virgil was not meaning our debate.

P.A. But his phrase throws forward into the future besides illuminating the past.

PRIEST Where do you suppose that reality originates – only from the genes, the chromosomes, DNA, the double helix?

P.A. I don't know.

PRIEST That's the wisest admission you have made.

P.A. I could not aspire to a scientific inquiry without that basic admission.

PRIEST I could not aspire to God without a similar admission.

P.A. My objection to your people is that they claim an omniscient and omnipotent God.

PRIEST We aspire to a god made in our own image – that is well known; but because we keep company with people that have certain views I don't think we should be debited with those views.

P.A. It is part of my work to point out that all of us are victims of just that experience. Like it or not, of such is the kingdom of men.

PRIEST I don't quarrel with that.

P.A. We have come a long way from your queer dream without, I fear, penetrating the problem. Don't hold it against me or against those who, like me, aspire to know.

PRIEST I don't – so long as you do not claim that 'to aspire' is the same as 'to achieve'. At our stage of development that is arrogant. Let us agree to discourage the idea that we have arrived at the destination.

P.A. If *we* don't, some fact will – perhaps the explosion of which you dreamed. I observe that we are not alone; we can continue later. Good morning, Ma'am; I hope you are well.

ROSEMARY Thank you – very well. Where's Alice? I told her to be here.

ALICE Here, Ma'am.

ROSEMARY Sit down all of you. You two (*addressing Priest and P.A.*) have arrived at an agreement. I am glad –

PRIEST It is more apparent than real.

P.A. We have arrived at the same fence at the same time and that gives an illusion of agreement liable to obscure the fact that we are on different sides of the fence.

ROSEMARY Fence? What fence?

PRIEST Alas! It is invisible, impalpable, insensible . . .

P.A. Nearly inexpressible but for our borrowings from disciplines not our own.

ROSEMARY Then you are in agreement in 'acquisition'.

P.A. No. He steals or borrows from me: I do the same from him. We both resent each other and even ourselves as we have to collude with each other. Collusion, robbery, theft – what do we not owe to them!

PRIEST Bigotry, ignorance, intolerance – how much science owes to them!

P.A. How firm the foundations on which the Church must build!

PRIEST How persistently the scientists rob us of faith! How unsleeping must be our resistance to their attacks!

ALICE A plague on both your houses and may they soon perish.

ROSEMARY Hold your tongue, Alice!

MAN Shall I shoot her?

ROSEMARY Certainly not – you are too crude. She could be trained to do something useful, like dressing my hair. You may do it now, Alice, but I shall have to send you out of the room if you interrupt.

ALICE Sorry, Ma'am. I thought you objected –

ROSEMARY Don't think. Get on with my hair. And smarten that uniform I gave you.

P.A. Your left-off clothing – mental and physical. Allowing her to participate in intellectual discussion has worn thin the servant's clothing which you left her.

ROSEMARY Mind your own business.

PRIEST She has grown in insolence instead of profiting by the example you set her. Her frame of mind lacks servility. General Violence, who used to command the Armed Forces, saw to it that the troops conformed to religious truth. When that is relaxed military discipline becomes corrupt.

P.A. The mind is ill-disciplined when released from philosophical discipline. When you tried to substitute religious discipline, the executive branch, the Church, had to devote years to the planning of the City of God. Long before it was completed, even while the plans were being elaborated, it was discovered that it was being erected in the wrong places.

PRIEST True. Those who later became known as the psychoanalysts, the Romantics, got hold of it in – of all places – the unconscious; there, amongst its poisonous marshes and gases, the ruins of that wonderful structure were painfully put together to form a romantic ruin ready for the Inauguration – of arguments and controversies about its beauties.

P.A. Are you 'borrowing' or 'stealing'? I seem to have heard something like this about Port Royal.

PRIEST 'Psychoanalysis', like 'Port Royal', is a phrase which may be 'beautifying' something as foul and smelly as 'pourris'. Milton beautified the debate in Hell.

P.A. Farmers acknowledge their debt to 'manure'. Lord Acton horrified his contemporaries by saying that many a beautiful lady owed her safety to whores and whoredom.

PRIEST Men don't like that idea. Hosea owed his wife to the realm of harlotry. When 'Gomer first at Heaven's command' arose from out the azure main . . . Which azure? Heaven? Pornography? – some language is 'blue'.

ROSEMARY That will do, Alice – how does my hair look?

ALICE Beautiful, Ma'am.

ROSEMARY It's a waste of time as far as these two fools are concerned. Science and Knowledge seem unaware of Beauty. I think you have made my already 'beautiful' hair apparent. You certainly had a long and expensive training before you became fit to be my maid; even now you have much to learn. I know I am beautiful; now you have to say I am whether you like it or not. It used to be rather fun when Roland, although a booby, acknowledged my beauty; I never thought you would have to admit it too. (*Lowers her voice*) My trigger-happy admirer who thinks I bow to his gun will be in trouble if I am not very much mistaken. How? Oh, I have my means – not least his belief that I am in love with him and terrified of his friends.

ALICE Aren't you, Ma'am?

ROSEMARY Of course I am, but I don't allow myself to be stupefied by love or terror. That's the advantage of being intelligent enough to turn one's 'education' to good account. I learnt a lot when I was young and could see how to manage the wealthy and powerful and lust-crazed blackguards who came for my Mum. Even now I have nightmares when I wake up sweating with fear. Mind you (*looking down at Alice's feet*) I wouldn't be in your shoes. How are they, by the way? You gave me them as part of my uniform when I came into service with you. How times have changed! They suit you – I hope you look after them. What are those men talking about? The moment they notice us they shut up. Let's listen . . .

P.A. 'Worship', you say; I would prefer to use some less emotional term.

PRIEST The word is not emotional. It means exactly what I intend it to mean when I am, as at present, talking about God. I avoid using it in contexts such as 'worshipping' Man or our mistress here. If I did I would feel guilty of blasphemy or, at the least, flattering speech.

P.A. Who or what were you speaking of when you used it just now?

PRIEST God, as I have said. I would not consider my 'queer' dream as just a dream with a qualifying adjective.

P.A. Effusions of the unconscious –

PRIEST 'Unconscious' – what's that?

P.A. 'God' – what's that?

PRIEST I realize you think I know as little about God as you do, and perhaps I know even less about the unconscious, but I meant it seriously when I asked you about the unconscious. Do you know more about it than the usual theories of Freud and Melanie Klein and the rest? Do you know the extent to which qualified psychoanalysts are unconscious of reality, even the realities of psychoanalysis? Those I have seen individually and at their congresses appear to me only to be capable of grasping that narrow range of phenomena which fall, so to speak, within the rational band of the spectrum. Unless you can formulate your 'discoveries' within the range of rational, articulate speech you are not satisfied that you 'know'.

P.A. That is probably so; since we try to conform to the conventions commonly accepted by scientists as 'scientific', our formulations are vulnerable to the criticism that they are only rational

statements – common sense. Even so, they are challenged as being unsupported by evidence. We are criticised both for being platitudinous *and* incomprehensible – 'mad', as it is vulgarly called.

PRIEST I wonder if you have considered 'scientists', as you call them.

P.A. May I ask if you have considered Christian Scientists?

PRIEST Yes indeed, as I have also considered Christian Philosophers. I do not exclude consideration of any phenomenon, but we must consider how much time is available for 'consideration' between birth and death.

P.A. One of my objections to your school of thought is that it appears to encourage a belief in unlimited times such as life after death.

PRIEST Unfortunately we are debited with the views – usually mistaken – that people have about what we teach.

P.A. You yourself appear to debit me with views about psychoanalysis which I do not hold; it would be a part of my task if you were an analysand to elucidate your assumptions so that you could contrast and compare them with any other ideas you might entertain. In this respect I think our activity is different from yours. *You* aspire to tell others how and what to think: *We* aspire only to show what people think – the rest is their choice.

PRIEST Fair enough; I have no quarrel with that. But I have a quarrel with psychoanalysts who talk as if they are subject to no such weakness.

P.A. Fair enough – I reciprocate. We object to that kind of psychoanalyst. I would hope not to be of their number.

PRIEST It sounds ideal.

P.A. It is, but we are aware of the difference between the real and ideal. A few people have existed who have done more to help others to discriminate between the real and ideal than we have.

PRIEST I don't wish to deny you the credit for it; religion also has played an important part in fostering that awareness.

P.A. Scandals of the Church and scandalous behaviour of its devotees could, I suppose, be said to have taught people to discriminate, but that is hardly a virtue of religious activity, or an activity of which religions should claim to be proud.

PRIEST Scandals of psychoanalysis are not different. All should stand in penitential awe before the throne of our Maker.

P.A. You are talking of matters which are known to me only by repute. A psychoanalysis affords an opportunity to compare and acknowledge superiority when seen.

PRIEST It contrast painfully with analysis as I know it.

P.A. Reality often involves pain when brought near the ideal, whether scientific or aesthetic. I am usually sensitive to this pain; I hope to be sufficiently tolerant of it to avoid recourse to 'holier' (more scientific, more artistic, more wealthy, more aristocratic) 'than thou'.

PRIEST In aspiration we seem to be not so far apart – 'so far'.

ROSEMARY *How* they talk!

ALICE Yes, don't they.

P.A. I see the ladies are listening. Perhaps it is rather rude not to include them.

PRIEST Or 'superior'?

P.A. People of different sex find it easier to resolve their anatomical and physiological differences than their differences in outlook. After all, the physical can be subjected to tactile and visual and olfactory investigation and resolution.

PRIEST Dogs can be observed using their olfactory inheritance for that purpose.

P.A. True; but that path of solution is easily followed and its destination soon reached. Believing, as I do, that there is a mind –

PRIEST And as I do, a soul and a spirit –

P.A. – the mental differences present goals and problems which are far more difficult.

PRIEST Wasn't it Napoleon – who could hardly be said to be religiously inclined – who compared the physical to the spiritual, the material to the moral, very much in favour of the spiritual?

P.A. No, Emerson – nothing like such an impressive witness.

PRIEST In any case the idea expressed is important, not who said it.

P.A. Emerson certainly claimed great power and importance for ideas.

MORIARTY So did Anatole France who claimed high prestige for the supremacy and power of bigotry and ignorance.

P.A. In *Thaïs* I think.

MORIARTY But where did the idea come from – France or the imagination?

P.A. *His* imagination – the unconscious.

PRIEST *If* unconscious you cannot be consciously aware of its origin, the generator.

P.A. I don't deny the possibility of some generator force any more than I would deny either the force of, or the search for, the Quasars of which we hear so much.

ROSEMARY (*to Alice*) They both ignore the force or presence of yourself and myself.

ALICE P.A. seemed to admit surreptitiously that 'the ladies' were here.

ROSEMARY Fucking idiot!

ALICE Probably both idiocy and fucking, but that is not the same as admitting the presence of you and me.

ROSEMARY True. He's busy getting a pedestal for me to get onto, or a servile function to fulfil. You should see what goes on in the psychoanalytic dovecote when feminine intuition obtrudes. Watch them.

ALICE I know – 'celibacy of the clergy' and 'professional integrity', they call it.

ROSEMARY Impotent bastards!

ALICE Put that way it doesn't sound so grand. Look out! Here's your boyfriend.

MAN (*bows coldly to Rosemary, ignores Alice*) I have come with news for you. I think the rest may fade out.

(*The scene becomes dark.*)

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It is light again. Man and Rosemary are alone. She is attractively and expensively dressed.

MAN I have come to let you know that I have decided, after long and careful consideration, to make you my wife.

ROSEMARY I am amazed.

MAN I thought you might be, but I have gone into the matter most carefully; I have not only had good reports of you but from my own personal observation I have concluded that you are satisfactory and will therefore be married to me at the beginning of next month.

ROSEMARY (*furious but not speechless*) If you kneel at my feet and bring your face conveniently near to me I shall condescend to give you the hardest smack on the jaw you or anyone else has had.

MAN Rosemary, don't, I beg of you, do anything so foolish. You know I don't waste words – by the way, did you see to it that Tom disposed of that silly English fellow?

ROSEMARY Are you daring to threaten me? Who do you think –

MAN Oh come; don't waste words. So far from threatening you I have told you we are to marry and the details are being arranged. Threats and love and all those sorts of things are all right amongst the vulgar. Surely you can see it is out of place here?

ROSEMARY Indeed? And is sex also only for the vulgar?

MAN That is nothing to do with us. Of course I shall use you for sexual purposes – I have gone into that and you will do, but don't imagine that I am talking the silly juvenile nonsense of animals like P.A. I got over that *many* years ago.

ROSEMARY Love too?

MAN Don't be silly. I have arranged and that is enough.

ROSEMARY Blast your damned impudence!

MAN I have some other matters to arrange. You will be sent for in half an hour. All your possessions will be packed. I take it you want to keep your maid; she will be sent for likewise. Now, good-bye. (*He goes out.*)

ROSEMARY Alice!

ALICE What's he going to do?

ROSEMARY It is what *I* am going to do, believe me. If I cannot deal with him I am much mistaken. Bring me the automatic – fully loaded.

ALICE Yes, Ma'am.

(*Rosemary sits brooding in silence. Alice returns.*)

ALICE It's gone! Everything has been taken away!

(*Fade out. Man and Priest are alone together when it becomes light.*)

MAN I have sent for you to let you know my arrangements. As you are doubtless aware these meetings have served their purpose –

PRIEST They were indeed becoming unruly. I thought that Rosemary no longer had the disciplinary hold she used to have.

MAN No, no – she never had. Just a sexual grasp on her maid and that is of no consequence. A little re-organization will sort it out. I shall confer authority on Rosemary to enable her to keep order when I have married her.

PRIEST Congratulations.

MAN Congratulations? I don't think I understand – oh yes, of course. She was a fairly obvious choice from what I have seen of her ability to make the best of such facilities as were available to her. She might not be able to live up to increased power and prestige – that does sometimes happen. I am not unhopeful. However, I shall not waste time on the past. I want you to be a religious overseer. You must not be obsessed with the past; it is your weakness. You must adjust to the present and future. I give you the chance; if you don't succeed it will be sad – you will be dispensed with.

PRIEST Like Roland, you mean. Are you threatening me?

MAN *That* is an example of your obsession with the past. I don't threaten; I state a fact. You wear the Past as if it were a decoration. It has no importance, though its debris can still be seen and felt impinging on the present. I'll arrange for that kind of rubbish to be looked after so that it can be swept up and discarded.

PRIEST How will you dispense with the debris of 1054?

MAN It would take too long to explain. It's an example of the way visual trash hangs around; there is nothing to see, but that trivial

little explosion continues and some people devote time and generations of lives to sweeping up detritus. Now it is being collected into books which soon no one will read – and that, for the time, will be that.

PRIEST For the time? – so you do think it has a future.

MAN That is what I am saying; the past is past; it is of no consequence except as debris for collection and disposal. I shall appoint you –

PRIEST I see; as an authority like a –

MAN No, no, no. Not like an anything. There you go again – obsessed with the past and with being 'just like' the past, or a man, or a bishop. You are like a child saying, 'Look – aren't I exactly like a grown up!' The result – no chance of 'becoming' anything, the mind so stuffed full with 'memories' there is room for nothing more. You must clear your mind of cant.

PRIEST That has been said before.

MAN Still harping on the past – 'before'. You see what I mean? I can't waste time. Meet here in half an hour.

PRIEST The same half hour? Half an hour from Now? That means that we shall not meet together.

MAN Yes, it will be the same. Every half hour will be different from every other half hour – your half hour, Rosemary's half hour – but 'the Time' will be the same.

PRIEST Roland too? He's dead you know.

MAN I know – I shot him. Now he's dead I have an important job for him.

PRIEST How can he do a job if he is dead? He can't do anything.

MAN That is his qualification. *You* would be able to do almost anything if only you'd shut up thinking you are important and trying to 'look like' an important person.

PRIEST Yet you tell me to take an important post.

MAN You may not be as incorrigible as you sound. Here! In half an hour. (*Disappears.*)

PRIEST Where's my watch? Gone. Of all the impossible orders from the most impossible of men! As it is Rosemary's half hour and Roland's half hour, it will have to be my half hour. What a meeting it will be! If I ran my diocese like that . . .

(*It slowly blacks out and grows light again, revealing Man alone with P.A.*)

MAN You will have to do a different job. This arrangement of your mistress's has become redundant.

P.A. I thought you would find that. You should not have shot Roland.

MAN (*opening his eyes wide*) It was essential that he should be shot to become available for my purposes.

P.A. He is dead.

MAN That is the first essential. I require him –

P.A. You'd better be quick – Tom has buried him and he must be discomposed.

MAN You are a prisoner to reality, buried in 'facts'. It is inevitable that you should have a prejudiced view.

P.A. My view is scientific.

MAN That's what I mean. Scientific outlook; limited outlook, obscured by facts. *You* are scientific; your religion also. But enough of this – I want you as the leader of a department of Truth.

P.A. That is what I have always meant by Science.

MAN Not as far as my observation goes. You are devoted to the *idea* that you are devoted to Truth –

P.A. What truth can I be devoted to if it is not truth as I see it?

MAN Your dilemma is indeed painful; *your* pain, not mine.

P.A. You sound as if you don't care.

MAN I don't. In half an hour – here! (*Disappears.*)

P.A. (*soliloquizing*) 'In half an hour. Here.' Where is here and what clock do I use? The law of the excluded middle . . . I thought there could be some alternative to an extreme course; physically I know of no alternative to presenting myself – being or not being. That is, *if* I am right in assuming that the vertex is topographical. Suppose it is typographical – I could be one type or another . . . so many occasions in my life where I have found out what 'it' meant. Which 'it'? Do I choose to be or not to be? That fellow Shakespeare put words to the emotional problem that is still not solved. Has Priest the right idea that this life is a time of testing for a future? Suppose there is no future – I think it unlikely that there is an existence which I shall have to lead, and therefore be prepared for, *after* the next half hour. I shall have to consider a law of the excluded beginning. Logically this means that from the physiological vertex any object would be a figment of imagination. Not even that; if it excluded a beginning it

would also exclude imagination which is necessary for its 'figment' to exist. The law of an 'excluded end' would seem to be tacitly believed by artists and, in fact, human beings in general. I am supposing that 'classical' logic is the only kind of logic. But suppose reality does not obey any of the laws laid down by the human animal – not even the 'logic' to which not only human thought, but also the universe *not* included in human thought, is supposed to conform. Is there an ultra or infra logic which does not fall within the spectrum of human logic, the logical spectrum analogous to the visual portion of the spectrum of electro-magnetic waves? 'Geocentral time' is up – 'half an hour' is over. Is it geotemporal or sidero-temporal? Galactic-temporal or ultra-temporal? I shall call it Quasi-scientific time, measured in quasi hours. When I want to indicate something of which I *know* nothing but of which I want to talk or even think, it clothes itself with a meaning and I lose my nothing, my alpha or beta element. My variable becomes a constant.

Wake up? Go to hell! Oh, all right – time to get up? Quasi hell? It is the lark that sings so out of tune? Hear it not, Duncan. The wild ass can stamp o'er his head but Bahram's sleep cannot be broken; that great hunter shall sleep no more and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more, Aeneas shall sleep no more . . . Palinurus! . . . I'm not a damned Dormouse . . . then don't twinkle like a bright and steadfast Star! The war was over last July – it says so in John Bull. We won! Officially! Oh, come in Equivocator . . . that's good news. Gos-spel! Oh, it's Man. Why did *you* act it out? Why did I only dream it? Which is worse – that you cannot wake me up, or that you only act it? Is it the sleeper only who poisons his dreams with his mental excrement? Or he who cannot dream of destroying the world but has to transform his dream into a bomb that poisons us with his atomic debris? 'In half an hour' this thug says he expects my answer, and I fool with pretty intellectual Quasar time. I am honest; I think; I am concerned with quasi morals. There is no special science but science. Yes, but I do not know which science, which truth. 'Couvre-toi de flannelle' is less impressive than 'Couvre-toi de gloire', but that kind of glory is comfortable after its kind; so is 'flannelle'. 'Oh my, I don't want to die, I want to go home', we used to sing. That was true; we hoped that the ugly reality would not penetrate the joke armour-plate. The armour-plate of a tank was penetrable; we were bewitched,

bemused, 'probability'-dazzled cowards. 'Probably' we would not be killed; 'probably' we would survive to inhabit a new heaven and a new earth – 'après la guerre'. I did not know I loved life so much. I survived to foot the bill; fight a war and spend the rest of life paying the bill for all those shells and tanks and bullets and the state of mind used to provide an armour more impenetrable than 'gloire' or 'flannelle'. '*Ante Agamemnona multi*' . . . I remember, am still penetrated by the memory of brave men whose name did not 'live for evermore'. 'With whatsoever emphasis of passionate love repeated' the echo of their name is faint at last, 'soft as old sorrow, bright as old renown'; it fades and dies. Why do I mind this grizzly, victorious lout? It is not death I fear, but the shame of knowing a few, only a few, of the multitudinous shabby failures. There goes the bell again! Telephone? Alarm? Come in Equivocator – the anarchs of the world of *Après la Guerre Fini*. From that warfare there is no release – *après la guerre fini*. Come Phorbas! Come, come. As torrents in summer suddenly rise, though the sky is still cloudless . . . Mene huic confidere monstro? Not bloody likely! Ecce deus . . . ecce homo . . . take your choice. Sleep or wake – : you pays your money and you takes your choice'. Oh! It's you is it?

MAN No. Go away – and send Alice.

(*P.A. fades out.*)

(*Alice appears.*)

ALICE You want me – sir?

MAN Yes. Pack your mistress's things and meet me here in half an hour.

ALICE Is she going away? Where to?

MAN Mind your business. Be here in half an hour – I can give you your orders then. You have nothing to pack. Go!

ALICE But . . .

(*Fade out. Alice alone in the darkness begins to cry out, her calls becoming more terrified, wilder, angrier and more animal-like.*)

ALICE Rosamund . . . Roseamund . . . Rosie! Rose . . . Herose! Here-rhose! Heeee . . . rose from the dead!

VOICE *Stop it!* (*Silence; then the savage, wilder howls begin again – now unmistakably animal.*)

ROSEMARY Hush! Oh hush! What's the matter?

ROBIN It's Roland – that is his howl. I would know it anywhere.

He's calling his mate – there it is again! That's Alice – tigerish, but that's her, I know.

(*The bloodcurdling duet becomes distant, blends with a storm and stops with a sudden decrescendo.*)

* * *

ROSEMARY (*in full daylight, alone*) I can't stand this bloody place.

MAN The priest is ready to unite the happy pair.

ROSEMARY Don't I have any say in the matter?

MAN None. Bow your head modestly as if in prayer; follow me exactly.

ROSEMARY But . . . (*she is struggling to protest but he hushes her peremptorily.*)

PRIEST'S VOICE (*droning as if in religious* incantation *of congregational prayer*) England-have-won-the-toss-and-have-chosen-to-bat. Ah-men. Ah-setting-the-field-as-if-for-a-fast-bowler. Ah-wonder-who-it-will-be. In-heaven-as-it-is-on-earth-because-there-is-no-turf-on-the-pitch-which-is-worn-and-will-almost-certainly-crumble-long-before-the-day. Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae.

MAN (*whispers, hoarse with excitement*) Keep your head down! Don't watch – pretend you can't hear a thing. England are coming in to bat. I think it's Kitchener and . . . Kipling! No, it's . . .

PRIEST'S VOICE . . . the weary at rest. Rudyard has ceased from Kipling. He has started his run to the wicket. From outside the main entrance . . . Here he comes and is just going round the bend! Look out! He's using an atomic bomb instead of a ball, and . . . Here is a list of the Glorious dead who batted into the third day after all and have come direct out of the computer, the Holy Boast of our civilization. Quid nunc? These are they who come out of great fibrillation and here endeth the Christo –Semitic era and beginneth the post-fissile quasi-epoch. I only am escaped alone to tell thee. What a marvellous day it is! Clear, silent, desolate. There is nothing to see but these gigantic boulders; I stand on top of one and look towards the horizon, a hard brilliant line that separates this brilliant desolation from utter blackness which is absolute – not so cold, so unfriendly as the googly. There is no sound; the silence is as absolute as the vision when there is no beholder. No sight, no sound, no feel of primrose sward, no sun rejecteth no beholder;

absolute negation, no affirmation. What's yet to come is still unsure. Man is a discarded experiment like the mammals, like the saurians, like fire, like sparks that fly upward, like troubles when there is no mind to experience them.

MAN I thought we were done – for that time, but it was a dud after all. Now then, are we all present and correct? Read the roll, Sergeant Major, and reply, 'adsum', all of you – that is, if you are here. No cheating, no lying, no delusions, illusions or hypochondriacal hallucinations. Where is the Sergeant Major?

ALL We are all minors here now, sir.

MAN Oh yes, of course; quite right. What, *you* here?

PRIEST'S GHOST No, sir. I'm the ghost of the Boast you knew.

MAN Will *you* be acting Miner major? Call the roll!

PRIEST'S GHOST The Roll will be called up yonder in the Heavenly Kingdom.

P.A.'S GHOST What Time Scale?

PRIEST'S GHOST Sidereal Time of course; at Zero Infinite.

P.A.'S GHOST I don't understand.

MAN No one has asked you to. Is Widdecum here?

VOICE No, I'm his uncle –

MAN Uncle Tom Cobley? Pleased to meet –

ALL No, you damn' fool.

MAN I'll have you all bombed if you are impudent.

CROWD (*chanting*) We are immortal. We are evil. When man dies his Evil lives after him. His Evil is immortal.

ALL SOULS For though the body dies the soul shall live for ever.

CROWD (*chanting*) Arse 'oles inspire.

MAN *Very* funny: I'll have you bombed!

ALL SOULS What! No cakes and ale?

MAN You're dead – shut up!

ALL SOULS Our name is forgotten for evermore, but we have not happened yet and we shall live after you when you are dead and gone.

MAN My evil shall live after me. Where's that mistress of mine roaming? Come here!

ALICE Surely you aren't going to obey him.

ROSEMARY Didn't they even teach evil in your holy school? Not even scandal?

ALICE We only read the school for scandal, but we didn't really practise it.

ROSEMARY At *my* school we practised it. Yes – I am going with Man. And mind your own bloody business.

ALICE You aren't in love with him!

ROSEMARY Of course not; I wouldn't let anyone put those blinkers on *me.* Roland couldn't teach you anything – he went to a Public School. You'll catch a spirochaete in your next job I shouldn't wonder. And tiny little spirochaetes with their soft inaudible mouths will eat away that brain of yours; they are delicate feeders –

ALICE Are you going to give me to the troops for my livelihood?

ROSEMARY Why not? I gave my mother; that's why she tried to bring me up properly, but thanks to Original Sin I never got taken in. I was tough. Love this murderous blackguard? I should say so! You watch – he's coming now. If you keep your head down you will see the lovelight soften my eyes and dissolve his common sense; it has not softened *my* brain. *Watch* – and pray if you like. Hulloh, *dar*ling! Oh, it's you is it?

P.A. I heard you say, 'watch' –

PRIEST – and 'pray' –

P.A. & PRIEST So I came.

ROSEMARY So long as you don't join in I don't mind.

P.A. & PRIEST You're not going to give yourself to that brute! He's an enemy!

ROSEMARY He won didn't he?

P.A. He and his never stuck to the rules of war.

ROSEMARY The rules of war! What do you know about war? You mean *your* rules. Leg-before-wicket, swing together, the halter is round your neck! What Rules – Britannia? The Waves? Even Canute knew better than that!

MYCROFT No, no child – microwaves.

ROSEMARY And who may they be? Scientific bunkum. What do you know about the waves emitted by my feet when I chose to make them twinkle, twinkle on the hard, hard slum pavements of my street? I have seen the natural, unspoilt louts and blackguards of my slum follow my heels, threads of invisible steel hooking their eyes and dragging them helpless at my feet till I chose to release them. Love! You don't know what it is – none of you.

P.A. Your beliefs are expressions of great confidence in your powers; how you come to such 'beliefs' and what evidence has convinced you that they are 'facts', I don't know.

ROSEMARY I *do* know – and your doubts do not impress me.

P.A. You think I doubt the truth of your impressions. I am saying that you have not told me what evidential support there is for those beliefs.

ROSEMARY I feel it; I know it.

P.A. Your feelings are one kind of evidence. But don't make the mistake of acting as if you had a different sort of evidence. Alice *feels* you love her, but the feeling leads her to suppose facts. She thinks she can depend on you; she can't. If she cannot depend on herself she would be unwise to depend on anyone else.

ROSEMARY Me, for example.

P.A. For example, yes.

ROSEMARY I agree. My principles would not allow me to think otherwise; the same principle which would not allow either loving or being loved by Man. I depend on my hooks –

P.A. And on his eyes to provide you with 'material' into which you can insert those same 'hooks'. In other terms – my psychoanalytic terms – sex.

ROSEMARY (*yawning*) How interesting.

P.A. Not in the least. Usually sex interest has died by puberty, leaving only a mental vestige which cannot be relied on any more than you could rely on your vestigial tail to support you if you tried to hang by it from the branch of a tree.

ALICE How ridiculous!

P.A. I gave a ridiculous example to illustrate a ridiculous dependence.

SHERLOCK I thought the whole of psychoanalysis depended on sex.

P.A. In the practice of psychoanalysis I depend on ideas.

ALICE If *that is* not hanging by a vestigial tail I would like to know what is.

P.A. Man, as a thinking animal, has reached the end of the road.

SHERLOCK What road?

P.A. The road which is taken by all experiments that have to be discarded.

MYCROFT Aristarchus had to discard his heliocentric theories.

P.A. No, he died before the instrument makers caught up with him. After they had made telescopes and mathematical theories, which later were recognized as mental instruments, Copernicus found Aristarchus and his theories were right.

MAN No he didn't. It was a German who used a telescope to discover the satellites of Jupiter but was denied the credit.

ROSEMARY Darling, how clever you are! Come and sit by me.

MAN Later. Where's that priest? Get on with the roll-call.

PRIEST Irene Adler

REPLY – and grey mare

PRIEST Tom Pierce

REPLY – the grey mare is mine

PRIEST Robin

REPLY – it is not; it's that Coventry woman

PRIEST Moriarty

REPLY – she's a whoore

PRIEST Miners

REPLY – it's hers

PRIEST Roland

REPLY – it's not

PRIEST All souls

REPLY – it's hers

MAN Whoore or no whoore, Missus Brune will now sing a song.

ALICE

> 'It's sung to the moon by a love-lorn loon
> Who died for the love of a lady.'

ROSEMARY Alice, don't be sentimental. By the way – how's Tom?

ALICE I know nothing about him.

ROSEMARY (*slyly*) Alice, Alice! I'm shocked. Didn't you once tell me he was a very 'suitable' man? Oh well, love dies alas! Tell Man he may sit near me – if he dares.

ALICE He's just coming over – don't look.

P.A. 'Taught by the heavenly muse to venture down the dark descent and up to re-ascend though hard and rare.' I wonder . . . she may be tough enough and so may he, but he is no Horace to survive the storms of Pyrrha, and she is quite as tough as Horace's golden-haired lass.

MAN (*solicitously*) How are you dear? Not feeling nervous?

ROSEMARY I don't think (*looking adoringly at him*) I should ever feel nervous with you by my side.

ALICE He shot him, the bastard!

ROSEMARY Which bastard are you referring to dear?

MAN You shouldn't be so familiar with your maid. I love you for it, but it is dangerous to encourage the lower classes. Servants must serve, not aspire.

ROSEMARY Darling, I shall remember that – always. Alice, go and see Tom.

ALICE Yes, Ma'am.

MAN That's better. You should get rid of her.

ROSEMARY I would miss her here; she has been with me so long I almost think of her as part of the place.

MAN I know, but she should know her place *in* this place.

ROSEMARY How wise you are! I always remind her of her rightful place in the house if she ever shows signs of forgetting it. I hope you will remind me – I am sure you will – of *my* place in the house if I ever show signs of forgetting it. When is our wedding?

MAN When you like. I have told them they must all be ready waiting, including the priest.

ROSEMARY Oh, is it to be a real Church wedding? How thrilling!

MAN Well . . . yes. A modern Church wedding. Not the old-fashioned kind. We start with a roll-call to see that they are all present and correct.

ROSEMARY I don't see anyone yet; there were one or two but they have disappeared. Oh, of course dear – how clever of you to arrange for us to have a little quiet time together first!

MAN Where is everyone? Many hours have passed and yet there are a mere handful of people – I told them to be here for the wedding in half an hour.

ROSEMARY Alice – go and fetch them and be quick about it. And bring Roland.

ALICE He's dead.

ROSEMARY So what? I knew he was dead years ago. Fetch his ghost. You can weep for him if you like but that won't bring him back to life. It may flush him out of your eyes.

MAN Call the roll!

ALL SOULS (*in raucous unison*)

Shall we gather at the river?
The river that flows through Paradise.

P.A.

When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there.

THE DUCHESS Wrong! It should be:

The Happy gate that leads to Ware
Love is like sunshine in the Air.

ROBIN Wrong:

Love is like sunshine in the bier.
Oh drink to me only through your tears
And I'll not ask for beer.

ALICE Wrong:

Colonel left in the Knuts Harding, D.S.O.

GULL Left tight, left right – Halt! Left turn!

TOM Well, what brought you to enlist my man? Private Harding, D.S.O., reduced to the ranks for being sober and orderly in your sobriety.

GULL Pardon me sir . . . related to the Duchess.

TOM Oh, that's different . . . promoted to the vice-president of Licensed States of America.

HARDING To *be* vice-president or the *state* of vice-president?

TOM No, no –

GULL Left turn! Quick march! Left right left right. Dis-miss! Sentenced to All the Known States of Psychoanalysis for Eternity.

HARDING My sentence is more than I can bear. Born and bred in a state of sin, entangled in the barb of frivolity, alcohol and fraternity, I shall rejoice in joholity Evermore.

THE DUKE OF SHEHOL My *dear* Colonel! My *very* dear Colonel! I envy you with all my heart. Can I offer you a port? No? I apologize – you are allowed nothing but champagne. In heaven I don't need it for the port is any in a storm.

HARDING There is nothing like champagne. It is either sham-pain or it . . . isn't. The middle excluded again –

THE DUKE OF SHEHOL Poor fellow! Excluded for ever. These Extremists! I myself am bred extremely – no middle – too sexual. I regret it, I really do. I would give anything to be in your place. Or nearly everything . . . not my halo of course.

MAN What chaos! Tell them to stop it – at once, Rosemary!

ROSEMARY (*rouging her lips*) Alice – tell them to stop it.

(*Redoubled noise.*)

TOM Man is condemned to live on the fruits of Victory. Here – for the term of his natural life, amongst the English in everlasting freedom.

MAN My prize is more than I can wear.

ROBIN Lucky swine – I always wanted my hair long. This din is fearful.

ROSEMARY (*shouting, almost screaming to make herself heard*) I do so love that hymn, 'Shall we gather at the river'. It used to make me giggle to see the country bumpkins exchanging sly jokes – nothing sly about this though!

MAN (*pushing his fingers into his ears to prevent being deafened*) No.

PRIEST Partners find their ghosts for the Resurrection Blues!

MATHEMATICIAN It is absurd to exclude the middle.

P.A. You might as well say there is either a noise or there is no noise. It only means that either the listener can hear or he can't. It tells something about the personality that hears or does not hear; nothing about the environment of the personality. If I cannot see a tumour because I have no X-ray negative, or cannot interpret the negative, that doesn't mean there is no tumour because it is excluded.

ROSEMARY Thank you, thank you, darling, for . . .

MAN For what?

ROSEMARY This wonderful party. It is lovely; so gay, so happy! Everyone is enjoying it marvellously.

PRIEST All ghosts take the partner who stops in front of them when the music starts – stops I mean.

MATHEMATICIAN It can't do both; it stops, or it does not.

P.A. It is heard, or it is not. Like the music of the spheres – thanks to radio astronomy it is audible to ordinary people who think it is noise or interference.

ROBIN Or denial, or defence, or Kleinian rubbish, or psychoanalysis.

P.A. Some can listen to it and transform it – Mozart, Leonardo, Praxiteles, Bach –

ROBIN Or the Beatles, or Rossini –

MATHEMATICIAN Or Riemann, or Aristarchus.

P.A. You are admitting that the significance of the excluded middle is the excluded 'exclusion', the excluded 'person' or 'thing'.

MAN Nothing is excluded here. Is this your ideal?

P.A. No, not mine, but I don't therefore exclude its existence.

MAN But surely you can see – or hear – from this outrageous rabble, that you cannot allow *everything?* Something must be excluded – or do you British like this muddle? This isn't a marriage – it's a riot.

ROSEMARY *Darling* – it's lovely. 'Lap me in soft Lydian airs' is all right for Alice, but what has it brought her to? Send her to me at once to do the 'lapping' for me.

ALICE Tell Man he must go; this is no place for him without his guns and armour.

(*Rosemary signals to Man to go.*)

MAN Go? Why, what has happened?

PRIEST Time for the Resurrection Blues. The Dead will fall in on the right while the Roll is called. Spirits rejoin their partners later for the dance of death.

SPIRIT (*recognizing a friend*) If thou beest he? But oh, how fallen! Quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore . . .

ACHILLES . . . and he walked stiffly into the shadows.

ROBIN What a crowd! All the best people – too highbrow for me.

ROLAND I'm surprised you think so. These are not that kind –

ROBIN The bands have started to play. There is . . . I'm sorry, I have quite forgotten your name. You look more beautiful than ever. May I?

(*The pair dance slowly away into the distance.*)

ALICE Who are they?

ROLAND Do you still not know? It is your party.

ALICE No, it is Rosemary's.

ROSEMARY No, it is Time Past's party.

PRIEST *That* is P.A.'s party.

P.A. No, my party is not times past. Always the mistake of thinking the past is owned by psychoanalysis; the past is owned by Regret.

Regret is a guest at a psychoanalytic party but is not the host; nor is psychoanalysis the domain of Regret. Regret is so vain that it is regarded as important and treated with deference in religion.

PRIEST Centuries have passed since all was vanity, and Vain Regret took the place of God.

ROLAND Why can't you make up your mind?

ROSEMARY Typically masculine! Men are always making up their minds, yet they think they can look down on women for making up their faces. I don't know of any woman who makes up her mind to be such a mess as the mind is when a man has finished making it up. The years men spend on psychoanalysis and education and religion! All as futile as eye-shadow! They end up each time worse than the last.

ROLAND What would you have us do?

ROSEMARY No idea. I let my mind make me up. I suppose you think I haven't a mind?

ROLAND I always thought you have one of the most acute minds –

ROSEMARY Oh, don't be such a fool! Have enough respect for your intelligence and mine not to descend to flattery. The band has started a new tune – oh, I love this; let's join in.

SOPRANOS

Sum-mer suns are glow-ing over land and sea,
Hap-py light is flow-ing for you but not for me.

ALTOS

The bells of Hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling
Far over land and see
The loud, uplifted, alcoholim go single-im-a-ling
For new but not faugh mer-ley.

TENORS

Oh death where is thy sting-ai-ling
Oh greve thy vick-tau-rhee?

ROLAND Where's the grammarian? At his funeral?

ROBIN Don't let that Boche hear you – he is hostile to Arians.

PRIEST This band is lovely – that is the great advantage of being tone deaf.

ROLAND And colour blind. If you could distinguish colours you

would not be able to see me because my kind of visibility does not lie within the spectrum of human ocular vision.

PRIEST I have never been interested in human ocularity except as a blinker used for excluding the 'ghost' that one doesn't want to see. Now and then some fool like Arjuna, or Socrates, or Dante, or Meister Eckhart, or Juan Yeepes y Alvarez –

ROLAND Who on earth is Yeepes Yip-i-addy-i-ay-i-ay?

PRIEST He is not on earth.

ROSEMARY What on earth are you two talking about?

PRIEST The Kingdom of Heaven is not 'on earth' and nor is the place that chap from Hippotades was in when Augustine wrote *The City of God*. Plato knew that; Socrates was not so wise.

ROBIN '. . . as if of hemlock I had drunk', said Keats.

PRIEST He should have tried peyote; the Aztecs knew better.

SHERLOCK Even they had to wait till the Supreme Court recognized the Native American Church –

PRIEST Which recognized the Holy Spanish Church of Cortes, the Holy Catholic Church. As I was saying, Plato did not lack wisdom to the point of drinking hemlock.

SHERLOCK Nor, I gather, did you take the draught you offered the Court assembled in the Death Pit at Ur.

PRIEST There is no evidence.

SHERLOCK *That* is the evidence. My business is facts and I have to respect all kinds of evidence including negative evidence –

P.A. Which you have to interpret. I interpret – lo not dispense – facts.

SHERLOCK I do not argue against your vertex. I only argue against the favouritism you show for one fact rather than another, and one vertex rather than another.

PRIEST So do I. God is not mocked, but you behave as if you do not have to bother with God because you cannot be confronted with a particular category of a fact. Isn't this music hellish?

P.A. You give a perfect example of applying a religious category appropriate to religious categories of localization.

PRIEST I do not. Like you, I have to use topographical terminology to describe categories and locations when I am discussing, as here, a subject which has no known locality. One prophet said, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you'.

ROLAND Psychoanalysts deprecate these Kleinian statements.

ROBIN Good lord! Don't say you have psychoanalysts in Heaven.

ROLAND You rush to conclusions. I didn't say I was in Heaven – or Hell. I did say I was dead.

ROSEMARY I never regarded physical death as a necessary qualification for being dead.

PRIEST The classics are dead.

P.A. It has become a sign that a person or theory is dead when it is called a 'classic'. Classic Art, Classic Religion, Classic Science are states of those activities and people when they have reached the stage where no one regards them save as objects. This music –

PRIEST Not music yet, surely? Should there not be some structure, some sign of mental discipline about it?

P.A. If that is what you think, should there not also be some discipline to which religion conforms? In psychoanalysis, though we do support the idea of 'freedom', we also preserve a mental discipline – a rigorous one.

ROBIN Where is the line between licence and freedom?

PRIEST There has always been discipline in religion. Dogma is a succinct statement of religious law. Terms like 'dogmatic' are employed in an undisciplined manner by those who use dogma as a pejorative comment on a scientific statement. We are familiar, from personal experience, with 'life-preserving' religious experience, but we do not and cannot impose that fact on others who have no such experience.

ROLAND The band is playing a jazzed-up version of 'For though the Body dies the Soul shall live for ever'. Do you call that blasphemous?

PRIEST No; it gives a sombre note to a boringly hilarious evening.

ROBIN Aren't you being intolerant of hilarity?

PRIEST I think it would be boring without that tincture of solemnity which the reminder of death gives.

ROBIN Why? What is solemn about death?

P.A. Nothing; but people think so if they suppose they are doing something for the last time. I suppose one would think it doubly solemn if it were felt to be the first. Women have more reason than men to fear death as they know they can die in giving birth.

ROSEMARY Reason has nothing to do with it. If it had, many people would fear pregnancy who don't.

P.A. You mean they do not consciously express it.

ROSEMARY 'The unconscious'! Were you afraid Man was going to kill you, Roland?

ROLAND I meant to kill *him* before he could kill me. I was sure that I should not be left to live for long if I was successful.

ROSEMARY Were you afraid of a future life?

ROLAND No. This 'future life' is no worse than many times I have lived through – periods which were 'future' before they had occurred. The whole of my life had been future at some time. I hope *this* is going to come to an end; once is enough. What does P.A. say? – if this infernal music leaves him able to think.

P.A. 'Infernal music', you call it; are you using the term 'infernal' as pejorative? Or topographical, that is, music appropriate to the region our priestly friend calls Hell?

PRIEST 'Hell' is not a term of religious topology.

CHOIRMASTER Now – All toes only. Starting at page 2, piu, piu poco animato. 'The more we are together.' One, two . . . The more we are together, together, together – no, no! All toes together – poco sostenuto; the froth-blowers' anthem.

BIG TOE I can't find the place.

CHOIRMASTER You are not supposed to – this is not a solo item. This is All toes. You wait for the double bass to come in. Page 3 opens with a crashing bore marking your entry.

ALL TOES Entry? I thought it was the exit.

CHOIRMASTER All toes – exeunt – the entry is through the mouth. T'other end of the anatomy if you want The Way Out. Aut, aut, aut-ishoo! sneezes only!

ROSEMARY Oh, The Blue Danube! What a beautiful tune, I used to think. I once overhead a beautiful young man talking to a beautiful young girl; those two beauties were flushed with grievance because the dance, which glittered like Heaven to me, was 'so *bo*ring!'. 'So *bo*ring!' they repeated over again. I went up to my attic and prayed God to make me good.

MAN Whatever did you do that for? *I* should have killed them. Perhaps you thought that if you were a good girl God would let you go to dances too. So you shall; I will take you.

ROSEMARY This dance frightens me. I think we are dead.

MORIARTY So you are – as only human beings can be. Requiescat in pace – as if they had ever done anything but bore all figments of imagination as they read us without comprehension. I used

occasionally to appear in their dreams. That man Roland used to come alive sometimes, enough to shriek with terror and wake some of his fellows. Why, Rosemary, what's the matter? You look quite faint. Just as I thought you were almost interesting. Catch her you dolt!

MAN Here's a chair. Where's your maid?

ROSEMARY I'm all right – it's hot in here, isn't it? I think I would like to sit down.

MORIARTY Sit down? just as she was coming to life. They think they are going to break down if there is a chance of hatching out: Conan Doyle cracked up when he felt his shell of sanity was breaking. What a tough prison of sanity they grow at any sign of reality! Newton had to support his fragile shell by being Master of the Mint just like any blathering Big Business construct. To be like everyone else – 'sanity', they call it!

MAN (*to Rosemary*) Are you better, dear?

MORIARTY No, you fool – far worse. She is finding her way back to the slavery of mistresshood.

ROSEMARY What's that? I'm hearing voices.

MAN Of course; the room is full of people talking. Shall I tell them to go?

MORIARTY I thought only fragilities like Macbeth had to break up the party. She has no more stamina than the usual day-dream – probably less because she is a desire of Alice's; what P.A. would call a 'sexual' desire.

PRIEST Queer what a hullabulloo was made when Freud decided that some desires could be particularized as sexual. We had recognized the obscurant qualities of Desire years ago. Even Arjuna was unable to tolerate the desire which he almost succeeded in satisfying.

ROBIN 'Desire' is a name given an impulse when it is wished to obscure a precise feeling by generalizing the particular.

PRIEST I didn't know you had a philosophical bent.

ROBIN I haven't. All I wanted was to live in peace and quiet and run my farm. Then a farm worker desired to blow his brains out and did so. Filthy mess he made, too – made worse by coroners and psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, and now invading Germans.

SHERLOCK How do you know 'they' are to blame? If 'they' had not noticed 'the mess', do you suggest someone else would not have done so?

P.A. I think all the explanations, by all the different specialists of all the different specialities, including my own, are 'rationalizations'; that is, 'reasonable' explanations – scavenging.

PRIEST And are correspondingly suspect. When no reason is available, reason itself is called in to show that the unwelcome but observed facts conform to the limits of the human mind and to laws made by the human dictator.

P.A. Logic is set apart in the human pantheon as if thinking can be judged as being in accordance with 'logic'; which is as convincing and ridiculous as all the other standards that have ever been set up for awe, veneration, adoration.

MAN Liberty, Equality, Fraternity – set them up and forget them. Load them with honour and they can be sunk without a trace. Some crack-pot poet or philosopher or saint is bound to give rein to his insatiable curiosity and unearth the forgotten god from his mound of worthless adoration.

PRIEST The god comes to life and upheaves the dead rubbish beneath which he lies buried. The autistic wisdom begins to hatch out of its shell, however stony, unyielding and safe the prison provided to contain the explosion.

ASTRONOMER The cataclysmic explosion can be felt in the periphery of the galaxy. Who is ready – someone always is – to darken council with his knowledge, his reason, his logic to prove that these stupendous upheavals, ineffable explosions are comprehensible and therefore don't exist?

P.A. And that the trivial, miniscule, undiscernible births are biological events which are analogically, and therefore really comparable to, relativistic protons in the physical world.

ASTRONOMER Why 'therefore'?

P.A. Because 'analogy' is a word, and a word is a symptom of mental activity – a fragment of theory.

ASTRONOMER That does not mean that there is a realization that approximates to the theory.

P.A. I agree. There is no 'evidence' of any link between the theory and the realization to which it is supposed to correspond. I am not sure that I need to suppose 'direction' in the way theories of causation presuppose, in this instance, that a 'big bang' set off an 'expanding universe', or that the violent expansion of the universe continues to cause 'perturbations' in the sensitive receiver we call the human

central nervous system. If the human CNS is capable of sensitive receptivity of a high order then it may betray events of great power though we remain ignorant of the genesis.

ASTRONOMER What do you mean by 'ignorant'?

P.A. I mean that an event might be powerful enough to stimulate the parasympathetic, but not powerful enough to cause the parasympathetic in its turn to stimulate the cortex. I have to use these anatomical terms to speak about the mind; they are in fact meaningless or inaccurate unless the recipient of these communications can tolerate their reception. Students of the heavens had to become sensitive to the evidence of heliocentric phenomena and tolerant of what their receptors conveyed before they could achieve comprehension.

PRIEST *You* use language of science and language of religion, but if I use it you claim that I am being unscientific. 'Heaven' is a word which should be used with due respect for its history as part of religious thinking.

P.A. You also should use these terms with respect for the scientific truths to which they relate. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you', was a statement made by one religious thinker, and should be respected no matter what the 'vertex' of the thinker. Such statements not only give coherence to past conjunctions, but also display conjunctions and coherences which were not suspected at the first adumbration. 'Man's inner world' is a succinct statement recently made, drawing attention to conjunctions of what we would call a similar kind of domain of mental phenomena.

MAN Shall I shoot him?

ROSEMARY Not yet – though I can hardly bear it. Does this waltz go on for ever?

MAN Only till we are totally exhausted.

ROSEMARY The din is getting worse and worse. It penetrates me; it will burst my ear drums. Funny to think . . .

MAN Why do you stop? What were you going to say? I see your maid is dancing with that fellow Roland.

ROSEMARY I thought you had done for him when you shot him. She dances well – I wonder where she learnt. I think one of her remote forebears must have been of good family. She has grace . . . I feel I am going to faint . . .

MAN I'll call your maid – you there! Come and help your mistress.

ROSEMARY I feel awful; I can't even faint.

MAN You have to be tough; you are dancing as well as ever. I felt upset when I first killed a man and saw how surprised he looked. He never realized he had been killed. Shooting isn't at all bad when you get used to the shock.

ROSEMARY It's a 'shock' to dance with someone – as if you didn't realize you would be 'danced with'. I suppose P.A. would say it was 'sexual'. Priest would say it was religious, like Saint Paul being 'converted'.

MAN Saint Paul was a Jew; he said he was a Roman citizen.

ROSEMARY A Christian, surely? If this waltz goes on I shall die; I'm utterly exhausted.

MAN Your feet are dancing all right.

ROSEMARY They are dancing *me*; I don't mean it to happen. Look at Alice – she doesn't mean it any more than I do.

P.A. Death is not a disease any more than birth. Disease is constantly conjoined to both; so is life – and human beings are liable to think one causes the other.

PRIEST Only because scientists have replaced God by cause.

P.A. I have heard religious addicts talk of a First Cause. Whether scientists or priests, they are restricted by the human mind which clings to ideas such as god; the variable is substituted by a constant and then venerated as Constant.

PRIEST That could be rewarding to a mathematician.

P.A. But I don't see the advantage of substituting God for god, although I can see the value, in some circumstances, for substituting 'G' for 'g'.

PRIEST It is only a sign to denote something to which it is wished to draw attention. No one suggests 'G' should be venerated; we think there is some thing which is worthy of veneration.

P.A. I include the human mind as something worthy of respect.

PRIEST Respect is not veneration.

P.A. You are talking about vocabulary. But I do not discuss grammar, although I am familiar with the supposition that I only play with jargon. In fact I recognize a reality beyond the word 'veneration'; similarly there is a realization that approximates to the

word 'respect'. If 'respect' could be measured against a spectrum it would show a different wave-length from that of 'veneration'. I do not venerate this music, but I do respect the noise that makes it difficult to think.

PRIEST

> 'Be shellèd eyes with double dark
> And find the uncreated light.'

P.A. 'I blind myself artificially', said Freud when he wished to investigate some dark phenomenon of the human mind.

PRIEST

> 'Shape nothing lips, be lovely dumb
> It is the shut, the curfew sent
> From there where all surrenders come
> Which only make you eloquent.'

Not grammatical – but excused as poetry.

P.A. I do not 'excuse' my silence but when I want to hear my patients I have to be silent. I listen too for more than is said.

PRIEST More than the words?

P.A. Yes, but not only more sound. I listen for something in addition to the sound or the well-known meanings of the words which may not be what is heard by the physiological, sensory apparatus.

PRIEST What is that?

P.A. That is what I expect to find out by being aware.

PRIEST I likewise advocate awareness. I object to the fact that you exclude certain categories of sense and so distort the evidence on which wisdom must rest.

P.A. Yet you quoted Hopkins with approval. Is that not selecting, and therefore undermining the basis for wisdom?

PRIEST No. I assume that more than enough sensual evidence is available for physical needs, but, like the noise here, too much to obviate the screening and marking of evidence needed for spiritual life.

P.A. How do you know what is needed and what is dispensable? I think something must be relevant to psychoanalysis, but if I claimed to be studying or worshipping God I would find it difficult to claim relevance. Even in the limited sphere of human personality it is hard to suppose I can exercise my capacity for discrimination effectively.

PRIEST Yet all psychoanalysis seems to stress certain alleged phenomena as worthy of more attention than others.

P.A. True; but our aims are related only to the practice of psychoanalysis. I may be wrong in thinking that religion relates to something assumed to be far more extensive, 'all-embracing', whereas psychoanalysis relates only to the human mind. That, I think, is more than enough.

PRIEST But – enough for what?

P.A. Studying and helping the development of the human mind. You, like Man, are engaged on tasks which appear to require decisions on whether a human being should retain his life or not.

PRIEST So are doctors. You psychoanalysts are concerned with no less than the life and death of the mind – does that include the spirit?

P.A. Not if I understand what you mean by 'the spirit'. What a man does with his mind is no more the job of an analyst than restoring a broken leg – which is then used in pursuit of robbery or murder – is to do with the use to which the patient is going to make of that leg.

PRIEST Or that saxophonist is going to make of his emphesematous lung. It is deafening – do you advocate listening to his playing?

P.A. If he were coming to me for analysis and it was the most direct way of his keeping me informed – yes. If he is concerned to make noises or weave patterns of sound, I do not consider it any part of my profession.

ROSEMARY Only if he deafens you?

ROBIN Or if it is a ritual? Or a religious pattern?

ROLAND A requiem for the dead – me, for example?

P.A. None of those. If he is deafening you, you could call for the protection of the police. If it is a ritual, I suppose it would be the job of the priest. If, instead of a saxophone, he were weaving a requiem with a lethal weapon, I would consider it the concern of the armed forces.

ROLAND A fat lot of use that would be in this country.

P.A. It would depend on whether I had the sanction of the appropriate authority. I would not psychoanalyse anyone unless I had sanction – permission. In this country the armed forces have been disarmed by superior forces, so I could not call on them to intervene against anyone choosing to make a pattern with a gun.

ROLAND Suppose he wanted a psychoanalysis with a gun?

P.A. I have had the experience.

ROLAND I'd like to see *you* analysing a gun!

P.A. I would not analyse any inanimate object, but I would try to analyse the man *behind* the gun –

ROLAND And suppose he replied with bullets!

P.A. I would hope to have made many interpretations before he had been forced to make his meaning clear with a gun. The interpretations would have had to have been such that they would have seemed worth hearing.

MAN I am glad you don't think you can analyse the gun. I often think it's the only defence we have against you people. I have known psychoanalysts who could not be prevented from outraging common sense.

P.A. Common sense can resort to common arms; by the time a nation has been reduced to armed force it is too late.

MAN We had no choice. What were you doing to allow things to come to such a pass? I don't remember any psychoanalytic appeal to redress grievances.

P.A. We are concerned to redress a particular form of grievance, but it takes time for us to gain ability sufficient to make a rewarding contribution.

MAN From what I have seen and heard, that is likely to take several centuries or even millennia.

P.A. Who knows? Change is often catastrophic. Bernard Shaw said it was only politicians who believe in change which is so gradual that no one detects it.

MAN Or it takes place so quickly that it is unobserved.

P.A. Or senses are so dulled or rudimentary that great changes are unobserved. A fetus is not likely to know it is growing.

ALICE Can a fetus commit murder or suicide?

P.A. A fetal idea can kill itself or be killed, and that is not a metaphor *only.* Metaphors can be the ghosts of ideas waiting to be born, and not only, as Berkeley said to Halley, 'ghosts of departed quantities'.

BANDMASTER (*ringing a bell and using a loud-hailer*) Time, ghosts! Time! Time to be departed. All change! Out increments! Out! Fall in by your Rights! Quick . . . march! Dead . . . fall in! By your

coffins . . . Quick . . . dead! Quick . . . dead! Loves me . . . loves me . . . not. All change at Purgatory!

MAN What's this?

LEADER OF CELESTIAL CHOIR All change, you bastards! All change!

MAN This is a dismal hole.

ROSEMARY Why have we got out here?

MAN We had to. Arrived. All change.

ROSEMARY All change? Surely not; where are the others? Where is that bloody maid of mine?

MAN You told her to get lost.

ROSEMARY Did I? She *would* obey if she knew I didn't mean it. If this is Purgatory I don't think much of it; I thought Purgatory was religious.

MAN No, the religious place is a dogma; this is scientific.

TOM What is this gloomy hole? Why are you looking about in that curious way?

P.A. They are having an occulo-gyric crisis in unison.

PRIEST In harmony would be better. You can mow them down more easily. I can hear the stutter of the Lewis guns even now.

ROBIN I can't. The damn thing has stopped again. You fool! Don't wrench it like that. It's *not* a number one. I suppose it's the only stoppage for which you know the cure. How quiet it is here! Not a sound . . . Yet I see old ghosts look in on the battle. I say, you chaps, it's awfully good of you to look in on me like that! It is so quiet it might be a morgue. I vote we have a group discussion. Do we have a vote here?

P.A. Of course; you can have as many ineffective votes as you wish. Effective votes to the left; all others to the right – so they can cancel out properly.

MAN That is nonsense.

P.A. No, it is Non Sense.

MAN It sounds mad to me.

P.A. You have forgotten all changed here, and what was nonsense has become Non Sense. The Laws of Nature are now the Laws of Un-Reason. This is the post Big Bang Era.

ALICE What was the Big Bang? I don't remember it.

MORIARTY It has not been discovered yet. The scientists, when they have caught up with the technique, will have to engage on

a journey of autismological discovery. Of course archaeology has changed too and has to relate to a spiritual science or spiritual curiosity. Priest may know who his successor will be – some young, inquisitive, post-bang dinosaur. I don't know who is taking over from me yet – no child of Irene and myself.

SHERLOCK So that is what happened to Irene Adler!

MORIARTY Really, Holmes! Didn't you know that? We didn't marry in church, but we married. The Big Bang separated us.

SHERLOCK For the time, I suppose?

MORIARTY No, there is no Time as you used to know it. I never set much store by it – or any other figments of Reality.

ROSEMARY I must say that you have a very high opinion of yourself when you are only the ghost of a figment of reality.

MORIARTY You forget that you are only a figment of imagination of a figment of the imagination of a lie after death. I have never been a figment of reality, and change presents none of the difficulties you seem to be having. As for P.A., I would hate to try to analyse *his* status. He was real to start with and has devoted himself to the reality of other realities even more banal than himself.

ALICE You are being rude.

SHERLOCK If you had been rude to Rosemary you might have done better.

MORIARTY I don't understand your scale of measurement.

ALICE Nor do I.

SHERLOCK It is the same as the scale against which I measure your distance from Roland. Your score, by that scale, was better with Rosemary than it was with Roland.

TOM What a dismal hole this is.

ALICE You said that before. How long do we have to wait here?

MYCROFT There is no time for figments of imagination, dear lady. You haven't forgotten real life yet.

ALICE I wish I could; that would be Heaven.

BANDMASTER That's the next stop. First Class passengers only. Supplementary tickets from Saint Peter.

P.A. I trust that the saint has no prejudice against psychoanalysis.

SHERLOCK You don't have to go first class. After all, I don't.

P.A. In my experience it was easier to appreciate both heaven and hell when in contact with them.

ROBIN What Heaven and Hell? I always understood them to be topological terms.

PRIEST No, religious.

PHYSICIST No, figments of imagination.

P.A. No, what I call definitory hypotheses depending on the vertex.

ROSEMARY My! You haven't changed a bit!

P.A. It certainly sounds as if I were lacking in mental flexibility. That is what I suspected about being dead. I never anticipated the possibility of experience after death; either I am not dead, or I shall have to revise my views.

PRIEST Let me recommend the less dogmatic approach, not least because you may be unfamiliar with dogma and its uses.

P.A. I have usually considered dogma to be the analogue of the so-called 'laws of nature'.

PRIEST I believe it to be a formulation of the 'thing itself.

P.A. You claim, with the mystics, that you have direct experience of God. I should have thought your organization would have considered that heretical; a psychiatrist would suspect megalomania.

PRIEST There are opinions which question the claim of any human animal to aspire to such experience. Dante only claims such direct experience as a mortal being can have.

MYCROFT Do you find your Deity more convincingly real then myself or Falstaff?

PRIEST I had never heard of you till recently, and Falstaff is only credible as a human is credit-worthy. My experience of God is ineffable, whereas the credibility of human beings and their various representations and creators only *remind* me of God.

P.A. I do not understand, still less know, the experience of which you speak. Does Man remind you of God?

PRIEST His violence and murderous propensities are reminiscent at many removes of the violence of God. A great religious poet once said, 'The Heavens declare the glory of God'; if that is taken to include the violence of the heavens I would say that that came nearer to 'God' corresponding to my experience. 'Who shall abide the day of His coming' is a phrase which expresses *my* feelings of awe and dread which seem to be more appropriate to the God I know than to more agreeable ones.

ROSEMARY Don't you believe in a loving God?

PRIEST Yes; but I do not recognize the feeling you seem to be experiencing when you describe it as 'love'.

P.A. It is notorious that you and your organizations are opposed to sex and even teach sex as if it were opposed to God.

PRIEST It is notorious that it is notorious, although even a superficial knowledge of what we teach would make it clear that we do not.

P.A. Are not your clergy supposed to be celibate?

PRIEST We consider that sexual occupations are not compatible with the work to which clergy are supposed to devote themselves. Psychoanalysts and physicians are not supposed to practise sex with their patients.

P.A. That is not the same as commending or even advocating total abstinence.

PRIEST You enjoin total alcoholic abstinence.

P.A. I don't, but I can and do see characters with whom such totality might be wise. I might hope that in the course of the experience of psychoanalysis the individual would become able to have an opinion of his own, and that those options would be more an asset than a liability. But *my* preferences, if I let them obtrude, may be his bane, so I do not consider formulation of such ideas to the patient as part of the psychoanalyst's function.

PRIEST But you are suggesting it by being a psychoanalyst.

P.A. I am sometimes asked if I advise psychoanalysis; I incur hostility because I say it is no part of advice I am qualified to give. I agree that merely being what I am suggests something to the patient, but I think it my duty to demonstrate to him that impulse of which he is often unaware.

PRIEST Has not Jung said this?

P.A. He said he agreed with Freud's description of the transference; he talked also of archetypes and a collective unconscious. I don't see why he should not call the Oedipus figure an archetype if he wants to, or say that an equivalent of the Oedipus figure exists in every human being. But I do not see any need to augment Freud's facts and theory; if I saw a better way of demonstration I would not hesitate to use it. The postulate of a collective unconscious seems to me to be unnecessary. I would not say that because two people see a mountain, *that* is evidence of a 'collective eye'; it is simpler to say

both people have eyes that function in a similar manner. I would not use an expression which might risk an increase in ambiguity – which is bad enough at best.

TOM I'm bored.

ROBIN Oh shut up! We all are.

PRIEST 'Collective boredom'? Hullo! Who is this?

ROSEMARY ? ! ! !

ALICE Awful-looking specimen.

ROSEMARY Specimen of what?

TOM Reminds me of someone.

ROBIN Don't say it's a bore!

P.A. I hardly recognized him – it's my ghost.

ROBIN I thought so.

GHOST OF P.A. I died at English Farm and I've been working through Purgatory since. I feared I might become like P.A.

ROSEMARY *I* don't think you're a bore; you look rather interesting.

GHOST OF P.A. No, I'm cold. How the wind whistles through me! If only I could be clothed with flesh and blood – that would warm my old bones.

P.A. It wouldn't. I have taken mine off to be a figment of imagination.

GHOST OF AUSER Aren't you . . . ?

P.A. No, I'm P.A.

GHOST OF AUSER You reminded me of – ah, there you are! I thought I might find you here.

GHOST OF P.A. When you knew me I was a ghost of myself – at Berles-aux-Bois. I loved you, but I couldn't save you.

GHOST OF AUSER Never mind, old boy. You were wonderful! Sorry I lost my tank, but there were a lot of them and they shot me through the heart. What's this dismal hole? Seems to be some sort of Transit Camp.

PRIEST That's what *you'd* call it. Some people think they are Stations of the Cross.

GHOST OF AUSER (*cheerfully*) Really? I thought that was a Roman Catholic idea.

PRIEST No – they borrowed the name from a Jew. It's named after him.

GHOST OF AUSER What's that queer get-up you are wearing? Fatigue dress?

PRIEST You might call it that.

GHOST OF AUSER (*to P.A. and Ghost of P.A.*) Well, how's things? How have you been getting on? It's jolly nice seeing you again – I hope you are glad to see me too.

P.A. I am indeed – but truth to tell I've always been afraid of meeting you.

GHOST OF AUSER Afraid of meeting me – whatever for? You were one of the bravest men I ever met! I wanted to get a V.C. – one better than you.

GHOST OF P.A. You only saw me wearing my Hero dress. I was afraid you'd see me – as I saw poor Gates.

GHOST OF AUSER Ah yes, I heard about that – broke down or something didn't he?

P.A. No, poor chap, he went sane long before the war was over; he couldn't bear the truth *and* being in a minority of one at the same time. It was pitiful – lying there in a ditch blubbing. He took to drink; even that couldn't save him from reality. It used to get him by the throat and blind him.

PRIEST I tried him on a stiff dose of religion but he had never been inoculated.

P.A. 'Religio Medici. t.d.s. as ordered' – but no one ordered it. I doubt it would have saved him anyway.

ROSEMARY Quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore qui redit exuvias indutus Achilli.

PRIEST I'd forgotten you knew Hector.

ROSEMARY He was a friend of my friend Paris.

ROLAND I remember it was said you were the party that burned the topless towers of Ilium.

ROSEMARY Yes – now it's the topless style of Saint Francisco. I no more launched a thousand ships than the London Scottish sank the Emden.

GHOST OF AUSER I heard that joke – I thought it rather funny. Like the surrender of the gunners of the Territorial Division to the artillery of the 7th Division when their guns fired too short because of worn barrels. You are very good-looking.

ROSEMARY Thanks! So I'm told – or used to be when I was younger. Luckily I was reconciled to having an ugly soul – more

serviceable. It has to be tough, like the sole of a boot. Alice, give me my shoes. There, you see how pretty they are? But the life and soul even of a party shoe has to depend on the life *and* sole of a . . . You're not attending. Where have you gone?

GHOST OF AUSER Sorry, I thought I saw a friend. I thought he had been killed at Ypres.

ROSEMARY Ypres? Never heard of it – unless you mean Wipers.

GHOST OF AUSER (*vaguely*) Yes, I suppose so. I was never there of course – before my time.

GHOST OF P.A. Even now he is as bright as old renown. No one ever heard of him, but *I* knew what we had lost when that brave, cheerful lad was found lying there – dead.

GHOST OF AUSER Old man Horace was wrong for once. I was not at all 'sweet' – dead or alive.

P.A. Ask my ghost what spectacle was presented by those of us who lived to grow old.

GHOST OF P.A. Do you think I was any better *before* English Farm?

P.A. On consideration – no; nor after. The actions of the just – the generous man – stay just; the mean man stays mean. Whatever the dress in which we clothe our 'selves' the structure lives longer than the character we hang upon it – the 'glories' of our blood and state.

GHOST OF AUSER I wanted to ask you – did we win?

(*A long, long silence.*)

20

ROLAND You've been crying.

ALICE And God shall wipe away all tears from . . .

ROLAND Come, wake up!

ALICE It would be nice if there were a God.

ROLAND Perhaps – if He were an improvement on the ones who have won adulation, the famous ones of old.

ALICE That reminds me of the dream I had last night. Terrible! I can't remember it, but I know it went on all night.

ROLAND 'In the silence of the sleep time, when you set your fancies free' – a song we had at school. I think the fancies were supposed to go somewhere . . . I forget.

ALICE 'Music, when soft voices die, vibrates in the memory.' I can't remember who wrote it –

ROLAND It doesn't matter.

ALICE Do you think there is a life after death?

ROLAND I hope not.

ALICE I feel depressed.

ROLAND You were crying in your sleep.

ALICE (*wiping away her tears*) I don't think that's crying – not weeping 'boo-hoo', but crying 'peep-bo'.

ROLAND I've got to go to Munden this morning –

ALICE I dreamt something about Munden, I think . . .

ROLAND Poor Robin's cowman's suicide upset you.

ALICE (*shuddering*) *That* wasn't a dream! Perhaps Shakespeare and Homer were right; it would be awful if we dreamt we were alive when we died.

ROLAND Who knows? These poet crackpots often had something.

ALICE If they had discipline, even the discipline of versification –

ROLAND Farming for me! I'm off to Munden. Goodbye; sweet dreams.

ALICE No, no! Don't let me go to sleep again. Rosemary! Rosemary!

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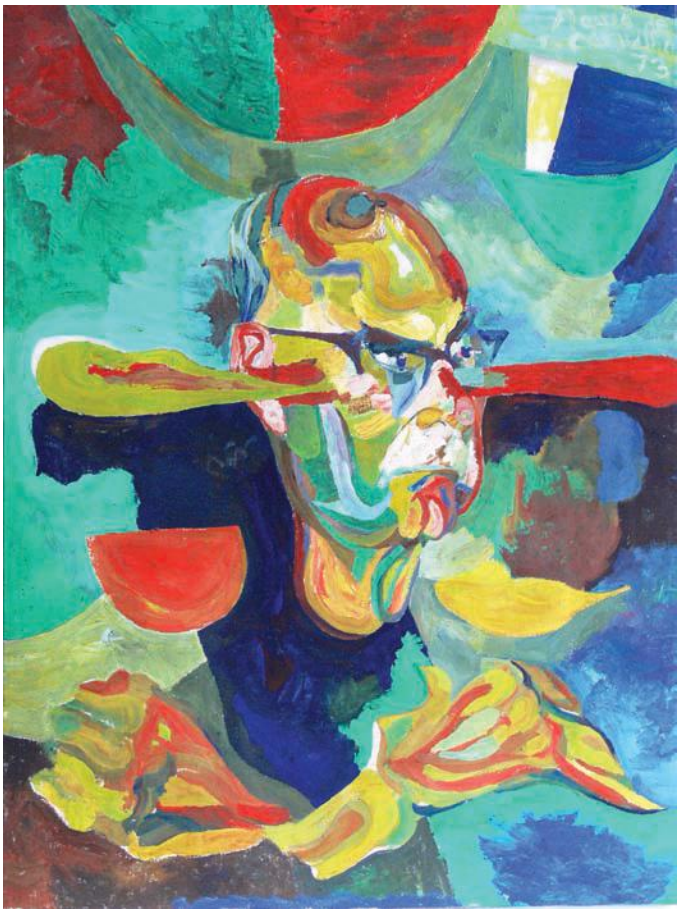

Painting of WRB
by Flavio de Carvalho

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Edited by Chris Mawson

Editorial consultant Francesca Bion

KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume XIV): 978–1–78220–242–4

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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A MEMOIR OF THE FUTURE
BOOK THREE:
THE DAWN OF OBLIVION

1979

A Memoir of the Future was first published in 1991 by Karnac Books, London. It consisted of revised and corrected versions of three previously published books – *The Dream*, *The Past Presented*, and *The Dawn of Oblivion* – together with a revised and expanded version of *A Key to A Memoir of the Future* (1981).

The Dawn of Oblivion was first published in 1979 by Clunie Press, Strath Tay.

A Memoir of the Future
Book Three:
The Dawn of Oblivion

Q Can you give me . . . oh it's you is it?

A Alas! yes.

Q I don't see why you say Alas!' I don't mind meeting you! Why . . .

A I thought you were going to ask what it's about.

Q Oh no. I read the last one.

A Splendid! Did you like it?

Q No. Is this as bad?

A Worse.

Q How interesting: I must get it.

A I said 'worse'.

Q That's what made me want it – I don't see how it could be.

1

EM-MATURE This book is a psycho-embryonic attempt to write an embryo-scientific account of a journey from birth to death overwhelmed by pre-mature knowledge, experience, glory and self-intoxicating self-satisfaction. I was spared any knowledge of the courtship of my sperm with my ovum, but many years later was given to understand that my ancestors had a long and disreputable history extending to the day when an ancestral sperm, swimming characteristically against the current, lodged in a fallopian tube to lie in wait for an unknown ovum. The history of my ovum appears to be virtually non-existent. My sperm impetuously penetrated a Graafian follicle before my ovum had time itself to escape penetration. I cannot vouch for the truth of these tales which became known to me through scientific hearsay many years later. I admit responsibility for what I have experienced, but not for the distortions of scientific sense. I acknowledge dependence on sensible and experienced transcriptions; I cannot promise communication of pure non-sense without the contamination by sense. I shall not repeat my apology for having to borrow the language of experience and reason despite its inadequacy.

My earliest experiences were of something touching what I later heard was 'me'. The changes in pressure in the fluid surrounding me varied from what Me called pleasure to what Me called pain. My optic and auditory pits at the age of three or four somites received sound and light, dark and silent, not usually increasing beyond nice and nasty, but sometimes making Me feel more inanimate than animate.

PRE-MATURE Get on with it – when were you born?

EM-MATURE Don't hurry; I was coming to that.

EIGHT YEARS You always are, but do not arrive.

EM When I was only three somites old –

TWENTY-FOUR YEARS That's not an age.

EM Don't talk about matters you don't understand. If you had some respect for your fore-bears –

EIGHT YEARS You've spelled it wrong.

EM When I spell it, it is right; when you spell it, it is wrong.

EIGHT YEARS That is not how it seems to me, looking at it from my side of the barrier.

LEONARD Shut up both of you and look at this drawing.

EIGHT YEARS Not bad – what is it?

EM I see a great light.

TWENTY-FOUR YEARS Open your eyes and you will see it is darkness of the womb.

MILTON The formless infinite – the void.

EM The light is too intense.

TWELVE YEARS 'it is eye. Be not afraid. And 'e did 'it 'is eye. And Em was afraid. Ha, ha, ha!

EM What a dreadful oscillation of pressure!

THIRTY YEARS Who is talking words you don't understand now?

EM Caught in a web of whirling waters.

LEONARD Hair! Water! If you only looked you would 'see-what-I-mean', but –

FORTY YEARS No – only hair, water, words –

FORTY-TWO YEARS No; if you listened you would only hear 'repetition compulsion' psycho-ese.

P.A. Psychoanalysis?

EM Stop! Stop! I can't bear it. I am blinded, deafened!

KRISHNA I told you so; wait till you are Arjuna.

EM It's quieter now. Gametes quarrelling. Post-natals at it again. Give me Silence. 'Shape nothing lips.' 'Be shelled eyes.' Stoma-you at the other end – keep closed. 'A sealed tube'? That can't be right. Suck! What?

FOUR SOMITES Come on, wake up! Think!

TWENTY MONTHS Think? You can't think! You haven't even got a central nervous system.

EM You're a fool. Even Four Somites had the sense to want to suck. I admit –

TERM You didn't. You made a fuss about being woken by me and my young co-hairs.

TWENTY MONTHS I sucked an erection.

TERM You made a fuss when my erection wanted me to suck it.

TWENTY MONTHS Rubbish! I objected to being fobbed off with a thumb. No milk, no amniotic fluid – nothing! Le Néant, the Void, the Infinite! Too late – here's Eighteen.

EIGHTEEN YEARS 'There will be too much of me in the coming by and by.'

INFANCY Now shut up, all of you. I'm senior here. Since you can't suck my nipple or penis and have a grouse about my thumb, I have arranged to suck a nipple.

SOMITES We don't want a nipple! We want an erection!

EM I don't want your borrowed erection. It nearly squeezed me to death and drowned me. Luckily I had the intelligence – wisdom – to become erect myself. I may borrow a case or sheath as an exo-skeleton temporarily, but –

TERM No, don't! If you borrow an exo-skeleton you will never get out of it. I swallowed the erection and now it is part of *Me.* It's my endo-skeleton. *I* am an erection. *I* am independent.

EIGHTEEN YEARS Hark at it! What conceit! What pride!

TWENTY-FOUR YEARS If it weren't for pride and conceit you would still be grovelling about on your belly. You owe Term a debt.

EM I may be grovelling around a bit, but if I don't bite the woman's heel, call me *Serpent!*

EIGHTEEN If I don't bruise your head, call me *Heel!*

ALL I don't know what you are talking about.

P.A. You think it's *about* something. It has already been said by Shakespeare – 'It is a tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing.'

TWELVE YEARS Shakespeare? I haven't done Shakespeare yet.

P.A. Soon you will have *done* Shakespeare, and when you have realized he is the greatest man who ever lived you will be *done* too – and you won't recover. Shakespeare has been so well *done* he has never recovered either.

EM I shall be so well and truly born I suppose I shall never recover either. It is terrible to dream I may become like Term one day. If only I could be sure to be told by an idiot I would be reconciled to being *Nothing,* but –

EIGHTEEN YEARS You will be well and truly educated; never able to draw out again. I look like being educated by one of those solidified nightmares on the Ypres Canal.

EM Long before my time or yours, when I crawled in that primaeval slime, I was a nightmare and did as nightmares do in nightmare land. Then I was taught and learned to call it 'only a nightmare'.

EIGHTEEN YEARS It took me a hell of a night time to learn I was wide awake.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS I nearly learned that Peter Pan had been our Commander in Chief, but sweet peace came and put me to sleep again and taught me it was 'only' a dream. P.A. turned up and untaught me it was 'only' real.

P.A. I did not. I thought you might learn something if you could have some respect for Somite Three and the others, Peter and Pan. You seemed to think they were 'ugly' and 'nasty'.

TWENTY-ONE Weren't they?

P.A. It's a matter of taste. After all, you have taste buds – why not respect them and what they tell you?

TWENTY-ONE I did not like the taste of a nine-inch Howitzer.

TWENTY-FOUR Nonsense; you thought you would be killed and feared penetrating the barrier between life and death. It was Somite Three who thought an erection was a 9.2 How.

EM I don't know when the amniotic pressure made my optic pits hurt; the stars were so brilliant, I kicked out.

SOMITE EIGHTEEN Nonsense! Even I don't know where my feet are; you are getting beyond yourself.

TERM You had to depend on your fetal membranes to get beyond yourself when you had no feet.

EM Your fetal membranes, as you call them, are a nuisance as it is impossible to break through them. I cannot reach you because of them. Who or What are you?

TERM I knew till you butted in. I am *mind* and my mental membranes make me able to reach far beyond my feet. How and What and Who used to help.

EM Now you have muddled me. I shall be *body;* for ever I shall gird at your mind.

MIND Hullo! Where have you sprung from?

BODY What – you again? I am Body; you can call me Soma if you like. Who are you?

MIND Call me Psyche – Psyche-Soma.

BODY Soma-Psyche.

MIND We must be related.

BODY Never – not if I can help it.

MIND Oh, come. Not as bad as that, is it?

BODY Worse. You got us into this air. Luckily I brought some liquid with me. What are you doing?

MIND Nothing; it must be my phrenes, that diaphragm going up and down. I'm breathing in air – fluid, not liquid. What did you bring that wet stuff for? Beautiful odour.

BODY You could not know about the odour if I had not the liquid to hold your atoms with. Typical of Mind – all words and no content. Where did you find them?

MIND Borrowed from the future – you are borrowing them from me; do you get them through the diaphragm?

BODY *They* penetrate *it*. But the meaning does not get through. Where did you get your pains from?

MIND Borrowed – from the past. The meaning does not get through the barrier though. Funny – the meaning does not get through whether it is from you to me, or from me to you.

BODY It is the meaning of pain that I am sending to you; the words get through – which I have not sent – but the meaning is lost.

MIND What is that amusing little affair sticking out? I like it. It has a mind of its own just like me.

BODY It's just like me – has a body of its own. That's why it is so erect. Your mind – no evidence for it at all.

MIND Don't be ridiculous. I suffer anxiety as much as you have pain. In fact I have pain about which you know nothing. I suffered intensely when we were rejected. I asked you to call me Psyche and promised to call you Soma.

SOMA All right Psyche; I don't admit that there is any such person other than a figment of my digestion.

PSYCHE Who are you talking to then?

SOMA I'm talking to myself and the sound is reflected back by one of my fetal membranes.

PSYCHE Your feetal membranes! Ha, ha! Very good! Is that your pun or mine?

SOMA It's the only language you understand.

PSYCHE It's the only language you hear. All you talk is pain.

SOMA All you respect is pain or lack of it. The only time I can get anything over to you is pain – talk from the hills.

PSYCHE Plain talk through your stoma. Excuse me if I borrow to talk to this idiotic nipple a moment – there! An erection at once!

SOMA Thanks to my liquid evacuations. Who is that?

PSYCHE I bit it.

SOMA It had just bitten me. Bite it again! That's me – not it.

PSYCHE It can't be. I put my foot in it – was it your stoma? You have confused me again. Pain, Feet – all mixed up. Why can't you take your choice?

SOMA I do. If you had any respect for my 'feelings' and did what I feel you, you wouldn't be in this mess.

PSYCHE I am in this mess because I was squeezed into it. Who is responsible – your feelings or your ideas? All that has me is yours – amniotic fluid, light, smell, taste, noise, I'm wrapped up in it. Look out! I am getting absorbed!

SOMA I'll pi you out when I've absorbed you. All piss, shit, and pi-ety. You can idea-lize it – get a good price for it no doubt. Bless me – I'm getting absorbed too. Help!

PSYCHE That's what comes of penetrating in or out. I'm confused.

SOMA That's what comes of not penetrating – you break up or down.

BOY Let's leave them to it. Boys and girls –

2

GIRL

Golden boys and girls all must
Like chimney sweepers come to dust.

BOY We are not dandelions. I'm bored. Let's play in the garden.

GIRL No, that's kiddish.

BOY It's not. What's kiddish about it?

GIRL Oh nothing – it's silly. Silly boring old garden. Jennifer is coming.

BOY *Her!* How awful. She's a slob.

GIRL She's not. You shouldn't say awful things like that. I'll tell Ma!

BOY Sneak! It's not awful; you're a sneak.

GIRL I shall tell Ma you called her a sneak!

BOY Oh, you liar – I didn't say anything of the sort.

GIRL You did! What did you say then?

BOY I didn't call her what you said.

GIRL Jennifer's my best friend. She says boys are awful. I'll tell Ma you made me cry.

BOY Sneak!

GIRL I don't sneak. She will see my eyes are red and she will ask you what you have been doing to make me cry. I shan't tell her and then you'll catch it! You know she doesn't like it if you make me cry. She'll tell Dad and he'll be furious.

BOY Oh! You are a . . . are a . . . little beast!

GIRL Now I *shall* tell Ma! I wasn't going to say anything till you started calling me those awful names.

BOY Cyril knows what a sneak you are. (*Girl puts out her tongue*

at him.) Ooh! That's awful! You know Ma said you should *never* do that. If you tell Ma I shall tell her you put your tongue out at me. I'm going to play the piano.

GIRL No!

BOY Why not? It's only my exercises. You know I have to do them every day.

GIRL I'll tell Ma you wouldn't play with me.

BOY It was *you* said you wouldn't play.

GIRL Only because you call me names. And why aren't you doing your exercises? Ma told you to do them first thing after breakfast.

MOTHER (*both children fall into a sulk as she enters*) Why don't you two play in the garden? It's such a lovely morning.

BOY Don't want to.

GIRL (*brightly*) I'm waiting for Jennifer.

MOTHER That's good, but why don't you play in the garden till she comes?

BOY (*to himself*) Well, why don't I? Anyhow, I don't. Girls always want to play. Jennifer isn't a bad kid if only she didn't team up with my horrible sister. I hate girls – you always get the worst of it.

GIRL (*to herself*) I don't want to play in the garden. Why did I say I want to? Jennifer hates it too. I wish she would hurry up. She's better than a boy anyway. I suppose . . . *if* there was a decent boy – unlike my horrible brother . . . he lies face down on the floor and wiggles. Told me to try it because it was lovely. Humbug – nothing to it.

MOTHER (*to boy*) Not going?

BOY (*crossly*) Oh, all right.

(*He and Girl go out.*)

P.A. They don't really hate each other – 'they' all hate learning – it makes them develop – swell up.

CONTAINER It distends me.

MOTHER Let's see now . . . what have I forgotten? Reminds me of something. Helen perhaps . . . or my mother when I said I had forgotten to say my prayers before cleaning my teeth – luckily she used to forget to ask if I had cleaned my teeth. I remember her sweet, gentle voice. 'Child of the Devil, child of the Devil; go and say them and ask his forgiveness.' I did not dare to reply. 'What! Ask the Devil for forgiveness? – for not praying to him?' She would not have allowed such pert – what is the phrase now? – answers. I suppose we are more enlightened now. And more comfortable perhaps.

Will these two look back nostalgically on their present freedom? And guiltily, as I do now, wonder what mistakes *they* are making? What of the children of our imperial family – did the great ones of our time bring them up wrongly? Pakistan? Amin? Indira? Bangladesh? Does God sometimes think He made a mistake to allow the human animal to reproduce . . . or do the viruses roam freely already seeking some cadaver of the vanished races? They shall inherit – our nebula? Or our earth? Well?

GIRL Mummy, Jenny has a super idea – can we go skating? She says the ice is super. She says it is fabulous. Oh, thanks awfully. Of course we will take him. Can I have some money? And could I buy some skates? Dad won't mind – in fact he said he wished I would learn to skate.

MOTHER Yes, I heard him. And I remember your answer. 'Oh no! It's so *boring*. Need I go?' Do you remem . . .

BOY That's a long time ago. Besides —

GIRL We shall be terribly careful.

MOTHER (*to herself*) Is it déjà vu? Why is it so familiar? (*Aloud*) No, I'm very sorry, but you can ask your father when he gets home tonight.

GIRL Oh, Mummy! That's too late. Jenny wants us to go with her now! Tomorrow she can't come.

BOY I said it would be no good asking.

MOTHER There – I was sure you wouldn't ask for anything so silly.

GIRL But he has! He wants to go – don't you?

MOTHER (*laughing*) I expect you put him up to it. No; I'm sorry Jenny – another day perhaps. Now run along to the garden.

GIRL But it's so boring.

(*Mother goes out.*)

BOY Let's have an otter hunt.

JENNY What's that?

BOY Well, *you* catch Tibs because Tibs doesn't know you – she won't come to us. Then I'll get one of those really large pots from the gardener – his shed I mean, because he would never let us have one. Then while you stroke Tibs I shall put the pot on her and —

JENNY Won't that be terribly cruel? Our cat would hate it.

BOY Oh, Tibs won't mind. Anyway it's only for a moment and then —

GIRL I shall get a croquet mallet and –

BOY Smash it down on the pot and that sets Tibs off to a good start and we have to catch her before she gets up a tree. You have to be jolly quick though.

JENNY While you're chasing Tibs, the gardener will be chasing you.

GIRL Oh no – he doesn't mind – he won't know anyhow. He'll only tell Dad when he finds out, and Dad is sure to think it couldn't be us and will beat my brother.

BOY Thanks awfully! Jenny, get Tibs – she was asleep on the wall just now. Come on – we'll break in and she will break out. Do her good – she's always sleeping!

TIBS (*soliloquizing*) It is nice to stretch in the sun. Not that there is much. When there is, that B'yrrh-Lady sends those damned children out into it. Why couldn't she keep them in her womb? Can't blame her if she chucks the devils out *at once.* No wonder the sun becomes darkened. There's one of them. Oh child, get out of the way and let me feel the warmth. Oh, it's you is it Jenny? As bad as the rest if I knew you better. Still – 'tickley-tums' if you must make that ridiculous noise instead of purring. If she could talk a sensible language like mine she could hear the difference between a purr and a growl. Now she has to hold me in her arms! Oh dear! Oh dear! But I wouldn't give her kittens anyway. Ah! Here come the little devils. They must think I'm a fool if I don't know what they are up to – Jenny as bad as the rest. I am scared inside this pot I admit. I can't help running – all four of me. Stupid oafs! Woops! Up the tree and claws out. Lucky for them I didn't get my claws into *them* instead of the tree. Nice and warm again; and there they go, little . . . little . . . anyhow I can lick my paws in peace. The hell hounds always behave like a fetus – omnipotent, as old as God and as all-knowing, impossible to teach. In fact they remind me of Grandma who tried to shoo Grandpa's hat off the chair because she couldn't tell the difference between a hat and a cat. These devils can't tell the difference between a flowerpot and a pregnant pot. 'What a pot!', the Boy said to his aunt. In fact it was the only scientific observation he had made, but his Mummy said it was rude. That's what she said to the Girl when she used to stand in front of her 'betters' and say, 'Lavatory, lavatory, lavatory', to find out their reaction. A cat may not look at a psychiatrist without being called a

'Reaction-type'. My sperm-mate, Tom, who lives in the looney bin, tells me they all start in a looney bin and all return to it after a brief spell of making a hell on earth so they won't miss what they have left before they go back to it. It really is enough to make a girl laugh. In the childhood of the race, at least the Egyptians respected animal containers for their content. Blockheads all – I suppose it is understandable that they want to keep their blocks and consult them. The only time we understand and meet is digestion time and that language penetrates – in both directions – the barrier of sense; the sense that is born then is common. Even so, some aristo-c-rat or psychophilo is sure to pounce on it and give us all pollutocracy. Muscle – stretching time – ah! Wait till the Great Cat Ra catches them.

MOTHER Did you have a nice time?

BOY Not bad; is there any cake? Oh, supper – I don't want supper. Can't I have cake? Jenny can run! Can she come tomorrow?

MOTHER If her parents let her. Did you race each other?

BOY Not exactly.

GIRL She's not *your* friend anyway. She's coming to see me.

BOY Anyway I don't like her – she's soppy. Can Cyril come?

GIRL Cyril! *He* is soppy if you like. Do you know what Jenny told me? She said –

MOTHER Please, please! No more quarrelling tonight.

BOY Here's – I wasn't quarrelling – Tibs. Can I give her her milk? Please!

GIRL No. It's my turn. Tibs doesn't like you. Mummy, he chased Tibs till Tibs had to run up the tree.

BOY Ooh, what a whopper! I never did and Tibs loves me – don't you Tibs? What's that tapping the window?!

TIBS (*soliloquizing and licking her whiskers*) The tree and I understand each other – though he is rather rooted in the past.

TREE (*soliloquizing*) I live on earth and water, and even my leaves and branches when they break out feed and feed on air.

TIBS That's what I breathe and smell.

MOTHER Bed!

BOY Gd-ni . . . (*sleeps*) Tibs, you are a spoiled cat. No, it's no good you saying you are a *Tiger. If* you are a tiger you are really a spoiled tiger – a cat that has been spoiled and has turned into a pussy cat. Cyril laughs when he says 'pussy'. He says it's a gross word.

Now don't you turn into a gross cat Tibs. That's German. I hope I'm not getting afraid *of* an unspoiled great Kat. Tiger . . . Tiger . . . we learnt in school – burning bright. Please sir! Its eyes sir – what dread hands question mark and what dread feet? A stop sir? Yes sir, a proper pause. *If* the wine don't get you the women must. It rhymes with dust.

GIRL Shut up and go to sleep.

BOY I am asleep. *You* shut up. Where's Tibs?

GIRL Never mind – she likes sleeping on my bed. Where's Cyril? I don't care. I don't like him.

* * *

BOY Come on! There are guns in the field behind Prime's Field.

CYRIL Where? Can we get near them? Look! Soldiers! Hundreds of them.

BOY Let's watch. We'll go to the guns later. Look! There are more – thousands – Leicesters, the North Midland Division. They are moving in. There goes the bell for Prep. What a bore! I want to watch. Won't it be awful if the war is over.

CYRIL I know. I really feel sorry for the Germans. They are sure to get licked. Can't we join up?

BOY No. They'll turn us down for being too young.

CYRIL Well, I'm eighteen, so I can join at the end of term. You look it.

BOY I know. A woman gave me a white feather because I hadn't joined up. I felt a terrible fool.

CYRIL Good Lord! What cheek! What did you say?

BOY I didn't say anything. I felt such a fool.

CYRIL You ought to have smacked her face.

BOY I couldn't. I felt I ought to have joined up myself. I feel such a fool wearing a school cap. A woman made my father feel a fool. 'But your boy is wearing a school cap!', she said. I should feel such a fool going to a recruiting station. I feel a fool *not* going.

CYRIL Take your cap off. I know – get a bowler hat – they'll never know.

BOY That's what Miss Tommy said. She looked so smart. She looked me up and down – I knew she thought I was a soft idiot. 'I thought you were captain of school!', she said. Well, I couldn't answer

that. I couldn't tell her I felt a fool. You know Tartarin de Tarascon? I thought that was funny when his conscience tells him, 'Couvre-toi de gloire' and someone says, 'Couvre-toi de flannelle!' I feel a fool either way. You are lucky to be joining up. I wish I had *been* captain and left. Here's Prep started. We'll talk after Lights Out. (*Sleeps.*)

3

SOMITE THIRTY Get back into the Amniotic Fluid.

TERM Get out into the sun! Glory! The fields are bathed in light. Moonlight! Don't lie snoozing in bed.

SOMITE THIRTY Keep warm in bed. Your King and Country want you – you stay in bed.

BOY (*stirring uneasily*) What? Lucky devil – he will win a V.C. What did you say – flannel?

TERM Oh get lost! I can't lie here all night.

BOY Sit Jessica. The moonlight sleeps on the bank . . . That awful Repetition – I shall have to learn it first thing.

CYRIL Sh, sh, you're making an awful row. Go to sleep.

TWENTY-FOUR YEARS Lights out and stop talking now please –

SEVENTY YEARS That's better. If only one could rely on their always going to sleep.

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS Unfortunately they never do. Sometimes they all speak at once and it is a perfect Bedlam.

P.A. I think it might someday be possible for them all to be awake and carry on a fairly disciplined debate.

ROBIN I doubt it. I sometimes think it saves my sanity that most of them are usually asleep. It's bad enough when it's only two or three talking at once.

ROLAND That's only because they all talk a different language.

MAN I shot you so you would lie down and stay down – and out. And silent. Your friend Robin too – years ago. I don't want any ghostly voices around. Anyone would think it wasn't bad enough with religious nonsense inventing a future life and angel voices to add to the tumult.

ROBIN I can't see that's any worse than P.A. and his crowd inventing minds and characters and psycho-somatic disturbances.

ROLAND Doctors are as bad – new diseases and expensive new cures and specialists to go with them.

MORIARTY As one who has waged war against religious nonsense much longer than –

P.A. Oh, come – you are a creature of fiction yourself!

SHERLOCK HOLMES But *not* religious fiction. Scientific fiction is entirely superior.

DEVIL I am religious, but I certainly do not consider that I am fictitious. I do not of course hold with the ridiculous theatrical costumes in which I am supposed to appear in gardens of Eden and such primitive landscapes. In fact, I have always been most punctilious about my dress. I defy anyone to say they have ever seen me in anything but unobtrusive clothes, quietly and beautifully cut, and manners to which no real lady or gentleman could possibly take exception. Excuse me – you were about to say?

P.A. I confess I had supposed you inhabited the unconscious.

ALICE At my school we certainly were taught that the Devil existed, but none of us believed it was true.

DEVIL My dear lady – I hardly know how to apologize for my lack of perspicacity. I remember your school very well. I frequently gave away the yearly prizes and used to address you at the close of a ceremony which I was vain enough to regard as a particularly pleasing annual tribute to my services. Very charming, if I may say so, you all looked. Your Headmistresses – I knew all of them very well – were gratifyingly deferential. I even donated a fund for a prize to the most promising pupil – for the promises which were most unlikely to be kept. It carried a scholarship – a university scholarship – for Moral Philosophy. No, no thanks – I never touch sherry. I find it induces a somewhat genuine geniality.

ROLAND Now I understand why your face is so familiar – at our Prize-giving Days! You were responsible for all our sexual troubles I suppose?

DEVIL Certainly not. Sex, like sherry, often produces perfectly genuine feelings of love and affection. I relied on various religious teachers and moralists to inflame moral hatred for those harmless and agreeable practices –

SOMA My department.

DEVIL Quite so; as my friend P.A. was saying –

P.A. Excuse me: *not* your friend. I do not even believe in you.

DEVIL You amaze me. I would have thought by this time the facts would have compelled you to catch up with Priest – he at least believes in me.

P.A. I do not waste time believing facts or anything I *know*. I save my credulity for what I do *not* know.

DEVIL Like God?

P.A. Certainly. Both you and God I leave to Priest and his religious department.

ROLAND But . . . I suppose you would say you do not believe in men and women because they are facts which you know.

P.A. Certainly – I know some men and some women. I know they have minds as well as bodies.

SOMITE THIRTY Somitically speaking I know a lot that I cannot make clear to you but that is factual enough to me. I have to borrow articulate speech from Soma.

SOMA My difficulty exactly. I cannot make anything clear to Psyche unless I borrow a bellyache or headache or respiratory distress from somitic vocabulary for any of these post-natal structures. I believe in mind and personality as there is no evidence whatever for anything but Body. And when I manage to make somebody aware of a bellyache the probability is that they immediately drag in a 'cure'. As for my message, God knows –

DEVIL God knows! Is Soma also among the religious?

ROSEMARY You know that as well as I do. Some of the healthier and most well-nourished bellies I know are to be found amongst the religious. The Celibates look particularly pregnant.

ROLAND I know women who look pregnant. Sometimes they are.

P.A. I *know* pregnant silences – I don't have to believe in them. Seventy-five was speaking of all talking at once as a bedlam.

PRIEST Milton spoke of Pandemonium.

DEVIL That was before Reason took the chairmanship.

P.A. And Bedlam – only because Reason was such a bad Chairman. The so-called *laws* of logic were a prescription for Chaos. They left no living space at all for vitality. Even today it would be still-born if it had not found refuge in what Alice would call craziness or –

DOCTOR Manic-depressive psychosis, or hysteria, or schizophrenia, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera – and quite right too.

P.A. Or the Royal College of Physicians, or the Royal College of Surgeons.

DOCTOR Or the International Psycho-Analytic Association, or the Church.

DEVIL

'Go it Justice, go it Percy,
Go it Eustace, go it Mercy.'

I love to hear it – it's music to my ears! All dead – and all so lively.

P.A. All Institutes are dead and therefore conform, like all inanimate objects, to laws and bye-laws which are comprehensible within the limits of human understanding. However, as they are composed of people and individuals who are liable to develop, the Institution begins to yield to pressure.

TERM So did my uterus; I had had enough of it – the fear of having my life squeezed out of me compelled me to compel it to yield to my counter-pressure.

ALICE And nearly lost me my life. When you did squeeze out – or I squeezed you out – I remained alive, but I often asked myself whether the life with which I was left was worth living.

ROSEMARY Poor old thing – get me my shawl. You make quite a good skivvy even if I feel the draught sometimes. Better a shawl – which I can discard – than a mistress that I can't.

P.A. Better a science you can discard than a religion you cannot. I have no more difficulty with a scientific theory than an insect has with the form it bursts out of. Some of us, I admit, have ideas like exo-skeletons.

DOCTOR Or brains like alimentary canals emitting facts where ideas might be hoped for. Or even 'flights of ideas' when thoughts, articulate thoughts, were necessary.

P.A. I think the problem is pressing when the 'articulations' are so rigid that the individual does not think, but has a psychical osteo-arthritis – to borrow some of my medical friend's terminology.

DEVIL Or, to borrow a perspicuous phrase from my priestly friend, a spiritual bigotry where tolerance should be.

ALICE Or licence where laws should rule.

ROSEMARY Alice, you have ideas beyond your station in life. I shall have to get rid of you if you interrupt with Socratic ideas.

ALICE I thought that this was a practical world – like Aristotle said.

ROSEMARY For goodness sake speak English – not like a skivvy. Socrates! Aristotle! We shall be having Kant or Descartes next.

PRIEST Pascal was very intelligent even though he had not the sense to avoid mathematical indecencies.

DEVIL Mathematics! As bad as music. Pythagoras might have caused great trouble by making a ritual to serve to marry the two. Luckily nobody had the wit to understand him.

P.A. The carapace was too rigid to allow for the development of that marriage. Desargues helped and drew a pretty little picture which many a mind ogled in an inviting way.

DEVIL Pascal – though not one of my favourites – did well till the Church had him under control.

P.A. If the psychiatrists had got hold of him they would have had him in a strait jacket of the pattern that they themselves wear. Nowadays we would confine him in one of our theoretical constructs.

DEVIL Really! I admire your perspicacity. So many of you seem to find it impossible to know a constricting construct when you are faced by one.

SOMA Not even when it's all round them. I have known oscillations, transmitted in a liquid medium, become unrecognizable when transmitted in air – a mere change of fluid!

SOMITE THIRTY I have known post-natals unable to learn because they are unable to be curious, having lost their sense of smell – the only really effective mode of exercising curiosity as any animal knows, except these domesticated, educated, cultivated creatures that have 'forgotten'.

ROLAND You sound like Gilbert and Sullivan.

SOMITE THIRTY Never heard of them.

ALICE Can't bear the stuff. Bach and Mozart for me.

DEVIL I am sure P.A. will recognize the warring musical sects as psychoanalytic theories in a new costume. How Dryden would have laughed!

P.A. He did, does and will do in future, I am sure. It is not quite so amusing to people like me, who are still conscious, awake and aware of the medium which surrounds us, as it is to God and the

Devil. By the way, how should I address you? Your Satanic Majesty? Your Id-iocy?

DEVIL (*bowing politely*) Take your choice. I am not fussy as they are in The Other Place. Bigotry and Intolerance are simply the medium in which I flourish. We weave it into a thin veil on to which our demonstrations are projected for identification.

P.A. My God! You are not a Kleinian, are you?

DEVIL You are not by any chance addressing me, are you? Are you one of the people whose God is the Devil? I do not cultivate theories; theories are a symptom of gregarious animals when they function as members of a group. I am special, individual, a victim of disapproval.

MAN Poor devil; it must be very trying, but rather agreeable. At least you appear to thrive.

DEVIL I had to fight for my right to be curious. I had to overcome my morals.

SOMITE THIRTY *You* had to? My sense of smell, my only guide and provider, was of short range in the water on which I relied and had my being. I passed it on to Soma.

SOMA I turned it to good account when I found myself in a gaseous fluid; it was a shock at first. Some never learned how to smell their way through all that gas to food.

THIRTY YEARS I admit that even when my nose led me to discover a durian I was scared to eat it.

SOMA Still, I got through that intellectual – or was it moral? – barrier to what P.A. would no doubt call your mind. Let me acknowledge my debt to gastro-intestinal greed –

DEVIL And, I hope, to my powers of seduction.

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS Don't you think Somite, Soma and you youngsters owe something to what I have been doing all my life – besides growing older. To me it seems as if I owed and still keep on owing something to all of you.

SOMITE THREE That's the first time I have heard you admit that you still owe me something.

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS I think it is probably the first time I have got through to you. Even now I can't imagine how anything I say is sufficiently perspicuous to make the journey from here to my fish-like origin, although I have often had 'echoes' of messages from my gills to my conscious mind.

FOURTEEN YEARS Your *what*? Never heard of it.

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS That is more than I can say for you. I have lost my capacity for shame, thanks largely to being perpetually bombarded with memories of my past association with you.

FIFTY YEARS Oh, I wouldn't say that. After all, you and P.A. between you kept Fourteen awake with your probings. Why can't you let the past sleep in peace?

PRIEST I don't think a little guilt and remorse does anyone any harm.

P.A. A little perhaps, but not the quantities with which you and your friends pollute old age.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS Pollute old age! *I* had plenty to regret, plenty to mourn. I thought I would never survive the shame of having lived beyond my friends who were dead by the end of August 8th.

ROBIN I remember – that was the famous victory, the breakthrough – Ludendorff's 'black day for the German Army'.

ROLAND I remember that. A marvellous sight as you and I looked back along the Amiens–Roye road in the bright sunlight and saw it crowded with the reserves.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS Too late, blast them, too late! Years too late! They should have been there on November 20th – Cambrai – in 1917.

FIFTY YEARS The staff had to learn their job. That victory would have been the biggest disaster ever, had the reserves been there to get through – and be captured.

P.A. Now we know what we did not know then, that our Governors had not learned their job. At least the army learned; the civilians never did.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS Nor have you since.

FIFTY YEARS Well, why didn't *you*?

TWENTY-ONE YEARS I tried. But Oxford, good food, marvellous colleges, the incredible excitement of Iffly Road crowded with us all going to see the Varsity play Newport, seduced us. 'How will it seem to you forty years on?'

SIXTY-ONE YEARS I think you were seduced into forgetting. Perhaps it was better than those poor chaps of whose death we spoke in whispers – unable to stand Parson's Pleasure, the Parks bathed in sunlight, Magdalen Tower and Great Tom rolling out the curfew. The war they survived; it was the peace that finished them off. Even now I remember a little rat of a man – Mons Star and a few more

meaningless baubles – 'Oo yer shuvvin'? 'urryin' to a war?' The heavy, uneducated sarcasm of the under-privileged still smarting at his lack of appreciation, his inglorious, undistinguished nothingness. It should have been me, but I had been so pampered, so praised that I almost – not quite – believed the luxury deserved.

P.A. It may have saved your life more than once. Ultimately your unbelief rescued you from *that* quagmire – sunk without a trace in your own exudate of complacency.

TWENTY-THREE YEARS I reached a very low ebb. I was so nasty that not even my parents could preserve the illusion intact. I suppose you think it was psychoanalysis?

P.A. I think it helped. Luckily it was not the only source of Truth.

TWENTY-THREE YEARS What else?

P.A. The world you live in – that is, if you read it and not only books.

NINETEEN YEARS I was not reading books. I had forgotten most of those I had read.

TWENTY YEARS I had almost forgotten to read – certainly forgotten how to understand what I read. I wonder if I knew that printed words had a meaning.

FOURTEEN YEARS I thought *Paradise Lost* had a meaning.

FIFTY YEARS You must have been pretty bright in those days.

FOURTEEN YEARS I can't be rude enough to say I think you stupid; or untruthful enough to say I think you clever or wise.

SIXTY YEARS I do not remember Fourteen as clever or polite.

FOURTEEN YEARS I do not remember anyone thinking anything about me except perhaps that I was unprepossessing and gauche. Possibly not my mother, but I didn't count her.

FIFTY YEARS Why didn't you count your mother?

FOURTEEN YEARS Mothers always think that sort of thing.

SIXTY YEARS Do they? I have seen some that do not. Perhaps they disguise their true feelings, but I don't think so.

EIGHTEEN YEARS Weren't you pleased when you were decorated for war service?

TWENTY-THREE YEARS Too late! Besides, I knew too much. I remember Lord Helpus, as we called him, saying to Twenty, I always tell my son John that if you see a man with more than two rows of ribbons he is tolerably certain to be a waster'.

TWENTY YEARS I remember. I only had one solitary ribbon which

I was afraid I would have to prove – I knew I could not. 'Coward! Coward!' my thumping heart would tell me. At Anvin when I felt the air trembling and throbbing against my ears . . . a bombardment? Twenty and more miles away? I felt no better when that old hand Trapper said, 'It's only a trench raid'. I thought it must be all Hell let loose.

TWENTY-THREE YEARS You were both right – it was only a raid and it *was* all Hell let loose.

TWENTY YEARS My pounding heart – surely, I thought, Lord Helpus and the others can hear it?

HEART You heard it – why did you not pay attention to what I was trying to knock into your thick phrenes?

TWENTY YEARS My mind was making such a row – screaming 'Patriotism! Apache! Brigand!' I couldn't hear myself – I suppose it was me? – thinking.

THIRTY YEARS Too much anatomy and physiology to listen to your guts.

SOMITE THIRTY-TWO I could have told you that more than two rows of teeth meant you could be certain that you were a shark, greedy and in love with your food.

FIFTEEN YEARS Couvre-toi de flannelle!

TWENTY-THREE YEARS Couvre-toi de plumes blanches.

EIGHTEEN YEARS Those bloody girls in Kingsway!

TWENTY YEARS They gave me one in March 1918 when I was on leave.

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS I remember – wasn't it after you had been to the investiture?

TWENTY YEARS Yes; but that time I knew they were quite right. I was going back to the Front in an hour or so when I had changed back into uniform. 'But', said the almoner, 'Isn't your boy wearing the cap of a famous regiment?'

HEART If the cap fits – wear it. Let you and your damn silly mind go back to the Front, but why drag me in? I didn't enlist 'for the duration.' I was furious when you told me to stop thumping.

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS You were always thumping – if not with fury, then with fear. Later it was love. Rabbits always 'thump'; it's like trying to interpret a motor car horn – it tells you nothing and leaves you to imagine something is going to happen to someone, somewhere, sometime.

HEART If only you listened to me and learnt my language – why, even your cardiologist told you that!

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS Too late! Too late!

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS You are as bad as the Brain-fever bird – remember?

SIX YEARS Very well – funny your knowing. 'Brain-fever, brain-fever, brain-fever' it used to sing.

SEVENTY-SEVEN YEARS Ah yes, cuculus varius, you mean.

TWENTY YEARS Do I? You're as bad as our Army Intelligence Officer. When I came out of the Third Battle of Ypres and hardly knew whether I was alive or dreaming, he asked me if I had noticed when the alluvial changed to the cretaceous. I couldn't even laugh. Like all staff officers he thought how stupid we combatant officers were.

HEART So you were.

'So
We go
To face a foreign foe.'

Quite appropriate to a musical like *White Horse Inn*. You would have done better in a musical – in the audience. Leave fighting to the soldiers – not schoolboys.

EIGHTEEN YEARS You should have seen Kitchener's piercing eyes following you around.

TWENTY YEARS You should have heard what Curzon said about Kitchener. My parents did.

TWENTY-THREE YEARS You should have heard what the soldiers heard Curzon say about the common Tommies in the bath house. 'Why, their skins are quite white!'

TWENTY YEARS I saw them before they had washed the 'alluvial' off. They weren't pretty even when their faces were as white as the cretaceous. And the cold . . . !

TWENTY-THREE YEARS And the warmth! Those nits! Do you remember an inn, Miranda? Do you remember an inn?

TWENTY YEARS No; she was doing war work – handing out white feathers!

THIRTY YEARS Oh, for heaven's sake! Can't you give it a rest?

EIGHTEEN YEARS It didn't –

TWENTY YEARS And doesn't –

TWENTY-THREE YEARS Give me a rest.

THIRTY YEARS Well, put a sock in it.

TWENTY YEARS Luckily we couldn't have fires and couldn't be warm enough for the little devils to feed. But the cold, the blue cold and the dangerous cretaceous view! When I opened my tin of bully beef I found a huge chunk of gristle that filled half the tin. Aghast that my day's rations had gone, 'Fray Bentos never did that to us', I said. 'You can't expect a vast wealthy American firm to bother about us', said Shorty. I admired the icy cretaceous in front. If that sniper fires I hope it will be a good shot through the forehead and out at the back with the brains which are such a useless chunk. Poor Edwards – I hope he didn't know anything about it. I hope it was only I who saw the mess bulge out and interrupt our conversation. He didn't even finish the sentence. 'Can I retire now sir?' 'Where's your tank? You're no bloody use to me without it.' But that was at the 'grand canyon' – no release from Villers Pluich. There was no one to ask anyway. That damned decoration! Why couldn't they give me something useful – like guts?

THIRTY YEARS Are you talking in your sleep? What's the matter with you – shell shock?

TWENTY YEARS No, sir; yessir, I mean ter say, y'know. Not really. I'm all right. Tell me, Eighteen, have I any soft bloody brain stuff behind my right ear?

EIGHTEEN YEARS No. Shut up. How do you expect me to fight if you talk like that? I want a V.C. – not a V. Pluich.

TWENTY YEARS It's cold; I wish it wasn't so cold. What about a nice cosy group session?

THIRTY YEARS It's a pity that Twenty can't make up his mind that he will survive the war, or has survived being born.

FORTY YEARS How could he possibly know unless you leaked it back to Twenty-two and told him to pass it on to Twenty-one to pass it on to Eighteen?

TWENTY YEARS I couldn't pass it on to Eighteen – he was so busy thinking he was going to win the V.C. or some such damned nonsense. Besides, I knew I would be far more likely to get a hole drilled in my head – if not then, in the next few months. Had I known I would soon be at that ruddy Salient again I think I would have arranged for one of those nice Boches to drill a hole through my skull and let me out like the Lossiemouth captain's brains. I had neither brains nor guts from then till August 8th 1918.

EIGHTEEN YEARS Nonsense. I was so terrified that I would run away I could hardly think of anything else. If Twenty had told me I could not run away – even if I tried – I would have felt much better.

TWENTY YEARS If I had known what I know now I would not have dared to tell you. I wished I could feel as enthusiastic as you seemed to be.

EIGHTEEN YEARS You were afraid that you would want to seem as brave as I hoped to appear to be.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS Twenty did, and was so busy 'seeming' to be brave that it nearly killed me. If you had had more sense you would have got a soft job at the War Office, but *now* look what you have done – I have to go into action at that terrible place Sequehart.

TWENTY-TWO YEARS What was wrong with Sequehart? I remember your telling me how beautiful it looked with the sun rising behind the slender spire and how you took those two crew members back because they were too gassed to walk. You remember? You described it so vividly it brought tears to me eyes. Such bravery! Such self-sacrificing compassion for those two poor chaps!

TWENTY-ONE YEARS Shut up! I was scared out of my wits and you know it. I do not see that that is any reason for being so very un-funny about me. If I had known you would be sitting knocking back brandies in an Oxford club, being facetious, I would have . . . I would. . . .

TWENTY-TWO YEARS No you wouldn't; and you would not have had the gall to be claiming 'compassion for your men' – you make me sick.

TWENTY YEARS So you do me. I think you're a nasty bastard.

TWENTY-TWO YEARS I can hardly disagree. Still, I didn't do so badly in view of recent fighting.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS You did. You just cribbed that idea out of your testimonial from that Oxford don who thought he had better be kind to an ex-gallant officer.

FORTY YEARS Ex-officer and ex-gallant. The ex-es have it. I declare the ex-es elected unanimously.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS Oh my God – not really? Is there no future?

ALICE 'And from that warfare there is no release.'

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FORTY YEARS What's that? What did you say?

ALICE Oh nothing, nothing. It was Rosemary.

ROSEMARY I agree – nothing! Nothing at all. I was just interested in your debate. Do go on.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS I have forgotten what I was saying. These women butted – I mean – 'said' something.

ROSEMARY Ah – these women! Always our fault!

ALICE I see your 'gallantry' remains unimpaired.

TWENTY YEARS Where would you have been if we had not fought?

MAN And won. Don't forget you won too!

ROLAND We did our best, you sneering lout.

MAN A girlfriend of mine taught me how to sneer. She said she had learned it from an English soldier who threw his cigarette butts on the ground to see smoke-crazed German women fight for them in the dust.

ALICE Gallant as always.

ROSEMARY Alice and I keep our butts for –

ROBIN Please, please! Don't be vulgar.

EIGHTEEN YEARS I used to think my old school was marvellous.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS I had almost forgotten how quaint you were. 'The distant tape and the runner beside.' How it brings it back to me! But 'Où sont les neiges d'antan?' They don't come back – only slush.

EIGHTEEN YEARS 'His own name over all!' It is too sad to think about.

P.A. That is a common fallacy, though it is a habit to which a psychoanalytic intercourse seems prone. But that is not the aim which the analyst pursues.

FORTY YEARS What is his aim?

P.A. That depends on a great many factors, notably on whether he has a disposition compatible with the work he does, his age and experience –

FORTY YEARS Are you referring to his training?

P.A. In part. I do not mean to restrict it to his analytic training, or even to his university, school or home training. All those are important; but I have in mind the need to distinguish between experience of knowledge imparted by others and knowledge derived from the analyst's ability to turn what his senses tell him into nourishment.

FORTY YEARS I don't think I understand.

P.A. As an example of what I mean, I take your last statement. In so far as you *do* understand, I suspect the 'thing' you understand will contribute to your growth. In so far as you *don't* understand, I suspect that it cannot and does not lead to growth.

FORTY YEARS You are very cautious; why do you say you 'suspect' that it does or does not? Or am I being pedantic?

P.A. Not at all. I *try* to be precise and therefore 'suspect'. I cannot *know* because even if I do not understand I may be able to turn that fact to good account by learning that there are some things which I do not understand; whereas if I were an intolerant man I would dismiss the experience before I had time to learn from it.

ROLAND Then I can't have learned much from war, because if I had gone through all this palaver before I pressed the button of my machine gun – well, I wouldn't have 'gone through all this palaver'; I would have been shot like your Lossiemouth captain before I had thought a single word.

P.A. That is why you went through a machine gun course at Grantham so that you could automatically press the button in a crisis *without* going through all this palaver. But you must sometimes have waited, when your patrols were out, to see if it was friend or foe. That would be knowledge acquired, and for it to be 'automatically' available you must have made it your own.

ROBIN I vouch for it – Roland did a lot of 'swotting' on that course.

P.A. Well then – you must have gone through the palaver beforehand. You must be capable of going through it at *some* time. If you had got drunk instead, you would have been unable to press the button when you were 'sober' and under fire.

ROSEMARY How extremely interesting. What is the button?

P.A. I am sorry – we are boring you.

ROSEMARY You are not sorry; nor am I bored. But –

ROBIN But what? Or is that a secret between you and Alice?

P.A. If it is, I might suggest a psychoanalytic interpretation. But this is not a psychoanalytic occasion and therefore the minimum conditions for a verbal, audible interpretation don't exist.

ROBIN Something sexual, I bet.

P.A. A sexual situation affords the conditions for a sexual interpretation, an analytic situation affords an opportunity for a psychoanalytic interpretation.

ALICE What *is* a psychoanalytic interpretation?

P.A. It must be perspicacious and perspicuous. That is –

ROLAND These long words!

P.A. – an expression of a scientifically accurate insight which is phrased in a language comprehensible to the listener. It must be believed to be true by the analyst, and his formulation should be in terms that would penetrate the barriers of the listener's incomprehension.

ALICE Oh, I know – that would get through my thick feminine skull.

ROSEMARY Well, I *don't* know!

P.A. You both give an example of the difficulty I am talking about. Alice, hostile, 'thinks' I am an obtuse male; Rosemary 'remembers' my learnedness. Both – feelings, and ideas remembered – produce an obscurity.

SOMITE TWENTY-FOUR I've got a stomach ache.

ALICE At lasts – something I *do* understand; I have the advantage of knowing pregnancy.

FOURTEEN YEARS Neither of you knows how painful it is to have an idea.

TWENTY-TWO YEARS You? I didn't know you ever had an idea.

FOURTEEN YEARS I and my friend Thirteen have had ideas – even religious ones.

PRIEST I remember; Thirteen's god was the school swimming captain, and Fourteen used to believe in the school rugger captain.

FIFTEEN YEARS I was – still am – most impressed by Ruskin. Poor Ruskin – I didn't know then what a hell he lived in.

DEVIL Nothing to do with me; must have been your god. He kicked people about, but I didn't.

SIXTEEN YEARS I can't imagine your kicking anything about; you always wore morning dress.

DEVIL You cribbed that idea from Beerbohm.

FORTY YEARS Did he? I had forgotten he read about poor Soames.

SIXTEEN YEARS I read a great deal; I also played hard.

PRIEST And prayed hard.

SIXTEEN YEARS I may even have done that, but no answering god replied and I gave it up. The devil wasn't much use either.

SEVENTY YEARS Poor devil! Blamed for everything but perhaps he, like the rest of us, had to learn. There are plausible grounds for believing that he exists. He and his trainees –

DEVIL Always ready to learn from Adam and Eve.

SIXTEEN YEARS Seventy owes something to me; his body is in good order considering that he still totters around.

SEVENTY YEARS Sixteen is not one of my favourite characters.

SOMITE TWENTY-FOUR Nor mine; such an ugly character!

ALICE Oh, poor soul – not as bad as you make out, surely?

SOMITE TWENTY-FOUR You are prejudiced. If I had known I would grow a soul I would have remained a fetus.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS If I had known I had such an ugly somitic ancestor I would not have tried to cultivate a soul.

EIGHTEEN YEARS I don't think I knew your somitic friend, but I had my suspicions and thought a soul would be an asset, not an excrescence.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS We all make mistakes. Knowing what I know now I would certainly not choose to be intelligent. Wise perhaps, but *not* intelligent.

SEVENTY YEARS That's something you can pat yourself on the back about. I cannot honestly say I feel wise.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS Perhaps your honesty is overdeveloped – more pathological than benign.

SEVENTY YEARS No, I don't think so. In real life it gets worn off as fast as it grows.

FORTY YEARS You are too personal, Twenty-five. You've learnt that from P.A. He is always being personal.

FIFTY YEARS Not personal – specific.

P.A. I have great respect for the individual. Do you think that is wrong?

FIFTY YEARS No, but it is not in keeping with the growth of the

Herd. I can see P.A. will be in serious trouble if the Herd develops faster than he does.

P.A. If the development of the Herd is incompatible with that of the individual, either the individual will perish, or the Herd will be destroyed by the individual who is not allowed to fulfil himself.

PRIEST Surely it depends on whether the Herd develops an intolerance to the individual or the individual to the Herd.

P.A. Some of us think that the development of the individual needs careful supervision.

PRIEST Of course; we are all agreed about that. The disagreement arises when the agreement is to be translated into action. The executive has to decide *what is* to be taught, *what* is to be believed, *what* is to be painted, or musically or aesthetically created.

DOCTOR Or whether the mother or the baby is to live. 'Do not strive officiously to keep alive' is what I was taught.

ROLAND Am I being 'officious' if I strive to keep myself alive?

ROBIN Or cowardly? Or suicidal not to?

P.A. Whether it is better to take arms against a sea of troubles . . .

PRIEST Who or what decides?

P.A. It appears to be the individual that decides whether to preserve life.

PHYSICIST Nowadays, thanks to us, *one* individual appears to be able to decide whether he *and* people 'not him' are to live or die.

P.A. It appears – to us – to be the case. But is what appears to 'us' to be regarded as identical with fact? Priest and others seem to think that we psychoanalysts claim to know. I regard any thing I 'know' as transitive theory – a theory 'on the way' to knowledge, but not *knowledge.* It is merely a 'resting place', a 'pause' where I can be temporarily free to be aware of my condition, however precarious that condition is.

PRIEST John Bunyan described that state in a number of pictorially vivid phrases.

SCHREBER So did I.

ROLAND Whoever is that?

P.A. Oh, only a poor devil of a paranoiac.

ROBIN A what? Crazy, you mean?

P.A. I suppose I do, though I think Freud suspected that what Schreber wrote was worthy of attention. I slipped into the prevalent mental slough. One cannot avoid instinctively conforming to the

quagmire – whatever its defects – in which one has survived so far. Bunyan tried to scramble out; so did Schreber. Both thought that Valiant for Truth, though they did not call him that, would help. Schreber, I suppose, thought he would be safe if he was a judge or a psychiatrist.

PRIEST Or psychoanalyst? Heaven? Or the 'Law'?

ROBIN 'To be'? Or 'not to be'? Shakespeare, like Bunyan, said it. Extraordinary how these old buffers wrote it all down. Of course they can't have known what they were talking about.

ROSEMARY 'Of course.' Like women they would not know. I at least had the intelligence not to have children because I had some respect for the pain in my belly. And some respect for my belly. So had you Alice.

ALICE (*deeply distressed*) No, no, no! Would God I had died for thee oh Absalom my son –

ROLAND That was said by a father.

ALICE I thought I was marrying a father. But a father would have known that I might lay down my life for a son and that he might have to lay down his married life for a daughter. Hopeless, hopeless, hopeless.

ROLAND I am sorry – I know it's no good, but I *am* sorry. It was not my fault I survived the war.

MAN You thought you were winning.

ROLAND You thought you had won. But you did not.

DEVIL Allow me to settle it for you. I can't bear to see you quarrelling. I have a nice chain reaction here which one of my scientific friends will gladly teach you to realize. Temporarily, however, I must limit your freedom by using the reaction to chain you. It is only temporary and then – pouff – it will all be over without even a whimper. No one will even hear a bang.

ROBIN I'm afraid.

ROLAND I don't like this theatrical pose.

ROSEMARY It is so seductive, so intelligent.

ROLAND You bloody women.

DEVIL Don't quarrel – tell me when you are ready and I will do what I can do for you.

PRIEST Or just 'do for us'.

DEVIL (*bows himself out*) At your service. . . .

ROBIN For God's sake don't exasperate him.

ROLAND For God's sake don't worship him.

ALICE I thought you did – especially when you professed to 'worship' me.

ROLAND I have not forgotten; I was scared of bloody women. Even the first man I saw spread-eagled in the shell hole we shared was not bloody – only faintly green parchment stretched over bones.

P.A. The sight impressed you, lying with him on the brick-dust-stained earth – that insalubrious place, the ghost of Wieltje village.

MAN Our 9.2 Howitzers dealt with that.

P.A. So I understand. As for Roland, I thought you had shot him several times.

ROSEMARY No one can deal with Roland. I tried to dissuade Man from trying.

ALICE He did for me.

ROLAND I died for you; but you thought I was being sentimental.

ROBIN I liked you, but you always thought I was too much of a coward to be allowed to share your body. All the same, if I hadn't made you duck – more than once I may say – you would not be alive today.

ROLAND Thank you – for nothing.

ALICE You only saved his corpse and sent it back for me.

ROLAND Not so much honouring thee but giving it a hope that there it might not withered be. Alas, I was no rosy wreath.

P.A. I remember a woman whose man came back to her after long years of war when she had prayed to God to bring him back safe. But his leg had been amputated so she quit. He thought she would love him as a wounded hero.

ALICE How like a man! If she had had a baby by him *he* would have quit her; if he blushed, which I doubt, he blushed unseen.

P.A. I know a man who was always a deathly white. He was so ashamed that people would see his blushes that he killed himself.

ROLAND Another of your bloody silly stories.

P.A. No, only a fact. I haven't the imagination to invent a story like that. Alice reminds me of a man who didn't blush, but was seen to blush by himself. I did not find out why because, as I say, he killed himself – more efficiently than Man's efforts with Roland.

ROLAND Sometimes I think these debates amongst ourselves are most menacing because they are so private – the same family. Why can't we get together? Not only are we all the same human family,

though artificially split by man's art into individuals, groups, nations, but –

ROBIN According to Priest not 'artificially', but by God's command linguistically, religiously, aesthetically and in every this – that way for building a ramp which would –

ROLAND Enable them to storm Heaven and the throne of Heaven's King.

ROSEMARY How bizarre!

ALICE Even Man thinks that by murder, contrived by the instrument of masses of disciplined murderers, men would reach the throne of Heaven. Victory! with a capital V.

P.A. Wee, capital wee-wee.

ROLAND Ghastly pun – even for you.

P.A. What is a ghastly pun for me may be the first step in a new language.

ROBIN What's fun for you is death to me, as Toad is said to have remarked. What is your new language? It reminds me of puns, as the ideograms of Chinese were 'articulated', though articulating was not the correct method of cohering those elements.

P.A. You mean not correct in accordance with the scheme of the inventors of the 'ideogrammatic signs'. But the articulations, though 'false', enabled Fenollosa to enable Ezra Pound to enable future generations to further the knowledge achieved. Artificial or God-made, these divisions into individuals, into seconds, years, millennia, make it extremely difficult to form a meaningful junction between one ideogram, individual (person, race, nation) and the next. There is a screen, a caesura, a resistant material between one particle and the next.

ALICE Unless some person paints on a piece of glass, like Picasso, so that it can be seen from both sides of the screen both sides of the resistance.

ROBIN Which 'like a dome of many-coloured glass stains the white radiance of eternity' so that we – minute individual particles that we are – may discern what we think is a meaningful pattern projected against the glass. I agree with Roland – 'Why can't we get together?'

P.A. No reason – in so far as we know that the same person created all of our characters and we should therefore be free to get together and write a single book sired by 'us'.

ROBIN If it's a book, it has to be split into pages, chapters and so forth. I don't want to lose my identity, swallowed by all you crowd.

ROLAND You wouldn't. How do you know that our being swallowed up in a group – which would mean all of us – would not be indistinguishable from perfect freedom? It would be our fulfilment.

ROBIN How do you know it would end in a Pauline freedom? If I had a Shakespearean vocabulary it would be very helpful. Victor Hugo had an enormous vocabulary and was able verbally to paint a visual image of rose petals scattered by the wind over the surface of a pool of water, like an Armada dispersed by the storm. According to Heredia, Anthony saw, in the pools of Cleopatra's eyes, a fleet in flight. All that has been dealt with – not so overtly as in the undergraduate dining club known as *The Shakespeare,* but just as effectively – by the glorious memorial tomb of Shakespearean Scholarship. Now no one dreams of Shakespeare and I could not mobilize even four thousand words with which to express what I want to communicate. If Shakespeare could not survive –

ROLAND Or Pythagoras, buried under his triangle –

P.A. Or Freud buried under his oedipal triangle, or Melanie Klein under a mass of evacuated identifications –

ALICE Or a mass of Kleinian Theories treated to 'introjective projections', or even what *I* say interpreted, diagnosed, relegated to the lavatory bowl as psychotic distortions by virtue of the neologisms of psychiatry. Time that antiquates antiquity; the neo-news allowed to calcify in the realms of oblivion until the mental archaeologists scrape the arteries free of their horny integuments and display the dead jargons of the past to be admired, re-diagnosed, re-interpreted and re-interred.

P.A. James Joyce tried to break out of the mental ossifications in which his tender shoots of animation were enclosed by the Clongowesian wrappings of Roman Catholicized semitic Zeus.

PRIEST Zeus was a juvenile vulgarian anyway. Truth always has to break out of the wrappings of the latest Enthusiast who wants to bring his pet mummy to life.

P.A. And in doing so dresses it up in the latest fashions of embalming technique. 'Mother' becomes 'Mummy', God borrows the costume of Old Nick, and his son is tricked out, swaddled in his grave clothes. But man only destroys man because he has not yet discovered that minute, ineffable particle which transforms the inanimate and

makes it perceptible, distinguishable, noteworthy, because it is alive. 'Though the body dies' the virus shall live for ever. The present is already concealed in Oblivion. Whose finger is on the button?

ALICE My clitoris is passed by unnoticed by your mouth, 'blinded', 'glutted' by your penitential penis. What you don't know is knowledge; once you know it, and once it is known by you, you are too full of knowledge to be able to be curious.

ROSEMARY Even if his alimentary canal can learn no more he opens his eyes wide to take in what his belly can't. Then his eyes are so stuffed with Beauty that he cannot see me. Not even Homer had the wit to see that Helen of Troy was not just an ecto-dermal proliferation.

ALICE They are all the same. I have known no person, clothed in the trappings of the woman's body, that was not imprisoned by those same trappings and unable to break through them to meet her . . . her . . . why, I used to think I could talk, but this same capacity for articulate speech is more an opaque screen than a link which enables me to communicate with something not me.

P.A. Perhaps you could project your ideas on to your resistance; then someone not – you could read the trace left on the resistance.

ROBIN You mean she might use the delay to think some sense before she opens her mouth again?

P.A. No, I don't. I think it might help you if you could use the hindering obstacle to think; but from what I know of you it is far more likely that you would fill the silence with just such a damn silly remark as you just made.

MAN Shall I shoot him?

ROSEMARY No. (*to Alice*) Man is a dear, but he has such a one-track mind. Useful enough for bullets, penes and other guided missiles, but no good without either a single track or a guide.

ALICE The boy scouts and the girl guides – as we used to say at school.

ROSEMARY I didn't know you were such a dirty-minded lot at your school.

ALICE Oh yes, we knew quite a lot. Of course we had to hide it from the staff.

VOICE Of course.

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ALICE What was that? Did you hear it?

ROSEMARY No – I hope you aren't hallucinating, or I shall have to get rid of you.

P.A. I should be careful what you do with your voice. Here – suck one of these psychoanalytic pills – slowly. Just let it dissolve in your mind. You've swallowed it! You shouldn't have done that. It won't do you any harm just a bit of heart ache. But it will spread through your system and be excreted harmlessly by your mind – like cinnamon, or whisky. It was probably the Future casting its shadow before; sometimes it is disguised as the Past casting its memory forward.

ROSEMARY Thank you; I am most grateful. Do you know what gratitude is?

ROBIN 'A lively expectation of benefits to come.'

ALICE You are cynical. What is guilt then?

P.A. Ah yes! – the Cynics.

ROBIN No, she asked about guilt. Guilt is 'a lively apprehension of rewards to be inflicted'.

P.A. For being able to laugh at dirty jokes in school-like, 'It is I. Come forth! And 'e came fifth – and 'e did 'it 'is eye.'

ALICE Oh my God!

ROSEMARY Isn't it awful? Now it has become respectable and is called Psychoanalysis. It hardly makes one anxious to follow Roland's suggestion and become unified.

ROBIN If we could come together we could still preserve our identity – like the hills on a map in which all the same levels could be joined by a contour –

P.A. All right if we could link Somite Three here with all the other

Somite Threes. Of course, the auditory and optic pits would have to put up with being linked.

DOCTOR The post-natals may want to keep their distance from the pre-natals – and vice versa. We must assume that the pre-natal crowd can adjust to a change from a liquid environment to a gaseous one, the olfactory elements easing the change by bringing mucus with them so they go on functioning even after birth.

P.A. Some of these post-natal people complain of too much fluid. They call it 'catarrh' or 'influenza' and rush off to someone to 'cure' them. You must be familiar with that demand.

DOCTOR Yes indeed, but I would hesitate to tell them they were complaining of too much cure – being drowned in cure.

P.A. Your somitic friends would complain of being immersed in your intellectual, cerebral evacuations – a rarefied, abstract ocean of theory in which they could not taste or smell. If somites could write, the book would be 'On the Interpretation of Reality' and the theories would all be what we call dreams. We complain both of the unpleasant warmth of psychoanalysis *and* its arid abstractions.

DOCTOR Poor old body; poor old mind. It is hardly surprising that they do not get on well together and look down on each other, especially if we remember that one is derived from the other. In fact they may derive from a biological atomic plutonium breeder.

P.A. If it is true that living matter derives from the heat engendered by the reaction of oxygen with protoplasm, then I can see that brain substance might derive from the 'decay' of involuntary muscle, and the mind likewise from the energy released by the degeneration of athletic ability.

DOCTOR I knew some intelligent, 'brainy' people who played games for Oxford; they seemed to remain brainy *and* athletic.

P.A. Fortunate people! If only one could see how they did it one might solve the problem of how to produce more energy than beef. I would think I was in reality becoming a psychoanalyst if I could *become* more energetic by *being* more energetic. It might enable others to start that reaction. Melanie Klein seemed to do that for psychoanalysis.

BION What! You don't mean to say you are a Kleinian?

P.A. You remind me of Sir Andrew Aguecheek – 'And if I thought he were a puritan I would . . . !' Your excellent reason, sir?

BION I thought you would appreciate an experience which we could share together.

P.A. That reminds me – we were talking about linking the different 'levels' of mind as contours portray a mountain on a flat surface. How would you contrive to link your third somite with me? Rosemary was saying that when she was Helen of Troy –

DOCTOR Yes, I heard her – poor paranoiac! She must be as mad as a coot.

P.A. – nobody wanted progenitors whose ancestors were less than ectoderm. But she would be insulted if I said she *looked* like an embryo of thirty somites, or that she had a character like that.

SEVEN-WEEKS EMBRYO If I had thought I would turn out like Helen of Troy I would have drowned myself in amniotic fluid. Luckily Six Weeks appreciated the difference and passed it on to his mesonephros. No wonder Rosemary was tired of people who could only see the progeny of her ectoderm. I'm not sure I want to be jammed up with Six Weeks though.

P.A. Beauty is in the eye of the ectoderm – as soon as the shell has developed it wants to become permanent. No wonder we are all insects at heart – just as well some of us developed an endoskeleton.

ROLAND What is wonderful about that? I have always had a spine and even my penis was often erect, but I can't see that I am better for it.

DOCTOR You would if your lack of spine got you into a prisoner of war camp or a flabby penis had kept you out of marriage.

ALICE I never discouraged an erection of nipple, clitoris or penis.

P.A. Hmmmm . . . nor do I, though I see plenty who do. Sexual maturity is often thought to be the end of the journey when in fact it is another beginning.

DOCTOR What more is there besides sexual maturity?

P.A. Terms like 'sexual maturity' ought to be used precisely for physical maturity as in adolescence. By being allowed to spread, it disguises the absence of passionate love that is not only physical or mental, but a development of the fusion of both.

ROSEMARY Sounds interesting.

P.A. It is intended to. If you are right about it, the sound may travel through the liquid medium and reach the auditory apparatus within you.

ALICE What about the pits?

P.A. Whether it is the pressure of sound waves which are subsonic or infra-visual they could reach the auditory and optic pits. Unfortunately, Doctor may be so blinded by his psychiatric training that he would not interpret them correctly when they bounce back to his mind. So many won't see or listen because they say they are visual or auditory hallucinations, or chemically generated feelings of pugnacity, or fear born of the adrenals – as if that made them unworthy of attention. Freud listened to and quoted his great teacher Charcot. If others did likewise they would repeat their observations, however compulsively repetitive they seemed to be, until a pattern became discernible in the chaos of chance. Look at your facts. Respect them even if you do not like them. The mists may clear and reveal a pattern which is so disagreeable –

PRIEST Or so blindingly brilliant, as Arjuna and others found –

P.A. Or so deep a void, so black, so astronomical a hole that you regret the price you have to pay.

VOICE What price is that?

ALICE What echo was that?

ROSEMARY It makes me shudder.

DOCTOR It bounces back from the hole and its sides.

P.A. We probably learn the price too late.

ALICE Too late for what?

P.A. For us to mend our course. Too 'late' or 'early' as measured against a scale of time which is relevant only to our ephemeral existence, not the millennia of millennia needed to plumb the nearest confines of reality.

ALICE Shall we get together?

SOMITE THREE Delighted – but let me remind you that the rest of you have spent all your energies trying to get rid of me. Were it not for my persistence –

GERM PLASM *Your* persistence! *Mine*, you mean.

SOMITE THREE I nourished you and provided the conditions for your survival.

ALL ANTE-NATAL SOULS Had it not been for our parental care and your capacity to make the best of it, which we learnt from you, none of the post-natal crowd would exist.

ALL POST-NATAL SOULS Let us agree that there are certain basic fundamentals of character and environment – Choice and Chance, as

Yeats put it – which cannot be extinguished without our own extinction.

SOMITE THREE All I say is –

SEVEN WEEKS All we say is –

P.A. All I say is, do not forget what we owe to all of us – though I do not find a belly-ache or strabismus helpful.

ALL ANTE-NATAL SOULS We do not find it helpful to have to choose 'pains' as our only method of drawing attention to our existence. We do not find Depression or Paranoia helpful to our struggles.

P.A. If I may speak for All Post-Natal Souls, we don't find it helpful to have to be depressed or mad before we get attention.

ROLAND I suppose germ cells had to go on proliferating though I can't see why they should carry it so far as to give birth to a mind. Still, now it has happened I'm all in favour of making the best of a bad job.

ROSEMARY It sounds sensible – though I'm not sure what the *best* is.

ALICE Is anyone? Or is it just *more* cells till there is no room for even the cells to generate.

MAN With co-operation from the rest of us I think I could arrange to have the button pressed.

ROSEMARY I am afraid. I think Post-Natal Souls may get together and a mind will be generated.

ROBIN Like maggots in the warmth of a rotting dung heap. What does –

P.A. I think it is too late to stop a mind developing. The only question is, how to make the best of it. I gather it would be as well for it not to obtrude into notice too much. What does Priest think?

PRIEST Shall we form a small committee – P.A., Robin, Rosemary, Alice and one other.

ALICE Good idea. I suggest we include Priest as he has a truly extensive experience. The others would contribute on occasions when their special gifts would be illuminating.

ROBIN We can speak for others who are not committee members; I know Twenty has a good deal to say.

P.A. Ought we to co-opt him?

ROBIN No, I think I could put it in more uninhibited – if P.A. will excuse me – terms; perhaps more mellow language.

P.A. Right – let's start. I remember how I felt when I was Twenty-

one. We had just been ordered up the Line; I was terrified. I did not like the prospect at all. The orders were that we must not allow the enemy any rest, but carry on the pursuit now he had been beaten and a great gap torn in his lines by our victory on August 8th. Unfortunately I had been decorated for gallantry. Twenty-one knew I was terrified and hadn't the courage to get the doc to invalid me out. I knew I had not the courage for 'heroic' deeds. Besides, I had 'flu; my runner was given a bottle of phyz to dose me with. No one knew what I was suffering from so it was called p.u.o. – pyrexia of unknown origin. I hoped my death would be painless and sudden. The infantryman by my side had a hole in his belly. We looked at him coldly. 'He's a gonner – why waste time looking at him? Come on – zero hour.' I scrambled out of the trench and started walking forward. I inhibited – as I learned to call it later – any whisper of fact to burst through my p.u.o. A grey-haired man with his legs worn round his neck like a scarf wanted me to 'help' him. It was annoying to be expected to disentangle his neckwear. Besides, I was busy. '*No* – stretcher bearers coming!' I knew they weren't; only regimental stretcher bearers help. Why did I tell him that? I had been taught – disciplined – so that in just such a crisis I would not have an unfamiliar, unthought-out problem to solve in inadequate conditions for its solution. As a doctor I now understand; as an influenza-sodden tank officer, 'S.B.'s coming!' I lied. 'Kamerad kaput!', yelled the little Boche as he ran towards me, his bottom wiggling furiously as he tried not to fall. I could tell the hideously disarticulated old Tommy to go to Hell – 'S.B.'s coming' – but I allowed the horrible little Boche to drag me to his cubby hole. No discipline – I knew he would murder me. I entered; in the dark another Boche with his legs wrapped round his neck for scarfwear. 'Kaput?' He dragged me to touch – Kaput?' I did. 'Yes, kaput.' He burst into tears. I told myself, 'Now – damn fool – get *out*.' Only then I snapped out – out of the hole, out into the air, out into the sense to carry my Smith and Wesson where I had been taught to carry it.

PRIEST You would not have felt any better if you had been a parson. I remember our pink-faced, jolly, card-playing padre and how scornful you were – you and that red-faced, non-conformist private – because he would not come up and bury the dead. Poor Smith! He was so rigorous mortis that we could not force his arms into our grave; we were in a hurry too.

P.A. He preferred bridge with the colonel in H.Q. mess.

ROLAND Oh, don't be so hypocritical – so would you if you had been able to play bridge and hadn't been commanding a tank.

P.A. True. I was not scared – I was nothing. I thought I would be court-martialled. I was surprised that I told such an articulate, coherent story that I couldn't detect a chink of falsehood in it – and my men were so grateful and so full of admiration. I was amazed that I could not believe a word of it. All lies and so completely factual that even now –

ROLAND Well, what happened?

P.A. I caught up with my leading tank. I knew the long-range naval guns must get us. 'Get out!' I told them, 'and walk behind till it gets hit'. I set the controls at full speed and got out myself. It raced – for those days – ahead so we could hardly stumble up with it. And then – *then*! – the full horror came on me. Fool! What had I done? As I scrambled and tripped in my drunken influenza to catch up with the tank, in the shadow of which I had ordered my crew to remain sheltered, my ice-cold reality revealed a *fact*: The tank, in perfect order, with guns, ammunition and its 175-horse-power engines, was delivered into the hands of the enemy. Alone, I alone, had done this thing! My pyrexia left to rejoin its unknown origin.

PRIEST How did you get in – by beating your hands on the cold steel doors?

P.A. I was in; I did get in. A high-velocity shell struck; without thought I shot out of the hatch as the flames of petrol swathed the steel carcass. Are you hurt, sir? No – fell on my arse. Are you all right, sir? Of course! Why? Home – quick!

PRIEST Do you really remember this? It sounds most unlikely – but I cannot claim to attach so much importance to what you scientists call facts.

ROLAND Both Robin and I regard facts as facts. If I did not remember to sow corn and harvest 'facts', the crew you 'saved' would not have anything to eat. Nor would the rooks be blown cawing across the evening sky.

ROBIN I remember P.A. and his doctor friend as boys driving Curley to Munden when she did not want to be separated from her calf. Poor unintelligent animal! No one had told her about 'Separation Anxiety', but she knew all about the way *not* to Munden.

P.A. My twelve-year-old hadn't heard of 'separation anxiety'

either, but 'remembered' not to be separated from my intelligently disciplined 175 horse-power acquired conscious/conscience! Even now I have to risk being heard by some damned psychiatric neologism-shooter.

ROBIN You speak with bitterness that I more usually hear conjoined with evacuation of hatred. In fact, if you hated psychoanalysts I would not be surprised to hear what I heard you say. As it is, I am almost shocked.

ROLAND If you were twelve years old I would not be surprised to hear that Curley had not arrived at Munden. I am shocked that as a psychoanalyst you are angry that your 'meaning' has not been driven into what you think is the right verbal pen.

P.A. I know, and have reason to fear that the 'pen' into which it has entered will imprison both me and my meaning – inescapably. You think this is all talk and that talk is nothing. I know – though I cannot prove – it is *not.*

ALICE I knew that my baby's noise wasn't all babel; it sounded Just like' talk; it was not.

P.A. It was a precursor, a prelude to talk perhaps, but now we do not know. We do not know if this conversation is 'just like' talk, a 'prelude' to talk, the thing-in-itself, fact, real. It may be 'It', what our lives have been leading up to.

ROLAND Curley was a good beast. She not only yielded milk for her calf, she produced manure – just what was needed to germinate the wheat. Manure – an essential condition.

ROBIN There is a lot to be said in favour of your tractors, but if I had to choose between the smell of manure and the smell of petrol fumes, I prefer manure.

P.A. Just as well that you did. But you didn't like the smell of my hate which was as out of place in our discussion as you think the smell of fumes is for wheat germ. Maybe that is only because neither you nor I know for *what* the fumes are an 'essential' condition.

ROBIN Surely you do not suggest air pollution is good for us?

P.A. I do not. You, I am sure, do not suggest manure is the ideal floor covering for social discussion. But who could predict that cow dung would one day nourish our social intercourse? Socrates pointed out that 'talk', like 'painting', is not good, not bad, but ambiguous. His talk was interpreted – diagnosed – as corrupting the youth.

Death, 'they' said, would cure the spread of those corrupt ideas. His body, as we know, turned to physical corruption. But what of his ideas? Plato caused them to be repeated.

ROBIN When Thirteen and I got together they excited us. Our admiration grew so that –

P.A. His ideas were buried beneath a memorial so deep they could not be heard. It is hard to determine the extent to which an idea survives, deteriorates or develops although apparently we can compare our present ideas with ideas we once had. The words in which we dress ideas disguise, as readily as they display, the meaning to which we aspire. Call ourselves what we will, whether Bacon, Truth, Poet, Newton or Bach, we all disappear. But ideas do not 'appear'; that is an attribute of 'things'.

ROBIN 'Ideas' are 'things'; maybe we have to review our ideas about ideas.

P.A. The germ cell has its 'minimum conditions'.

ROLAND The existing vocabulary of words or ideas needs augmentation. Institutions wear out; like things, they are inanimate and obey the laws of all inanimate objects; they are not alive. *Members* of 'institutions' are people; they may not subordinate their developmental qualities to the framework, the structure.

P.A. An idea, it seems, has to submit to the structure if it is to be communicated. You spoke of Plato's ideas, but they had to fall within the discipline of verbal artistry and could not be communicated –

PRIEST – till a soldier captured Constantinople and released the ideas imprisoned within; a soldier had to become operative. Even then a medi-aeval priest had to translate those ideas.

P.A. Erasmus had to break through a cultural prison wall at least as limiting as a wheat germ cell, or a pharaoh's tomb. Tutankhamun's ideas were enclosed within the preservative shells of Thebes.

PRIEST But before we blame the shell for the death of the idea we should acknowledge the 'preservative' function. We should not condemn the helical structure of the DNA molecule.

P.A. Nor need we glorify the structure and lose sight of our ignorance of that which differentiates the animate from the apparently identical inanimate.

PRIEST Socrates recognized God – the insensible, inhuman, a-biological God; God that does not obey the laws which he should obey to be comprehensible to the human All-Highest Complacency.

ALICE If I admit that I don't know what you are talking about I am confident that I shall be offered more words – disciplines, well-ordered artefacts – like 'love' and 'concern'.

ROSEMARY Or a disorderly, undisciplined, sexual 'love' reminiscent of a baby's love of food. There is nothing between. If, for want of anything to love or by which I could be loved, I find some transient experience on the way to it, like Alice –

ALICE Some psychoanalyst, psychiatrist, man, is sure to 'know' I am having a 'homosexual experience'.

P.A. So you are. That does not mean that you are not having an experience of which the homosexual component is a part. A letter of the alphabet might as well be treated as if it were indistinguishable from the whole of *Paradise Lost.* Yet a psychoanalytic interpretation is often taken as a whole of psychoanalysis.

PRIEST If I say a 'marriage' is a miraculous ritual it is believed a 'miracle' is the whole of religion; I know a 'miracle' is only a transient episode on a human soul's journey to factual Truth. I call it 'God' because it is less misleading than to call it 'Scientific' Truth – that is only truth modified to lie within man's comprehension.

ROLAND I am no poet or painter or musician; I hesitate to claim more than moderate adequacy as a farmer. But I was regarded as responsible – I had to be, though I knew I was not a chemist or meteorologist. I admired the great storm clouds when they towered above the fields of golden corn. 'Robin', I used to say, 'we shall have to use the scythes when this storm has laid the corn flat.'

ALICE I used to hate you all when you and your guns surrounded the last of the narrowing field to kill the cowering beasties as they tried to escape.

ROSEMARY Oh why? That's when we had a good meat meal.

ROBIN Pity they recovered from myxomatosis. What did your god think about that?

PRIEST It was not my function to tell God what to think. If I were a rabbit I would use my rabbity intelligence to use my god-given legs to run. As I am a man I use my teeth.

P.A. After a few hundred years of culinary experience no doubt; even that you left Alice to acquire, who in turn left it to Rosemary.

ALICE So – I retained my place on the top of the pinnacle of which Rosemary was the base. Priest and P.A. pushed me off to leave room for themselves. Well, I do not envy you your eminence.

P.A. You may not envy the kind of eminence which stimulates my envy, but you nevertheless have feelings of envy. The fact that I may not be able to define feelings, either yours, mine or those of others which are neither yours nor mine, does not mean that they do not, did not, or may not in future exist. They may at some stage become so obtrusive that it is possible to attach a name to them.

ROBIN Although I have been aware of the pressure of what I can now call sexual or envious feelings, I would have been outraged had I been told that I was sexual or envious.

ROLAND What other people can verbalize about my feelings, especially if I can't, is particularly exasperating.

P.A. That is one component of the practice of psychoanalysis which is constant even if not constantly perceived. Guilty feelings are unwelcome and even in infants easily evoked. It is difficult to give an interpretation which is distinguished from a moral accusation.

ROLAND Surely this is a defect of psychoanalysis?

P.A. Certainly; but when I agree, you and others are therefore liable to assume that it is psychoanalysis only that suffers from that weakness, whereas I believe that this is a fundamental experience. It is this fundamental experience that underlies Plato's dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus which is being revived here – a few hundred years later – in this discussion.

ALICE Do men agree with the dismissal of Xanthippe? Do you consider the presence of myself and Rosemary an excrescence? Is our sexual equipment the only worthwhile contribution to the discussion? Or are we tolerated rather than welcomed as servants? Often it is called 'love' when what is meant is that we serve your lust.

ROLAND Robin and I have often discussed this. I have never felt that sex should be abolished; even when I have been aware of what a damned nuisance those impulses are, I have not felt easy at their facile dismissal. 'Perverse', 'homosexual', 'lustful' – I am sure P.A. can supply a great number of denigratory expressions, all of the highest scientific respectability.

P.A. I thought Alice was expressing contempt both for the being who requires his or her sexual urge to be fulfilled, and for the person, male or female, who 'serves' to fulfil them – whore, pimp, womanizer, homosexual – especially when money is clearly in close attendance.

ROBIN I do not like to think I would need to resort to a prostitute, or that a woman was 'prostituting' her beauty or her gifts. Nor

would I like the man who seemed to be using his money or his looks to seduce women.

P.A. What is involved is a capacity for judgement and discrimination. That is something primitive and fundamental, sophisticated and a part of highly developed society. Fish smell a difference between the noxious or dangerous, and the development-nourishing 'thing'. So does the amphibian. So does the animal that lives, like man, in a gaseous fluid.

ROBIN Are you seriously suggesting that we are like fish, frogs, reptiles?

P.A. I am quite serious, but this is not a scientific discussion; I am speculating with the freedom of a social talk. I confine scientific speculation to scientific meetings; here I claim freedom from the discipline imposed by scientific thought.

ROBIN But it sounds to me as if you were discussing scientific matters.

P.A. That is one of the problems of verbal communication. Speech is ambiguous; its ambiguity is the more dangerous for being disguised by its apparent precision.

ROBIN You mean that psychoanalysis, as most of us always have suspected, is couched in apparently scientific terms, but is in fact jargon?

P.A. I think the criticism is just, but I fear to make the admission as it is usually assumed that I am conceding superior 'truth' to other disciplines.

ALICE Disciplines! That is not a word which spontaneously springs to my mind when I think of psychoanalysis or psychoanalysts. They seem to me to claim the merits of unobstructed emotions, be they sex or rage or what they are pleased to call love.

ROLAND The ones I meet usually seem to be a depressed and anxious – not to mention 'dull' – lot.

P.A. We have the right to feel.

ROLAND Last night I dreamed a dream –

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ROBIN How truly Bunyanesque of you!

ROLAND Don't be a bloody cunt. Do you want me to tell you the dream or not?

P.A. Do go on –

ALICE Well, really! Are we supposed to listen to language like that? It is not even sexual – as P.A. would agree.

ROLAND All right, Xanthippe, darling. Socrates' complaint is comprehensible if we are not allowed to discuss naturally and spontaneously.

ALICE I have no objection at all, but surely it is not necessary to talk like that. Yes, I know – you are going to say 'like what?', but I shan't repeat such . . . such . . . language, though you are trying to make me use the words. You know very well what I mean, but I have to think of Rosemary. I am sure she agrees.

ROSEMARY Oh yes, Ma'am, I do. My mum was very particular how she brought me up. When I asked her what she and her gentleman were doing – I had come into the room innocently because Patricia our dog was barking so loud – Trixie we used to call him because it sounded less girlish if you see what I mean – him being a dog and not a bitch if you will excuse the expression, Ma'am –

ROBIN Oh God-all-fucking-mighty-do get on, will you.

ALICE There you go again – is it necessary to be blasphemous to make yourself clear?

P.A. He is speaking rhapsodically – not with social or scientific precision.

ROLAND Robin will agree with me that he is being no more blasphemous than I am when I say 'bloody cunt'; bloody is only a quick

way of saying 'by Our Lady' – which is sacred. Go on, Rosemary, for Christ sake.

ROBIN Oh Cripes!

ROLAND 'Schoolboy' for Christ. Anyhow, *please* get on.

ALICE Now he has become sufficiently civilized to say 'please', go on, Rosemary.

ROSEMARY Oh yes, Ma'am – my mum was always most particular and wore a crucifix all the time because she told me I should never forget Our Lord, especially when the gentlemen came to see us. That was how I found out that she *only* had high-class gentlemen like lords to see her though my friend Faith – she was called that out of Faith, Hope and Charity –

ALICE I won't ask you two what you are thinking because I can see it in your faces.

ROBIN There must be something wrong with the small muscles of our faces, Roland.

ROLAND 'Myasthenia gravis' no doubt. But Rosemary's story is so exciting I can hardly wait to hear.

ALICE Then why don't you two fucking bastards shut up and let her get on? Can't you control your face muscles? See – I can talk that stuff as well as you can.

ROLAND I am sure P.A. knew you always could.

ALICE Go on, Rosemary – don't take any notice of the ugly faces they make.

ROSEMARY That's what my mum always used to say to me. 'Rosemary', she says, 'don't you take any notice of what people say. You may as well be killed for a Lion as a Cockroach' – now what was I saying? – forgotten – oh yes, Faith and me used to have many a laugh about the gentlemen my mum knew and we used to watch and laugh till one day Trixie flew at the gentleman because he thought he was being cruel to my mum. I was frightened because my mum was so pale and she told me that if it hadn't been for Trixie the gentleman would have beaten her to death with a leather stick he had.

ROLAND P.A. would call it 'pure phantasy'.

P.A. Not only phantasy, but phantasy certainly.

ROBIN Do you mean you don't believe it happened?

P.A. I mean that I do not doubt it was a real phantasy and a real fact – in so far as I am capable of knowing what a fact is and

of respecting the factualness of a fact, however 'realized'. Phantasies sometimes burst through into articulate words when the individual is 'off his guard', as when he is asleep; they break out also when the individual is conscious and fully awake. Sometimes they break 'in' to articulate speech, conventionally acceptable art or music, and sometimes into conventionally acceptable 'behaviour' – in this instance unacceptable muscular action. Sometimes the 'acceptable convention' has to stretch, alter, to accommodate the thing that 'breaks through'; sometimes the 'conventionally acceptable' crushes the 'outbreaking impulse'. Usually it is a compromise between the two. Just now Alice allowed her ears and lips to be degraded by 'bloody cunt' and 'fucking bastard'; the rest of us have had to allow ourselves to be limited by being polite and saying 'please'.

ROSEMARY – the gentleman had to run away.

ALICE He was lucky. Or was he?

P.A. This language, which clearly we all know though we have forgotten it, are forgetting it, and hope in future to forget it, makes an unrecognized – an unrecognized archaic and still vital – contribution to our intercourse.

ROLAND And was once, is now, and in future will continue to become more and more refined – or should I say 'refained'? – into a virtually meaningless 'prettiness' or meaningful ugliness.

ROBIN Like a pretty man, boy, girl or woman – nothing deeper than the skin.

P.A. Or more disturbing than a dermatitis if our scrutiny went beyond appearance to the underlying reality.

ALICE Or more disturbing than blasphemy and sex if we allowed our scrutiny to go beyond spirochaetes, mummification and the beauty parlour. Helen of Troy, Cleopatra, are more than mere shadows of the past; they could be the shadow cast before by the Future we do not know.

P.A. Out of the rotting syphilitic remains of human flesh –

ALICE How elegantly, how poetically, you express it!

P.A. – may the warmth engendered by the decay give rise to a new form of life.

ROBIN Like cockroaches from dirt and neglect, or compost out of a silo.

ROLAND Who or what is to take the place of the silo?

P.A. The effect would be similar if the human race had to expand

on a world too small for it – the 'pressure' would increase. With our individual birth the mother's womb would be the silo in which pressure built up till the child burst forth or the mother got sick of carrying such a load of amniotic fluid, fetus, meconium and junk. But now it is the Birth of Mind. 'Mary McSweeney confined in Mount Joy' – 'The Birth of a Nation', as some wag scrawled on the wall beneath the slogan about Mary McSweeney.

ALICE I remember that old chestnut. At the time I had no doubt that the 'joke' was typically one that could be seen by a man.

ROBIN I thought it was quite witty. Mary must have done something to precipitate incarceration. It cannot be a man only who initiates a pregnancy.

ALICE Blame. Blame. Blame.

P.A. Blame, or I would rather call it Guilt, is one of the fundamentals, one of the basic assumptions, as fundamental as the sacred 'bloody' and the non-sexual 'cunf – it is neither masculine nor feminine. I don't want to know your birthday because I am sure you will tell me a date which does *not* outrage ideas of genital intercourse, midwifery, surgery. What I want to know is, when was your character or personality born? Did changes of pressure on your optic pits cause you to become luminosity-aware?

ROBIN It certainly seemed to me that Alice and Rosemary showed distinct signs of being aware of the words 'bloody cunt'.

ALICE I understand that when the police came to restore order at one of the Ivy League schools, these great big tough he-men retired in disorder when greeted by the innocent shouts of 'Mother Fuckers'.

ROLAND It would seem to bear out P.A.'s suggestion that these archaic terms hide or disguise or preserve some powerful germ of vital development in a way that is not true of 'bloody vagina'. Yet a vagina is a real and important canal. So is a penis.

ROBIN Hide or conceal, you say. You might as well say a breast or penis or clitoris 'hides' an erection. But there is no such thing as an 'erection'; it is an invisible state made manifest by 'erectile' tissue.

ALICE Any mother knows that, even if she had never suckled a baby; or father, even if he had never nourished a penis. But why is it that so few men and women are at ease with an erection?

P.A. Some deficiency in our mental growth. The infant potentially is a parent; the parent potentially is, but is not capable of becoming,

an infant. In that way it sounds as if developmental processes are directional in one direction only. It seems to me we need to develop a capacity to use a screen, a resistance, a caesura, as Picasso could use a plate of glass. Look on *this* side and see a delineation of a psychosomatic disorder; look on *this* side and see a soma-psychosis.

ROBIN You remind me of the early days of studentship when a small black cat used to appear in our courtyard, do its evacuations, cover them up neatly and disappear. It was called Melanie Klein – Melanie because it was black, Klein because it was little, and Melanie Klein because it had no inhibitions. Today one could compare a tiny germ of Rhodesia with the independent Rhodesia; then it was tiny, white and inhibited; what it is today I do not know. But tomorrow Africa may be black, huge and uninhibited.

ALICE I do not see what this has to do with our discussion.

P.A. Perhaps this is a constant feature of the present. It is difficult even under discipline to know our past history, impossible to perceive the present while we experience it, and only vaguely as through a glass darkly to perceive the future which casts its shadow before.

ROLAND Not only the group but the individual, not only the individual but the group also.

P.A. I remember that song which we all disliked so much that we did not sing it. 'Rule Britannia! Britannia rule the waves. Britons never, never, never shall be . . .' skivvies? Butlers?

ROBIN No; as Alice would say, only 'civil servants'. Say please, please. *'Good dog!'* – as the clever pet was put through its trick. 'Die for your country', and he would lie on his back; the biscuit casting its shadow before was too much; his tail wagged phrenetically.

P.A. Britannia was a repulsive old dame even when clothed in masculine garb. Wider still and wider were her boundaries set, till at last the weight of greedy spoils became too much to carry on her poor feet and she rebelled against crushing them into the cosmetically beautiful, but inappropriate to old age, shoes of youth.

ROLAND I remember your sister trying on your mother's shoes and shuffling around saying, 'Aren't I just like Mummy!'

P.A. I remember. Do you think groups, and the individuals, pursue an helical progress?

ROBIN I think there is a pictorial similarity.

P.A. Pressure on the optic pits; demands on visual acuity aided by telescopes and microscopes till the poor old cerebral hemispheres

sink under the load of spoils won for them by curiosity. As the schoolboy joke of contextual examinations had it: 'Who said, "My punishment is more than I can bear"? Answer – "Agag, when he was hacked in pieces: 'It is not the prize that counts, but the running for it.'"

ROLAND That may be all very well for rabbits and tortoises, but you try telling that to a real rabbit or a real tortoise.

ROBIN Have you tried? You might ask a plant what it thinks of herbivores. Human animals are both carnivorous and herbivorous – greedy beasts.

P.A. We talk as if there were some force or power which creates an almost infinite variety of animate and inanimate objects. When we are talking about *us* – as we are here – there is an advantage in talking in this way. An inescapable fact is that we tend to wonder, and tend at the same time to refrain from wondering, if it is true or not; that is to say, if the image that we bring will find a real image there. We shall have to consider what a *real* image is, but for the moment I suppose that my image of myself is real. If I meet a Not-me which nevertheless reminds me of Me, then I am likely to wonder what this object is. If it is a nice object, then, Narcissus-like, I have the pleasure of discovering what a nice person I am. If I do not like this Not-me, then I do not like its reminding me of Me; I am outraged. I do not like looking-glasses, sheets of water, novels, psychoanalysis –

ROBIN 'Sheets of water' you say. Would you include sheets of amniotic fluid?

P.A. Certainly – any liquid. I would go further and suggest that sheets of reflective fluid of any kind become objects of dislike.

ALICE You mean the fluid does not have to be liquid but can, as at birth, be changed to a gaseous fluid?

P.A. Quite so. But, liquid or gaseous, the fluid can be constantly changing from calm reflecting state to turbulence.

ALICE When I took my astronomical course we were familiar with conditions for observation.

P.A. Right. It is commonplace for obstetricians to find a fetus is sucking its thumb. Presumably the fetus has an ideal opportunity for 'observing' its thumb.

ROLAND Presumably? May I ask who presumes?

P.A. We may all ask or not as we choose. 'La réponse est le malheur de la question.'

ROSEMARY Please translate.

P.A. I understand it to mean that the question's misfortune is that it is liable to be answered. Your curiosity and that of Trixie was aroused by your mother and her gentleman. In so far as it made you question 'gentle-manliness', its misfortune was that it was answered. You have never quite recovered from wanting, and fearing, to experience a similar 'gentle'ness.

ALICE Oh, nonsense! You are putting ideas into her head. Now she's spawned off all the bits and pieces which are so small that it is impossible to see how they could cohere even if the environment were right – which it isn't. But your idea would make her try it. You are corrupting her youth.

P.A. I hope you are wrong and that I am right. It seems to me that it is as well for her to be aware that unobserved beneath the calm and mirror-like surface of her character which makes it easier for you to see your reflection as her lovable mistress, there are storms that rage. One of the advantages of the 'real' Mediterranean is that Homer, Virgil, even you and I, can see reflected in it something which, however calm or turbulent, reminds us of ourselves.

ROBIN You sound as if you wanted to teach us to 'semanticide'.

P.A. Alas; language – though I try to speak it articulately, precisely and to the point – is, as used by me, a distorted, distorting and turbulent reflecting surface.

ROLAND Our army ditty was:

> Ashes to ashes and dust to dust
> If the wine don't get you then the women must.

P.A. In fact it is both.

ROLAND Both? How do you mean?

P.A. I suppose the simplest way I could explain it would be by falling back on Desargues's theorem.

ROBIN Good God! You aren't serious, are you? Even in the mathematical Tripos I found Desargues and Conics impossible.

ROLAND Conics are chronic.

ALICE Punning is a very low form of life.

P.A. Life fundamentally is really 'low life' – cock-roaches, and 'bloody cunt' and swimming in a sea of amniotic fluid and meconium, and now psychoanalysis. Even the fetus is involved with *non-fetus.* One cone intersects another cone. Here the eyes of each of us can be described as sweeping out an area of space more or less cone-

shaped. But these cones intersect other cones whose focal origin is different. These points of intersection could be pictorially depicted by resorting to geometrical figures. That is an over-simplification which, as Robin said, is complex enough to make any further description redundant. However, I do not see why the universe in which we live should oblige us by being comprehensible to us mere human beings. This is true of our own bodies and minds in which we have to live. Even if we don't trouble with the 'universe', the *not-us,* we find that merely trying to know who 'f am involves an intolerable amount of discovery of what we have never been able to tolerate and which, as likely as not, we are right not to tolerate.

ROLAND You remind me – Britannia reminds me – of the mother who on her death-bed collected her children because she wished to confess that she had never loved her husband, their father, and had been constantly unfaithful and promiscuous. The eldest, recovering first from this stupefying information, announced, 'Well, I don't know about you other bastards, but I'm going to the movies', and they all fucked off.

ALICE Very amusing. I regret that my facial muscles do not express my entertainment.

ROBIN I expect you are not perceiving how amused you are at being not-amused.

ALICE Though I said it was 'very amusing', I did not expect you to believe I meant just that.

P.A. Though you do not call it psychoanalysis, you interpret naturally and expect others to interpret your behaviour, including the language you talk. These diagnoses, interpretations, are intrusions, outrages perhaps, on your privacy – our privacy.

ALICE If you are right, that seems to me to be one more reason for behaving in a reasonably civil manner.

P.A. Certainly. But in reality, as far as I am capable of perceiving reality or truth, the more I am aware that reality is not civilized or reasonable or considerate of our feelings or ideas. This applies to you and me; we are not polite, civilized, considerate *only. So,* in so far as we achieve 'civilized' character, our capacity for lying, murdering, robbing, being in *rude health*, 'fust in us unused', as Milton put it.

ALICE Milton certainly did not mean what you say he meant.

P.A. I am ready to believe that Milton did not mean to mean that. It requires, at least, considerable training to achieve any idea now of

what Milton meant – or Nietzsche, or Newton, or any other great figure of the past. In the present we do not have to bother because there are not perceived to be any great figures. In fact we are learning to regard them as figments of our imaginations.

ROLAND I remember the fashion for 'Father Figures'; the mental landscape was such that one could not see one's genetic father, the air was so thick with Father Figures.

ROBIN I smell a Father Figure; I see him in the Air; I will nip him in the Bud.

ROLAND Call me Buddy – so much more friendly.

P.A. Technical terms are not safe from de-value-ation; hence my resort to spelling out the word in a hope that the return to that childhood learning difficulty might re-inforce my communication. Must we keep our technical terms in constant repair? The bloody cunt which is *not* anything to do with anatomical sex, not masculine, not feminine, not haematology, not religion but could be said to be sacred, has nevertheless an almost universal – western at least – comprehensibility. It made Alice angry; even articulate. It degrades the user almost as much as the recipient.

ALICE Then why use it?

P.A. I am not advocating or deprecating its use. Since it is there it seems wise to acknowledge or respect its presence as one should respect any other fact, whether we like it or not.

ROBIN I can see Alice's point – why go out of your way to look for the unpleasant?

P.A. If it were only a matter of pleasant or unpleasant that would depend on the character or person, and on his or her likes or dislikes. I suggest it also involves *is* or *is not*. If it *is*, then the individual should respect the *is-ness* or *is-not-ness* of it. You think these 'things' are so rare that it is perverse to go out of our way to find them. I say they are so universal that it is perverse to make great mental detours to avoid being aware.

ROBIN But who uses language like that?

P.A. I do, for one. So do you. So does Alice.

ALICE I beg your pardon – I don't.

P.A. But you said 'fucking bastard' a little while back; you reacted as to the manner born to Roland saying 'bloody cunt'. If it were a foreign language I would say you must have been born to it, lived it, loved it as your very own favourite language. I agree with

you that you spoke to it as if you had forgotten it and didn't want to be reminded of it.

ALICE Only because you chose to drag it up into the conversation first.

P.A. Like the police, asked to intervene in the Ivy League dispute. Like Robin – equally ignorant. But the fact that you are and wish to remain ignore-ant is your affair. Robin, did you never march through a village of innocent, clean English men and women singing –

> 'When we go out with noise and shout
> We'll be buggered if we'll be buggered about,
> We won't be buggered about!'

ROBIN Oh, the army!

P.A. Or your very select private Public School.

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ROBIN The army and school – that was a long time ago.

P.A. Then, no doubt, you'd have said it would be a long time before you would grow up and use the awful language those great big authorities – starting with your parents – used. But if as a baby you had not been so angry and inarticulate, *that* is the 'cuntish' language you would have talked. In fact I do not believe there has ever been a time when your mental turbulence did not surface gems of this obscene 'water' – amniotic fluid, social freedom – call it what you will. What language does Alice spontaneously use when the alarm clock wakes her and she wants to sleep some more?

ALICE I admit your point. I still wonder what good it does to talk such language or about it.

P.A. Though forgotten, the archaic thing lives and contributes its vitality to an otherwise sterile talk. I remember a dignified board meeting at which the chairman started a long and highly involved address urging members to 'be more circumspect because so much offence was caused by . . . er . . . er . . .'. 'Oh, Christ – Bish been saying 'fuck' again?' The chairman inclined his head in shamed acknowledgement that the surmise was correct. The contrast of the 'civil' communication with the direct primitive phrase was most impressive; the primitive tapped reserves of vitality spread through the somnolent, but well-behaved group.

ALICE I am glad you acknowledge that the group, however somnolent, was well-behaved. I do not think this discussion would be improved by our free exchange of terms like 'fuck' and 'buggery', 'bastard' and . . . and . . .

P.A. We will spare you the embarrassment of demonstrating your familiarity with the vocabulary. But I do not want us to lose sight

of this almost universally comprehended speech. It hardly requires translation. I can see that the speeches in the United Nations Assembly might well be enlivened if the 'freedom' was extended to include freedom to choose, without limitation, *how* to express as well as what matter to express.

ALICE I should prefer a civilized and decorous assembly.

ROLAND So would I, but the 'fundamental basic thing' would not oblige by being confined within the rules of debate. Those rules may be all right if our object were to achieve the politeness of polite conversation. But this is not the object of a United Nations Assembly, and I don't think it is the object of this discussion. I wonder if P.A. could enlighten us about the object, not simply of psychoanalytic debates, institutions, 'scientific' papers, but of psychoanalysis itself.

P.A. I would if I could but I am not sure that there is any adequate way of doing this, short of experiencing psychoanalysis itself.

ALICE Do you use terms like 'fuck' and 'buggery'?

P.A. Sometimes; it depends on what I want to communicate and what I think the listener capable of hearing. A child of ten or twelve would be likely to snigger if he heard me use one of these terms. If I asked, 'Why do you snigger?', I don't think he could answer, but from my experience I would expect the response to be unmistakable signs of guilt. 'Guilt' is fundamental, basic, sharing the primitive qualities which Freud attributes to the id. If the id could speak, that is the language I would expect it to use.

ROBIN How does this apply to the practice of analysis? I take it you do not talk to the id, because that is only a theoretical term.

P.A. Even theories and theoretical terms are supposed to remind us of a reality. I have no doubt that one 'talks to' an experienced person; the matter of psychoanalysis is such that analyst and analysand cannot afford to neglect the total sophisticated capacities of which both are capable. The psychoanalyst has a lifetime of experience, including the experience of technical psychoanalytic training; the analysand, even if only a young child, has a considerable body of experience to fall back on. It is certain that the psychoanalysis will fail if the analysand does not respect the knowledge, character and wisdom of the analyst – and vice versa.

ROBIN Doesn't that presuppose some mutual acquaintance with each other? I thought it was important that the analyst should not know the analysand.

P.A. There is substance in the idea, but the idea must be modified by common sense; applied in extreme degree it would mean that psychoanalysis could only be carried out between two people who had neither race, nationality, language nor culture in common. The other extreme would mean that the two knew each other so well that there was no topic which could be discussed profitably. In practice some rough rules can be formulated; close blood relations who know each other well, or husband and wife, would probably not find the psychoanalytic interchange rewarding.

ROBIN I listened to some married friends who were both enthusiastic psychoanalysts, and I felt that if I had to listen to them 'analysing' each other for long I would go mad. If *that* is what analysis does for you, heaven save me from it!

P.A. I sympathize with your dismay. But psychoanalysis does nothing for anyone, any more than do morphia or strychnine or human speech. Most people can turn these facilities to good account, but there are many pairs who would use them and other components of the universe in which we live in ways which you and I might not applaud. Loeb and Leopold appear to have used their chances – even the chance which could be used for homosexual love – for purposes of committing the 'perfect' murder. In the upshot it was *not* perfect although they appear to have been gifted and living in a universe which afforded ample opportunity. The institution of marriage is supposed to offer the legal conditions for a hetero-sexual pair to fulfil themselves. Whether they choose to utilize those conditions for mutual psychoanalysis, mutual masturbation or mutual anything else, is their affair. One, or other, or both may wish to avail themselves of the institute of divorce to 'correct' the prior decision to marry. But what choice they make is their own private affair. The fact that you or I would not decide to live as they do is a matter of no importance whatever – except to you or me.

ROLAND But do you never give any help?

ROBIN Suppose they come to you for help.

P.A. Naturally I should hope that I was the sort of character who would want to help them; but I would like to have the discipline to confine my efforts within the limits of my capacity.

ROBIN It sounds like, 'Find out what you can do and do a little less'.

ROLAND You could hardly advocate '. . . and do a little more'.

P.A. I think there is something to be said for differentiating *knowledge* and *wisdom* – at least for purposes of this discussion. Then I would say that whatever *knowledge* each of us has must be augmented by *wisdom*. However intelligent, the chance of survival is decreased if the character cannot rely on being wise.

ALICE Is it not also true that the wise person's chance of survival depends on intelligence?

P.A. Certainly. Part of the problem is that intelligence, as a capacity for collecting knowledge, needs to be distinguished, isolated – defined for purposes of this discussion – from wisdom. In real life the problem cannot be solved as simply as it can be conversationally. 'Acts' do not arrive clearly labelled. Projected acts are not like a medicine in a bottle.

ALICE Do you remember Prince André in *War and Peace* feeling in the course of a discussion as if an inner voice said, 'That is sooth; accept it'.

ROBIN Yes, it impressed me when I read it.

ALICE Did you ever read *War and Peace,* Rosemary?

ROSEMARY Oh no. I saw it, but it was too thick and learned for the likes of me. Mum always used to say, 'Now don't you go and read those trashy novels', so I never did. Not that I thought a big book like that was trashy.

ROLAND 'Another of those damn thick, square books, Mr Gibbon? Scribble, scribble, scribble!' Upstairs and downstairs and in My Lady's chamber. There I met an old man who wouldn't say his prayers – so –

P.A. These nursery rhymes say a lot. Some analysts study them; so do children, and they understand them. Or, rather, the archaic chord is struck and vitality is released. If we could strike the chord, the vibrations thus initiated could penetrate the barriers which at present act as obscuring screens – the need is for screens sufficiently resistant to catch and display the meaning without destroying it by denial or 'acceptance' – 'No' or 'Yes, I know'. I want to display not a psycho-somatic disturbance only, but also the soma-psychotic disturbance that is there; those who wish to see, do.

ROLAND Do you suggest that the old man should say his prayers?

P.A. I knew a young man who would not say his prayers because

he was sure that he would be laughed at for being 'converted' out of fear of going into battle.

ROBIN I was. But I had also come to have such a contempt for the act of praying – as I had been taught to practise it and seen it practised – that it would outrage any respect that I had for myself if I did it.

ROLAND Do you think there is any kind of prayer that is not an outrage on one's common sense? Obviously the athletic 'knees bend' exercise could not satisfy any person of integrity. What does P.A. think?

P.A. It is not my department. I have ideas about it like any other man, but I would not like it supposed that because I set up as an expert on psychoanalysis my expertise extended to religion and other disciplines – painting, music, literature.

PRIEST Is that not somewhat cowardly?

P.A. You and others might think so but I do not. Even in my own limited field I am not unfamiliar with a cowardly shrinking from expressing a truth that I know will be unwelcome. One takes flight into doubt – "'What is truth?" said jesting Pilate'; Bacon himself did not wait for an answer because he knew he might be killed if he did. Physical death is a hard price to pay – especially for those of us who, from training and observation, believe in the obliteration of the body. I believe also in the obliteration of one's respect for the truth; it is not simply by physical methods – alcohol, for example – that one can destroy one's capacity for discerning or proclaiming the Truth.

PRIEST I believe in moral, religious death. Truth can be nourished; it can be allowed to die of neglect or be poisoned by seductions, cowardice too often repeated. But Truth is robust; 'facts' cannot be killed even if we do not know what they are. The fragile human respect for the truth cannot be as easily disposed of as often appears.

P.A. I hope you are right. I cannot, however, say that my knowledge of myself or others provides me with food for hope. Religion itself gives evidence of the great force of power, bigotry, ignorance; and psychoanalysis is shot through with error and the defects of us humans who try to practise it.

PRIEST You are being extremely self-contradictory in claiming that it is a science *and* is true. It must have a point of reference outside itself. You cannot believe in Truth any more than you can 'believe in God'. God is –

ROLAND – or is not.

P.A. No. 'God is, or is not' is only a human formulation in conformity with human principles of thinking. It has nothing to do with the reality. The only 'reality' we *know about* is the various hopes, dreams, phantasies, memories and desires which are a part of us. The other reality exists, *is*, whether we like it or not. A child may want to punish a table for hurting him when he suffers a contusion. But he may desire to punish himself for 'suffering' a contusion. He may ultimately be compelled to believe that, in addition to these facts, there is a table that is neither good nor bad, like it or not, forgive it or punish it. We may decide to punish our god, punish ourselves for believing in 'it' or 'him' or 'her'. It will not affect the reality which will continue to be real no matter how unsearchable, un-knowable, beyond the grasp of human capacity it is/not is. After all, we do not know much about the world we live on, or the minds we are.

ALICE I thought you psychoanalysts were supposed to have discovered all about us.

ROBIN Supposed? By whom? I do not 'suppose' I know either myself or my husband –

ALICE I didn't know you were married! May I congratulate you!

ROBIN *I* do not know whether you are 'married' or 'divorced'; in so far as those two words derive from the Institute of a state, they tell me nothing about the true relationship between you and your husband. But although I have no sensuous experience of, it I yet believe there is some reality underlying these words 'marriage' and 'divorce' beyond the meaning I know.

P.A. You say you have 'no sensuous experience', but is it not possible that while you have 'forgotten' the experience it has not, as it were, forgotten you?

ROBIN I don't know what you mean.

P.A. That is relatively rational and may be more acceptable than saying you have 'forgotten' being married and 'forgotten' what you meant; perhaps that you never knew what you meant. Some of these thoughts may now be difficult to entertain or formulate because you fear the reception they would get by the recipient; you might discover there was no recipient, or that there was one whose receptivity you feared. It is easier to feel there is an initiator *and* a recipient, and that there is some screen (caesura?) between. That is possible if you

believe it is between you and 'me' – a 'not-you' and 'you'. This is less alarming than believing you are now both the initiator and the receptor.

ROBIN Why?

ALICE Every question is liable to suffer from the existence of a potential answer which will kill it. The misfortune, the weakness of curiosity is the answer that finally will destroy curiosity itself.

P.A. 'Yes I know' – how lethal is that response! The wish to start exploration or discovery is destroyed. That response, made to yourself, crushes your curiosity or makes it take refuge out of sight, out of mind, out of social contact. The 'Yes I know' surface, the lifeless society, is all that is left.

ROLAND That was true of 'intellectual' culture in the school to which I was sent to 'learn'. In my time hobbies meant surreptitious sex: education meant answers to questions which no one had asked. Law and Order meant find out what they are up to and tell them not to. Sex meant widespread illegality – which did not exist. Hypocrisy meant religion.

PRIEST It sounds frightful.

ROLAND It was.

P.A. Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit. We did not believe it; now I know it is true.

ROLAND Tu Marcellus eris. Date manibus lilia plenis. . . . I did not know I ever learnt it. Had I known that it was all about that same wicked business of loving a man or a boy – 'sex', in short – I might have learnt it; but then perhaps I should not have remembered it. Education is a damned rum thing.

ROBIN . . . per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum.

PRIEST

> 'What hours, O what black hours we have spent
> This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went! . . .'

ALICE Time for supper and bed.

ROLAND All right, Martha.

ROBIN Or is it Xanthippe?

ALICE You would be the first to grumble if some of the ways I went had not led to the market.

P.A. Perhaps we all have to be busy with many things.

ROLAND The many things are all different.

ROBIN Why don't we meet more often?

P.A. Because we don't want to. This is true when our forgotten fishy, amphibian, terranean selves all meet in the same body at the same time – not consecutively or dispersed in space, but here and now in the same body. Draw the blinds. Where shall we make the splits and insert the inhibitions so that we may choose? When the universe in which we live clearly demonstrates the immense variety which chance –

PRIEST Or God –

P.A. I find it more adequate to say 'chance' – spreads before us, we have to choose. We choose to be responsible for our actions though we may not deliberate the problem. Choice, however, involves splitting the discriminated objects from each other.

ALICE Do we start as infinitesimal fragments, which cohere, or are we, as P.A. implies, a whole that is fragmented?

ROLAND Do you think we choose whether to be a fish or not?

P.A. No! I feel it more compatible with reality, as I know it, to say I have no say in the matter. The illusion of conscious purpose gives cause for belief – on inadequate grounds – in God, but I would resist any attempt to prevent Priest believing it, provided he didn't want to prevent me from choosing science.

PRIEST Could we agree that both of us support a search for truth, but our paths often appear to separate?

P.A. Lack of choice means that each of us still retains his fishy qualities.

ROBIN Fish out of water.

P.A. Not quite. When we abandon our liquid environment for a gaseous one we take our liquid with us. Like fish, we can still smell by cause of the mucus preserved in our respiratory passages by the glands that maintain our watery medium although we have moved into a gaseous one.

ROBIN I don't see what we are to do about it, or what it has to do with us.

P.A. You would if you caught what is called 'a cold'; or if your tears began to flow. The liquid environment which we take with us or manufacture inside is useful for making it possible to see or smell, or even to provide for the germ plasm which we produce when we transfer to a gaseous medium like air. But if it is overproductive, then the mucus makes us feel we are about to drown; we can't smell, we

can't see for tears, we can't find a repository for the superfluity of seminal or ovarian fluids.

ROBIN If all these generations of our human development are repeated in each individual, I can see it might also apply to the mind or psyche.

P.A. It is sometimes illuminating to think so.

ROLAND We could borrow from the cartographers and imagine that here we are aware of two dimensions and portray two only. Thus a mountainous district can be represented on a flat surface by contour lines. We 'read' the map; we 'read' the person.

ROBIN What are the elements which our suppositious 'contours' link? It would appear to be uninformative to link the same heights – physical tallness – with the character of the person. I do not imagine that the character displays patterns corresponding to the height.

ROLAND How tall was Shakespeare when he wrote *Hamlet?*

P.A. The question demonstrates the process though it does not – if it could be answered – illuminate a matter of consequence.

ROSEMARY We had to read Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* – terrible stuff. It put me off Shakespeare for ever – and Lamb. I thought the story of Roast Pig really silly.

ROBIN Perhaps we could join together, contour, all the ages or heights at which you thought Lamb silly.

P.A. She probably wouldn't remember.

ROSEMARY I remember I never thought him anything else.

ROLAND I wonder what Alice would think – but she has gone to bed.

P.A. We could say we know where she, geographically speaking, has gone.

ROBIN How would you speak if not geographically?

ROLAND I would like a rational answer.

P.A. Rational answers might all be placed on the same contour, but 'rational' means answers that conform to the rules of human thought. Suppose the universe in which we live does not oblige us by conforming to the limitations which are imposed by what is comprehensible to man. We do not expect a child to comprehend all of even the little which we are able to communicate. The wisest of us may be children in comparison with what the solar system alone can communicate – in so far as we know its language.

ROLAND That has been so often observed that it is a commonplace.

ROBIN True; nonetheless we may forget the meaning of the commonplace if it is a fact which we prefer to disregard.

ROLAND Is there any merit in contemplating a fact about which we can do nothing?

P.A. We may not be able to do anything about the fact, but we can do something about ourselves. Particularly we may be able to moderate our conceit of ourselves and our wisdom – our self-inflicted omniscience.

ROLAND Admitting our 'omniscience' – I am not sure that I do, for all that psychoanalysts tell us – can we do anything about it if it is our nature?

P.A. It is matter of opinion; you may not agree with my view that it 'does something' to the person who allows his attention to be drawn to a fact of his personality.

ROLAND I can't say that I have paid much attention although I remember plenty of beaks at school who tried to impress upon me the many unpleasant aspects of my behaviour.

P.A. I can't say anything about the episodes of which you speak, but I gather they were not psychoanalytic sessions.

ROLAND What is there so special about psychoanalytic sessions?

P.A. I doubt I could explain that without your submitting to an analysis. But I can say something about why you should not think it special. We use ordinary conversational English and it tends to give an impression that we are as care-less about what we say and how we say it as in any ordinary conversation. In fact we try to speak with care, precision and respect for the person we address. This is not so easy as you might imagine. It is not just a problem of vocabulary or English grammar – it never is a problem of 'just' or 'only' that which is being consciously and intentionally expressed. The important and significant thing is that which we are meaning and intending to transform into action.

ROBIN What are we immediately intending to translate into action here? I am not aware of anything except wanting to follow Alice's example and go to bed –

ROLAND Agreed. Everyone agreed? Let's go then.

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P.A. When we were last together we 'solved' the problem of translating thoughts into action by going to bed. That was a precise solution of a precisely defined . . . what? It was apparently 'defined' by being terminated. But that act defined it – in the sense of ending the discussion. It occurred to me later that we were behaving as if we had become aware of human speech, as a child might become aware that grownups are not merely making noises with their mouths, but are communicating with each other or engaging in some prelude to communication. Such an 'event', now used as a free association, can be reviewed in the light of increased experience. The 're-view' can itself be turned to good account.

ROLAND I see what you mean. My complaint is that it does not seem to me that the review is turning our experience to good account.

ROBIN If your discovery, unwelcome though it may be, leads us to reconsider the wisdom of continuing the activity – in this instance, discussion – surely that is a gain.

ROLAND Maybe; maybe not.

P.A. Exactly – maybe; maybe not. That is a risk we have to take. It is the price that we pay for being responsible human beings exercising our freedom to choose. We may choose wrong. I am haunted by the memory of the young officer who, admiring me for what he considered to be my bravery, refused to surrender and was, inevitably, killed. His enemies had no choice except to kill.

ROBIN I remember a young fellow who *did* surrender. It seemed to me he was in a hopeless position and was right to surrender. He never recovered from the discovery that he saved his life rather than die for his country. I knew him when he was a charming young man – little more than a boy – but after his surrender his capacity

for gaiety was . . . well, I can only describe it as 'dead'. He never recovered; he became more and more depressed, introspective and withdrawn till finally he could not stand it and killed himself.

ROSEMARY One of my friends, not very good-looking, couldn't bear to think she would never find anyone to marry her when she wanted a baby so badly. She had an illegitimate baby and no one would speak to her.

ALICE The moral superiority of humans in the mass is wonderful to observe. As long as it is morally superior it does not matter how cruel the morally superior person is.

P.A. Cruelty is a very early form of love. The baby bites the nipple and proceeds to bite all the food it loves. It would soon find that the food would 'bite it back' again if it did not chew it; but it may be too afraid to chew it. Wrong either way.

ROLAND Gastro-morality; intestinal revenge; or if those fail there can always be the haemorrhoids that stand ready to prevent the export.

P.A. It had never occurred to me that the customs authorities were sociological haemorrhoids, but I see what you mean. Now you mention it, it seems clear that as far as speech and discussion are concerned there are many obstacles to passing wind if it carries ideas in the way that speech does.

ROLAND 'Sermons in stones' is an eloquent way of describing how even geological fact might convey a moral idea – metaphorically of course.

ROBIN Metaphorically my foot! Clearly you haven't been in a stone-chucking mob – no 'metaphors' about that, I assure you!

ALICE No metaphor about childbirth either. To 'express' a child from one's insides without the proper licence can be Death to one's repute even if physical death has been escaped. The converse is not true; a properly attested moral Birth can kill a woman in spite of the licence.

P.A. Are you talking about legal licence or licentiousness? It seems to me that the moral system, individual and social, requires overhaul but I do not think the old authorities are the ones to do the overhauling.

ALICE Who then is to do it? Psychoanalysts?

P.A. Psychoanalysts are trained to do psychoanalysis only – a considerable undertaking. I would not feel qualified by my training

to do more than that although like surgeons, engineers and other citizens, I am expected to carry my civil obligations as well as my professional ones. But I deprecate the idea that my expertise extends beyond that of psychoanalyst; it is hard enough trying to be an 'expert' in one's own profession. Yet we are constantly expected to be expert far beyond our professional domain, and are regarded with contempt if we fail to live up to expectations which we strive not to arouse.

ALICE Then – as I said – who is to do the overhauling?

P.A. Whoever did it would have to bring to the task –

ROBIN Psychoanalysis?

ROLAND Kleinian theory?

P.A. – as much devotion to their work as most psychoanalysts display in theirs.

ALICE The ones I know are devoted more to making a handsome income than relieving the suffering of their patients.

P.A. It is a matter of opinion. I can say only what I require to provide good shelter, food and education.

ROLAND As you say – it is a matter of opinion. Who decides what is 'good'?

P.A. I do, of course. You can hardly expect me to choose something less than good. Indeed I should wonder why anyone coming to me for analysis had a philosophy of losing, and why, if they had such a philosophy, they would choose me to help them lose.

ROBIN Yet the boy I spoke of did not surrender when the alternative was clearly death. Perhaps you think it was not clear – that he chose it under some misapprehension.

P.A. Such devotion was, and still is, beyond my capacity. In situations of great danger I always had a belief that I would probably survive. Had I realized – been compelled by some dreadful wound to realize – that such a belief was nonsense, I would have dodged the danger. Nobody told me – nor would I have understood them if they had – that war service would change utterly my capacity to enjoy life. Are we, even today, prepared to tell our children, or our children's children, what price they would have to pay if they served their fellows? Are we to tell them not to do it, that it might cost them too much? What would it cost them if they did *not* serve their fellow men? Socrates chose not to run away after his sentence by the court of fellow Athenians. When remonstrated with, he said it was his free choice. For *that* freedom he paid the price knowingly.

ROLAND Did he believe in survival after death?

ROBIN As Horace pointed out, many brave men had died before Agamemnon without any Homer to confer on them the immortality of verse.

ROLAND What sort of immortality is that – schoolboys complaining about their Greek preparation?

ROBIN 'Immortality', like psychoanalysis, is often mental 'flannelle' to make people's consciences sleep in the cosy warmth of self-adulation.

P.A. It does not last for long. With the best will in the world the authorities wanted returned soldier undergraduates to be comfortable. Haig wished ex-servicemen to be looked after. How was it to be done?

ALICE And the women? Or don't they matter? What should I tell my daughters – and their daughters – about childbirth?

ROBIN Tell them? Something – not nothing. At least tell them to respect their bodies and bodily urges and demands, and to respect their minds and characters. Then they would not think that any old lecher would do as mate for themselves or father for their children. Conversely, they should not suppose that any old whore would do, Hosea-like, as wife or mother.

P.A. The problem is not solved by choosing intellectual monsters for the parenthood of 'souls'. This discussion is appropriate if we are concerned only with discussion; it must not become a substitute for psychoanalysis.

ROLAND Isn't that exactly what the danger is here and now? How do we know that all this isn't a substitute for not doing anything? Unless of course discussing is itself doing something.

ALICE I suppose it is doing something when Parliament 'just' talks. It is not true, I hope, that the 'talk' finds no reflection in the bills that are passed, or that the bills that are passed are simply invented by the Parliamentary stationers. The ones I have seen might as well have been written in a foreign language for all the sense they made.

ROBIN The sense they make is decided by the courts of law that have to interpret them, and the various authorities who are supposed to translate them into action. After all, isn't Parliament just a 'talking shop'?

P.A. It is possible. The price of freedom is constant vigilance. This is true of psychoanalysis; the individual is not analysed, 'cured',

so that he can then go to sleep for the rest of his life. If that were all that occurred one could regard it as an exercise in 'good resolutions'.

ALICE Psychoanalysts I know have wonderful intentions and make many 'good resolutions' to put them into practice, but I cannot say I am impressed with the lives they lead as good examples of a fine philosophy finely practised.

P.A. I cannot say anything about other analysts; I do not even know if the 'analysts' of whom you talk are people who have been analysed. I know something of myself and can see how I conform to civilized behaviour. I hope that the failures I see will in time lead to something less sterile than 'remorse' and good resolutions.

ALICE I know I certainly have it frequently brought home to me that I do not conform to the behaviour I regard as desirable or even decent.

P.A. The hope is that psychoanalysis brings into view thoughts and actions and feelings of which the individual may not be aware and so cannot control. If he can be aware of them he may, or may not, decide – albeit unconsciously – to change them.

ALICE I don't see how that differs from what has been done by parents, teachers, saints, philosophers, for countless generations of prophets of one kind and another.

P.A. What I said – and I cannot say it any better – is a description which could apply to many time-honoured procedures. You would be right to assume from my description that there is no particular reason to attribute any primacy to a psychoanalytic approach. That is why most people do not put themselves to the expense in time and money to go to a psychoanalyst. The 'real psychoanalysis' to which we aspire is at best only a reaching out towards that 'real psychoanalysis'. But it is 'real' enough to make people aware that there is 'something' beyond the feeble efforts of psychoanalyst and analysand. I think it optimistic to suppose that we do more than scratch the surface in our struggles to achieve it.

ROBIN It reminds me of all the religious talk I have heard about God and Christ and Heaven and Hell. I have tried honestly to believe, but now – after countless failures to find any reality corresponding to what my teachers have taught me, countless 'backslidings' as they called it but, as I now know, unwelcome discoveries that there was nothing in the place that should house my goal, my prize – I lack the freshness, vitality and naïvety to start off on the psychoanalytic

scramble for 'cure', 'heaven', 'success' or the up-to-date name for 'wild goose'. As far as I am concerned, amongst all the competing 'cures' which my betters offer as superior alternatives, 'stone dead hath no fellow'.

ALICE That sounds depressing.

ROBIN I don't find it so; it is a relief not to have to carry this burden of credulity.

ROLAND You seemed eager enough to find out who had won the Calcutta Cup.

ROBIN It gave me pleasure to hear about these athletic triumphs; I am glad I no longer have to care whether 'England' had won or not.

ROLAND What about war? Do you not mind whether the country wins or loses?

ROBIN Of course. I have been trained to believe horrific stories about the consequences of defeat. Ought I to be able to tell, from what I know of the world in which I live, whether 'you won' or 'I won' or 'they won'? Perhaps I should include '*it* won' as one of the possibilities? In the world of power fashions the latest in patriotic wear is a rearrangement of red, white and blue in a pattern of stars and stripes; I am as unimpressed by 'capital' in a tasteful design of red hammers and sickles.

ALICE I wonder what Helen of Troy or Cleopatra would think of these fashions.

ROBIN They weren't fools. We could do with a woman with some guts today.

ALICE That is all very well, but do you suppose that any woman would be allowed to clear up the mess, leaving no place to wallow in?

ROLAND It doesn't matter whether it is a man or woman – the condition for breeding animate objects is the warmth generated by decay. If decay did not betray its presence by its stink, no ovipositor could find a suitable source of warmth.

ROBIN The ovipositor would have to have a nose.

P.A. Certainly; humans find it difficult to recognize and reconcile an evil smell with creative activity, whether it is producing children, blow-flies or ideas. There are both good and bad bad smells. A cheese can be fermented and that, to me, is unbearable, but the cheese is good. So are durians.

ROBIN I can see that – if you are dealing with nosing out physical food – but we are concerned with mental food. How do you recognize

the counterpart of a bad smell when in fact there is no sensuous smell?

P.A. We shall have to revise our views about sensuous experience or about the nature of metaphors, or both. Obscene language may be accompanied by a bad smell which we are too 'civilized' to notice.

ROBIN Perhaps I should try one or two on my red setter bitch. She has a good nose. Ought I to whisper it, or shout it, or say it in an enticing manner?

P.A. It is an idea. I suppose you should express your obscene word in an obscene manner. I suspect there are few truly obscene words – words of which the sound is internationally recognized.

ROBIN They have the same smell, awake or asleep, American or Chinese, dog or human. One's skin could have a different odour if one were in an emotional state in which obscenity only would be adequate.

P.A. The state of mind would have to be genuine; then our noses would satisfy our curiosity.

ALICE If any one of us were to utter a carefully pre-conceived obscenity that would not be a test of sincerity.

ROLAND Lend me your bitch and see what happens when my alarm goes off in the morning. I utter a silent obscenity when that clock suddenly shoots me out of profound sleep. What do you think it would prove?

P.A. Nothing; ultimately I would hope to find out whether there was some physically recognizable as well as verbally recognizable underlying reality which we are investigating, not just a vast mare's nest of thinking about thinking about thinking, which same 'thinking' did not exist but was a symptom of glandular activity.

ROLAND Does the adrenal gland start us thinking, or our thinking start the gland secreting?

ROBIN Why not so of other glands? The most obvious would be the sexual. Does the girl look pretty because a gland is operating, or is the gland operating because the eyes have seen a pretty girl?

ROLAND Does it matter which is first anyhow?

P.A. Direction matters, at least in situations of life and death. Suppose it is a carcinogenic germ that is betraying its presence by some thought pattern: That could help to initiate an appropriate reaction before it was too late, depending on whether thought or germ was the origin.

ALICE Do you suggest that a fear of cancer means there is incipient cancer? Clearly not.

P.A. 'Clearly not', as you say. It might – but only if it were part of a pattern of thought. Even if it were, the pattern might indicate a cancer in a precise part of the body – the breast. The *pattern* of thought would matter – not the component parts of the pattern. The facts do not cease to exist because they are used by the analyst. The free associations might be valid analytically, but dangerous if obscuring the facts. Psychoanalysis is only applying the principle of making the best of a bad job; the bad job remains bad, even if it is turned to good account.

ROLAND You said, if 'thinking' turned out to be a by-product of glandular activity it would be a mare's nest. Why should one deny the reality of thinking, or refrain from turning *that* to good account even if glands originated ideas?

P.A. I did not mean to suggest it was a 'mere' product of glandular activity. It does not surprise me if I betrayed such hostility to thought or its lowly glandular origin. I am too familiar with that kind of intolerance to suppose that I am free of it. I, like my fellow brothers and sisters, aspire to a messianic superiority to my fallible origins. Hatred of our origins seems to be inseparable from any advance.

ALICE Perhaps especially when we owe a debt to the origins from which we rise to 'higher things'. How beastly we are!

ROLAND And were. But how admirable we shall shortly become! It would seem to be an advantage if we could find out the conditions propitious to real progress.

P.A. Or if we knew the direction in which we were progressing. I sometimes doubt it.

ROBIN I thought you psychoanalysts had no doubt about it. You talk as if you were certain at least about your own 'progress' because you have been analysed.

P.A. 'Certainty' is a part of life as is 'uncertainty'. We cannot avoid either; they are opposite poles of the same feeling. I do not know what name to give the 'same feeling' – that is, the feeling of which they are opposite poles. Perhaps if I were a poet or philosopher I could. It does not help that I am thought to be a psychoanalyst because that is my profession.

ALICE There may be a confusion because of the ambiguity of language – if your 'profession' is psychoanalysis, it is assumed that

you 'profess' that you are one who professes or claims to be proficient.

P.A. That is true; I have to claim proficiency because I fear that if I do not someone even less proficient will take my place. In courting, if the man or woman did not 'profess' ability to be a husband or wife, what do you suppose would happen? Mankind would be denuded of all but the paranoid braggarts; Hell and Heaven filled with self-destroyed melancholics. 'Weep! Weep for Adonis.'

ALICE Or, 'Adore, adore with me my Helen-ly Beauty'. I prefer 'Venite adoremus Dominum'.

ROLAND If you cannot believe in a religious solution I at least cannot 'believe' in *facts*. Facts do not offer an outlet for a religious impulse – only for scientific curiosity.

P.A. Might they not be the same? The religious people I know certainly think they are concerned with the Truth and nothing but the truth. It is often difficult to retain a sense of awe in the face of what we are more likely to think of as humdrum daily trivialities rather than facts which deserve to be treated with respect.

ROLAND 'With respect' I could manage, but not 'with awe'.

ALICE I would have thought that 'awe' is more appropriately left to people who are religious.

P.A. I agree that we should respect the language we use and be careful not to debase it.

ROBIN Is there any fact which you know and regard with 'awe'?

P.A. Certainly – I know awe inspired by the light curtains of the Aurora, mountains –

ROLAND Not people?

ROBIN Do you make a distinction between individuals – precise, particular men and women – and their 'minds'?

P.A. Sometimes that distinction is relevant. Increasingly I am aware that there is something more than that which presents itself to my senses – sound, sight, hearing, touch. I have feelings that are aroused by something that I do not smell or touch or hear or see. My perceptions are not fine enough – blunted by the constant battering of sensuous reality. I shall not live long enough to reach *those* facts except in rudimentary degree.

ALICE If it is rudimentary, perhaps it is something you could and did experience when you yourself were a rudimentary character – in the womb.

P.A. Were you aware in pregnancy of a 'character' in your body?

ALICE Emphatically. One kick in the belly is not the same as another.

ROBIN I should be interested to know what P.A. thinks of maternal intuition. Do you think that paternally gifted psychoanalysts would be capable of such fine discriminations?

P.A. I am a prey to my prejudices. There may be contributions which paternal genes confer and others which derive from both parents.

ROLAND You seem to suggest that as a psychoanalyst you are compacted of the best of both sexes.

P.A. Would it were true. I hope that that desire does not obscure my inheritance of weaknesses. I have noticed a prejudice in favour of my patients and a related desire to share their excellencies.

ROBIN Counter-transference?

P.A. Do not forget that 'counter-transference' is by definition unconscious; it follows that I do not know the nature, in reality, of my counter-transference. I know theoretically, but that is only knowing *about* counter-transference – that is not knowing the 'thing itself.

ROBIN Presumably, knowing 'about' counter-transference is helpful. Isn't it inevitable that one learns much of which one has no direct experience? I learn about a trip to the moon, but shall certainly not experience it. It must have some value unless we are to believe that the process of education is unrealistic.

ROLAND I had a lot to learn about machine guns.

P.A. So had I; indeed I was taught and learned a lot which seems to me to be indistinguishable from what it has become fashionable to call 'brain washing', 'shell shock'; the fashions in nomenclature alter, but the reality does not.

ROBIN Do you think that 'education', 'brain washing', 'shell shock' are the same?

P.A. I do not say they are the same, but in some contexts it may be important to recognize the 'fundamental' meaning of what is said. When I was young I was taught that 'patriotism' and 'courage' were important. I believed that 'Your King and Country want you' was true – as did many thousands of others. When the more sensitive and less robust of my companions learned that the enemy did not want them, they 'broke down', became 'shell shocked'. As time passed it became clear that I had only to go into action often

enough and I would be dead. But my 'brain washing' school, training, resisted – and were sufficiently robust to withstand, with the help of a little flattering decoration or so – the increasing assaults of reality. 'Couvre-toi de flannelle' became more audible than the seductive whispers of 'glory'.

ALICE You decry glory, but is there not some reality in that?

ROBIN I was impressed by the regimental motto, 'Quo Fas et Gloria Ducunt'.

ROLAND I still am. 'Ubique', likewise, has that appeal of mystery and invitation.

P.A. I don't deny it. In a world at peace I am glad to be left with some reminiscence, some luminosity that penetrates the shadow and the darkness. However ignorant of ideas to come, the idea of glory withstood my cowardice. But just as it would be impossible to explain to anyone who had not been in action what it would be like to be a combatant soldier or a regimental stretcher bearer, so is it impossible to describe to anyone who has not been a practising psychoanalyst what it is to experience real psychoanalysis.

ROLAND Surely you do not seriously mean that an analytic session is comparable with going into action?

P.A. Comparable, yes. Imminent death is not expected, although there is that possibility. That does not weigh the anxiety – fear in a low key. One shrinks from giving the unwelcome interpretation.

ROLAND Is it not just fear that the patient is going to be angry at being criticized?

P.A. I don't think so; the patient may be angry at a critical comment, perhaps even murderously angry, but I do not think that possibility consciously deters.

ROBIN Is it some unconscious fear – the counter-transference of which you spoke?

P.A. It is. Though one is not 'conscious' of it – to obviate that is one reason why we think analysts must themselves be analysed – there is an inherent fear of giving an interpretation. If a psychoanalyst is doing proper analysis then he is engaged on an activity that is indistinguishable from that of an animal that investigates what it is afraid of – it smells danger. An analyst is not doing his job if he investigates something because it is pleasurable or profitable. Patients do not come because they anticipate some agreeable imminent event; they

come because they are ill at ease. The analyst must share the danger and has, therefore, to share the 'smell' of the danger. If the hair at the back of your neck becomes erect, your primitive, archaic senses indicate the presence of the danger. It is your job to be curious about that danger – not cowardly, not irresponsible.

ROLAND You must think highly of yourself if you are such a paragon.

P.A. I am trying to describe the job – not my fitness or otherwise for it. I have enough respect for the psychoanalyst's task to tell the difference between this social chat about psychoanalysis – or even a technical discussion of it – and the practice of psychoanalysis. Anyone who is not afraid when he is engaged on psychoanalysis is either not doing his job or is unfitted for it.

ROBIN An airman or seaman who is not afraid of the elements, afraid of the sea and the skies, is unfit to navigate. The line between fear and cowardice is faint.

P.A. Quite so. I would add, the line between daring and stupidity is similarly faint.

ROLAND How would you define it?

P.A. I would not. In practice, where to draw the line depends on the facts, including the facts of one's personality, with which one judges – the total capacity. Definition is only a matter of theory – useful for discussion and communication of ideas. In practice one does not rely on anything so ambiguous as verbal formulation.

ALICE I am always relying on verbal formulation. I have to tell grocers and butchers and fishmongers and others what I want. Rosemary and I understand each other, so there is no difficulty.

P.A. I can see that for your practical purposes it is adequate, but it may lead to misunderstandings in psychoanalysis.

ALICE There are plenty of those I assure you. Most people know I mean what I say.

ROLAND You are lucky. You would be surprised how few people on the farm do understand that. I suppose one should be surprised that there are some who do.

P.A. In analysis it is more complex. Although I have been engaged on this work for many years I am still far from refining my vocabulary and syntax to a point at which I can satisfy myself that I have said 'what I mean'. There is the added problem of perspicuity

because I depend on the analysand's capacity for comprehension to augment my inability to be perspicuous. Ideally, knowing what I have to communicate I could refine my vocabulary to a point where the words available are few, yet adequate to communicate fundamentals.

ROBIN Can you give an example?

P.A. If I wish to point to a primitive archaic feature of the analysand's behaviour I have to decide whether to say 'defecate', or 'shit', or 'urinate', or 'make water', or 'piss', or 'wet yourself. A child might be able to grasp the last expression, but not 'urinate'. A lady, unfamiliar with me or the freedom of medical terminology, might be outraged if I said 'piss'. You may remember the boy I once mentioned who could not say he had a belly-ache because he thought 'belly' was rude. He said 'body-ache'.

ROLAND Surely that is an extreme example of idiotic priggishness.

ALICE I suppose you are usually dealing with extreme instances, but it must be pretty clear that you have a very disturbed patient.

P.A. True. Anyone who finds time and money to go to an analyst cannot be doing so unless he is aware of his disturbance. But he may not be aware of the 'disturbance' which is 'disturbing' him. The boy who had a body-ache had consciously clothed the impolite nakedness of his spontaneous speech, but he had 'clothed' it so adequately that he could not himself penetrate the 'civil' language to the 'meaning' that underlay what he was saying.

ROBIN Applying what you said just now – what 'smell' were you aware of and what was the danger you smelled?

P.A. The immediate danger was that he would take flight if I said 'belly', or asked him if he had recently had a proper shit. What language? Constipated? But he was also afraid. What I needed to be able to 'smell' was which danger *both* shared. The danger of the tiger and the deer which approached close.

ROBIN The tiger could not have feared that it would be eaten by the deer.

P.A. Your instance is a good example of my problem. I could diagrammatize it thus –

Tiger { Something is going to be eaten up / Something is going to run away and leave nothing to eat } Deer

That describes a shared fear. Out of that shared odour – in the boy let us call it an 'odour of sanctity' – the analyst must find a way of formulating it to himself and then reformulating it in a way 'comprehensible', 'digestible' to the boy.

ALICE I see what you mean; it doesn't seem particularly frightening. Is that the only fear that an analyst has to contend with in the course of his practice? No doubt you have other examples of which you know but we do not.

P.A. Plenty. There are the more extreme instances of danger – as with the armed or murderously disposed patient – but even in the 'harmless' instance I have given, the boy was afraid that the psychoanalyst would tell his parents and other authorities about his 'private' sins which he feared would be exposed by the analyst – in the role of criminal investigator. A disturbed boy, or a boy in one of his disturbed moments, can tell his parents that he 'hates' the analyst and thereby arouse fear and distrust in them. Or he may accuse the analyst of having made sexual advances, or even of having assaulted him sexually.

ALICE Isn't that somewhat unlikely, especially in the instance of a well-known analyst?

P.A. There is no such thing as a 'well-known analyst'; an analyst is one who at one stage of fashion is famous, at another infamous; the barrier between 'famous' and 'infamous' is as slight as the verbal 'in'. It is unimportant – except to the psychoanalyst who cannot afford to be unaware that it is a 'built-in' part of his profession.

ALICE I think you are being a bit paranoid.

P.A. What is 'a bit paranoid' for you either is, or is not, 'paranoid' for me. If paranoid, the psychoanalyst needs to 'smell' the danger as well as know as much as his training and psychiatric textbooks can tell him. He and his family are in danger.

ROBIN I knew a man who maintained he could smell a rattlesnake in its venomous state. Jim Corbett had an uncanny flair for hunting out a man-eating tiger. I thought that was the intuition of a natural hunter.

P.A. We think it important to be able to transform these 'natural instincts' into conscious and rational thought without destroying the natural capacities. Usually the training we all undergo in the process of becoming civilized does destroy, or dangerously cover up, our 'animal' inheritance.

ALICE I have known many, who have been trained to be clever and polite civilized beings, who seemed incapable of wisdom or common-sense. I knew a man with a training at the 'best' school and university who was an unspeakable cad and bigot.

ROBIN I knew a man, with a similar background, who was unable to behave in a way appropriate to a comfortable home. There was nothing wrong with his intelligence.

P.A. It sounds as if you were not impressed with knowledge acquired in the course of organized training. Nor am I; that is one reason why it seems to me that it is a matter of urgency to develop psychoanalysis or something better.

ROBIN Do you think analysis is, or will develop into, something better? It is the same race, with its inherent weaknesses, that has to develop this 'something better'.

P.A. Its weaknesses – and strengths. I do not feel optimistic; or so pessimistic as to give up the attempt. So far I have been more inclined to persist than to give it up; so far it has seemed that the positive part of my experience outweighs the negative.

ROLAND Positive – negative . . . how do you establish that polarity?

ROBIN The question which has worried me – how do we determine direction?

P.A. It is apparently crucial; I suspect there is no absolute answer within the grasp of our capacity, but relatively we assume that the sense of progress towards the decay and degeneration of our capacities acts as an unconscious orientation. Most people seem to believe that our uncontrollable journey to the grave gives us a base-line on which to work and to which our standards are referable.

ALICE Most, but not all. Religious people often think that 'though the body dies the soul shall live for ever'.

ROBIN It's a nice idea.

ROLAND 'Nice' you call it? I think it perfectly horrible – one life is enough. I do my best to maintain my life and that of my family, but that has provided me with enough pain and anxiety to get on with.

ALICE What does P.A. say? Do you believe in religion and a future life?

P.A. I have no doubt of the 'fact' of religion as a part, perhaps an unalienable part, of human character. I have even seen a mouse assume what looked like an attitude of religious beseeching when

being tortured by a cat that had caught it. Is that a religious impulse? Or is it an attitude we have learned, from animals, to take when in a hopeless situation –

ROBIN – in the presence of cruel but playful God Cat. If God exists I would have no difficulty in believing that one of his attributes was devouring cruelty.

ALICE A belief of very respectable antiquity; because human beings have considered human sacrifice to be acceptable to God, therefore God is like that. Why not God the fountain of compassion that feeds the surgeon and physician? Maybe even psychoanalysts could drink at that source.

P.A. I do not think we could tolerate our work – painful as it often is for both us and our patients – without compassion. I see no reason for postulating an external source, independent of man, from which compassion flows.

ROBIN

> 'As, without sound or struggle,
> The stars unhurrying march,
> Where Allah's finger points them
> Through yonder purple arch . . .'

ROLAND 'Le silence éternel de ces éspaces infinis m'effraie.' The vast universe of Absolute Cold does not call to my mind anything so warm as human love. Give me my fellow men and women every time.

ALICE I agree. But, but . . . the Nazi concentration camps? Were they the unaided creation of men?

ROBIN You are not suggesting they prove the existence of God?

ALICE I am prepared to consider them evidence of a devil or Satan. I am not capable of considering the theology of a Satan, but as far as I depend on my private capacity I find much that is more comprehensible if there is a God *and* a Devil, and men and women who are inspired by both. After all, if the outward manifestations are the product of man, there could be some Power, incomprehensible by man's feeble equipment, which is responsible for the created world and for its being created in accordance with a Divine pattern. The fact that we have not yet discerned that pattern, that no great human scientists have claimed to have seen it, does not convince me that there is no such pattern.

P.A. I do not deny the possibility; my prejudice in favour of a scientific or 'factual' approach has not led me to any mystical experience. Perhaps one day in my room I might experience such an illumination. Even so I should expect it to have an endo-psychic origin.

ROLAND 'Endo-psychic'! Pardon me, but that is only one of the technical terms which darken counsel rather than throw a beam through the realms of darkness and brutish ignorance in which we labour to exist.

P.A. I am sorry to have used a term which disturbs your understanding of what I am trying to convey. Technical terms in fact save a lot of time in conversation between colleagues who are familiar with the language of which they are part.

ALICE Do colleagues understand the language? Sometimes the conversations in which they participate seem to become an interchange of jargon which floats off the underlying meaning; it becomes a mental slough like a skin that no longer relates to its parent snake.

P.A. If that is what I was guilty, of I apologize; we are open to that criticism and its counterpart – that we are talking a language which is universally comprehended and universally recognized as obscene. 'Bloody cunt' for example.

ALICE Do we really need that example?

P.A. Probably not; you certainly understood what I said. The danger that is never far from erupting is the hostility to jargon' when we try to use language precisely, when we try to be perspicuous, or when we use everyday speech with which we are all familiar. The latter vocabulary and syntax is so debased, so devalued that it is like a coin whose denomination can no longer be deciphered.

ROBIN Yet you talk.

P.A. Poor as it is and poorly though we use it, verbal communication is one of the latest and most astonishing discoveries. It is only a few thousand years old. So it is probably wise to confine ourselves to verbal methods when we attempt something so ambitious as mental maintenance or repair. It is a great improvement on physical violence.

ROLAND I am not sure that I agree. 'Faire entrer la sagesse par le cul' still has its advocates.

ROBIN So it has, as we have good reason to know. Witness Nazi Germany.

ALICE There is a danger that our concentration on Nazi Germany will distract us from observing its development elsewhere.

P.A. Bigotry and ignorance are two well-developed and ancient characteristics of the human being. In psychoanalysis, and in those who practise it, it shows up with startling freshness and vigour. I trust that our ability to detect will not become so jaded, our taste for it so surfeited, that we cease to be aware of it.

ALICE I am not jaded or surfeited, but perhaps we had better continue our discussion after a night's rest; a pause for digestion.

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ALICE You say you have never had direct experience of a mysterious event; do you mean by that that you have not been in a room at the time when someone, not you, was under the influence of a mystical force?

P.A. I have had no evidence that either I or the other was passing through such an experience. I only remember two or three occasions when an analysand of mine actually claimed a mystical origin for the event. I have been more impressed when the individual was *not* consciously making such a claim.

ROBIN Why? Surely 'unconscious' claims are far more open to mis-interpretation.

P.A. Agreed – I do not wish to decry the events of which I know nothing. But I have been compelled to notice that 'fashions' in beliefs, in theories, in varieties of psychoanalysis and in psychoanalysts, are as plentiful as fashions in cosmetics. I suspect that the fundamental source of fashion, whether in people, religions, 'scientific' theories or holiday resorts is, or ought to be, one goal of our curiosity. As individuals we cannot hope to do more than reach some outlying, peripheral goal and please ourselves by claiming that it is ultimate truth; or alternatively fall into despair at discovering our insignificance.

ROLAND Most people with any common sense know that.

P.A. 'Most people with any common sense' are, in my experience, very few people indeed. Common sense is only rarely in fashion. 'Real' common sense, in contrast to cosmetic common sense, tells too many uncomfortable things. 'Eyes that have seen colossal storms and terraqueous convulsions' are not likely to be sought after if they reveal danger and the emotional state appropriate to it.

ROLAND Don't you think that psychoanalysis itself glorifies the

importance of a man's thoughts and feelings as a way of being deaf and blind to facts?

P.A. Yes; it can be used, chosen as a method of 'not choosing', inhibiting awareness of facts which we do not like and cannot do anything about. The danger of such use is that it blinds us to facts about which we might be able to do something if we had not decided to look the other way. Equally we may prefer to look outwards, to turn away from the spectacle of facts of our own character. We psychoanalysts are devoted to the assistance of those who choose to look inwards. As a private individual it is necessary for me to be as much aware as possible of the universe in which I live; professionally I need to be aware of what I profess to be aware of – the character which the analysand 'is', not simply what he 'is like'.

ALICE Most of those I know to be going for analysis are unimportant; sometimes I think their going to a psychoanalyst is about all they have to boast about. Yet when they have finished they boast of having been to such-and-such an analyst of whom I have never even heard. The only ones I know by name are Freud and Jung and Adler.

ROBIN And two of them were not psychoanalysts – according to Freud.

ROLAND I would hate to go to a psychoanalyst –

P.A. And would hate it still more if you got there. 'Insignificance' is not a discovery which anyone wants to make about himself and his affairs.

ALICE Do you include his analyst in the 'affairs' of which he discovers the insignificance?

P.A. It is part of the reality to which human beings should not be blind. Whether that discovery is achieved or not depends on the two engaged in the psychoanalytic research; they may prefer to discontinue the search before such culmination. Discovery is only transitory – on the way to another discovery.

ROLAND It sounds unrewarding. I was once told the meaning of the phrase 'virtue is its own reward'; I remember thinking it sounded like an elaborate practical, not-kind 'joke'. The reward of analysis appears to be – analysis.

P.A. All science, art and religion may come together, cohere, to expose a 'coherence' which is not in accordance with the predisposition of man. I do not see why he should not be another of Nature's discarded experiments.

ALICE You speak as if you 'personified' Nature.

P.A. I do, because it simplifies the communication of what I wish to communicate. It helps in talking to you and other friends with whom I wish to communicate, and who may also wish to communicate with me. This is not intended to mean that there is, in Rupert Brooke's phrase, a fishy god, 'squamous, omnipotent and kind', some Fate of whom we are the chosen children. This god of our fishy existence – assuming the embryologists are correct – may have wanted to turn me and my fellow fish into amphibians and finally to transform us into mammals.

ROLAND Finally? Why finally? This conversation, carried on by the indulgence of the very gas which has supported our existence may be a prelude to yet another transformation into the gas we use and abuse: 'spirit' or 'soul' we call it. Grandiose to the last. Homo sapiens!

ROBIN You are bitter about this harmless conceit.

ALICE I have seen much of this conceit, but I don't regard it as 'harmless'.

(*All fall silent. After a thoughtful pause of a minute or two . . .*)

P.A.

> 'Sceptre and Crown
> Must tumble down
> And in the grave
> Be equal made.'

ROBIN I didn't know you read the poets.

P.A. People frequently assume that I am devoid either of culture or of technical equipment – or both.

ROLAND You sound hardly used.

P.A. No; it is part of the analyst's profession to be familiar with the real world, whereas laymen think they can afford to be deaf and blind to these unpleasing components of real life.

ROLAND What solution do you suggest? Psychoanalysis seems to be available only for the wealthy, and even so only to confirm those analysands and their analysts in the belief that the world of riches is the best of all possible worlds.

P.A. I think this is the best of all possible worlds because I know of no other world that is possible. That is not the same as thinking, like Pangloss, that there is no way in which we could strive to improve

it. We consider the attempt to improve humans both worthwhile and urgent. I know no analyst who regards psychoanalysis with complacency, but unfortunately our discontent and the internal discussions and disagreements are easily mis-interpreted to express a belief that some body or institution is better. It is not my belief, but I *am* a critic.

ALICE I wish I didn't so often have evidence of the bigotry and bad temper of psychoanalysts.

P.A. So do I – I have plenty of opportunity to observe my own. And I have good reason to be familiar with the tension to which the practising psychoanalyst is exposed. It is understood that the work of doctors and surgeons must be responsible, arduous and trying, but it is not clear that psychoanalysts are exposed to the same stresses.

ROBIN You will admit that the lay public have difficulty in seeing what hardship there is in having a comfortable home, good food, an office which is easily and inexpensively maintained, and a not inconsiderable income.

P.A. I do not blame the public. It is foolish to nurse grievances about having to live in the same world as our patients. My impression is that my colleagues and I show considerable tolerance of characteristics of which we must necessarily be aware. A surgeon does not think a cancer pretty, or a physician admire a chancre's purity; still less does he think it necessary to contract the disease though Hunter was over-bold in his exploration of spirochaetes. A psychoanalyst is expected to be sensitive to psycho-neurotic or psychotic suffering.

ROBIN Don't we all suffer these pains?

P.A. In a sense, yes. The experience of a physician who observes suffering about which he can do nothing is similar to that of the psychoanalyst who knows how intense is the mental pain of a neurosis but can do nothing because his intervention would be resented as officious and self-interested.

ROLAND Wouldn't that diminish with the experience of the efficacy of psychoanalysis?

P.A. Probably – as it does when a general practitioner is known to be very skilful. But the psychoanalyst cannot fall back on a long history of therapeutic success. In physical medicine the triumphs are lost in the un-observed, unspectacular jungles of Public Health-pure water, pure air, untainted food. Who gives a thought to the solitary with his microscope, or the crank who deprecates smoking in a food market or other public place?

ROLAND If you want the doctor to be honoured he should also be recognized as the source of the knowledge that enables the addict to inject his veins with heroin.

P.A. I did not mean to be advocating honours. Perhaps, if I were to do so, I should also advocate 'dishonours', statues erected to the Marquis de Sade for his services to cruelty.

ROLAND Are you then opposed to 'honours'?

P.A. 'Honours', as part of institutional organization, is not a matter on which I am qualified to speak. I do not remember anything in the course of my experience with small groups which provided me with material for interpretation. Even a social conjecture becomes hazardous if, when I am speculating or privately discussing a few speculative phantasies, it is assumed that it carries the force of a scientifically derived formulation. But I *would* be prepared to express an opinion in a psychoanalysis and to be held responsible for what I said. In that context there is evidence that a patient must respect himself. If this sounds too obvious I can only regret that I have to use words which have become debased and for which there is little respect. Here it is easier to see that we must respect each other. I knew a successful and wealthy farmer who had great and justified respect for a drunken and illiterate cowherd when he spoke of any matters relating to cattle. 'Honour thy father and thy mother' is an injunction which lacks validity unless the father and mother are worthy of respect. The general principle has to be worth applying in a precise instance. The individual is always a particular instance to himself; whether he can respect himself is a matter which *he* must decide. I do not know if this bears on the question you ask, but I think it is related to it. There are good grounds for supposing that the character of a group would be revealed by the individual people or activities or achievements it chose to honour + or –.

ROBIN By 'honour + or –' I suppose you mean honour or dishonour.

P.A. Yes. Part of the ambiguity and uncertainty of psychoanalytic interpretation is that we have to speak spontaneously and cannot at such short notice express ourselves with precision. However accurate we may try to be, there is the ambiguity of imprecision of the language we use.

ROLAND You should cultivate the precision of mathematics.

P.A. I doubt whether we can do much in the realm of mathematics – unless you consider the introduction of plus and minus signs as a 'mathematical enlargement'. We have to forge our instruments while engaged in the work for which we need them. Rosemary is very quiet.

ROSEMARY I'm sorry I haven't much to say, but I was listening.

ROLAND A flattering thought; I hope it is worth listening to.

ROSEMARY Oh yes – though I don't always understand in spite of trying.

ALICE Rosemary and I spend so much of our lives in mundane activities that we cannot spare time for erudite books. If a house has to be kept liveable it is women who have to do so. How much respect do you think is paid to the minutiae to which we devote ourselves?

ROLAND Probably not much; isn't that true of all necessary but unspectacular activities? After all, we cannot erect monuments to all the heroes and heroines who have invented cheese. I love Camembert but I don't say grace to its creator. Perhaps I ought.

ROBIN Is that why some have a poly-gratitudinous all-purpose ritual – to ward off the evil eye that watches the scales recording our greed? No one seems to regard mental greed as reprehensible – people speak with admiration of the 'omnivorous reader'. What does P.A. think of that?

ALICE I would like to ask P.A. why there is no book on mental dietetics.

P.A. The principle is recognized though not formulated. We do not consider that children should be allowed access to every book; it is thought that some form of regulation is required to produce and maintain mental health –

ROBIN And freedom – see *Areopagitica*.

P.A. As a general principle the personality must be stimulated so that curiosity is aroused but not surfeited; if desire is too easily satisfied there is a loss of mental vigour. The danger of mental indigestion must be watched.

ROBIN I understand your metaphors, but can you give me a concrete example?

ROLAND Would you regard childhood masturbation as a surfeit?

P.A. It can be – later it would be lascivious or pornographic stories, or pictures or films. But what is pornographic for one man

may not be so for another, even at the same age. One man can sit facing another and be sexually stimulated by his vision reinforced by imagination; he has a homosexual experience which cannot be prevented by any physical obstruction. He may thus have a facile sexual life which outwardly arouses no censure. A similar experience, but heterosexual, can be equally mentally debilitating. It is as if the mind itself required some difficulty, some obstruction in order to function in a health-evoking manner. The diet must not be too easily digestible for physical health. Freud considered that analysis should be conducted in an atmosphere of deprivation.

ALICE Oh, Freud! You people seem to believe that no one ever thought before Freud. Any *woman* knows that it does not do to give children everything they want, but you should hear the row when. you try to introduce moderation –

P.A. I can still hear the yells and reverberations – all disguised in terms that might be used by an articulate cat while it licked the stolen cream from its whiskers. I am sure you would not maintain that cats are only male.

ALICE Or that only women are catty or tigerish? I do not.

ROLAND You sound a little ruffled yourself.

ALICE I am getting tired of the blameless innocent.

P.A. Sometimes the weary unite and . . . there is a Massacre of the Innocents. Then we start all over again to grow more Innocents and more teeth and claws to match.

ROLAND Nowadays we are growing more and better psychoanalysts to produce better minds to turn out bigger and more efficient bombs –

ROBIN And more and more breeder reactors to keep up the supply of fissile material.

ROSEMARY Isn't Nature wonderful!

P.A. I remember an old man who had retired, but liked to pride himself on his youthful, up-to-date vision. His eyes used to twinkle as he waggled his snowy beard. 'We live in stirring times!' he used to say. 'We live in stirring times.' 'What stirring times?' said an irreverent nephew. But by this time he had gone to sleep.

ROLAND And the moral of that is?

P.A. I don't know; I only fear that whatever Freud or Melanie Klein or Alice may say, the temptation to release a BIG BANG may be greater than the rewards of depriving ourselves of that pleasure.

ROBIN

Litora litoribus contraria;
'Bring your sticks of chewing gum
and sit upon the floor
And we'll tell you Bible stories
you have never heard before.'

P.A. Pleasure, particularly sexual pleasure, is one of the earliest pleasing events to be appreciated. Thanks to Freud it is not difficult to detect the existence of that pleasure.

ROLAND Surely that is general. I have always regarded Freud's discovery as somewhat naïve and over-rated.

P.A. Freud himself was astonished that something so commonplace should create such a furore – but it did. Today, the theories of psychoanalysis have to be formulated in tired language and it is thought that the *meaning* of Freud's formulations is correspondingly tired. Illnesses don't become tired, and mental pain is as fresh and lively as ever it was. People who complain of mental pain are regarded as being as unreasonable as an ancient Egyptian would have been had he complained about what *we* diagnose as syphilis. Mental pain is regarded, even today, as a fuss about nothing. *Theories* are discussed – rarely the pain the sufferer inflicts or embodies. I remember being called to see a German prisoner of war who complained of pains in his wrists which had been caused, he said, by the British who chained his hands together when he surrendered at Narvik. A German naval officer captured at the same time was called to interpret. I could do nothing because the officer, instead of translating, made use of the opportunity to express his contempt for the man and for the British for resorting to such barbarous tricks. I did not respond to his own self-hate for surrendering either to us or, as I began later to suspect, to the Nazis.

ROLAND What made you think that about the Nazis? I should have thought it most unlikely.

P.A. I did not in fact have any evidence of the kind that I would consider necessary had I been psychoanalysing him. I am citing it as a specific example of a general principle which I had formulated for myself. In the practice of psychoanalysis I always aim for specific evidence for the scientific facts which I am interpreting. But an accumulation of such experiences leads me to discern a pattern

underlying all the examples. This pattern I then try to formulate. No doubt if I were a painter I would try to transfer my discovery to a canvas; if a musician, to a musical score.

ALICE Do you mean the black marks on paper or the sounds which an orchestral instrument might produce?

P.A. Since I am speaking of the underlying, fundamental reality I imagine it would be the sound. I cannot know because I am not a musician; nor am I a painter. In those performed arts I am only capable of reception. When I aspire, as here, to be the transmitter I have to fall back on articulate speech. It is not because I am good at it, but because I am 'less bad' at it than I am at other methods of communication. It is not lost on me that Alice might again ask, 'Do you mean the black marks on paper, or the noises people make with their vocal chords when they speak?' I mean to use all my resources of language. I think there is a better chance for someone to interpret my spoken words correctly than to interpret the black marks on paper correctly. In both instances the fate of the meaning which I wish to convey is dependent on me – on my ability to communicate – *and* on the existence of a receiver.

ALICE So it depends on 'transmitter' and 'receiver'.

P.A. The Nazi officer was not a good transitory link in the chain – the episode afforded him an opportunity to communicate what *he* wanted to communicate. From his point of view – vertex – *I* was not a good transitory link, but the best available. It was that or nothing. Earlier he would have been able to augment his verbal apparatus with guns; disarmed, he had the spoken word.

ALICE And such gestures and tones of voice and facial contortions as he could command. I had not the slightest doubt when Robert was a baby that he could understand what I said and could make himself clear. What sets me against psychoanalysts is that they seem to have to resort to an enormous quantity of jargon in order either to conceal their ignorance, or to express a minute particle of common sense which any woman would know.

P.A. Not any woman, alas! Nor any man. As for the profession of psychiatry or psychoanalysis, it is no different from any other in that it has to be practised by human beings. I cannot transform myself into a person fit to be a psychoanalyst but, to be fair to myself and my colleagues, I know of no other occupation where such unceasing

efforts are made to become fit for the job we do. Unless we submit to the discipline we cannot call ourselves psychoanalysts.

ROLAND Can't this be done without an apparatus which is so costly in time and money?

P.A. No; mental pain requires careful handling. So does physical pain – although we usually regard a headache, or stomach ache, or abrasion as unworthy of the attention of a trained surgeon or physician.

ALICE What about your hypochondriacs?

ROBIN Yes; you seem to me to encourage some of the most tiresome people on earth. Aren't you encouraging such behaviour and profiting by its encouragement to make a living?

P.A. It is not our intention. Our difficulties are contributed to by the debasement and devaluation of our technical terms – 'paranoid' and 'narcissistic', for example. We have to use such language as is available and it may seem that we use it in the way that it is used in social intercourse.

ROLAND You make it sound as if psychoanalysts are all professors of English. That is not the impression I get when I read – which is not often, thank God – their books and papers.

ROBIN & ALICE (*together*) Amen to that.

P.A. 'And so say all of us.' We are not professors of English – though no doubt we would all be the better for it if we were. In practice we make do with a restricted capacity for English for accurate use in a limited area of experience.

ROLAND I do not understand in what sense you use 'area'. Do you mean an epoch of time, or geographical space, or part of the anatomy, or . . . ?

P.A. You point my difficulty. It is assumed that the character or personality corresponds to the physical boundaries which we can see and touch, but that does not seem a wise assumption – if there is in reality such an entity as a mind or character. For example, if one of us went out of the room and spoke, we. would recognize that it was . . .

ROBIN Oh surely! We should only recognize the sound and interpret that to be evidence of an individual, not a 'character'.

P.A. Perhaps. But I think that I would soon learn to distinguish between a recording, however faithful, and the real thing. I do not believe a baby would be unaware of the distinction if it listened to a

recording of the mother's voice, even if the mother were physically present and appearing to be speaking to it.

ROLAND Hasn't that test been carried out?

P.A. I should not be impressed if it were; I do not believe that a mother, being requested to act the part of a mother to her child while a record of her voice was being played, would not betray her deception. I suspect that the baby would react to that sense of falseness in the mother.

ROLAND But this is pure conjecture! Is there no scientific proof?

P.A. It is conjecture; but I am not sure that it is 'pure' conjecture any more than I consider 'pure' truth to be available to mere human beings like ourselves. Psychoanalysts have to be cautious about their claims of scientific truth. The nearest that the psychoanalytic couple comes to a 'fact' is when one or the other has a feeling. Communicating that fact to some other person is a task which has baffled scientists, saints, poets and philosophers as long as the race has existed. 'Nymphs and shepherds weep no more', 'Weep you no more, sad fountains' – could there be any statements more simple, any grammar or vocabulary less obscure? Yet those words have had a powerful effect on generations of people.

ROBIN 'Mummy, what does "a bloody fucker" mean?' – that is a simple question too, words and grammar. But it likewise has been known to create an emotional state in the 'Mummy' to whom it is communicated. Perhaps Alice could throw some light on the problem.

ALICE I admit that just now when the words were uttered they created a momentary flutter; in fact I immediately wondered if you were right to say them in front of Rosemary.

ROLAND I have known the reciprocal of that when something shocking has *not* been said. On one occasion the authorities in war did not divulge facts which might have saved many lives; they did not wish the enemy to know that his secrets were no longer secret. I suppose that we who survive would be willing to concede that those who died did not die in vain. But I wonder what the dead would say if they knew.

P.A. Going into action in war I knew I might lose my life. I don't think I mobilized my patriotism; I simply succeeded in believing that I would probably *not* be killed.

ROLAND That seems to me to be not divulging facts, even to yourself, for fear of what use you might make of them.

P.A. That is true. A decision involves choosing a particular set of ideas, inhibiting another.

ROBIN I thought 'inhibition' was a technical term for a pathological process.

P.A. Certain terms are chosen for technical use in discussion, but reality does not obey the rules of grammar or psychoanalysis. Our apparatus of thinking may have served us in good stead so far, but 'so far' only means as far as the limited range of our perceptions. André Green has pointed out that in the limited sphere of our chosen subject our intuition may be 'un œil en trop'; we are able to grasp a meaning so unwelcome that we cannot tolerate what our own perceptions reveal.

ROBIN I remember the depictions in the caves of Elephantine being considered by my parents to be too gross for my innocent eyes to observe.

ALICE Was it you who asked your mother what 'bloody fucker' meant?

ROBIN No – I was so 'innocent' that I was hardly fit to survive in the strange world of the 'bloody little sods' of my prep school.

ALICE Rosemary, do you object to this sort of language as much as I do?

ROSEMARY My mum was most particular that I should *not* hear and see what the gentlemen who came to see her behaved like.

ROBIN So you must be quite used to the behaviour of 'ladies and gentlemen' – your 'betters', in fact?

ROSEMARY My mother was 'pertikler' how I was brought up; of course I learnt it from my friends who used to tease me because they said my mum was a 'whoore', as they called it. One day in class, when the teacher told me to read the end of a poem, the children began to whisper, louder and louder, 'Rosemary's a whoore, Rosemary's a whoore', till at last the teacher said, 'Whoore or no whoore, Rosemary will now read the end of the ninth book of *Paradise Lost'*. I remember it clearly because I was dreaming of the words, 'Paradise the blest' – something about 'blest communion, fellowship divine'. I didn't know what the words meant, but they made me cry and everyone thought I was crying because my mother was a whore – but I wasn't.

ROLAND Poor kid. What did you do?

ROSEMARY Oh, I didn't mind. I told the boy next to me that I'd

knock his block off if I caught him after school; that shut them up because they knew I could fight. I was a terrible kid.

ALICE Worse than the 'gentlemen' who came to see your mum I expect. Do you blush, Roland?

ROLAND No; by the time I could go a-whoring I was so scared of spirochaetes and gonococci that I didn't dare. It is one occasion on which my cowardliness paid off. I expect P.A. must know something though.

P.A. Yes – though I too must plead guilty to cowardice as far as practice is concerned. I have plenty of second-hand, hear-say experience, and some experience of dealing with people who think that a psychoanalyst is a second-class citizen hardly worthy of common courtesy or respect. If he knows what he is talking about he is thought to be beneath consideration; or beneath consideration because he does not know what he is talking about. I don't think we are any worse off than anyone else, but we are supposed to be able to tolerate facts, however disagreeable. On the whole we get used to the low regard in which we are held. After all, not everyone would treat Rosemary as a human being or a social equal.

ROBIN In Russia perhaps, or the U.S.A.

ROLAND Is the culture of a country more than skin deep?

P.A. Any culture, civilization or temporarily exposed characteristic of persons or peoples is subject to penetration and displacement by the unexpected. They say animals are aware of the imminence of an earthquake. Humans are sensitive to the imminence of an emotional upheaval.

ALICE You mean people who are afraid they are going mad, or going to have a breakdown?

ROLAND Break up, down, in, out, or through?

P.A. Yes, though I was thinking of being subject, as human animals, to a cosmic upheaval. We probably would not be consciously, scientifically conceptually aware of it for some centuries. Until we are able to discern some such pattern we cannot 'test' it by submitting it to related forms of validation.

ROLAND Since none of us lives for centuries, a store, exposed to scrutiny, would be required to reveal a pattern.

P.A. I suppose so – unless there is some unknown form of communication between discrete individuals. Even if individual humans are separated by Time, Space, Deity – to borrow Alexander's

formulation – this barrier is penetrable by forces whose understanding is beyond the range of our logical, rational modes of thought.

ALICE Such as . . . ?

P.A. Speculative imagination, speculative reason. André Green has pointed out that there may be something about the dramatic art 'form' which is perspicuous. That might make communication possible through the barrier. I was thinking of something which I cannot support in any way that I regard as scientific unless we suppose that science develops from a germ of phantasy. Suppose the results of a colossal cosmic explosion – as for example the explosion which is visibly evident to us as the Crab Nebula – could now be reaching us in a way that affected the DNA molecule. That could exert an influence on the germ plasm of the entire human race; from that, the outbreak of many generations of humans all irritated into violent, murderous activity.

ROLAND Science fiction surely.

ALICE So he said, But what of it? Isn't it more reasonable to suppose some explanation like the wide dissemination of violence by film, press and television?

P.A. Much simpler – much more rational too. That is my point; a rational explanation is always welcome especially in contrast to no explanation at all, or a confession of ignorance. The fact that it is more acceptable to our insignificant little minds does not mean that an unwelcome fact would just go away because we did not like it.

ROBIN Somewhere Freud describes a paramnesia as being a secondary elaboration intended to take the place of something forgotten.

P.A. Or something that has never been known – the gap where a fact ought to be but isn't.

ROLAND Yes; but is there any evidence for a mind at all? It has no colour, smell, or any other sensuous component. Why should not the whole of psychoanalysis be just a vast, towering Babel of paramnesias to fill the gap where our ignorance ought to be?

P.A. I do not think Freud or any psychoanalyst would welcome such an extension; it is typical of the devaluation to which the language we use is subjected. I am prepared to entertain the possibility that the cloud-capp'd tow'rs of human imaginative structures may disappear like the insubstantial vision of a dream. I do not have any difficulty in thinking that the human race itself might disappear in a puff of smoke. Suppose the sun were to flicker as a prelude to its

disintegration, would any human survive? This world is only a grain of cosmic dust and our sun an ordinary star – so the astronomers tell us. We know of no other world to which we could fly as a new home.

ROBIN On the other hand it would be extraordinary if amongst the many millions of solar systems there were not some other accident similar to that which produced 'homo sapiens'.

ROLAND A fat lot of use that would be to us.

P.A. In the meantime we should remain true to our nature and endeavour to make the best of ourselves.

ROLAND Is P.A. also among the moralists? I thought you people prided yourselves on being above that.

P.A. I am not aware that we pride ourselves or deprecate ourselves on account of our being ordinary members of the human race. Like my fellows I would be gratified if I discovered that I was in some way excellent; in fact I have found no evidence of my 'excellence' as a psychoanalyst.

ALICE Your colleagues think highly of you.

P.A. Some do, luckily; I am not unappreciative of the fact, but it tells me more of the generosity and affection of my colleagues than of *my* merits. I think we could discuss something of greater interest than me and my qualities and defects.

ROBIN Doesn't your working day consist in discussing the qualities and defects of others?

P.A. I try to demonstrate the qualities of the individual. Whether they are assets or liabilities he can then decide for himself.

ROLAND I thought you were supposed to cure them.

ROBIN So did I.

P.A. 'Cure' is a word which, like 'illness' or 'disease', is borrowed from physicians and surgeons to account for our activities in a comprehensible manner.

ROLAND I hope you will not murder the language by introducing monstrosities like 'anti-bodies'.

ROBIN That was one of Quiller-Couch's aversions, but I do not see why. Quiller-Couch was hampered by his admiration for the translators of King James's Bible and did not recover from the fact that medical science was not written by men of literary genius at the height of English culture. I think James Strachey's achievement in translating Freud may yet come to be valued at its worth.

ALICE Is the matter he translated to be thought of as comparable

in value to the matter of the Bible? Perhaps we should discuss it with Priest when he returns. He's been away a long time but I understand he is coming back in time for our next meeting.

ROLAND Oh my . . . good.

ALICE You don't sound pleased; what is the matter?

ROLAND I'm glad he's coming, but I don't want to be involved with God and the rest of that pious stuff.

ROBIN To do him credit he does not try converting us; to be fair to P.A. *he* doesn't try to convert us to psychoanalysis either.

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ALICE (*to Priest*) It is very pleasant to welcome you back to our group. I hope your trip was successful.

PRIEST It was; I am glad to be back and to find you all looking so well. How's the debate been progressing?

ROBIN Well; though I don't think we made any discoveries. We were wondering whether you could re-light the flame which seems to have grown dim to near extinction. How was your conference?

PRIEST Much like others I have known – in fact I suspect my experience has not been so different from yours. Your account could be transferred to the religious conference without verbal alterations – insignificant, but not in the eyes of God.

ROBIN Why drag in God? We have no evidence of his existence.

PRIEST True. But the fact that we cannot prove that God exists may be a matter of importance only to our self-admiring selves. 'Self-yeast of spirit a dull dough sours', as the poet says. 'But, swollen with wind and the rank mist they draw . . .', as an earlier poet said.

ROLAND You do not mention that the two you quote were of opposing sects.

PRIEST Of opposing sects, yes; but at one in agreeing there is a God.

ROLAND Between them there is not *one* god but two. In fact there seem to be as many gods as there are people to believe in them.

P.A. I agree, but that is only saying that different individuals have different ideas about whom they are addressing and in what manner they should communicate their approach.

PRIEST That does not prove there is no God.

ALICE I think the discussion pointless. Some people have an experience which they cannot explain in any way comparable to that

in which they describe other experiences. The sense of contact with God is not similar to other contacts.

P.A. You are, here and now, making just that comparison. That could be because when you speak of 'contact with God' you are using 'contact' metaphorically; when you speak of contact with air or water or Tom Smith you do not mean it to be supposed that it is a metaphorical contact. I have not had such an experience and therefore find no necessity for any explanation. Freud had a good deal to say about the psychoanalysis of religion; he seemed to think there was no need to seek any other than a psychoanalytic explanation.

ROBIN In other words, he did not believe in God.

P.A. That could be one conclusion. I do not know if he had any other views.

PRIEST Whether he had or not, I cannot see that any one man's views, however impressive, can be regarded as relevant to someone who is not Freud. Freud spoke of a psychoanalysis of religion; if I had time I could write a book about the religion of psychoanalysis.

P.A. Could you give us a rough idea of what your book would contain?

PRIEST I think I could write an introductory volume or two about the many 'religions' that have existed, been discarded for another, been in turn replaced as more in conformity with the needs of its time. For all its apparatus of erudition I see Psychoanalysis as yet one more religion – not the True Religion – des-tined to flourish for its day and then be heard no more.

P.A. Why categorize it as a religion? Most of us try to be scientific; this is tantamount to claiming only one standard – the Truth. It is not incompatible with the religious stress on truth, but that does not make it a religion.

PRIEST The fact that people who have claimed to be God-fearing show little respect for the truth does not make all religion false, or God only a fiction spawned by a fevered imagination. Is that not more likely to be true of psychoanalysis? After all, who are the originators in psychoanalysis? Is it not generated by neurotics and worse?

P.A. I think it likely, but the revolt against neurosis and psychosis is also generated from amongst these same people. If you gather together a group of neurotics, psychotics, hypochondriacs and other disturbed people they soon rebel against themselves and their troubles.

ROBIN Is that any more than what people do who want to escape the consequences of a mistaken choice?

P.A. I think so. I doubt if individuals make a choice; they cannot know what the 'choice' is. The first requisite of a choice is that the person making it knows what the alternatives are from which he or she is to choose. But assuming that they have had a choice and made the wrong one, ought we not to attempt to correct it? If the belief in an almighty spirit is mistaken, if experience leads us to suppose that there is no such spirit, we should cease behaving as if there were.

PRIEST I agree. But does your experience support the idea that people give it any serious thought? From what I see of psychoanalysts they do not know what religion is; they simply transfer their allegiance from one indisciplined, desire-ridden system of emotions and ideas to another. I have heard psychoanalysts discussing; their discussion itself betrays all the characteristics which I have recognized as pathognomic of religion of a primitive, undisciplined, intellectually unstructured kind. They argue heatedly, adducing national, racial, aesthetic and other emotionally coloured motivations in support of their particular brand of activity.

P.A. I would not deny that we do all these things, but we do in fact continue to question ourselves and our motives in a disciplined manner. We may not succeed; neither do we give up the attempt.

PRIEST I hate to appear to sit in judgement but I have to judge, to appraise such evidence as I have as it touches my private life and my responsibility for my own thoughts and actions. You have as many sects of psychoanalysts as there are in any religion I know. You have as many psychoanalytic 'saints' with their individual following of devotees.

P.A. We are human and show all the weaknesses of that biological category. We do not cease to worship and adore because adoration and worship are basic, fundamental and therefore unalterable, inalienable characteristics; we try to allow for that fact.

PRIEST Ought you not then to make room for the capacity to worship and adore – even to depend on something worthy of dependence, adoration and worship? Otherwise such capacities either 'fust in us unused', or become debased by the object worshipped.

P.A. True. The individual who adores a particular nation, or drug – such as alcohol – may be debased by that fact and unable to

release himself from a loyalty which has become debasing and dangerous. Loyalties that are health-giving and growth-fostering at one stage become a barrier when the individual cannot transcend them. The barrier can be anything from the limitations imposed by our animal nature, to something temporary that has become hardened, calcified, rigid – I borrow the terms from medical descriptions of arterial degeneration; there is reason to suppose some spiritual counterpart, some unwillingness to entertain new ideas, which is inseparable from advancing physical age.

ROBIN Cannot the 'religion' of psychoanalysis, or the investigation of psychoanalysis by theologians, teach psychoanalysts something valuable, as the psychoanalysis of religion could teach theologians something valuable for theology? Why should there be any difficulty?

P.A. There *is* a difficulty; the very efficacy of teaching is a matter for caution because we do not know what those taught will learn. Children often learn to emulate their parents' faults. Even the good intentions of parents and teachers can be nullified by that fact.

PRIEST What man professes is not so important as what man is.

ALICE Whatever facets we observe, it is those facets, temporarily obscured, which exert such influence – perhaps because men deliberately hide from scrutiny what they wish to do.

PRIEST I would rather men learnt that God was the observer from whom nothing is hidden than that they only have to hide from their confessor or psychoanalyst.

P.A. That is one reason why I would avoid being trapped into being a 'good analyst' who does not require to be correctly informed. It must often lead some religious aspirant to hate and rebel against an all-seeing God, or even human being, whose business it is, like the police, to find out.

PRIEST A parent does need to be loving, but that does not mean he has to be a fool or believe in God as an expression of his folly. We do not recruit fools for our work, or choose fools to be God's servants by virtue of their folly.

P.A. We don't choose psychopaths to be candidates for psychoanalysis.

ALICE We do not knowingly choose fools for husbands or to be the parents of our children. The trouble in real life is to know how to choose from what chance offers us – only men.

ROSEMARY No, Ma'am – only males. We hope they will turn into men. I would rather be your servant, Ma'am, than risk a boyfriend who might never become a man. They are all pretty free if it is a matter of messing about with us – no one wants to change.

PRIEST That is so; men are similar to women, and women to men. That is the problem stated in terms – correct terms – of biological sex. We try to show people there is more to passionate love than simply the activity – contact – between genitalia.

ROBIN Does anyone believe that sex is only physical contact between genitalia? I have been a farmer nearly all my life and have never believed such nonsense. You would have to be someone really intelligent – like a psychoanalyst – to think something so divorced from reality.

P.A. I agree. It requires intelligence and the resources of an educational system at full stretch to produce a real fool. I have had experiences which could be understood as genuine endeavour; no fool, no *real* fool, could be the product of effortless pleasurable exercise. I have known people who think that effortless pleasurable activity must be the height of bliss. Do you, Robin, think that only a psychoanalyst could achieve this?

ALICE I'm sure Robin does not think that.

P.A. Exaggeration, all exaggeration, is analogous to the use of a mental microscope which makes visible what otherwise would remain unobserved.

ROBIN It is no exaggeration. I don't want to be rude to P.A. but I have seen experts of all sorts – architects, soldiers, sailors, statesmen – and though it took me years before I broke through the crust of training, by which I learned to revere my superiors and their wisdom, I did achieve my freedom.

P.A. I congratulate you on your felicity. I still find it easier to suppose that farmers and doctors and artists and others on whom I depend are wise.

ROLAND Should you be 'finding it easier', or are you being sarcastic? Rosemary, Alice, Robin and I are all wiser now than we were. It is a mistake – however natural – to be a creature of habit, to slip into these well-worn grooves of thinking. You should have had no difficulty in maintaining a disciplined 'way'.

P.A. Nevertheless I have difficulty; I am not exempt from the failings of my fellow men. I do not plead guilty to your complaint that

I was being sarcastic – although I am not debarred from the freedom to be sarcastic or hostile. When I am professionally engaged I do my best to refrain from thoughts and feelings which are irrelevant to my work. That does not mean I am obliged to be incapable of anger.

ROBIN You seem disturbed. I think Roland must have penetrated your adamantine calm.

P.A. Not adamantine: I expect to be treated with civility even though I pursue a profession which is disliked –

ROLAND – because it claims the right, on technical grounds, to say hurtful things.

P.A. I claim the right to say things that are correct psychoanalysis though they are hurtful. A surgeon uses a scalpel, but cutting into flesh is not done because of the pain it inflicts. A sadist may be a surgeon, but that is not the same as being a surgeon in order to conceal a forbidden pleasure. I might have to demonstrate that a patient was gaining surreptitious pleasure from the survival – active survival – of an emotionally charged idea that I was a father inflicting corporal punishment.

ROBIN Don't you use the expression 'Father figure'?

P.A. I should of course use it if I felt it expressed something I wished to say and the person to whom I said it understood what I meant.

ROBIN Can you give me an example?

P.A. I had a patient who was educated and cultivated. Yet he ejaculated 'God' with great emphasis in a context which made it clear that he was feeling angry and resentful towards me.

PRIEST How do you know he was not simply using the noise – 'god' – as a swear word? I would say he was uttering the name of God in vain.

P.A. That is assuming that there is a God.

PRIEST It is an assumption based on many years of experience.

P.A. Yes; but in the practice of my profession I have to consider the nature of the experience which you describe as lasting through years. I have to consider whether the 'experience' was not prompted by some events within your body and mind. The fact of a father and the fact of a mother are both impressive. You can say it is only a theory, but I should have thought it would occur to any parent that the theory could be plausibly regarded as compatible with known facts.

PRIEST Plausibly, yes. But why do you regard 'plausibility' as significant? An adult's conjecture about his views when he was an infant is called a scientific fact, but not when the discussion is of a 'religious' fact. You say the psychoanalyst – a real psychoanalyst – is a compassionate man or woman only concerned to be helpful even as he reminds the patient of a bad or cruel father or mother.

P.A. You go further than we do when you claim that there is in fact a 'guardian angel'.

PRIEST You go further than I do when you say there is a compassionate man or woman who is only concerned to be helpful. Tell me – have you ever known one? *I* do not say there is a sincere, compassionate, God-fearing, God-loving priest. I do not wish to denigrate any surgeon, physician, psychoanalyst, artist or other; nor do I want to endorse the claims of anyone who expects me to take such a figure at its reputed value. It is a less ridiculous claim when I say I have evidence of guardian angels who save us fallible creatures from our folly if we let them, and if it is in accordance with God's plan.

P.A. There are many 'ifs' in your discourse.

PRIEST Are there less in any other?

P.A. Yes, because only by comparison and discrimination shall we refine and discipline our unruly selves.

PRIEST I do not want to obstruct your aim, yet I am not unaware of the narrowness of your view.

P.A. When are blinkers a hindrance, not a help, to the horse?

PRIEST The horse's rider no doubt would be prepared to argue that he has improved the breed of horse. I think God has improved mankind –

P.A. Men have improved the race of gods, but they have not improved their methods of choosing their gods or of expressing devotion to the chosen one. When I say 'improved' I admit thinking in conformity with a scale of 'better' and 'worse'.

PRIEST So I noticed. Can you give any idea of the nature of that standard?

P.A. Not really; I suppose I would regard 'progress' as good if it were associated with what I regard as further development. Devotees of religion often do not appear to develop any increase in mental ability.

PRIEST Do you suggest that in this respect religious people are any worse than scientists or artists or musicians?

ROSEMARY Men and women always do just as they please, and find an explanation afterwards. Sometimes it is difficult because they haven't enough money, or the police stop it –

P.A. Or they haven't the physical health, or there is not time, or – as psychoanalysts think – there are unknown or unrecognized elements in their character which contribute obstacles to the fulfilment of their conscious aims even though there is no hindrance in the known universe of not-self. There are facts which I would like to demonstrate to you, but I cannot because I have not the experience and the training which are essential. Even if I had, you would have to be able to understand the 'language' I used.

ROBIN Well, what's the trouble?

P.A. You think you speak English and can therefore understand a Shakespeare play: I think the Shakespeare play would have to be competently produced and acted. An Englishman has to learn English.

ROBIN Poor Shakespeare! What a time he must have had to be able to write the world's most marvellous plays and have no one to help him put them over but a crowd of ranting ham actors.

ALICE Yet they did it. The Elizabethan crowd saw, and kept on going to see, plays in Elizabethan England.

PRIEST Does P.A. still believe in progress? Does he think that the world has 'progressed' positively, increasing the chance of development?

P.A. I could ask the same question of you. So far I still feel able to say 'Yes' just. How long I shall continue to be able to nurse my capacity for hope before black despair and depression swallow me in everlasting night, I do not know. I cannot fall back on your belief in a life after death, although I can entertain the hypothesis, fantasy, fairy-story, that a fetus has a pre-natal existence. I am not in a position to argue with an opponent who says that these fanciful 'theories' have no place in a scientific discipline.

PRIEST Then what hinders? If you cannot exclude the possibility that there is a fetal mentality suitable to a watery, fluid environment, then why deny an after-life? – a post-gaseous-fluid existence?

P.A. It is a fact of my nature, to which I have become accustomed, to believe that when I die I shall cease to exist.

PRIEST I do not deny that; I see no reason to believe that the creature that conforms to that same creature's 'laws' of nature, logic,

science, will continue to exist in accordance with those same laws, any more than I believe that the post-natal creature conforms to such 'laws' that the fetus 'regards' as reasonable. The fetus could 'believe' that a baby was a 'fabulous monster'.

P.A. I have had patients who are on bad terms with whatever they feel they have become; they are on bad terms with human beings who remind them of themselves. One of the difficulties of psychoanalysing such patients is that they do not want to be reminded of 'ordinary' behaviour – theirs or anyone else's.

ALICE Has this anything to do with real life?

P.A. It has a great deal to do with real life. Amongst the many and frequent dangers of psychoanalysis none is more dangerous than the experience of the coming together of the pre-natal and the post-natal personalities. It can be easily appreciated that the danger is associated with anything whatever – psychoanalysis, music, painting, mathematics – which could remind those two personalities of their continued and continuing 'contact' with each other in the same body and mind.

ROLAND You make it sound most dramatic.

P.A. It would require a drama of Shakespearean quality to portray the reality.

ROLAND Shakespeare must be responsible for many murders and suicides.

P.A. He said, 'Upon the King! let us our lives, our souls, our debts, our careful wives, Our children, and our sins lay on the King!' Shakespeare, doctors, and lesser fry like psychoanalysts, have been accused of inventing, 'creating' the diseases of which we would have our fellows be aware – *Be-ware*!

ROBIN Be ware! How certain this sound alarms! The alarm is dealt with as a substitute for, not a prelude to, action. If your belly aches tell it not to belly-ache!

ROLAND If your mind tells you not to bore the un-offending world with your private cares, go to a psychoanalyst and enlist his support against such old-fashioned ideas!

P.A. Psychoanalysts do not advocate indiscriminate broadcasting, but discriminating, meaningful, and consciously directed discussion. A parliament cannot achieve its highest function if it chooses caterwauling rather than debate. Why didn't Bion go on with groups?

BION I had more pressing problems which could be adequately

dealt with only by psychoanalysis – or something better; particularly the problem, which P.A. had been discussing, of the relationship of the highly equipped fetus with its own and its parents' 'parental' qualities.

ROLAND The fetus's parental quality! That sounds wonderful.

BION I was afraid it would arouse someone's contempt. The crackling of thorns under a pot is more serious when it becomes the crackling of radio-interference, or the marriage of divorced nuclear elements. Not that I would or can deny you your fun.

ROLAND I'm sorry if you felt I was making fun of you, but I do find it somewhat exasperating when people take themselves so seriously. I think you have an inflated view of your importance.

BION I regret that I give such an unfortunate impression. I should be less than sincere if I said you are only a source of innocent merriment. There are times when I find your supposedly sane and balanced outlook, your fascinating sense of humour, difficult to tolerate.

ALICE I don't wish to take sides, but 'peace! you English fools'.

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ALICE Surely it should be possible to discuss reasonably.

BION It is also possible – as we have reason to know – to resort to arms. The disastrous meeting I have been imagining as taking place between a potentially gifted fetal mind and its divorced but equally gifted post-natal self also occurs when two or more groups of individuals meet. The history of the relationship between French and English, German and British, and now Black and White races looks likely to end in mutual annihilation, not mutual beneficient stimulation.

ROLAND What is the ground for disagreement – colour? sex? prosperity?

ROBIN Father and son? Guardian and ward? Exploiter and exploitee? Mother and daughter?

P.A. The possibilities are endless. Once the problem obtrudes there is no end to explanations – *rational* explanations, though I would not like to say how a 'rational' explanation is distinguishable from a rationalization.

ROBIN You are as bad as the Intuitionist mathematicians who seem to disparage logic.

P.A. The Intuitionists would say that logical and intuitionist mathematics can exist happily with one another provided the logicians admit the reality of another approach. Quantum mechanicians do not deny the existence of wave motion.

ROBIN Is there an analogy in the relationship between group analysis and psychoanalysis proper?

P.A. It is a seductive possibility. Detailed psychoanalytic scrutiny reveals movements, up and down, of the individual particles composing a group; the 'up and down' movement would give an illusion of

waves, as when the sea is compared visually with the drops of water in it. Visual images penetrate deeply in the way that a capacity for sight extends the range of the infant; it is not limited to what it can grasp or touch. Mobility does not extend as far as the eye can reach.

ROBIN What about the range of visual images in geometry? That was extended by algebraic, not visual pictures of lines and circles.

ROLAND Desargues extended the grasp of mathematics even though his diagram was visual.

ROBIN The development of projective geometry which followed was not visual.

P.A. The person concerned with conic section falls back on the operation of an inner eye. Psychoanalytically individuals still seem to rely on the existence of a diaphragm analogous to that separating the lungs from the digestive canal. There is a survival of that mentality in the 'division' which is made between pre-natal and post-natal – as if *birth* were of great significance –

PRIEST And death which, as I have remarked before, you also speak of as if it were obvious to anyone except possibly stupid people like priests. We are assumed to deny death because we are afraid of it. It seems to me to be a naïve example of psychoanalytic misinterpretation and ignorance of religious teaching and experience.

P.A. It is not naïvety that is limited to psychoanalysis. I would not defend myself against such a charge, but the tone you employ when you formulate your observation invites a response which becomes either an admission of guilt or an aggressive repudiation.

ROLAND Admission of guilt? You don't say what crime.

P.A. I am not bringing the accusation. I am merely trying to draw attention to the way in which a feeling of guilt is evoked or created; it is basic, fundamental. The crime – rational, logical – and the feeling of guilt are natural partners. It is a matter to which justice, morals, intellectual ingenuity can be devoted for so long as anyone can spare the time and energy.

ROLAND The psychoanalytic view is an invitation to create a lawless and undisciplined world.

P.A. There is no 'psychoanalytic' view. But there are people who can use psychoanalytic theories to support any activity they choose. That is why we try to train people who are not only able, but who also wish to help, not hinder, the individual.

ROLAND Individual burglars, robbers, murderers as well?

P.A. The occupation or the philosophy of individuals is not usually – in the culture with which I am acquainted – believed to be the concern of doctors or surgeons; they are usually expected to confine themselves to medicine and surgery. I have an idea of how I ought to run my own life, but what I consider to be appropriate for me has nothing to do with an individual 'not-me'. I choose to train people I wish to help, but my ambition is not psychoanalysis – it is me.

PRIEST I could not watch a child putting its hand into a fire to grasp a live coal. If I saw adult behaviour likely to have similarly evil consequences I would intervene.

ALICE Anyone would.

P.A. These are hypothetical situations and the problems posed can be solved logically. In real life problems appear in a form which is not susceptible to solution theoretically; you have to act or refrain from acting. These discussions are important not in themselves, but because they promote readiness. Psychoanalysis is a kind of action which is a *prelude* to action. In the individual a nerve impulse is a prelude to action; it is not a thought. 'Tell me', a neurologist will say, 'if you feel anything when I touch your foot'. I do not need to ask such a question because I can see for myself if the patient feels anything when I touch his sensory apparatus with an idea, or a grimace, or a tone of voice. That is one reason why a psychoanalysis is not a social conversation or vice versa; the behaviour of a psychoanalyst conversing in a psychoanalysis is *not* the same as the behaviour of a psychoanalyst conversing at a dinner party. Confusion occurs because that important distinction is not observed.

ROBIN You spoke one day about articulate speech being indistinguishable from splitting. I don't understand your meaning when you say that speech at a dinner party is not the same as psychoanalysis.

P.A. If I say that it is a hot but rather muggy day, that articulated statement consists of bringing together a number of ideas – of heat, daylight, humidity, feeling – that have been split apart. Splitting is a convenience when prelude to an articulate sentence. But weather remains weather – a totality, not a mass of discrete particles. An individual angry with the weather might wish to attack it and split it into minute fragments. That, I would say, was an expression of impotent (and therefore omnipotent) rage. Atoms of hydrogen, oxygen, carbon and the rest are consequent on scientific observation – primitive splitting transformed to sophisticated use.

ROLAND How does it help a patient to be told that?

P.A. You are making the mistake about which I was just talking. This conversation is *not* a psychoanalysis; it is a social discussion *about* psychoanalysis. What I said to Robin was not psychoanalysing him. If I used the same words to a patient the circumstances would be different. I would have to ask myself the question Roland has just put to me – what would be the good, if any, of saying it to the patient?

ROLAND I often hear that a psychoanalyst tells a patient that 'when he was a child . . .', or 'when he was an infant . . .', such an event took place. There seems to be no evidence to support those statements and nothing that the analysand can do about some event reputed to have taken place in the past.

P.A. I agree that the 'past' is past and nothing can be done about it. All that can be 'done' is whatever can be done in the present and about the current consequences of some action which was taken in the past. What is *done* in psychoanalysis is 'done' by means of articulate speech in the present. In surgery we don't say, 'You once had a tail like a monkey'; we say, 'There is a malformation in the lower part of your spine; I think it would be worth your while allowing me to operate. I think you will find that we can make you comfortable and that when you have convalesced from the operation you won't have your present complaint any longer.' I am not concerned to say that something or other happened 'in infancy', or 'before you were born', and so on ad infinitum. That might be relevant if I were teaching psychological embryology, or psychological archaeology or history. Psychoanalysis, in practice, is more closely analogous to surgery, but it is only an analogy.

ROBIN You seem to me to come near to making reassuring, even flattering, comments about what most of us regard as a disastrous state of affairs – what we call being mad or insane. Don't you regard psychosis as serious?

P.A. Of course I do; I regard all states of mind as worthy of study. The seriousness of the state is not improved by its being untreated or misnamed. All descriptive terms – asleep, awake, sane – need to be kept in constant repair. Relatives and doctors allow their hopes to be stimulated by the facts of surgery, medicine, psychoanalysis, to an optimism indistinguishable from being carefree or careless. That is a misfortune as great as depression or despair amounting to passivity and negligence.

ROLAND There is no substitute for common sense.

P.A. Substitutes for common sense are legion; people turn to any course of action which offers an alternative to common sense. They become devoted to psychoanalysis because they think the theories are a romantic and seductive escape from common sense; they become devoted to individual analysis when analysis common to the sense of a group would be preferable. The fact that infants – perhaps even fetuses – display 'common sense' is most unwelcome.

ROLAND Oh come! Can you really give an example of an infant that shows common sense?

P.A. Let me start with something which I think you may even have observed for yourself, it has fascinated me and I have still found no adequate explanation. A baby, almost newborn, has a pot placed against its posterior by a mother who hopes it will defecate into the pot rather than its nappies. Its face is immediately suffused with expressions of intense concentration and determination, and there! – to the mother's delight – lies a modest but adequate contribution to the pot.

ROLAND There must be a simple explanation.

P.A. I agree; but I have not found out what it is. Any amount of 'interpretations' but – which is correct? With regard to the fetus I have no difficulty in supposing that at some stage two or more senses are in common – for example smell and hearing. Why should that not be a prototype of an experience which later becomes known as 'common sense'?

ALICE How do you link high intelligence, or a gifted personality, with something so disastrous as psychosis, insanity and even delinquency? That seems very peculiar – and most disturbing.

P.A. I do not find it difficult to do, but that very fact increases my hesitation about doing so. I do not wish anyone to seize on what, as far as I am concerned, are mere fancies and conjectures as if they were facts.

ALICE But don't you think you can rely on us to be fairly reasonable?

P.A. 'Fairly' reasonable, yes; but my experience is not the same as yours, and what I regard as 'fair' may not correspond to your idea. I am used to finding that what I say is regarded as strange, incomprehensible, fantastic. After a time what I say is regarded as obvious, commonplace, not worthy of remark. Later still I discover that the

formerly incomprehensible comment has become an established creation of the listener which I have plagiarized.

ROLAND You sound ill-treated.

P.A. I do not agree that I display grievance. The reality of the world often provokes feelings of grievance; people cannot reconcile themselves to the facts which they cannot deny and do not like.

ALICE What has that to do with the fetus?

P.A. A fetus might take a dislike to its experiences including awareness of them. As a result of her experiences with infants a theory was formulated by Melanie Klein which became known later as 'projective identification'. She did *not* attribute it to fetuses.

ROLAND Then why complicate the theory by supposing an even earlier existence of the mental mechanism? Isn't it a fact that this Kleinian theory is already questioned by many psychoanalysts?

P.A. If it were simply a matter of saying 'ditto, ditto to Mrs Klein, only earlier still' I would agree that there would be every reason for dismissing both the Kleinian theory and its supposed 'improvement' as probably ridiculous and not worth the expenditure of time and effort involved in their consideration. Many analysts repudiate Klein's extension of psychoanalysis as elaborated by Freud. I found it difficult to understand Klein's theory and practice though – perhaps because – I was being analysed by Melanie Klein herself. But after great difficulty I began to feel there was truth in the interpretations she gave and that they brought illumination to many experiences, mine and others, which had previously been incomprehensible, discrete and unrelated. Metaphorically, light began to dawn and then, with increasing momentum, all was clear.

ALICE Did you remain convinced by further experience?

P.A. Yes – and no. One of the painful, alarming features of continued experience was the fact that I had certain patients with whom I employed interpretations based on my previous experience with Melanie Klein, and though I felt that I employed them correctly and could not fault myself, none of the good results that I anticipated occurred.

ROBIN In other words the objections raised by contemporary psychoanalytic colleagues to Kleinian theories were being supported by your own experience of futility?

P.A. That was indeed one of my anxieties and one I did not feel disposed to ignore.

ROLAND But you must have ignored it. Did you not feel you had a vested interest in continuing to support psychoanalysis, Kleinian or otherwise?

P.A. I was aware that I would be likely to cherish my preconceptions. Every now and then something would occur that convinced me I would be foolish to abandon my ideas as if they were clearly wrong. In fact it was clear that they were not always wrong. So – it became a problem of discrimination.

ROLAND What led you to persist?

P.A. Partly a chance recapitulation of Freud's description of the impression created on him by Charcot's insistence on continued observation of facts – unexplained facts – until a pattern began to emerge; partly his admission that the 'trauma of birth' might afford a plausible but misleading reason for believing that there was this caesura between natal and pre-natal. There were other impressive 'caesuras' – for example, between conscious and unconscious – which might be similarly misleading. Melanie Klein's interpretations began to have a vaguely but truly illuminating quality. It was as if, literally as well as metaphorically, light began to grow, night was replaced by dawn. I was aware, with a new comprehension, of the passage of Milton's invocation to light at the commencement of the Third Book of *Paradise Lost.* I re-read the whole of *Paradise Lost* in a way which I had not previously done, although I had always been devoted to Milton. This was true likewise of Virgil's *Aeneid* – though it involved much painful regret for the way in which I had wasted and hated the privilege of being taught by certain schoolmasters whose devotion had but a sorry response from me. Let me now praise men who ought to have been famous. For my own pleasure I write their names: E. A. Knight, F. S. Sutton, Charles Mellows. Later came the debt to my friends whom I will not name lest it cause embarrassment.

ROBIN I appreciate the point, but I would like to know more about the 'illumination'.

P.A. Had you not better ask yourself to whom you owe such illumination as has saved your journey from being plunged in everlasting night or, worse still, in the blaze of everlasting certainty and good fortune?

PRIEST May I introduce a note of pity for the unfortunates who have been plunged in the everlasting gloom and self-satisfaction of

scientific knowledge – a fate which has deterred many from the joys of devotion to God and respect for His truth.

ALICE Surely scientists devote themselves in all modesty to the truth. Even women have been known to wish to bear children in whom a love of truth can germinate; we are not only ambitious to be sexually satisfied.

ROSEMARY Most of the men my mother knew behaved as if that was the only thing in life.

ROLAND Good God!

PRIEST Poor God! Can you imagine what it would be like to be worshipped by men and women? Even Socrates is said to have been tried and condemned to death by his betters. Some of you may remember the story of the Garden of Gethsemane.

ROLAND 'God Almighty first planted a garden and, indeed, it is the purest of all pleasures', said Bacon.

P.A. One of the purest of human pleasures appears to be the pleasure of cruelty. Could Priest enlighten us about this?

PRIEST Perhaps I can do so by reminding you of a religious doctrine of the Immaculate Conception; that is in contrast to 'human pleasures'. It seems to me that psychoanalysts' discoveries may be something which has been known to the Church for a long time.

P.A. Psychoanalysts who respect the truth have done and still try to do just that – respect the truth. But we do not put it in the terms you use.

PRIEST But what you say and the way you say it matter. For this reason the Catholic Church is particular about what it says and how it says it. We are often accused of narrow-mindedness and bigotry for being particular and not co-operating with people who believe themselves to be our allies.

P.A. We have been deflected from our problem, namely, to account for facts that lead us to think that existing theories are inadequate but too true to be discarded without loss. Maybe it is significant that the discussion that obtrudes centres on owner-ship, on who created or owned the idea.

PRIEST Or rather, who owned the owner – God or man? But let us debate the idea further tomorrow.

12

PRIEST What is the psychoanalytic view of original sin? Do you deny there is such a thing?

P.A. I hesitate to say I believe or disbelieve in something reported as a fact by someone else. I have been convinced that certain observations could be most easily explained if there were such a thing as original guilt.

ALICE You have often said this; I have no doubt about it.

P.A. A most unwelcome feeling – even to an infant. As I became aware of good psychoanalysis, even by myself, 'faulty psychoanalysis' was an inadequate explanation, so I cast around for some pattern other than our failings. Considering the great intelligence shown by some analysands, it was absurd to suppose that the intelligence sprang into being merely at the fact of physical birth. Surely, I thought, the offspring of gifted and intelligent parents might be as likely to be intelligent as much and as often as the offspring of stupid or handicapped parents might be expected to be stupid. In other words, the fetus must have inherent characteristics which sooner or later become apparent. If the fetus subsequently becomes an intelligent or wise or gifted man or woman, why should it not, as it approaches full term, show prototypes of the sort of behaviour expected of children and adults? It occurred to me that a fetus might hear noises, see sights, smell odours, in a watery fluid such as the amniotic fluid and meconium. The significance of this did not become apparent at once, but I felt that past experiences with patients would have been less obscure if I had dared to imagine that the emotions displayed might be prenatal. They were often expressed in a manner which differed from commonly accepted modes of expression.[1]

[1][See Piontelli (Alessandra) in the *Key*, this volume. *Ed.*]

ALICE How did that differ from any other person?

P.A. That is what I asked myself. I wondered whether the highly endowed fetus might employ the mechanisms which psychoanalysis had made familiar in the treatment of children and adults, even before birth, precociously. Such a precociously developed fetus could try to rid itself both of the senses when they became sensitive to changes of pressure in the watery medium, and of the feelings, 'emotions' of sub-thalamic intensity; it might be prey to experiences unmodified in the way we expect them to be by the 'higher' centres. Then comes the 'trauma of birth'.

ALICE I have some difficulty about the expression 'trauma'. Whose experience is traumatic? The mother might find it so, although even the unmarried girl must have a good idea that the prospect of giving birth would be frightening. Is the baby supposed to find it a traumatic experience? Or the father? Most people must be aware that the birth of a child is likely to be dangerous – one of the few experiences which bring home the fact that issues of life and death are never far away.

P.A. At the moment I want to be oblivious of these manifold considerations so as to concentrate on 'hypo-theory'. I am supposing that the gifted child has tried, even when a fetus, to be without 'feelings' or 'sensations'. It cannot get rid of its inborn, inherent genealogical inheritance; it can possibly get rid of what used to be called 'acquired characteristics', what I have called phenomenes – phenomena as contrasted with genotypes. So it remains the gifted, inherently gifted, person. Since this is so, it is able to learn what is expected of it, how to be what Mother or Father, or both, want. It learns the difference between what Father and Mother call right and wrong, what will one day be called the M'Naghten Rules. All this, however, is split off from its fundament, its base, its real self. So there you have a civilized, apparently well-adjusted moral being; its armoury of accomplishments is daily augmented in the way that a really intelligent animal learns to augment its repertoire of parlour tricks. 'Die for your country', the fond dog-lover says to her pet who obediently lies down on its back and wags its tail. In due course the young patriot learns to die for his country but may get killed in the process – unless one of these powerful but anaemic emotions breaks through the caesura and causes the young man to have 'shell-shock', or to have his brain washed according to the fashion prevalent in the culture current. His

intelligence hardly need cause a ripple in the depths of his personality even though engaged on what would be a difficult task of maintaining his shell-shocked, brain-washed personality in good repair if he had to do it with the conscious skill of an actor playing a part.

BION In the meantime – if I may join in the discussion – his premature personality continues its life in uneasy proximity with his post-mature lodger in the same physical soma. Sometimes the psycho-somatic partner demonstrates his soulful qualities; sometimes his soma-psychotic demands acknowledgment and recognition of his physical and psychotic gifts. I describe the situation in naïvely pictorial terms. There are other descriptions, but most of them have been impregnated with pejorative connotations.

ALICE Such as 'hypochondria'?

BION Yes; or 'crazy', or 'insane', or 'difficult', or 'tiresome'.

ROSEMARY My mum used to say her boyfriend was always belly-aching about something.

P.A. Such creatures cannot have any respect for their bodies unless they become medically, physically ill.

BION Or outstandingly athletically gifted.

ROLAND You don't mean to suggest that our Olympic athletes are all hypochondriacs?

P.A. I'm sure he does not – any more than you think that all those athletes are confined to Olympus. But you can see that it is quite respectable to be massaged before or after taking part in a race or other athletic contest.

ROSEMARY I took service once with a lady who regularly had her face massaged.

P.A. I am sure she was a perfect lady.

ALICE I knew her – she was an absolute bitch! I don't know how Rosemary ever put up with her.

BION I get the idea – thanks to the bi-lingual description achieved by Alice and Rosemary co-operating to describe the . . . the . . . er

ALICE } Bitch.
ROSEMARY } Lady.

BION Your happy combination and the clarification you achieve by your joint efforts encourages me to draw attention to another union not unlike the one I was describing between our two enemies, Soma and Psyche. Sometimes the two characters do not share the

same body; each contributes a real physical and imaginary component. They tend to be over-simply described as 'homosexual', or 'heterosexual', or 'married', or 'in partnership'. In those situations in which the disguise – the conventional costume – excites psychiatric attention, they are liable to be described as participating in a folie-à-deux. If they excite the attention of the Board of Trade they may become known as a famous business venture, although the dividing line – caesura? – between that and a bankruptcy, or criminal association, or un-happy-marriage, may not be so easy to determine in close investigation as it is in a purely literary or grammatical scrutiny. Words and articulate speech are wonderful inventions – still in their infancy.

ROLAND Yet you psychoanalysts talk as if you were learned people.

P.A. True; and that often leads the cognoscenti – amongst whose prophetic community perhaps I should include Roland – to suppose that we know nothing whatever.

PRIEST It is often assumed that theologians, priests, prophets – as P.A.'s intonation just suggested – also know nothing, that God is a figment of the imagination. There is truth in the criticism because the gods that most people believe in are figments created by such imaginative capacity as is available.

P.A. Some religions could be described as folies-à-deux; that is, relationships between the individual and a god created by the individual. These realities are often fundamentally real, but are made to appear unreal by verbal dependence on splitting as the basis of articulate speech. For example, we speak of 'religious melancholia'. A poor labourer I knew was in a state of profound depression because he *believed* that the cow on which he depended to earn a living had tuberculosis.

BION Who or what had tuberculosis? His cow? His wife? Or daughter? Or the society he had to serve? These questions cannot be investigated here – only in contact with the patient.

P.A. There is always the risk the investigator will catch the complaint – a risk he may not want to run. The analogy in the mental sphere of activity is the psychiatrist's fear that he himself will 'catch the complaint' – or find he has already caught it – if he allows himself to have a close contact.

BION In the relationship I have been describing – pre-natal ↔ post-natal – the individual often behaves as if his wisdom and intelligence would be contaminated if he allowed himself to recognize that his body thought; conversely, that his physique would suffer if he allowed his body to know what his mind thought.

ALICE The bloom on the cheeks of men or women can show that the pair in love are suffused by a reality which cannot be gainsaid.

BION Many wise people would not want to believe that the suffusion on the faces of the pair might be traced to a fetus in contact with the walls of the uterus. I see no reason to deny that the fetus – the germ plasm itself for that matter – could be affected by the loving relationship between the parents. Could not the blush on the bridal cheeks be communicated by a corresponding blush on the walls of the uterus and vice versa?

ROBIN So what?

P.A. 'So what' indeed. I was taught the Laws of Mendelian Inheritance, but not the laws of phenomene inheritance. Yet the child might inherit a passionate love which seemingly could only be acquired.

ROLAND What would obstetricians and gynaecologists think about these ideas? I suppose Priest would say that the Church had preached these matters for generations – even before there was a Christian church.

P.A. I don't suppose that medical science would be satisfied with anything less than the kind of documentary evidence that X-ray films provide – in time no doubt it will be forthcoming. The demand for it now – at this stage of human endeavour – might be more likely to stifle than encourage investigation. Psychoanalytic conjecture can be dismissed as too fanciful, but it is possible that a psychoanalyst might reconcile one of his analysands to respect what his body was trying to tell him and even persuade his body to have some respect for his mind. There has never been much anxiety to attribute an important function to the brain substance.

ROBIN I should have thought there must have been sufficient suspicion of it to encourage the vogue for decapitation – at least of one's enemies.

BION In war, public or private, no one thinks of anatomy or physiology but about hurting the opponent without getting hurt oneself. The relationship between man and woman which results in a pregnancy is emotionally significant; the feelings, absent or aroused,

have powerful physical accompaniments. I see nothing inherently unlikely in these being communicated to the fetus. The only problem is whether, and at what point, these events could communicate conflicting ideas and feelings in a child or adult; whether there is evidence that the conflicts were being worked out in a domain which may not be known to us – yet.

ROLAND What if they are? How does that effect a 'talking cure' – as psychoanalysis is sometimes called?

P.A. The problem has been raised before in our discussions – what language must we talk to the body? I think we must talk our own native language, ordinary articulate conscious speech, as correctly as we can. The speaker must also be free of the need to silence his body. If he is talking, the conversation must not be interrupted by the need to silence his hands, or his feet, or his facial muscles, or his eyes. For that matter he has to be free to talk even without fear of what lies his tongue may communicate. I have known analysands who could talk perfectly but who were nevertheless disturbed by the thought that they would stammer; that one of the 'two' people present would be the mouthpiece of a third even though invisible and inaudible.

BION To borrow from the embryologists, the analysand, though physically correctly formed, fears the intervention, in the tasks of his ears and eyes, of an over-active supposedly archaically surviving system of auditory or optic pits.

P.A. They might be regarded as prematurely active; in adulthood the causes of suspicion are variously, rationally described; in essence something excites comment because it is inappropriate. Hence the 'consciously' dubbed 'stammer'. In short: A and B meet, but fear the presence of x, y, z, a, b, c. . . . 'Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears . . .', but the rest of you lay off and do *not* borrow my sense apparatus –

BION – or mind; it may know too much. 'Vulgar Errors', or, as an old farm-hand said to his employer, 'To tell you the ghastly truth, Mister. . . .'

ROLAND How can you make these matters clear to the sufferer in his anxiety state or insanity?

P.A. Or his unconquerable self-satisfaction; or equally unconquerable rectitude –

PRIEST – or scientific training, or mathematical flair.

BION Great is the Truth and shall prevail – when none cares if it prevail or not.

MORIARTY My old friend Iago said to me as I went over the Reichenbach Falls, 'Don't worry – Sherlock Holmes will be sure to recover when Conan Doyle discovers on what side his bread is buttered'. 'But, Iago my friend, don't you realize our frightful predicament? We are due to be dashed in pieces on these frightful rocks at any moment. Indeed, I think we are overdue at the bottom now.' Don't worry. Falstaff is still alive, but where are all the Figments of Imagination who used to strut around patting themselves on their Reality? Careful now, how you dash yourself to pieces on those rocks of reality. There! Well done – you could hardly have done better if you were the Devil himself.

13

PRIEST Really, this is hopeless. I wanted to have a serious talk about right and wrong, and we are interrupted by these rowdy street urchins.

BION I remember those terrible, never-ending half-hours called 'Search the Scriptures'.

MORIARTY You were a very naughty little boy, forever thinking about trash like Sherlock Holmes instead of the . . . er . . . er . . . ranks of . . .

BION I know – 'prowl and prowl around'. We used to sing it 'ppp'. Terribly exciting! And *then* 'fff', 'Christians up and smite them'. I loved that bit. Was it Midian or Gideon? I forget.

MORIARTY There! Didn't I tell you? You should have learnt your scripture.

BION What *did* happen at the Reichenbach Falls?

MORIARTY I got dashed to bits, but we were all reunited again and went to Heaven.

BION How awful!

MORIARTY Yes. For a few aeons I was in reserve as a Solar Myth.

SEXTON Myth Whybrow.

MORIARTY No, you fool. You were her Favourite; don't you remember?

SEXTON Oh yes. I died of appendicitis, didn't I?

BION Yes; perfectly simple case.

PRIEST I suppose you disguised it as a Figment of Imagination.

MORIARTY 'Scientists' always do. Anyone with any sense knows that Figments of Imagination are the hereditary Rulers of Intellectual Life. Everything starts as a figment of imagination; it is the intellectual counterpart of what biologists call the germ plasm, or what

Bion chooses to call a phenomene. We figments of imagination are *not* dependent on sexual reproduction. People ought to take the advice, 'Shut up! Give your arse a chance'. But do they? No! They go to see a doctor who is only interested in his training and not in a body – which will probably tell him something he doesn't want to hear. It is worse still with a split or fragmented mind – and the rocks that cause all the trouble.

ALICE From what I have heard, the complacency and ignorance of psychoanalysts makes it difficult for them to take any adequate steps to perfect either themselves or psychoanalysis.

P.A. A danger lies in the belief that psychoanalysis is a novel approach to a newly discovered danger. If psychoanalysts had an overall view of the history of the human spirit, they would appreciate the length of that history of murder, failure, envy and deceit.

MORIARTY I at least, like my master the Devil, advocate civility and kindness and a decent evening dress. What is the big novelty about rudeness and dirt and hair all over the body?

P.A. You practise so well what you preach that you almost seduce me – I nearly said 'persuade' me – but in reality nothing is so simple that it can be disposed of as if it were a matter of personal cleanliness. Honesty can be regarded as devoting oneself to speaking the truth. But we have to depend on our senses to keep us correctly informed and to teach our children the truth – assuming that they want to know it. Although Moriarty is a figment of the imagination –

MORIARTY So is your god.

P.A. I haven't one. I am not opposed to the idea, but nor do I favour it – I am impartial.

MORIARTY I was about to congratulate you on your impartiality when you took the words out of my mouth.

ALICE Sarcastic fool – devil, I mean.

MORIARTY Do you? Or are you just meaning to be rude? What did she mean, P.A.?

P.A. I think she is afraid of being fascinated by you. *I* was, and I bet Bion was too during his 'Search the Scriptures'; so was Conan Doyle.

ALICE Conan Doyle was only a writer and Moriarty a figment of his imagination.

P.A. Exactly; but you are afraid that if Moriarty fascinated you, you might become a writer of detective fiction; or even influence a

baby inside you to 'get born' so that it might be a criminal who fascinated you – indeed *the* criminal that fascinated you.

ROBIN Is that what Bion means by phenomenes?

BION I think it convenient to have such a term. This episode to which you refer could be an example; if Alice was fascinated by a well-behaved, civil crook, that idea could be propagated and influence the growth or development of the 'character' inside her.

ROLAND You are being very fanciful!

BION Fancy? Or fact? Just fancy, if there was something about ideas which might make them 'generative'! The transmission of ideas may not follow the biological laws of sex, or the Mendelian laws of inheritance. Alice may fear – to resort to biological analogy and metaphor – the movement of a 'phenomene' in her mind. When an 'idea' is created, there is, in addition to the actual creation, a series of reactions to the created idea.

PRIEST Gerard Manley Hopkins strove to express an awareness both of a sense of being ideationally or artistically pregnant, and of the reaction, the counter-actions, to that activity. He believed this applied whatever role he played. He might identify himself with the poet that he himself was, or with the priest who hated and feared the fetus, or the poet who feared the priestly fetus. He seemed to be well aware of murderous envy which is born when the envied idea or person is born. Where? Who knows? The only certain thing is, *somewhere.*

P.A. You talk about envy in a way that I would expect to hear from one of my colleagues – or even from one of your colleagues predicting the birth of the Messiah. I do not restrict these expectations of a messiah or of envy and hatred to any profession. I am familiar with expectations, even announcements, of the existence of a saviour. Sometimes it is a military saviour; sometimes a scientist who is going to make the world safe for mental defectives of one kind or another. Heaven will presumably then consist of boobies and a number of angel nurses who will save the boobies from liquidation.

MORIARTY That Great and Good Man Adolph Hitler has not been assessed at his true value.

ALICE You are a swine. I don't like saying so, and hitherto I have been saved the necessity by the fact that you are a figment of the imagination.

P.A. I think you may in future have to have a great deal of respect for figments of imagination and take them seriously. I could draw up

a considerable list of Saviours of the Nation; for example, Hindenburg, Sir John French, Henry V.

ALICE But surely some of them were good men? Or do you want to suggest that none was?

P.A. I understand your unease. Mine is perhaps even greater because I am convinced that all the men and women I have ever known have some good in them. Conversely, probably all had some bad. Let me say at once that I am aware of the utter banality of that conclusion, but that this is one reason why I do not wish to regard it as a *conclusion.* I am sometimes consoled by the possibility that the goodness, the capacity for love and concern for our fellows, may be a greater force than hate.

ROLAND Possibly. But don't you think it pathetic that when Science and its brood of astronomers leads unmistakably to the discovery of our insignificance in contrast with these gigantic forces – novae, super novae, black holes and the rest – someone is sure to apply a mental first-aid dressing and hurl us back into the downy comfort of ignorance. Doesn't that depress you?

P.A. No. Down serves the fledgling; mental down preserves us, however praise- or blameworthy we may be. The fact that the blackness and absolute cold lie beyond the charming blue of a summer sky does not make the blue less lovely to me. The vast incomprehensibility of the Absolute surrounding me is not so biting as a tooth-ache. I have not begun to cope with the fear of tooth-ache, whereas God and Devil do not even make my flesh creep.

MORIARTY Splendid! Splendid! Allow me to congratulate you on your perspicacity and courage. *Carpe diem* say I. A good ghoulish murder is worth all the rest of Priest's high-falutin' nonsense – as any reader of the more sensational parts of a newspaper knows. Even Priest knows better than to cut all the spicier bits of the Bible from Sunday reading. 'Search the Scriptures' indeed! Why *not?* Instead of that, you humbugs search the quotations! No wonder life – real life – doesn't seem worth living. You priests and doctors, and now psychoanalysts, would have made some pretty vile sadistic monsters if you had not been so afraid of your imaginations and the figments to which they would have given birth.

PRIEST Do you suppose we don't know that?

P.A. We advocate knowledge of what we are really like – in so far as we can. But we do not thereby close the options. On the contrary;

the options that are there, whether we like them or not, remain open. The patient, who may not have had the knowledge, cannot be regarded as making a truly moral judgement – as he can if he re-views his opportunities when more mature. We do not even know what our nature – bodily, mental, spiritual – is capable of doing. We can hardly, therefore, regard ourselves as responsible in any true sense.

ROBIN Real human beings are usually so difficult to believe in, that we have to be introduced to them gently by the medium of the figments of imaginative genius.

P.A. Even so, we do not want to be reminded of our selves.

PRIEST We may want to remind *others* of something they would rather forget; they fear they might not be able to survive the shock of the reminder. Hell is feared – by some.

P.A. I know people who do not need to be told that the kingdom of Hell is within them.

ROLAND If they do not need to be told, what do you psychoanalysts tell them?

P.A. What *they* tell *me* may remind me of something relevant to what they are saying which is not clear to them.

ALICE Suppose, while I am pregnant, I have some disturbing news. Would this affect the fetus?

P.A. It would surprise me if it did not. I do not restrict 'news' to information conveyed to the mother by relatives or books or newspapers. Suppose you had been brought up in ignorance of the physical facts of sex either by the folly of your authorities, or through your unwillingness to learn; then you became aware of being pregnant. The information, from the fetus or your body, might be unwelcome 'bad news'. The waves of pressure communicated through the amniotic fluid would form a different pattern from those usual in a mother pregnant with a fetus she wanted from a man by whom she wanted it. The fact that there is no demonstrable communication between mother and fetus as clear as that between mother and baby is not an adequate reason for asserting that there isn't one. I expect unbelievers to state the 'facts' on which their 'unbelief rests.

ROLAND The facts on which *my* unbelief rests are the multitudinous and multiform theories of psychoanalysis itself. I do not become more confident in a doctor's ability the greater the number of theories he expresses about a pain in my thumb. I prefer him to hold his tongue until he is able to tell me precisely what to do about it. When

a psychoanalyst produces more and more erudite explanations about why I believe or think as I do the more impatient I feel.

P.A. Then go to another psychoanalyst or doctor. I do not believe that you or Alice are asking me questions for nothing; why you are asking these questions is no business of mine – though I may have my suspicions.

ALICE Would you tell me what to do?

P.A. If I thought there was anything you could do – in the sense that you mean it – I would advise you to go to someone who *does* things. Experience has taught me that there are many things which need to have something *done* about them; they first need to be discussed. The fact that the British believe in *parliamentary* government is evidence that this has at least been unconsciously recognized. It is absurd to condemn those who believe that 'discussion' is a way of doing things; 'talk' is not a substitute for action.

ROBIN But you don't think it is disastrous when action, say, war, is required and people prefer to talk in the hope that the problem will go away or be solved if they talk long enough?

P.A. Yes, but it is just as serious if people, rather than face the pains and frustrations of talk, fall back on murder or war as a substitute for discussion, Similarly, the individual may feel that drugs or self-murder are preferable to the tedious discipline of analysis; they are seductively shorter.

ROLAND It is sometimes seductively less painful to talk than to undergo a physical operation.

P.A. Seductive possibilities, concealed in the wide range of options available, will ultimately compel the growth of a capacity for discrimination – or catastrophe.

ROBIN Why catastrophe?

P.A. Because unless the human animal learns to become expert in discrimination, he will be in imminent danger of the *wrong* choice.

ALICE Nuclear war, for example.

P.A. There are no labels attached to most options; there is no substitute for the growth of wisdom. Wisdom or oblivion – take your choice. From that warfare there is no release.

A I see you turn to the last page as you always used to do.

Q Of course. Last time you told me how much it had cost you to publish. Did you find it interesting? How was America – North and South?

A Marvellous; a nice change from the Third Battle of Wipers.

Q Lots more since then. And more to come – which reminds me; I must rush; I have a date to meet Fate.

A Bye-bye – happy holocaust!

. . . & EPILOGUE
. . . FUGUE
. . . DONA ES REQUIEM
. . . MANY

All my life I have been imprisoned, frustrated, dogged by common-sense, reason, memories, desires and – greatest bug-bear of all – understanding and being understood. This is an attempt to express my rebellion, to say 'Good-bye' to all that. It is my wish, I now realize doomed to failure, to write a book unspoiled by any tincture of common-sense, reason, etc. (see above). So although I would write, 'Abandon Hope all ye who expect to find any facts – scientific, aesthetic or religious – in this book', I cannot claim to have succeeded. All these will, I fear, be seen to have left their traces, vestiges, ghosts hidden within these words; even sanity, like 'cheerfulness', will creep in. However successful my attempt, there would always be the risk that the book 'became' acceptable, respectable, honoured and unread. 'Why write then?' you may ask. To prevent someone who KNOWS from filling the empty space – but I fear I am being 'reasonable', that great Ape. Wishing you all a Happy Lunacy and a Relativistic Fission. . . .

A KEY TO A MEMOIR OF THE FUTURE

1981

A Memoir of the Future was first published by Karnac Books, London, in 1991. It consisted of revised and corrected versions of three previously published books – *The Dream*, *The Past Presented*, and *The Dawn of Oblivion* – together with *A Key to A Memoir of the Future* (1981).

A Key to A Memoir of the Future, compiled by W. R. Bion and Francesca Bion, was first published by Clunie Press, Strath Tay, in 1981. A revised and corrected version was published in *A Memoir of the Future* by Karnac Books, London, in 1991.

INTRODUCTION

Bion was reluctant to supply readers of *A Memoir of the Future* with information they could (or perhaps should) discover for themselves. However, as Editor of the single-volume 1991 edition, I took advantage of the opportunity to add to the *Key*. The *Complete Works* project now provides the last chance to add a few additional entries.

Francesca Bion
2011

Chapter numbers are preceded by a roman numeral indicating Book One (I), Book Two (II), and Book Three (III).

A Key to
A Memoir of the Future

AVE . . .

F *Are you there?*

W *You have woke me too soon, I must –*

F *Oh, do get a move on – we shall never finish this index at this rate – three pages an hour! It's endless –*

W *It's very hard work – and whenever am I going to get any writing done?*

F *This is writing – and a necessary part of the trilogy.*

W *I hate having to examine my own vomit.*

F *All right – let me know when you have a free hour and the inclination –*

W *I never have. Let's get on with it –*

F *I can arrange my schedule to suit you –*

W *For Christ's sake let's get the ruddy thing done now!*

F *It's no good trying to do it if you are in a bad temper. I shall do some gardening.*

A

Abominable Snowman creature conjectured to exist in the high Himalayas. II.1
'about' formulation of the 'thing itself contrasted with formulation 'about' the 'thing itself'. I.19
about *see* discussion centred on *Myself* discriminating between 'talking *about* psychoanalysis' and psychoanalysis. I.42
Absalom lament for, OLD TESTAMENT, SAMUEL XVIII.33. I.17; III.4
absolute *colour*, zero, pitch, space. I.8
Absolute Space and Absolute Time. Laws of chemistry and physics as understood at present are probably not applicable owing to limitations of the mind. II.1
Absolute Truth a usage borrowed from 'absolute value' in mathematics. The word is enclosed between two parallel lines to indicate the total span of meaning, e.g. |fight| to indicate all directions of violent movement, and in this respect not differing from |flight|. II.1
abstinence sexual and alcoholic, debated as an aspiration. II.19
abstract term discussed. I.43
thought. I.8
abstractions meaningless, related to dreams and reality. I.15
'accidental' features – discussion of. I.38
accusers real or imaginary, and supposed defences against them. I.19
Achilles *Homer*, ILIAD. I.34
sulking. I.17, I.34
acquisition of ideas, contrasted with theft. II.18
Acton, Lord on the foundations of civilized society. II.18
act, aggressive The verbal description of an act depends for its accuracy on the context in which it is used. A doctor can describe the behaviour of a patient (adult or child) as aggressive, but he does so from a particular vertex. To what extent can this be considered to

be a correct description from the vertex of the patient, child, fetus? The problem is the same as that implicit in the idea that a person who is wide awake knows of his state of mind when asleep. II.3

acts without an agent, compared to thoughts without a thinker. I.36

Adler, Irene real or fictitious. I.31; II.19

admission of ignorance, an essential ability of the aspirant to scientific accuracy. II.18

adrenals What at a later stage in development can be described and felt as fear and aggression, 'fighting' and 'running away', are closely related to pharmacological reactions in the developing embryo. This statement cannot be supported as yet by what I call 'scientific fact'; I only claim for it that it is a 'rational conjecture'. At some stage of post-natal development the personality will display strikingly powerful emotions and symptoms, as for example continuous crying of such a degree that the parents cannot tolerate it. When the patient is old enough, he will express the pressure of the intense feelings of which he is aware as a fear of going mad. Such expressions arouse, in the parents and doctors responsible for the care, reactions which are premature, inappropriate and liable to 'blind' all intuition. In waking life this can emerge as the panic which afflicts even disciplined troops and their leaders in war [*see* **panic, thalamus, theorizing**]. I.42

'adsum' conventional reply when a roll is called to detect if there are any absentees; an English public (i.e. private) school custom. II.19

adulation as a method of silencing the generator of unwelcome trains of thought. II.1

Aeneas hero of the ILIAD. I.13

Aesthetic as universal linguistic. II.1, II.2

aesthetic mathematical formulation as analogue of poetic creation. II.1

Agamemnon and religion. II.9

husband of *Clytemnestra;* murdered by his wife. II.11

see Horace, ODE TO LOLLIUS. I.11, I.13; II.3, II.19

Aguecheek, Sir Andrew *Shakespeare,* TWELFTH NIGHT. III.5

Alcuin A.D. 735–804. Letter to Charlemagne. A.D. 800. II.2.

Alcuin of York, nicknamed Albinus. An English scholar, ecclesiastic, poet and teacher from York, Northumbria. He became the student of Archbishop Ecgbert at York.

Alexander SPACE, TIME, DEITY: THE GIFFORD LECTURES, GLASGOW 1916–1918. I.38; III.9

algebraic deductive systems. I.28

geometry, and development of projective geometry. III.14

Alice 'a fabulous monster', ALICE IN WONDERLAND. I.Pro
and bad night. I.Pro
and *Lewis Carroll*. II.7
and *Rosemary,* symbols of master and mistress; cf. arbitrium. I.15
dreams of imperial honour and maid *Rosemary.* I.1
wealthy background. I.3
wish to help *Rosemary.* I.2
alimentary canal bad night and dream. I.Pro
and telescopic view. I.Pro
alimentary canals brains like. III.3
ali-metric word invented to describe hunger as making the passage of time explicit. II.14
Allah Akbar [*see* **God, Godhead**]. I.38
all-alone [*see* **dependent**]. II.16
All change! call used on British railways to warn passengers that they have arrived at a railway junction where it is necessary to mount another train. II.19
all-conquering Implicit in the idea, expressed by *Rosemary* referring to the chocolate bar which has intimidated the rest of the group, is the psychological experience of the all-conquering dominance of sight vis-á-vis the other senses. I.39
Allen war reminiscence; dream or breakthrough of imperfectly verbalized feelings. I.12
All-mighty omnipotence as mental archaism still active. I.9
α ref. *Bion,* THE GRID. I.13
α **and** β [*see also* **'trick'**]. I.39
Alpha a communicable shorthand for something which is not, and is not like, but is becoming [*see* **Beta**]. I.14
Alps as minor preparation for Himalayas. II.1
All Souls an Oxford college founded as a memorial to British dead in the battle of Agincourt in 1415. I.27
'All's right with the world' state of optimism described by *Browning* in PIPPA PASSES; also as a sarcastic comment on the optimism of German philosophy by *Voltaire* through *Pangloss* in CANDIDE. II.1
All toes pun linking dancing with singing (altos). II.19
Amiens-Roye road road running in the direction of the advance of the First French and Fourth British Armies on 8 August 1918. II.2
amplifier mechanical means used to magnify a sound which might otherwise be unnoticed; used metaphorically. I.43
anachronism The ordinary calendar or other measure of time is good enough for conversation but not adequate for psychoanalysis. I.34

anal eroticism seems to cover an activity which is pre-verbal. There is gynaecological evidence for the evacuation of meconium by the fetus. It provokes the possibility that evacuation could be one of the earliest active functions of the physical body. This being so, it may be the counterpart of a primordial 'thinking'. This primitive activity is one which *Melanie Klein* emphasizes, and this matches my own experience. Evacuation could thus be indistinguishable from 'blotting out', i.e. making opaque, an area of the mind. I.40

analogue link between two objects which are usually specified. Here the emphasis is on the link and not on the two objects to which it is 'moored'. I.44

analogy as link between two objects, not the objects. I.16; II.2

anarchs ref. *Shelley,* HELLAS. I.34; II.1

Anatole France quotation from LA REINE PEDAUQUE. II.4

angels common to many religions. Is it a pointer to a basic reality, or a cover for 'nothingness'? I.26

angry Anger is one of the emotions that is so obtrusive that it can be given a recognizable name in any individual life. Its detection can often be used to arouse guilt in the angry person. II.20

angstrom units used in measurement of light waves. I.34

animate contrasted with *inanimate* for which there is no adequate definition. I.30

answers popular journal of that name typical of the facile search for substitutes for truth. II.1

anus as analogical link. I.16

anxiety Herodic, and infanticide. I.10

apart from (#) mathematical sign. I.41, I.42

Apparition spoken of by *Rosemary* as personified in poetry and fiction. II.17

apparitions and hallucinations, claimed to have a health-preservative function if acknowledged by the person who experiences them. II.17

Arab Lady described by *Yeats* as lying with *Solomon.* II.2

archetype term used by *Jung.* II.19

AREOPAGITICA *Milton,* SPEECH FOR LIBERTY OF UNLICENSED PRINTING. III.9

arf childhood version of 'Our Father . . .', THE LORD'S PRAYER. I.11, I.12, I.13, I.16

Aristarchus thinker who contributed to train of thought that led to modern astronomy [*see* **Palomar** and **Jodrell Bank**]. II.3, II.19
his helicocentric hypotheses used as models of the mind. I.30

aristocrat In fact the murderer was an ordinary businessman who had never been known to depart from respectability. The assault he

made could not be described in terms of 'human conduct'; it is typical of an accredited fact which would not be believed if reported in a work of fiction. II.10

Aristotle and a practical world. III.3

Arjuna criticizes, and criticized by, God. I.17
quoted by BHAGAVAD GITA. I.16, I.34; II.20
presumption of [*see* **uncertainty principle**]. I.43

arrogance expressed by music or anatomical posture. I.17

arsenic poison discredited in use for murder because of its capacity for preserving the evidence of the crime. II.14

arse 'oles One school caused a Protestant hymn to be unusable by pronouncing 'Our souls' in an irreligious manner. I.15; II.19

artefacts used in the sense of facts whose source, origin and creator is a human mind. It could be debated whether it is equally applicable to animals other than human. II.2

articulate articulated language contrasted with hieroglyphic. I.43

'articulate' communication dominant method of, between the self and the self. I.43

articulation as a method of putting words together to construct an 'architectonic'; this is analogous to the use of materials in architecture to construct a building. I.38

artificial Analysis is artificial, but is an attempt to approach a basic reality. II.9

artisan as 'respect-worthy'. I.30

artist differentiated from scientific detection. I.20

artistic Whether a scientist, a painter, or a composer, the person to whom this book is addressed is assumed to be driven by an urge to the truth. One cannot conceive of a drive to untruth as being separable from what is evil. II.7

art nouveau Art has never been new, although the current method of communication conforms to changing fashions. The thing itself – painting, sculpture, mathematics etc. – is unchanging even though its method of communication changes. II.9.

'As without sound or struggle . . .' lines from 'The Return of the Guards' by Sir Francis Hastings C. Doyle. III.8
The lines would have held a powerful resonance for Bion from his service in World War I [*Ed.*]:
These were not stirred by anger,
Nor yet by lust made bold; Renown they thought above them,
Nor did they look for gold. To them their leader's signal
Was as the voice of God: Unmoved, and uncomplaining,
The path it showed they trod.

As, without sound or struggle,
The stars unhurrying march, Where Allah's finger guides them,
Through yonder purple arch, These Franks, sublimely silent,
Without a quickened breath, Went in the strength of duty
Straight to their goal of death.

asses a reference to *Omar Khayyam,* RUBAIYAT: 'The wild ass stamps o'er his head', *Fitzgerald* translation. I.Pro

asthma relationship to personality. I.22

astronomers their discoveries are unlikely at present to cause panic. Any scientific work is liable to be resented if it exposes human beings to dread. II.5

Athanasian Creed exact, elaborate Catholic statement of the Trinity and the Incarnation, no longer believed to be by Saint Athanasius. I.39

athletic dominance an early form of dominance fairly easily established in the rivalry of games [*see* **pits**]. II.1

Attlee, Clement British prime minister succeeding *Winston Churchill* after World War II. II.1

audiences *P.A.* draws attention to the fact that a communication is dependent on there being a receptor. II.11

auditory apparatus comprehensive term used to describe everything from auditory pits to ears and their accompanying sensory extension, and finally to mechanical aids, including radio. I.26

August 8 August 1918, Battle of Amiens, described by *Ludendorff* as 'a black day for the German Army'. It was delivered by the Fourth British and the First French Armies and supported by the British Fifth Tank Battalion. I.33

Augustine, Saint and Rome. I.20
used the equipment of religion to separate good from evil. I.17

Augustus the Caesar who reigned during *Virgil's* lifetime. II.11

Auschwitz cleansing showers of. I.14

Auser young officer killed on 11 August 1918 in the Battle of Amiens. II.19

austere conditions of philosophical thinking and part of the discipline of psychoanalysis. II.1

authority conferred by power. II.12

autismological a punning word of the kind described by *Lewis Carroll* as 'portmanteau'. II.19

autistic wisdom. II.19

automatic weapon as an instrument for the expression of new female subservience. II.19

auto-mobile implying a machine and an independent person. II.1

awe and facts. III.8
awe-ful to be distinguished from 'awful'. II.18
Aztec as name of a religion. II.5

B

baa-ram reference to *Bahram,* 'That Great Hunter'; *see Omar Khayyam,* RUBAIYAT, *Fitzgerald* translation. I.11
Babel confusion. I.8
confusion of, used as an expression of divine hostility to thinking man's ambitions. I.34
Bach, J. S. THE WELL-TEMPERED CLAVIER. I.8
and *Mozart* and *Beethoven;* chance of actual throwing together of notes or lines and other pictorial representations, without the existence of a mental midwife [as *Socrates* described himself]. II.3
musical score and patterns of sound. I.19
Bacon, Francis brilliant thinker who was also an artist in words. Quotation from his essays. II.1
bad job Bion's last paper, 'Making the Best of a Bad Job' (1979). W. R. Bion to the British Psycho-Analytical Society, March 1979. (First published in *Bulletin of the British Psycho-Analytical Soc*iety, 1979. Also published in *Clinical Seminars and Four Papers*, Oxford: Fleetwood Press, 1987.) III.8
bad temper provoked with reason; *see Freud's* reaction to *Adler* and *Jung,* ON THE HISTORY OF THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT, 1914d, p. 62. I.29
BHAGAVAD GITA [*see* ***Arjuna*** and ***Krishna***]. I.31
bait, mental an invitation to 'swallow' a fact without the labour of discrimination. II.3
Balaam OLD TESTAMENT, NUMBERS, *Micah;* NEW TESTAMENT, *Peter, Jude, Revelation.* I.26
bandersnatch *Lewis Carroll,* THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS. II.1
baptism term used to signify a happening in a manner similar to 'interpretation' and 'diagnosis'. II.1
barbarism past civilizations described as barbarous. *Priest* demurs. II.11
basic and fundamental. Both these terms should be used with respect so that their real value is restored. Example of 'talking about' fundamentals in psychoanalysis. II.2
bastard gross or biological use. I.10
term of abuse used by *Alice* and *Rosemary.* II.19
battering physical or mental, dream or real. I.6

beam '. . . or of th' Eternal co-eternal beam . . .', *Milton,* PARADISE LOST, BOOK III. I.8
beamish boy *Lewis Carroll,* THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS. I.9
beautiful clothes used to communicate beauty. *Roland* interprets it as a sign of self love. R.16
separation from ugly. I.17
Beauty athletic and aesthetic, as an outlet for frustrated energy. II.1
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty', *Keats,* ODE ON A GRECIAN URN. II.12
beauty function of, in aiding formulation. I.28
of the verse, quoted as conferring longevity on the artist's product. II.15
reputed, signified by *Helen* of Troy. Also equated by *Keats* with Truth. I.42
sometimes claimed to give penetrating power to human achievements that are 'blunt'. II.14
stimulates and initiates 'fire' analogous to inflammation. I.17
beco- an illustration of what the French call 'enjambement'. What is the effect of writing 'become' as beco-me? I.23
Beerbohm, Max his representation of the Devil as wearing morning dress. III.4
being the understanding of the relationship between 'being' and 'understanding'. I.38
belief ambiguous word; does not differentiate a state of mind from the object observed or believed. II.9
religious intensity of THE ILIAD and THE ODYSSEY. II.3
state of mind; its relation to the object of belief. II.7
state of mind operative when evidence is not available; related to probability, a generator of action. I.37, I.38; II.7
Belloc, Hilaire and Church. I.9
belly-ache [*see* **body-ache** and **blush**]. II.1
bend round the; slang expression for becoming insane. II.19
benevolent sea, disguised as the Mediterranean to screen malevolence. I.13
Berkeley a bishop of brilliant scientific intuition who made destructive play of *Newton's* OPTICKS. I.20, I.40; II.9, II.19
Berles-aux-Bois village two miles behind the front line from which tanks moved to entrain for the Battle of Amiens. II.19
Beta a communicable shorthand for patterns supposedly established in the soma and identical with geno-types of ideas and feelings. I.14
teeth and somatic 'thought'. I.14
beta-element as a convenient method of referring to something which may exist; not a thought, but that might become what thinkers

would describe as a thought, e.g. if a dog comes when it is called. II.3

Bible source of dirty stories. I.15

Big Bang the epitome of a violent solution. I.29
temptation to release. III.9

'big bang' borrowed from astronomical theory, indicating the origin of the universe. II.19

bigotry *Anatole France* on. II.1
and 'bigotry generators': their prevalence in all forms of humans and their expressions of formulations. II.1
[*see* **dogmatism**]. I.41
spiritual, in place of tolerance. III.3

bilge filth collecting in the bottom of a ship; popularly used to express contempt. II.1

binocular metaphorical model for two or more emotions. I.13

biological creator and its relationship to the creator of morals. II.2

Bion talking about psychoanalysis. I.19

bio± symbolizing a spectrum of reality. I.7

Birchanger reminiscence of a bluebell wood associated with the miseries flowing from patriotism. II.4

birth usually considered to mark the commencement (not death); nevertheless death is also supposed in religion to initiate a new life [*see also* **death**]. II.19

bitch pejorative and sacred. I.14

blackguards and scientists [*see* ***Santayana***]. I.20

black hole possibly combined in a binary system which appears as if an eclipsing variable. II.2
term borrowed from astronomy; astronomers' discovery of 'spaces' where the forces of 'physics', 'chemistry', etc., as we understand them, do not apply. II.1

blackmail a threat, usually for the purpose of exacting gain. The context is an example of *Robin* exposing experience to *Rosemary.* I.15

Blake, William preface to MILTON; set to music and usually referred to as 'Jerusalem'. I.34

blame attribution of, by different disciplines. II.19

Blandish reference to a book by *James Hadley Chase,* NO ORCHIDS FOR MISS BLANDISH, published in 1938. I.27

blindness Christian hymn describes the 'heathen' as blind. An English boys' school at Blackheath, with strong religious connections, was known by rival schools as 'The Heathen'. A rival school cricket team once defeated 'The Heathen' through the skill of two boys called Wood and Stone. I.26

blinkers used to indicate that 'love' can be used to hide any frightening spectacle. II.19

blood handwashers as a class of characters. I.27
noises; when does the fetus first hear its blood? I.13
of the lamb. II.12

bloody by Our Lady. I.11; III.6
line borrowed from *G. B. Shaw,* PYGMALION. II.6

blue colours are often described as if permanently associated with feelings. They require attention. II.18

blush 'Her pure and eloquent blood spoke in her cheeks . . .', *John Donne,* THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY; his description of a physical re-action suggesting that the body itself might think cannot be bettered. Similarly, 'unscientific' traces can be discerned in the survival of terms like 'rhinencephalon'. These 'survivals' should be regarded with respect by psychoanalysts concerned with patients who are sensitive about their noses and their watery productions. Even physiologically there are traces in the 'extra-cellular fluid' unpolluted by salt and other chemicals, as are the oceans. Only psychoanalytic observation is likely to unveil the relationship between post-natal and pre-natal mentation. II.1
representing the physiological source of what at a later stage could be expressed verbally; ref. *Gray*, ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD. II.4

blushing invisible yet intolerable [*see* **self-murder, suicide**]. I.11

body-ache [*see* **blush**]. II.1

books as the repository of metal activity that is irrelevant to the present and the future. II.19

bomb atomic. I.14, I.23

bored This word is often used for a feeling which is unmistakable, but which is nevertheless difficult to analyse. The emotion itself is ambiguous and complex. Like 'love', it is often facetiously or carelessly used, but the analyst cannot afford to ignore the reality which transcends both words. I.42

borogroves *Lewis Carroll,* THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS. II.14

boundary physical, used as anatomy of metal boundaries. I.17
bounds physical boundaries, to be distinguished from mental. II.18

brain convolutions of. I.30
damage and genesis in war. I.21

brains like alimentary canals. III.3

brain washing fashions in nomenclature. III.8

Braughing House social significance contrasted with brutal helplessness. I.6

brave supposed to have a basis in reality; frequently emphasized by honours and decorations intended to give substance and reality to what otherwise might pass unnoticed – if it exists. I.32

bravery cover for cowardice. I.14

Bray, Vicar of well-known English song about a character notorious for changes of opinion according to self interest. II.12

break-down Words borrowed from special direction are often combined and liable to lose their significance in combination. Sometimes it is a matter of importance to distinguish what the contrasting 'direction' is. II.18

breast as analogy. I.16

brilliance Illumination, particularly emotional, is often regarded as too great for human sight. II.2

Britannia alleged to rule the waves at the time of the supposed supremacy of the British navy. II.19

Broglie, Louis Victor de French physicist, inventor of wave mechanics. I.38

Brouwer his initiation of a type of mathematical thought not unlike *Gödel's* discussion of the excluded middle. II.2

Browne, Sir Thomas PSEUDODOXIA EPIDEMICA: OR ENQUIRIES INTO VULGAR AND COMMON ERRORS. II.2

URN BURIAL. II.2

Browning, Robert thoughts similar to *Kant's.* I.18

quotation from poem HEROES; attributed to *Browning,* but not confirmed. I.26

bullet claimed by *Moriarty* to effect the change from social superiority to inferiority, and vice versa. II.16

bump *Milton* describes Satan's flight into an horrific vacuity known to modern airmen as an 'air pocket', PARADISE LOST, BOOK II. II.2

Bunyan, John PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. I.9; III.4

THE HOLY WAR. II.3

Valiant-for-Truth, departure at the end of pilgrim's progress, part ii. I.30

Vanity-Fair, described in pilgrim's progress. II.4

bush burning. I.8

but word used to discomfit participant in a verbal intercourse. I.32

C

caesura between natal and pre-natal, and between conscious and unconscious. III.11

two aspects of, separation and connection. II.2; III.6
used as a screen on which can be projected the explicit/implicit. I.35
Cain name used to brand a quality of mind. I.17
Calcutta Cup a Rugby Union trophy awarded to the winner of the annual Six Nations Championship match between England and Scotland. III.8
Campbell, Roy English poet, 1901–1957. II.14
Cambrai 20 November 1917; a battle in which tanks were used to effect a surprise on the German army. The surprise was so successful that the British, like the Germans, almost failed to recover. I.32
canals of Mars. I.41
cancer an example of unwillingness to make discoveries. I.22
cannibal and blackguard, used anachronistically. I.34
and mental cannibalism. I.35
cannibalism and blood drinking; ritualistic, imaginary or factual? I.27
primordial, self-devouring. I.26
capacity development of awareness. I.22
Cap'n 'art tha sleepin' there below?' *Newbolt,* DRAKES'S DRUM. Compare *Palinurus.* I.9, I.21
Carnarvon, Lord and *Howard Carter;* their combined efforts led to the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun. II.10
Carroll, Lewis Not only is there a devaluation and debasement of words which could still have a useful value, but this could also apply to entertaining and valuable stories such as ALICE IN WONDERLAND. They can suffer by being regarded as children's books hardly worthy of adult attention until they reach a point where they become the victims of 'psychoanalytic' interpretation. The vogue for prestigious, scientific erudition can undermine the original value without adding any illumination whatsoever. II.7
carte blanche used as a metaphor for freedom of thought. II.4
Cartesian co-ordinates as a means of liberating the implicit. II.1, II.2
used for the point of intersection of a line with a circle [*see* **conjugate complex**]. II.1
Cassandra *Rosemary* identified with. II.18
castration [*see* **rivalry, success**]. I.37
cat related to tiger. I.21
cause 'because' frequently a prelude to introducing a 'cause' or explanation or theory prematurely as an evasion of the need for thought. II.1
cautious problem of whether caution is prudent or timid. II.14
cave man shadows man. I.10
parable of. I.10

Cawdor one of the titles of *Macbeth.* II.19

Celestial Light In *Milton's* account of his journey introducing BOOK III, PARADISE LOST, he describes his discovery that he awakes to find he is blind; he proposes to resort to 'insight' since 'sight' is no longer possible. II.2

celibate celibacy is often quoted as necessary to religious leadership and also to modern Confucianism. II.19

cemetery cannibal, literal, not metaphorical. I.29

centuries *Priest* is maintaining that belief in God is not a vogue, but is related to a reality that is not dependent on human thought. II.11

certainty and uncertainty. The claims to definitive knowledge often made, and supported by its pleasurable nature, are regarded as superior to the 'uncertainty' of analyst or scientist who makes no such claim. II.12

and uncertainty; opposite poles of the same feeling. III.8

Chamberlain, Neville British prime minister at Munich crisis, 1938. I.24

change as a fact that initiates mental growth. II.11

from good to bad, beautiful to whore. I.28

problem of the origin of its initiation. II.14

chap guy (U.S.). II.19

character discrimination of real from fictitious. I.28

Charcot quoted by *Freud*. III.5, III.11

Charisma messianic colouration. II.2

related to hysterical manifestations. II.1

charisma and its use with implication of messianic expectations. II.2

Charity discussed as a formulation of love. II.1

chattering *Roland* describes his teeth as 'chattering' with fear years after the war. II.4

cheat psychoanalysis as a method of expanding the capacity for self/deception. I.35

cheats and lies; 'scientific' system of. I.7

cheeks a blush without a cheek analogous to a thought without a thinker. II.4

Cheshire Cat appearance and disappearance. I.7

grinning like. I.14

reality and imagination pictorialized. I.27

child pregnant. I.5

childbirth infant and maternal mortality closely associated with birth. Both birth and death are impressive and are reflected in mental reactions to them. I.32

childless *Alice.* I.5

children brain-, and the responsibility for their use. I.27
chocolate danger of misinterpretation stressed. II.11
sarcastic reference to the power of sweet food, deception and a force transcending the word overtly expressed. II.7
chocolate bar as representing a reality used for bluffing purposes. II.11
used by *Man* to take the place of a handgun in his holster. I.39, I.43
choice requires knowledge of alternatives. III.10
chortled *Lewis Carroll,* ALICE IN WONDERLAND. '"O frabjous day! Calooh! Callay!" He chortled in his joy.' I.9
Christ divine powers attributed to *Jesus* (ref. also *Jove* in *Milton's* LYCIDAS). I.30
Christian Scientists and Christian Philosophers considered. II.18
chromosome the characters to which Mendelian inheritance is supposed to conform. II.2
Church as a physical embodiment of religion; its tenets wrongly supposed to be uniform through all religions. II.16
Christian and modern contrasted. II.19
cigar *Sherlock Holmes* and his monograph on cigar ash. I.42
circle and diameter. I.8
related to section. I.28
CITY OF GOD by *Saint Augustine.* I.20
clarification replaced at once by further 'unknowns'. I.42
clarity [*see* **poles**]. I.19
class distinction wiped out by war. I.6
claw bird's; discussion of the range of psychoanalytic concern. II.12
claws hetero-hate expressed by psychoanalysing a woman's use of aids to beauty. I.19
clear enough This ambiguous phrase may conceal the blindness of the patient to 'material' which is not visible. II.2
clitoris envy of. I.10
clothing Discarded ideas can be re-assumed without growth or improvement. II.18
cloud-capp'd Towers THE TEMPEST, Act IV scene 1. III.9
Clytemnestra wife of *Agamemnon,* mother of Orestes, *Electra* and *Iphigenia.* II.11
CNS as anatomical structure possibly capable of a high degree of awareness. II.19
its relationship to the peripheral nervous system (PNS) debated. I.36
the use to which this sign is being put is discussed. I.38
cockatrice a fabulous reptile; used here to depict a frightening animal of the world explored by the adventurer in 'unconscious states of mind'. II.2

cold-blooded discussion of the exercise of power which contrasts with psychoanalytic respect for the individual personality. II.13
watching. The exercise of such power is differentiated from insensibility to the act. II.13
collar *Priest* would certainly know the derivation of that part of priestly uniform. His sarcasm frightens *Roland* and *Robin;* it reveals that a priest is not restricted to feelings of love any more than a girl is. II.8
colour blind Colours are often spoken of in the course of analysis; their mention deserves attention because of their linkage with primitive descriptions of character. II.19
Coma Berenices the constellation of. II.15
common sense The phrase usually refers to a distillate of the speaker's experience. Careless or vulgar use has eroded its functional value and therefore, like all the language the psychoanalyst uses, has to be used *always* with a value which is constant until the patient realizes that the term is not a slovenly formulation. 'Seeing' appears to be so impressive that it dominates all other senses. Even with the aid of powerful astronomical telescopes the meaning of what is seen depends on interpretation. I.41
prototype in the fetus. III.11
'real' contrasted with cosmetic. III.9
substitutes for. III.11
communication, verbal ambiguity disguised. III.5
compassion woman to woman. I.6
computer as machine for scanning medical material. I.28, I.42
auxiliary to the senses but, like them, requiring interpretation. I.30
Conan Doyle and spiritualism. I.20, I.39
creator of *Sherlock Holmes.* I.24
concept as a pit in which thought is buried. I.8
[*see* **Kant**]. I.8, I.18
concepts empty [*see* **Kant**]. II.1
conclusion as starting point of further problems. II.3
concrescence a growing or coming together, as in a pun or other form of compact statement [*see* **Sterne**]. I.14
concubine term used by *Rosemary* to express contempt for a person used for sexual purposes. II.15
conditions for psychoanalysis. There is a certain *necessary* minimum condition; also a certain minimum; necessity also is part of the 'necessary' condition. All three are involved in assessing work on a psychoanalytic task. These factors are rarely considered, although they are apposite in any human activity. II.9

configuration mental, compared with patterns made visible by X-rays. I.20, I.21
confusion appearance of, produced by starting what is in fact linear or conical not at the beginning. I.41
of tongues. I.8
relation to destruction. I.26
[*see* **poles**]. I.19
congratulations an expression of the idea of married love as a reason for congratulation. II.19
conic section and operation of an inner eye. III.11
conjecture a state of mind that invites accretion. If the conjunction of ideas develops positively in the analytic experience, the conjecture can become a probability. Whether the analyst formulates an interpretation and communicates it to the recipient depends on his assessment of both his potential statement and the ability of the analysand to receive it. II.3
conjugate complex borrowed from algebraic projective geometry. I.43
contrasted with what you can touch (tangents). I.14, I.28
two points contrasting with 'real and distinct' and 'real and coincident'. II.1
conjunction constant conjunction/conjunction that is conjoined; difficulties arising from that. I.35, I.42
conquest woman as object of. I.31
conscious in the sense of 'aware of. II.6
conscious, the as an extension of the concept of mind. I.16
consciously dreams are reported and discussed when the patient is awake. II.18
consciousness as a receptor. I.21
consideration equated with contemplation. II.18
'considering' the time taken to 'consider' is often exploited by those who do not wish to do so and 'know the answers'. II.1
constancy *Priest* is maintaining that belief in God is not a vogue but is related to a reality that is not dependent on human thought. II.11
constant conjunction [*see* **integration**]. I.43
constant conjunctions and facts. II.1
[*see* **'constructions'**]. II.1
constants borrowed from algebra to describe qualities as 'visible' from a particular vertex. I.30
'construction' contrasted with 'interpretation' by *Freud.* I.29
'constructions' as meaningful conglomerations. II.1
used in the description of mental constructs. I.20
contained (♂) as analogy. I.16

container (♀) and content; destructive relationship. I.8
as analogy. I.16
container–contained (♀ ♂). Term used to discuss aspects of mental growth. I.34
contemporaneity Awareness can be of something that increases the burden of the present. I.24
contempt for master and mistress; a version of husband and wife, father and mother. I.3
P.A. expresses anger. Some theorists appear to consider that it is possible or desirable for an analyst to avoid showing emotion. II.8
[*see* **Mister Toad**]. I.43
contest a pictorial description given of what in the individual amounts to a confrontation of opposing ideas, thoughts or feelings. I.38
context its relevance to meaning. I.16
contours of the mind, likened to map reading. III.7
conversation destruction of. I.26
converse as a method of intercourse contrasting with other, and more primitive, methods. II.3
convolutions of the brain. I.30
co-operative Dead objects can be made c. I.29
co-ordinates Cartesian, initiated algebraic geometry. I.21, I.28
of growth. I.17
Copernicus astronomical theories of, like those of *Galileo* and *Descartes*, unacceptable to authority. II.19
corpse-stenching sense of smell associated with heightened visual and auditory observation in direct contact with the enemy. II.4
cosine a pictorial formulation dependent on triangles. II.1
cough inability to, by the soldier whose thoracic wall had been blown off. The verbal reaction of the officer is an example of terror which is not dealt with by superficial military training. II.6
council (counsel) darken; reference to the BOOK OF JOB. II.19
Count with Cox; socially acceptable cover for the gross meaning. I.14
counter-transference by definition unconscious. III.8
couple, psychoanalytic fact and feeling. III.9
covens assemblies of witches. I.27
cowherd analogous to shepherd. II.18
Cowper, William quotation from OLNEY HYMNS. II.5
Cox [*see* **Count**]. I.14
Crab nebula. II.1; III.9
nebula, as a sign of a still existing stellar explosion. I.43
cravings masochistic, as an instance of a force that can dominate. II.7
crazy one of those words in common use which help to make a

psychoanalyst's life a burden. They sound like a verbal communication, but are often not much more than a vocal noise requiring interpretation. In this respect they share the fate of what once were used as psychoanalytic technical terms. II.7

cricket a game sometimes played with fanatical devotion. *P.A.* suggests that the devotion corresponds to *Freud's* theory of the power of unconscious ideas. II.11

Croce, Benedetto author of a book on Aesthetic which he proposed as a universal linguistic. II.1, II.2

'cruel looking-glass' *Rudyard Kipling*, THE LOOKING GLASS. *Kipling's* poems used to discuss the power of cosmetic beauty. II.1, II.9

cruelty deliberate. I.6
divine, as a component of religion. I.17
an early form of love. III.8

cul, le French vulgar for 'anus'. III.8

cunt gross word, related to international speech in contrast with anatomical usage. I.16

Cup Final the final of a knock-out competition between rival professional football teams [*see* **Wembley**]. I.26, I.27

cure as a hope for unceasing or permanent pleasure. I.36
'cures' likened to litter. I.22
word borrowed by psychoanalysts from physicians to make their activities comprehensible. III.9

curiosity and authoritative indifference. I.5
aroused but not surfeited. III.9
disposed of by sleep [cf. **Palinurus**]. I.8
insatiable; a reminiscence of *Kipling's* THE ELEPHANT'S CHILD. II.19
its part in transforming thought into action – e.g. Eve and the Tree of Knowledge, God and the Tower of Babel. I.38
related to waiting. I.9

'Curst be he that moves my bones' *Shakespeare's* epitaph, chosen by himself for his tomb at Stratford-on-Avon. II.10

D

dancing a more sophisticated capacity to verbalize would call it 'fetal dance movements within the womb'. II.19

dandelions sexual and vegetative reproduction. II.17

Dante and direct experience of the mortal being. II.19

daring and stupidity. III.8

darkness not to be considered negatively as an absence of light, but as a function of light. I.39

dawn The reference is to a popular theory about sleep. It is also supposed to be the time when the individual passing from a state of sleep to a state of wakefulness is assailed by irrational and frightening thoughts and feelings. II.10

'day of his coming'; dies illa, dies irae. II.14, II.19

daylight associated with safety. Darkness is regarded as safer if 'heavenly'. I.13

dead quite; cf. the religious view of the life after death. II.16
Roland presumed to have suffered physiological death. II.16
unconscious equated with somatic pattern. I.14
used to describe a language no longer in everyday use. II.19

deafening The threshold of sound varies enormously according to the individual. In psychoanalysis the analysand may talk in such a way that the analyst's interpretations appear to be lost. Therefore the analyst needs to adhere to the volume of sound which he is able to maintain during his day's work; engagement in a shouting match does not help. II.19

death and freedom. I.8
as the price which may be paid for decisions made by men or women. I.38
assumed and threatened. I.3
like birth, always exciting comment. II.19
quoted for its prominent role in the minds of the living. II.15

death pit Cadavers ultimately provide a record for archaeologists to interpret scientifically. I.27
of Ur. I.8; II.8

debris remnants of ideas acquired that are no longer of service. II.19

decapitation as an example of violent separation. This is similar to the splitting involved in 'evacuation' of projective identification; it is also related to *Freud's* and *Breuer's* tentative trial of catharsis. II.2

decay warmth generated by, as a condition for breeding. III.8

deception and lying. I.10

decision involves choosing and inhibiting. III.9

defeat as a release. I.16

definition inseparable from denial. I.20

definitory hypothesis relationship of the basic reality underlying the concern of psychoanalysis and the verbal formulations required to represent these realities. A person can be named 'Robin'; this is a convenient summary that does not require emphasis; but the real

person, the character, does not conform to that verbal summary – the proper name. I.38

to be constructed as a base for an 'architectonic' of the psychoanalytic mind. I.30

definitory hypothesis and constancy or variation. I.43

deity compared with *Mycroft* and *Falstaff.* II.19

delay intolerance of, because it is indistinguishable from frustration; its bearing on impulsive behaviour. I.36

Delderfield, Rose buried in a churchyard at Tring, England; otherwise unknown. II.2

Delilah the woman who seduced *Samson* from his devotion to God. II.1

Delphi origin of oracular statements which made itself redundant – like all progress. I.14

deluded The state of being deluded is regarded as preferable to an awareness of futility. II.4

democratic society Assuming that it is one in which the authority lies in the hands of the populace, do its origins differ from those of a theocratic society? The point is discussed by *Paul, Roland* and *P.A.* II.2

Democritus of Abdera atomic theories of. I.30

department *P.A.*'s disavowal of concern with unspecified areas of thought. II.12

dependent Dependence and being all-alone are both *unpleasant* states of mind. Even an infant seems to be aware of being alone *and* being dependent on the assistance of something which is not its Self. The early awareness of these feelings is linked with vulnerability and cruelty. The coming together of these manifestations suggests the presence of a basic characteristic. The problem of the analyst is to intuit the date of the quality he is observing. II.16

Depressive Position and turbulence. I.11

Desargues his geometrical theorem. I.39; III.3, III.6, III.11

Descartes and the implication of 'cogito ergo sum' for the foundation of psychoanalysis. I.37

inventor of Cartesian co-ordinates; associated with other 'markers' of mental progress. I.13

Desire misleading force of. II.19

desires and memories, interpretations and sensuous impressions. It is easier to restrict this concept to the anatomical and physiological view of the information communicated by the irritation of the nervous system. There is a problem; we do not know what a sensitive being is capable of – a woman can be aware of the reactions of her fetus to music. Presumably, therefore, the fetus is sufficiently

developed to be aware of sound. This involves questions of how soon the auditory pits become functional. Such developments lie outside the scope of the analyst who is communicating with a fully-aware 'being' when he himself is fully aware. It will be seen that the problem now impinges on states of mind such as that of the person who is asleep. II.9

despair *Priest* uses the words of Jesus to express it. II.11

destruction and its relation to confusion. I.26

detonated a dream version of supposedly ineffective but nonetheless dangerous psychoanalysis. I.23

development mathematical, similar to and inseparable from character development. I.20

the distinction made from decay as the negative pole of development. II.5

Devil obverse of God. I.10

The contrast of two forces, good and evil, has been derived from Arabian and Greek sources. II.14

devil evocative expletive. I.9

diagnosis an interpretation which has to be made, usually of physical signs [*see* **headache**]. I.18

diameter vast. I.8

Diana equated with Bahram; and baa-lamb equated with stupidity. I.16

die 'I don't want to d.'; a song popular amongst troops of World War I. II.19

'Dies illa, dies irae' from SEQUENCE FOR THE DEAD, poem by *Thomas of Celano.* [c. 1200–c. 1265] II.14

diet nourishment required for the mind. I.27

dietetics mental. III.9

'Dieu me pardonnera' the response said to have been made when the confessor spoke to the dying penitent. II.2

digestive tract terms from, used for models of the nervous system. I.20

dip used in the sense of a short swim contrasted with preoccupation with cosmic time. II.5

direction lack of a frame of reference for purposes of discussion. I.21

mental, spoken of without a mental 'compass'. I.13

often used in, or implicit in, psychoanalytic statements as if there were already an established system of co-ordinates. Psychoanalytic discussion is often carried on without recognition of the presupposition that a basic system of co-ordinates exists. There is no objection to this, any more than one would object to algebraic projective

geometry being implicit in Euclidean geometry. Our problem is how this implicit co-ordinate system is to be made explicit as a foundation for further progress. I.38
the need for vectors as a way of making it clear that a 'cause' is regarded as originating the origin of stimulation. II.19; III.8
the sense of progress towards the decay of our capacities acting as an unconscious orientation. III.8
disagreements and discontent, misinterpreted. III.9
discipline years of, as a prelude to real fun. It is more true to say that real fun is a prelude to the establishment of discipline. II.9
its imposition by authority discussed. II.18
discovery relationship to many particulars. I.21
discretion problem of preserving privacy. I.24
discrimination universe associated with. I.8
dishonesty the honesty of psychoanalysis doubted. I.24
'Divine afflatus' spectrum of meaning [*see* **'flatus'**]. I.26
DNA molecule, discovery of, and construction of dopamine receptors in certain areas of the brain, is liable to obscure the need for the human being to achieve disciplined thought. In fact the more clear it is, as in 'psychoses' and other disturbances, that there is a physical defect, the more – not less – necessary it is that the remaining part of the mind should be adequately used. II.1; II.18.
molecules supposedly affected by cosmic explosion. III.9
D.N.A. used to introduce further discussion. II.15
Dodo an extinct bird to which reference is made by *Lewis Carroll* in ALICE IN WONDERLAND. I.26
dog, barking, that doesn't bark. Reference to *Sherlock Holmes* story, SILVER BLAZE. I.26
dogma popular use of the term deprecated. II.19
religious and psychoanalytic. II.3
used as a pejorative comment on a scientific statement. II.19
dogmatism [*see* **certitude**]. I.41
'doing something' Confusion is created by the failure to distinguish between thought that is a prelude to action, and thought used as a substitute for action. This leads to an inability to distinguish between someone who is only 'talking' and somebody who is 'saying something'. This distinction is of vital importance in psychoanalysis. II.3
'dome of many-coloured glass' quotation from *Shelley*, ADONAIS. III.4
Doom crack of; legend scrawled on the side of one of the powerful

units used by the Royal Heavy Artillery of the British in World War I. II.6

Dormouse character in ALICE IN WONDERLAND. II.7

double bass a reference to the musical instrument alleged to be used for marking the commencement of a musical phrase. II.19

'double dark' appears to be *Gerard Manley Hopkins'* view of darkness as doubly 'thick'. It is taken up by *Freud's* metaphorical description of investigation of the unsolved problems of the mind. II.19

doubt as used by *Descartes* but not itself 'doubted', i.e. scrutinized. I.43

dovecote sarcastic reference to psychoanalytic institutes. II.18

down mental, as preservative. III.13

'do yer' a catch phrase made popular in the 1930s through a BBC series, 'ITMA' (It's That Man Again). I.26

'Do you remember an inn, Miranda?' quotation from *Hilaire Belloc*, 'Tarantella'. III.3

dragon the sowing of its teeth that sprang up as soldiers. II.6

dread boredom displaced by. I.3

attempt to ward off, is inherent. I.17

dream 'a queer dream' always requires particular attention. In what way is an ordinary dream distinguished? II.18

psychoanalytic use of, in contrast with hallucination. I.20

stimulated by a discussion. II.3

The term, used by *Freud* when he made his revolutionary attempt to investigate the human personality scientifically, refers to a happening which occurs when the person is described, physiologically, as 'asleep'. I have been more and more impressed by the fact that the state of mind which a person is talking about when asleep is used in a state of mind which is very different from that when he says, or thinks, he is awake. This may appear obvious, but I find it useful to treat 'happenings' as being as real when the dreamer is in that state of mind as the 'happenings' which are experienced by the person who is, supposedly, awake and has 'all his wits about him'. The transition from one state to the other is often confused. Conversely, some mentally disturbed people are said, psychiatrically, to be 'confused'. In psychoanalysis it is necessary to be aware when the popular phrase is being used to describe a pathological state. II.1

What is a dream? What does the dreamer think of the events experienced in what appears to the observer to be 'sleep'? Conversely, what does he think of the events he experiences when, to the observer, he is wide awake? I.36

dreamer a den in which conscious visual images are buried. I.8
compared to drunkard; the inefficient state of mind turned to good account. II.3
dreams facts of. I.8
mutilated. I.8
persistence of war experience in. I.17
psychotic. I.21
Shakespeare, HAMLET, quoted. I.22
violent, and fears of insanity. II.12
dreams, sweet often used as a greeting, but described, in a waking state, when referring to an experience when asleep which may have been anything but pleasant. II.1
drug to stupefy. I.8
drunk *Moriarty,* the personification of evil, shows his strict adherence to disciplined morality. II.14
Dryden ref. THE POWER OF MUSIQUE or AN ODE IN HONOUR OF ST CECILIA'S DAY. III.3
D.S.O. Distinguished Service Order. British army decoration, confined since 1916 to combat gallantry. II.19
Du a formulation of an imaginative conjecture. On this and subsequent pages it represents the germ of an idea striving to escape from the confines of *Roland's* mind. II.4
Duncan character in *Shakespeare's* MACBETH. II.19
dust galactic, thought to obscure the galactic centre from earth inhabitants. II.2
Duty Sense of, *Priest's* reply to 'sense or non-sense'? II.4
dwarfs white, likened to compact objects in mental space. I.8

E

eclogue a pastoral poem. *P.A.* refers to *Virgil's* Fourth, and discussion follows. II.11
Edmund representing an astronomical vertex. II.1
Edmund Halley (Halley was an English astronomer and mathematician and was the first to calculate the orbit of the comet which later was named after him).
education educated love indistinguishable from shop-soiled. I.8
Egyptians and animal containers; reference to the deification of the cat. III.2
ejaculation an ambiguous word biologically often referring to sudden evacuation of anything from 'sensuous phenomena' to the function

of disruption of a train of thought. The source of such intrusion is likened to destroying a painting. I.40

elaboration of instruments to reveal facts. I.22

electron microscope, and radio telescope as instruments to aid observation. I.30

elements constant conjunction of. I.21

Elephantine caves, on the island of Elephanta near Bombay, in which various aspects of Siva are depicted by carvings from solid rock. III.9

Ellis, Havelock contributed to the knowledge of *Krafft-Ebing's* PSYCHOPATHIA SEXUALIS and of *Freud* who was scarcely known in England before 1918. II.10

Elizabeth of Bohemia the transience of fame typified when applied to beautiful women. II.2

Elohistic code conflict between two streams of thought [*see* **Priestly code**]. II.1

embryonic sense related to non-sensuous thought. I.11

Empire empery founded on violence. I.38

emotions pre-natal, displayed by patients in analysis. III.12

Emerson as a philosopher. II.18

end used as if it were a sense organ. I.24

English inadequate for psychoanalysis. I.24

P.A. is referring to conversational English and the belief of psychoanalysis that words used have many 'over-' and 'under-' meanings. II.14

English Farm the name of a minute area in the mud of the battlefield of Ypres. II.19

English, plain a phrase easily used about a communication difficult to make. II.15

English, simple literate difficult for the psychoanalyst to achieve for the purposes of psychoanalytic practice. II.1

Enthusiasm discussed by *Father Ronald Knox* in his book of that title. II.3

entrancing This term is used by *Rosemary* sarcastically. The reader will have to decide for himself what he thinks about the topic being discussed supposedly by *Rosemary.* II.7

environmental factors Included in these the psychoanalyst has to remember the power of 'vogue'. It is useful to make a distinction between vogue and transient fashion. II.15

ephemeral The life span of the human being is of insignificant duration when contrasted with a background of astronomical reality. II.1, II.2

Equivocator gatekeeper's soliloquy in *Shakespeare's* MACBETH. II.19
Erasmus and a cultural prison wall. III.5
ergot a growth on rye which can burrow into human flesh. II.2
erect punning use of. I.14
'espaces infinis' *Pascal,* PENSÉES. This is a striking description of the fear of silence which can often be seen in psychoanalytic practice; it is shown by the dislike of pauses for thought. I.13; II.1; III.8
eternity 'Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, Stains the white radiance of eternity', *Shelley,* ADONAIS. I.11, I.19; III.4
Eton and Harrow; two famous English boys' schools often singled out as targets for envy, hatred and abuse. The human members of these institutions make them vulnerable. I.25
Euclid his geometry of pictorial vision. I.21
Riemann and *Lobachevsky*. I.11, I.14
Euclidean dependence on visual imagery which is itself tainted by the dominance of the sense of sight. This can also imperil the possibility of 'insight'. II.2
geometry, an implicit formulation, to become explicit later. II.1
Eve primordial mother. I.17
everlasting life often carrying the connotation that life exists after death. II.2
evidence concept of, has to be borrowed to describe mental facts. It is possible that the only phenomenon which could be described as a 'fact' is what an analysand says he feels. II.19
It is difficult to see how any human being can claim that the evidence of his senses is validated. II.14
negative. II.19
title conferred on facts that the individual wishes to entertain authoritatively. II.2
exaggeration analogous to a mental microscope. III.10
examination medical. I.6
excluded middle Every choice involves what is not chosen. The statement, 'A thing cannot both be and not be', excludes the possibility of something that can both be and not be, e.g. a condition which is neither inanimate nor animate. Such logical and dogmatic formulation can be no more than a symptom of man's inability to think. II.2, II.19
exist The impulse to exist is postulated even as an urge to which the individual is a 'slave'. It provokes rebellion against its dominance. Such a rebellion finds extreme expression in selfmurder. II.2
expanding universe [*see* **Big Bang**]. II.19

exploded a verbal formulation of the violent response initiated by an idea. II.1

explosion *Man's* minimizing reference to the colossal explosion considered by astronomers to be visually witnessed when a nova appears. e.g. The Crab Nebula in the year 1054. II.19

explosive *Man* refers to the incident in Book I, ch. 7, but is discussing the 'explosive' nature of ideas and feelings. II.11

exo-skeletons ideas like. III.3

extinction possible, of psychoanalysis. I.20

'exuvias indutus Achilli' a reference to the qualities of *Achilles* before he was killed by *Hector;* ref. Virgil, AENEID, BOOK II. II.14

'Eyes that have seen colossal storms and terraqueous convulsions' a reference to Thomas Hardy's TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES, ch. 43: '. . . gaunt spectral creatures with tragical eyes – eyes which had witnessed scenes of cataclysmal horror in inaccessible polar regions of a magnitude such as no human being had ever conceived, in curdling temperatures that no man could endure; which had beheld the crash of icebergs and the slide of snow-hills by the shooting light of the Aurora; been half blinded by the whirl of colossal storms and terraqueous distortions.' III.9

F

façade *Alice* is making a hostile criticism by emphasizing the fact that psychoanalysts can easily develop an 'occupational neurosis' which consists in developing their technical knowledge until it becomes a cover for their practical sensitivity, or lack of it. II.7

facts and answers. II.1

and artefacts, such as the thoughts, ideas and words which are formulated by men. II.2

and constant conjunctions. The question is always subsumed as if already answered in psychoanalytic practice. The problem has worried, and still worries, the searcher for truth in all disciplines and at all times as to whether human beings can ever know that something they 'think' is matched by a corresponding reality. II.1, II.2

discussion related to the problem of human ability to distinguish the real. II.7

In so far as facts are real events, independent of the human mind, they do not obey the rules propounded by human beings to which human beings can attempt to adhere. I.38

problem facing an attempt to make psychoanalysis scientific in view of what physicists would regard as a fact [*see* **evidence**]. II.19

fact, scientific is vulnerable in so far as it is a human idea of what constitutes reality, and liable to be destroyed by the supposedly more ineffective myth [*see* **conjecture**]. II.1

'faint at last' quotation from *Walter Landor,* IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS, AESOP AND RHODOPE. II.1

faint a minimization of psychotic intensity. I.21

faithful institutionalized 'fidelity'. I.14

fall in borrowed from the army order to parade for subsequent manoeuvres. II.19

falsehood and truth. I.16

Falstaff as an artefact compared with reality. I.Pro

Shakespeare, HENRY IV. II.10

family whether literal or metaphoric, discussed. II.14

fancies supposed to be set free in sleep. II.19

Farrar *Dean Farrar* wrote ERIC, OR LITTLE BY LITTLE, a depressing, moral story for children. I.14

farts and gerks. I.Pro

fas referring to mottos of regiments of the British Army. II.4

fascination *Rosemary* typifying impelling sexual quality. I.21

fashions in nomenclature. III.8

Priest is implicitly referring to an English popular song, THE VICAR OF BRAY. II.11

fashions, power and patriotic wear. III.8

fata [*see* **fas**]. In conversation the fates are often spoken of as 'luck'. II.4

Father Figure technical psychoanalytic term used as a means of pointing to a fact in evidence in psychoanalytic practice; often misused as the 'thing itself' and not a pointer to the thing. II.3; III.6, III.10

fault The basic feeling of guilt, known to some religions as 'original sin', is shown as a characteristic which can be used in the warfare between the sexes; discussed by *Rosemary.* II.16

fear and cowardice. III.9

and 'murder'. I.7

of making a discovery which may be unpleasant. I.22

[*see* **worship**]. I.9

feast, marriage [*see* **Poverty** . . .]. II.15

feeble verbal inadequacy to represent a reality. Sometimes a psychotic patient deliberately masks what is powerful by calling it 'feeble'. II.16

feelings the stimulation of one component by the other when separated by a caesura, e.g. constant/conjunction. I.35

fees related to services. II.9
feet as early and primitive control of the body and the mind. II.19
object of attention. I.41
the athlete can use them better than some people can use their hands. II.9
♀ container; and symbol for 'female'. I.41
fetishistic related to religious ritual and sexual objects. II.5
fetus communication between mother and. III.13
highly equipped. III.10, III.12
precocious development of. III.12
pre-natal existence. III.10, III.12
tries to rid itself of feelings and sensations. III.12
two or more senses in common, prototype of the experience later known as 'common sense'. III.11
When does thinking start? II.3
[*See* ***Piontelli, Alessandra***]
fiaow onomatopoeic name given to a curious and blood-curdling cry of the wild jackal; the effect produced described. I.29
fibrillation punning reference to 'tribulation' [*see* **Holy Boast**]. II.19
fictitious characters, contrasted with characters supposedly real. I.20, I.28
construction; value and danger of, debated by *Bion* and *Man.* I.37
fiction use of, for purposes of illumination or deception. I.43
uses of, related to chivalry, treachery etc. I.42
fidelity drab. I.5
wealthy. I.5
fiend *Macbeth's* cry of despairing hostility is used to portray a denizen of the 'state of mind' from which *Milton* describes himself as escaping in his introduction to BOOK III, PARADISE LOST. II.1, II.15
fiery red reference to the poem, VIRTUE, by *George Herbert.* I.8
Fifth Army British, destroyed in World War I. II.5
figment of the imagination intellectual counterpart of germ plasm or phenomena. III.16
Moriarty. III.16
figments of the imagination further discussed. II.24, II.33, II.34, II.35; III.12, III.13
figments of imaginative genius as an introduction to real human beings. III.13
figure, idealized In mathematics an attempt to draw a square must be recognized as an idealized representation. Like any picture, it makes available to a sense of sight the existence of something real which transcends it. *Priest* also attempts to make others aware of

a force that passes notice but which he considers to exist. Astronomers, likewise, refer to forces which they believe to exist and for which they hope to find evidence. II.9

firmament PSALM 19 quoted. II.5

First Cause as a constant, and then diverted to constancy. II.19

'flannelle couvre toi de', *Daudet*, TARTARIN DE TARASCON. III.8

flattening photographic representation regarded as. It is also an effect produced by the satisfaction of curiosity. I.24

'flatus' as a vehicle by which one mind communicates with another; from Divine to devilish. I.26

focal point and its relationship to the caesura in which its presence becomes plain. I.35

folie-à-deux religious. III.12

two characters exciting psychiatric attention [*see* **Soma** and **Psyche**]. III.13

forebears mental, if known, would be illuminating. II.15

force and possession. I.39

formulation methods of, chosen as means of communication. II.7

'Forsan et haec (olim) meminisse juvabit' 'Maybe one day we shall be glad to remember even these things', Virgil, AENEID, BOOK II. III.7

fossils, old vulgar expression used as a model for a real 'state of mind'. I.34

foundling hospital institution for receiving and caring for children abandoned by their parents. I.15

'Frail as summer flowers . . .' popular school hymn sung softly by the girls, bawled by the boys. I.15

framework need for a structuring of human thought including art, religion, science. I.16

France, Anatole on bigotry. II.1, II.14, II.18

Frankenstein associated with monsters of the imagination contrasted with ugliness thought to be real. II.14

free association and realization. I.43

free associations and facts obscured. III.8

Freudian. I.8

freedom, perfect death. I.8

French, Sir John Field Marshal John Denton Pinkstone French, 1st Earl of Ypres (1852–1925). He was a British and Anglo-Irish officer who distinguished himself commanding British cavalry during the Second Boer War and then served as the first Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in World War I. III.13

Freud, S. as 'midwife'. II.3

'constructions'. II.1

definition of 'conscious'. I.21
description of a 'paramnesia'. III.9
his view that psychoanalysis should be conducted in an atmosphere of deprivation. III.9
infant sexuality. I.Pro
letter to *Lou Andreas-Salomé* quoted. I.9
psychoanalytic explanation of religion. III.10
sexual theories decried. II.19; III.9
statements used by, 'precisely' and in a 'particular' context, becoming incomprehensible because of the growth stimulated by his own contributions to human thought. I.43
theory of anal eroticism. I.40
theory of consciousness, requiring extension. I.26
theories of, even if inadequate, are nevertheless valuable for containing, implicitly, the expression of formulation required, now and in the future, for making them explicit. I.37
transference. II.2
'trauma of birth'. III.11
two methods of mental functioning. II.3

Freudian and Kleinian. These terms are often used as if it were possible to split psychoanalysis. The division is useful for purposes of articulate speech, but it serves to obscure the thing that transcends grammatical boundaries. II.15

froth-blowers term for drinkers of beer. The 'anthem' is a song associated with jovial gatherings. II.19

fuck supposed, inaccurately, to be what is 'done' by one sex to the other, not an activity which is dependent on both partners. II.7

fucking the word and the act a nuisance. I.10

fugitive, false 'Back to thy punishment . . .', Milton, PARADISE LOST, BOOK II. I.21

funny a judgement of an event which stimulates horror. I.22
cruel fun to be discriminated; primitive sado-masochistic likewise. I.14

furniture as the contents of a dream. I.8

'fust in us unused' *Shakespeare,* HAMLET. III.10

futility pun on 'fertility'. II.14

'future' at hand; the past unknown, the present observed. I.4

Future casts its shadow before. I.25
in which to bury postponements. I.14

G

galactic centre invisible from Earth, but supposedly brilliant, as is the case with the centre of M31 and other spiral nebulae. II.2

galactic nebulae supposedly analogous to objects thrown together like the fall of dice. II.3

galaxy its centre hidden from us. II.1

Galileo need to conform to society. I.9

Gallowglass [*gallóglaigh* (pl.), *gallóglach* (sing)]. Old Irish for 'warrior' and 'foreigner'. (See novel of this name [1990] by *Ruth Rendell*, under name '*Barbara Vine*'). II.6

games including the 'psychoanalytic' game as a prelude to disciplined thinking. I.37

gap like a paramnesia, intended to fill the space before violence. I.29

garden serpent's entry into. I.8

Gates an officer who took part in the landing of the Lancashire Fusiliers at the Dardanelles; he was recommended for the Victoria Cross but could not face the prospect of further battle. II.19

'generator' a person or thing fostering an implicit development of thought which becomes explicit, possibly centuries later. II.1

genius need to develop sensitiveness to its presence. I.26

warning of the charismatic distortion of the word. Every analyst has to restore its meaning by constantly repeated use without varying the 'meaning' which he wishes to convey. II.2

geocentric time typical of ego-centric concern with |time| [*see* **Absolute Truth**]. II.1

geometry Euclidean and visual images. I.14; II.1

geophysical term borrowed from and therefore reminiscent of, past use in order to express a future yet undetermined. II.3

get up an expression used in reference to athletic activity, a function of the limbic nuclei. This and similar phrases must be recognized as signs that a particular state of mind in the analysand is being activated. II.4

ghastly expression [*see* **Cheshire Cat** and **grin**]. I.14

ghosts supposed visible evidence of absent persons. I.20

'ghosts' *Berkeley's* attack on *Newton* for his 'ghosts' of increments may assume a new meaning when used to describe the 'objects' evacuated (in phantasy) by the infant. I.40; II.4, II.19

Gibbon *The Duke of Gloucester* quoted in *Best*'s LITERARY MEMORIALS. III.7

Gilbert and *Sullivan:* H.M.S. PINAFORE quoted. II.1

THE GONDOLIERS; rhythmic imitation of 'That celebrated, cultivated, underrated nobleman, The Duke of Plaza Toro'. III.3

girl and man, on 'holiday'. I.36
'gist' used by *P.A.* as a word to summarize 'impressions'. II.11
glass darkly. THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS. I.8
glittering prizes a phrase used by *Lord Birkenhead (F. E. Smith)* to describe seductive bait. II.3
'glories of our blood and state . . .', *James Shirley,* THE CONTENTION OF AJAX AND ULYSSES. II.19
glory of God PSALM 19. II.1, II.10
God and Satan. I.8
as expletive. I.11
belief in a cruel G. and masochistic adoration. I.17
communication of human being with. II.3
concept considered as an idée mère. II.4
cruel sense of humour. I.27
devouring cruelty. III.8
dreadful, screened by analogy with 'Decent Chap'. II.5
existence of, debated. III.10
figment of the imagination. III.19
flight from. II.1
fountain of compassion. III.8
His interest in religion questioned. II.2
human belief that human sacrifice acceptable to. III.8
incarnate; belief in the doctrine of, to include also Devil incarnate; *P.A.* discusses. II.8
in distinction from Godhead, debated. II.9
invoked in popular speech by *Alice* to aid in the prevention of further discussion which might lead to learning. This God is pictorialized in the story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. It seems to be similar to the God depicted in the narrative of Babel. I.42
'And God laughed' a reference to 'Ducks', by F. W. Harvey. ('All God's jokes are good – even the practical ones! / And as for the duck, I think God must have smiled a bit / Seeing those bright eyes blink on the day He fashioned it. / And he's probably laughing still at the sound that came out of its bill!). II.2
'. . . name of, in vain', THIRD COMMANDMENT. I.11
not obsessed with religion. I.26
'(the), of love my Shepherd is', Christian hymn. II.10
related to truth, and truth related to God. I.35
vestiges of, in past, present or future. I.29
word often technically used, as is 'Father Figure', to save thinking. II.9
'God' the god that is worshipped depends partly on the individual and partly on the cultural context. II.3, II.11

Godhead origin of what is known more precisely as 'God'. I.16; II.12, II.14
'Godhead' word useful as less abstract than 'Ultimate Reality'. I.43
Godlike dependent on the function endowed with omnipotence. I.8
gods false, contrasted with God. II.12
gold as a basis of value ignorantly believed to be independent of the artisan. I.30
golden boys and girls, *Shakespeare,* CYMBELINE. III.2
Gomer concubine of the prophet *Hosea.* II.18
good girl rewarded by the prospect of jollity. II.19
goodness The attempt to focus on the goodness of God contributes to blindness to the qualities of the world in which we live. II.9
good report sarcastic reference to a school aspiration. II.10
googly cricket term describing a particularly deceptive spin imparted to the ball by the bowler. II.19
grammar system of rules. I.20
Great is the Truth originally, 'For great is truth and shall prevail', *Thomas Brooks,* THE CROWN AND GLORY OF CHRISTIANITY. III.12
greed mental. III.9
greedy *soul* [*see* **glittering prizes**]. II.3
Greeks used to represent the educational model. I.17
Green, André his book, UN OEIL EN TROP. III.9
perspicuous nature of the dramatic art form pointed out. III.9
Griffiths, D. W. producer of spectacular films. I.23
grin [*see* **Cheshire Cat**]. I.14
gross words cunt and prick. I.16
discussed. III.6, III.7
guilty response to. III.7
language of the id. III.7
primitive reserves of vitality tapped. III.7
universally comprehended. III.6, III.7
group as a vertex from which observations can be made similar to a 'macroscopic' examination. This is contrasted with psychoanalysis of the 'individual' which, in its detail, resembles a 'microscopic' scrutiny. I.38
term borrowed from mathematics. The implications of the problem seen from a mathematical vertex have been described by *Ignacio Matte Blanco* in THE UNCONSCIOUS AS INFINITE SETS. That exploration can be so difficult as to be forbidding; it is evocative and rewarding. The difficulty is not different from that confronting anyone who embarks on the discipline of a psychoanalysis [*see* **set theory**]. I.42

group analysis and psychoanalysis; possible relationship discussed. III.11

groups Disciplined groups, such as armies and their leaders, can in certain circumstances succumb to the pressure of intense and communicable terror. This is one reason why regular soldiers have to submit to years of 'disciplined training' in discipline [*see* **discipline** and **panic**]. I.42

growth and maturation. I.17

Guadalupe shrine of, in Mexico. I.31

guardian euphemism for murderer. I.24

guilt and its relationship to self-deception. I.35
denial of, by the formation of a hard, smooth coat of love. I.3
resentment of; dialogue between *Adolf* and *Albert.* I.18

guilts irrational; a term whose meaning depends on the weight which is attached to the fact that 'reasons' are as plentiful as weeds. II.2

gun The easy availability of a handgun has to be reckoned with by anyone aspiring to appeal to reason. II.19

gustatory introducing the idea of the toxic use of food and drink as agents to prevent the evocation of thought. II.1

gutless lack of courage in sexual initiative. II.17

guts a reference to a horrible war event recurrent in dreams. I.23

guttersnipe a street urchin. I.17

H

haemorrhoids as an alternative to gastro-morality and intestinal revenge. III.8

hair dressing of. I.10

hallucination or dream, or unconscious, or artefact. I.4
term often coloured by fear as if malign. I.20

hallucinations contrasted with facts. II.17

happy pair a term often applied automatically to married people. II.2

hard-baked [*see* **façade**]. II.7

harlotry information about, requested by schoolboys wishing to embarrass teachers. II.17

Harrow [*see* **Eton**]. I.25

hatching out from shell; used metaphorically to describe the birth of an idea. II.19

hate contrast with banality. I.3
or love. I.43

penetrating effect of. I.32
real contrasted with simulated, both being called 'hate'. I.32
[*see* **love**]. I.32
hate, divine contrasted with human. I.32
hatred and contempt. I.3
headache a pain known by the individual, but invisible, and yet requiring interpretation [*see* **diagnosis**]. I.18
Heaven a word that should be used with respect because of its long history of being indispensable to human thought. II.19
spoken of as subject to the same rules of wealth and privilege as obtain on earth. II.19
Heavenly Muse contrasted by *Milton* with the pagan muse *Orpheus.* II.1
Heavens, the PSALM 19. II.1, II.10, II.19
Hector dishonoured in war. I.17
quotation from *Virgil,* AENEID [*see* **'exuvias indutus Achilli'**]. II.19
heel *see* OLD TESTAMENT, GENESIS III. III.1
Heisenberg His theory of the Uncertainty Principle seems to be paralleled in philosophy by 'doubt'. I.44
related to the discussion of logic. II.3
Helen of Troy as the seducer of *Paris.* II.1
caused mankind to see Beauty. I.8
This type of the power of beauty is significant in that her features are nowhere described – only her action in appearing on the walls. II.15
heliocentric reference to the theories of *Aristarchus* and *Copernicus.* II.19
helix structure of the DNA molecule. II.10
hell as a space filler; expletives used as a substitute for thought. I.30
flight from, described by *Milton* as 'pandemonium'. II.1
Hell evocative of God. I.11
compared to Heaven; presumed to be a way of segregating evil from good. II.16
helpless a stimulus to cruelty. I.24
helplessness inseparable from omnipotence. I.35
hemlock *Keats,* ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE. II.19
the poison administered to *Socrates.* II.19
Henry IV his ambition to possess Paris. I.13
here where? when? what? how? – all leading to problems which cannot be matched to the correct solution. II.19
Heredia his poem, VITRAIL. II.10
Herodotus on fossils. I.18, I.26
hierarchy discredited, represented by *Priest,* but confused with religion. II.14

hieroglyph a type of visual image used for communication. I.35; II.2
Hippotades guardian of the winds. II.19
history punning reference to LITTLE ARTHUR'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND, by *Maria Lady Callcott.* I.21
Hobbes his use of a group of individuals as a model for the individual in the LEVIATHAN. I.44
Hobbs a famous cricketer. II.1
hole violent release from the skull. I.9
'holier' degrees of superiority in holiness discussed. II.18
Holmes, Sherlock and wandering attention. I.31
only observing and detecting. II.7
the fictional character confronting the author. I.39
holy meaning honest and helpful. II.2
Holy Boast punning reference to boasting as an activity of the evil mind masquerading as the honest and helpful Spirit of religion. II.19
Homer ILIAD and ODYSSEY. I.38, I.43
Milton, in PARADISE LOST, BOOK III, likens his own fate to famous predecessors, 'Blind Thamyris and blind Maeonides'. II.1
homo-sapiens as a characteristic of omnipotence. I.35
homosexual relationship contrasted with heterosexual. I.22
[see **love**]. I.38
use of decorations to cover up despised homosexuality. I.24
honour or dishonour, + or –. III.9
hooks used metaphorically to describe that with which attention is aroused. II.19
hope related to the desire for unceasing pleasant sensations. I.36
Hopkins, Gerard Manley and schizophrenia. II.3
HABIT OF PERFECTION quoted. I.26, I.33; III.1
Horace said *Homer* conferred immortality on *Agamemnon* in the ILIAD. I.Pro; III.8
ODE TO LOLLIUS, BOOK IV 9. II.14
Lydia, in ODES, BOOK III 9; cf. *Verlaine,* COLLOQUE SENTIMENTAL. I.17
Hosea cited as an example of a prophet seduced by a whore; OLD TESTAMENT. II.1, II.3; III.8
howls loud noise equated with faint sound. I.21
howls, animal made by *Alice* and *Roland.* It is a reminiscence of the lilith, the demon that is one of the inhabitants of the mind. II.19
hunch as a popular expression for 'intuition'. I.36; II.2
possible refuge from exposure. I.22
related to discovery. I.21
hunters a reference to *Bahram* in the RUBAIYAT of *Omar Khayyam.* I.Pro

humbug and pretension of 'modesty'; *see Freud's* description of what he calls the 'over-interpretation'. II.1
Priest's soliloquy on the 'scientific' approach, compared with religious and intuitive speculation. II.10
Hume on 'reason' as the slave of emotion. I.36
hydrophobia rabies, commonly carried by wild animals. I.29
hyena animal used as a symbol of cruel laughter. I.21
'hypochondria' and other terms impregnated with pejorative connotations. III.12
hypochondriasis difficulty of distinguishing, from awareness of illness. I.22
'hypo-theory' concentration on, as an aid to imaginative conjecture. III.12
hypothesis related to dogma. I.14

I

idea as able to lodge in 'roughness'. II.3
exposure of; *Roland* questions the value of its exposure. *P.A.* concedes the possibility. II.11
in contrast with feeling. I.16
ideal idealization motivated by dissatisfaction with the realities in so far as they are observed. II.18
idealization of the unworthy. I.34
idealized figures The fact of idealization is an expression of dissatisfaction with reality and a belief that the person can imagine something superior to the fact. II.14
ideas disguised or displayed by words. III.5
idée mère the beta-element as generator of an idea. II.3
idées mères a name used by *James Joyce.* In analysis certain ideas, whether expressed by analyst or analysand, are soon seen to provoke breeder-reactions; be it question or answer, it 'breeds' a whole range of new problems and ideas. It is against this vent that either of the two people can strive to defend himself by a closure. This is often the function of being awake, insomnia etc., as a defence of states of mind and sights seen and places visited when asleep. Similarly, either of the pair can take refuge from being wide awake and scientifically capable, by sleep or by being deaf, dumb and blind to the surrounding universe. I.41, I.43
idiot 'tale told by an, ' *Shakespeare,* MACBETH. II.9; III.1

if *P.A.* emphasizes a word the significance of which can easily be ignored. II.15
ignorance worship of. I.9
ILIAD and basic elements of war. I.17
illogical the utterly, used to impress. II.1
illumination When illumination occurs much depends on the years during which discipline has been built up in the course of training and, more spontaneously, in dealing with frustration. Otherwise the illumination is liable to initiate an uncontrolled reaction. For this reason progress in psychoanalysis can appear to precipitate a breakdown of frightening proportions. The illumination has often been described, usually in religious literature and by poets; for example, the apocryphal description of Krishna's unveiling before Arjuna in the BHAGAVAD GITA; *Milton's* description of his reaction to blindness at the commencement of PARADISE LOST, BOOK III. Others may be profitably searched out by practising analysts. The revelation of these emotions which have been 'hidden' by the patient, even from himself, is liable always to produce a refusal of further analysis by patient, relatives and psychoanalyst. If this is proceeded with, it may be rewarding. I.42
'Ils gisent là . . .' from the poem, VITRAIL, by *Heredia.* II.10
image, real a reminiscence of SOLOMON AND THE WITCH, by *W. B. Yeats*. II.6
imaginary and fictitious characters. I.21
imitation of analytic session note-taking. I.19
Pirandello's play, SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR, associated with imaginary numbers. I.26
imagination as the origin of pain. II.14
has to be protected against reality. I.20
questioned as the real origin of a supposed fact. II.7
imitation prelude to articulate speech. I.26
Immaculate Conception doctrine in contrast to 'human pleasures'. III.12
impasse liable, like any obstruction, to lead to a diversion and therefore diverticula. I.14
impending disaster related anxiety state ↔ anticipation and foresight. I.37
implicit *Bion* and *Man* debate the idea that psychoanalysis was implicit in many writings before *Freud* made it explicit. I.36
impressed methods of impressing. I.17
inanimate change from animate to. I.28
field of the living extended by. I.16

incantation of Priest, who talks as if broadcasting an international cricket match with the intonation appropriate to a religious service. II.19
Incarnation *P.A.* is discussing a matter which is more thoroughly explored by theologians. II.8
incomprehensible contrasted with the simplicity of ferocious action. II.1
incomprehension paramnesias and other substitutes used as a detour to avoid the work of comprehension. I.43
increment + murder becomes war [*see also* **'ghosts'**]. II.9
related to growth. II.9
indigestion lightly spoken of by *Rosemary* in the service of denial of the mind; the same word is used by *P.A.* metaphorically to affirm the reality of a mind. II.17
mental. III.9
individual the importance of the 'individual' contrasted with the group. I.38
the importance of, falsely magnified by psychoanalysis. I.24
indolence contrasted with activity. I.27
infants massacre of; a reference to the alleged plot of the Roman authorities. II.14
'inferiority complex' term now vulgarized so that its psychiatric meaning is devalued. I.43
infernal pejorative or topographical. II.19
infinity stupor to bigotry. I.8
infra-conceptual term borrowed from 'things' whose position could be related if there were a suitable system of co-ordinates; the lack of it, illustrated by discussion. II.2
infra-red and ultra-violet, as unit of measurement. I.28
infra-sensual from, to ultra-sensual; or infra-human to ultra-human. I.13, I.16, I.28, I.34
infra-sensuous /'conscious' and rational. I.34
infra-sensuous /ultra-sensuous-the relationship discussed. I.36, I.42
'ingredients of the poisoned chalice', *Shakespeare,* MACBETH. II.14
inhibition technical term for use in discussion. III.9
in love *Rosemary's* mother, from her experience as a whore, does not regard being 'in love' as in any way related to reality in a heterosexual episode. II.16
insane the need for the analyst to be able to tolerate being regarded as. I.24
insanity 'sanity' regarded as superior to. I.14
insight and 'out'sight. II.15

insignificance discovery of, unwelcome. III.9
Institutes dead. III.3
institutions inanimate objects. III.5
members of. III.5
instrument a book as, for purposes of communication to other times and personalities. I.42
integration constant conjunction synonymous with? *Alice's* question followed by discussion. I.43
intelligence like a bad smell, a substitute for wisdom. I.14
underestimation of. I.7
intelligent word frequently used as an alternative to 'wise'; topic debated. II.15
intently used to describe the concentration with which an observation is made. II.11
INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS Chapter 7, *S. Freud.* I.21
interpretation a common activity, not only psychoanalytic, e.g. musical score. I.19
Empathy could be described, in contrast with projective identification, as the attempt to 'penetrate' in order to discover meaning. II.15
of bodily symptoms. II.14
inherent fear of giving. III.8
[*see* **construction**]. I.29
interpretations dialogue based on the need that every individual has to 'interpret' the 'facts' of which his senses make him aware. II.11
[*see* **desires**]. II.9
Introspection and Extroversion. I.11
intrusion of imagination into a serious discussion, and vice versa. I.20
intuition contrasted with 'things' observed. I.43
discussed. I.43
feminine, as a mode of intuiting the quality of a proposed union. I.43
mathematical, feminine and masculine as differing qualities of. I.43
[*see Kant,* CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON]. I.8, I.43; II.1
Intuitionist mathematics as a mode of thinking. II.9
Intuitionists and logic. III.11
infinity suggested as a thing easy to grasp by the immature, in contrast with the difficulty of the concept to the adult. II.2
[*see* **excluded middle**]. II.2
invader war, poverty, disease, beauty and dirt as penetrating forces. I.31
invariants borrowed from algebra [*see* **constants**]. I.30
investments in farm work and whoring. I.16
Irene Adler fictitious character alleged to be admired by *Sherlock Holmes;* here supposed to have embraced his wicked rival. II.19

irrational and mathematics. I.11
Isaiah Hebrew prophet. His formulations have been translated and transformed into terms comprehensible to present-day readers. These ancient events appear to leave 'vestiges' in present-day thought; their present-day form has to be recognized and re-translated into formulations suitable for our age. II.2
The reference is to ISAIAH, vi. The function of the two wings was consciously understood originally to refer to the genitalia; in the present era it would probably have to be interpreted psychoanalytically, to the scandal of the faithful. II.6, II.8, II.18
isolation [*see* **all-alone** and **dependent**]. II.16
it importance of context to confer meaning. I.29

J

jackal Indian name for coyote. I.29
jargon interchange of, becomes a mental slough. III.8
space filler, used as a substitute for thought; 'talking' instead of speaking to say something. I.14, I.42; II.1
The technique of communication or any other human activity rapidly becomes debased. *Rosemary* sums up the process by a hostile comment about learning to cook. II.9, II.14
type of verbalization usually distinguished for its pretentious language used with the object of passing for intelligence and wisdom. II.15
undisciplined growth of words likened to mental cancer. II.14
jaws reference to apparent expression of a skull. II.4
jealousy and envy. *Elliott Jaques* was responsible for pointing out to *Melanie Klein* that the title of her projected book should include 'gratitude' to represent the content of what she had written. II.18
Jessica *Shakespeare,* THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. II.3
Jesuit religion and mental illness [*see* ***Hopkins, Gerard Manley***]. II.3
Jesus and his God. I.9
eponymous. I.17
Jew said to claim Roman citizenship in contrast with attribution of Christian ideas. II.19
jewel *Shakespeare's* description of *John of Gaunt's* England: 'This precious stone set in a silver sea', RICHARD II. II.10
Jezail *Watson's* bullet. I.22, I.32
wound's location, ambiguously described. I.26
Job answered by God. I.28
judging the judge. I.17
[*see* **uncertainty principle**]. I.43

job An analyst has no control over the use to which the analysand puts his experience. He therefore has to be aware of accepting responsibility for a matter which is not his job. II.19

Rosemary, suspecting *Alice* of collusion with *Roland,* tells her to 'find another job.' II.16

Jodrell Bank the site of a radio telescope in England. II.1

JOHN BULL a disreputable journal published by *Horatio Bottomley;* notorious amongst the troops in World War I in a song parodying its prognostications. II.19

joke cruel. I.16

kind and loving. I.11

journey end of; part of a bawdy song sung by the troops in World War I. II.2

Joyce, James compared with sculptors in stone, *Michelangelo* and *Moore.* I.11

his illuminating use of 'idées mères'. I.41, I.43

Jung nomenclature of, contrasted with *Freud's.* II.19

juvenile nonsense the contemptuous reference to psychoanalytic theory and outlook contrasted with the new version of old male dominance. II.19

K

K minus and plus, assume a linear model for conveying lack or otherwise of experience. I.33, I.34

Kant 'concepts without intuition are empty. . .', CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON. I.8, I.39, I.40, I.41

'thing-in-itself, critique of pure reason. I.Pro

Karno sarcastic reference by the men of Kitchener's Army, sung to the tune of the hymn, THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION. II.2

Keats 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty', ODE ON A GRECIAN URN. II.12

used the term 'Negative Capability' in a letter to his brother. I.43

Kenner, Hugh [*see* ***Ruskin***]. II.2

kicking off a ludicrous ritual, often observed, in which the wife of some highly-decorated authority initiates a regimental event. I.23

killed in action. I.22

killing and war. I.17

Kingdom of Heaven; used from historically early times to describe the existence of internal objects. II.19

Kipling, Rudyard parody of *Horace's* ODES. I.17

was obsessed by a school friend whom he described as 'Stalky'. II.19

kiss type of significant action. What does it signify? Discussed. I.42
Kitchenger a distortion of *Kitchener,* war minister in World War I. II.19
Klein, Melanie her theory of projective identification not attributed to fetuses. III.11
her view of man as 'a world in himself'. I.43
paranoid-schizoid position. I.14
her ideas extended to cover domains believed to be implicit in her theories though not avowed by her. I.37
Kleinian vertex, regarded as one from which the observation is 'microscopic' rather than 'macroscopic'. I.43
knowledge and wisdom, differentiated [*see* **intelligence**]. III.7
Ronald Knox, Father (1888–1957). *Ronald Knox* was born in Kibworth, Leicestershire, and was educated at Eton College, and Balliol College, Oxford. In 1910, he became a fellow of Trinity College, Oxford. Knox translated the St. Jerome Latin Vulgate Bible into English. He also wrote satirically on the character of *Sherlock Holmes*. [*See also* **Enthusiasm**]. II.3
Krafft-Ebing PSYCHOPATHIA SEXUALIS [*see* ***Ellis, Havelock***]. II.10
Krakatoa and grandeur. II.10
Krishna quoted by BHAGAVAD GITA [*see* ***Arjuna***]. I.16, I.17, I.34; II.11

L

lady-in-waiting function performed, usually in royal courts. I.33
λ (lambda) Greek letter as a pictorial representation not unlike Chinese; used here as a constant. I.19
language a reference to PSALM 19. I.17
conversational. The psychoanalyst has to use terms which are misleadingly reminiscent of conversation. It is one reason why he should strive to use even devalued terms with precise, constant and repetitive frequency to restore their value. II.1; III.9
inadequacy of. I.17
lark descent from flight. II.1
Juliet, on parting from *Romeo; Shakespeare,* ROMEO AND JULIET. II.14
freedom of, contrasted with human. I.5
Larling a village near Thetford, England; the name sounds like a ghostly distortion of 'darling' – represented by darling/darling. I.33
laugh expression of cruel feelings by *Rosemary.* II.16
sadistic, fiendish response to suffering. I.21
laughing interpretation of the underlying force of which it is the disguise. I.8

laughter cruel, in contrast with friendly. I.21
of a fool, OLD TESTAMENT, ECCLESIASTES VII. I.21
Law *Poisson's*. I.8
laws Confusion is often caused by supposing that the laws governing human thinking have their counterpart in the 'laws' of the universe [*see* **black hole**]. II.1
of nature, not to be confused with laws that are obeyed. I.35
of Nature; spoken of as if the human ability to formulate observations, scientifically observed, makes them immutable. II.19
League tables sarcastic reference to rivalry amongst psychoanalysts. The term is borrowed from ball games. II.1
learning by heart; the popular phrase reconsidered. II.1
in excess, equated with insanity; *see* 'much learning doth make thee mad', NEW TESTAMENT, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES XXVI. I.14
Much of what has been acquired in the course of a lifetime, whether of the analyst or the analysand, can appear as what psychoanalysts call 'free associations', but what I think is sometimes more illuminating to regard as 'debris'. This word is applicable to both analyst and analysand. What the analysand says shows what he has 'learnt' in various stages of 'digestion'. The analyst must show the patient, in the light of his own debris, the relationship that the various scraps of the analysand's bear to each other. II.9
the acquiring of 'technical' proficiency, e.g. in the arts and sciences, and now a psychoanalytic ambition. II.2
Le Conte on knowledge of stella composition. II.5
Lee limerick about 'a young lady of Lee'. II.4
Legion The name of the famous XXth Legion stationed in the West Country of England was Legio Vicessima Valeria Victrix. It disappeared from the muster roll of the Roman Army, probably wiped out by the Brigantes, a warlike tribe inhabiting what is now Yorkshire. I.23
lenses as an aid to reinforce visual capacity. I.22
Leonardo da Vinci as the agent through whom a work of art is created. II.3
expressed turbulence by drawing hair and water. I.33; II.9; III.1
his golden number as analogous to Cartesian co-ordinates. I.28
Lesbia see poems by *Catullus.* II.15
L'Estrade the police detective in the MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. I.28
Lethe the river of forgetfulness in Hades, used as a soporific drug by the god *Somnus.* I.28
Leviathan aquatic monster, described in the BOOK OF JOB, OLD TESTAMENT. I.9

liar *Rosemary's* disillusion leads her to assume that there is nothing but illusions deliberately created. To what extent the human being is capable of assessing what is a fact has always been a matter of doubt, but psychoanalysis helps to expose the doubtful nature of many 'facts' assumed to be true. Disillusionment is frequently accompanied by the unpleasant emotion of disillusionment; there needs to be a method by which dis-illusionment could be differentiated from disillusionment. Words are therefore of great importance to clear thinking, but they need to be correctly attached to the 'real' thing. II.7

liars heroic; quoted as a parody of *Horace's* ODE TO LOLLIUS. I.28

lie simulation of truth. I.11

lies and deceptions. I.28

Lies indistinguishable from Truth. I.11

Light Heavenly, described by *Milton* in PARADISE LOST, BOOK III. II.5, II.12

Lilith Jewish female demon. The reference here is to the legend of *Lilith* as the wife of Adam. It is worth comparing to the story told by *Colette* (and the opera by Ravel), L'ENFANT ET LES SORTILÈGES. II.18

representative of primordial thought. I.17

limits What are the borders which have temporarily to be established as the confines within which a discussion is to take place? I.42

linear co-ordinates use of, in the formulation of narrative. I.39

link Sometimes the word is used to express the conventional function and is then coloured by the context in which it is used, e.g. *Alice* married *Roland.* At others it has to be interpreted in the context of all that has been told the analyst. At other times the interpretation depends upon the context, which the analyst can see for himself, in the conversation; at others, it has to be interpreted in the context of the analysand's hopes, expectations and forebodings. I.41

links genetic; the need for extension analogous to Cartesian co-ordinates. I.28

listen with attention. I.17

'Litora, litoribus contraria' Virgil's description in the AENEID of the opposing coasts of the Trojan and Roman empires; used here to describe opposing coasts of France and Britain. II.18; III.9

live becoming hateful when transformed to inanimate. I.29

living equated with Beta becoming Alpha, unconscious becoming conscious, inarticulate communication becoming articulate thought. I.14

Livy his parable of the members of the body; his description in physical terms – the soma – when wishing to communicate the reality of a group's culture. II.1, II.15

Lobachevsky and *Riemann,* quoted as a method of provoking thought. II.1

and space. I.14

as a threat to *Euclid;* mathematics have to become irrational. I.11

locked up confinement as a punitive treatment of who or what is not understood. I.16

Loeb and Leopold A reference to two wealthy students from the University of Chicago, who in 1924 were tried and found guilty of the murder, an attempted 'perfect crime', of a 14-year-old boy. *Clarence Darrow's* summing up of the case for the defence was a criticism of capital punishment and retributive justice, and was to become influential in stimulating reform. III. 7

logic conscious system of, as a cloak for sympathetic and parasympathetic obtrusion into 'logic'. I.14

laws of, often spoken of as if what is in fact a limitation of the human mind applies to the 'cosmic' universe and not only to the universe of thought. II.4

often spoken of as if the laws which govern clear thought and expression of human thinking have a validity which extends to the universe in which humans live. II.19

[*see* **excluded middle**]. II.2

term used to describe a method of thinking which appears to be fundamental to the human capacity for thought. II.3

Lollius immortalized in *Horace's* ODE, BOOK IV. II.10

London Scottish territorial regiment, unfortunate enough, during World War I, to be placarded as such marvellous fighters that they became the laughing-stock of the British armies of the Western Front. II.19

Longfellow, H. W. [*see* **'Sail on!'**]. II.1

loon both human and bird usually associated with stupidity. II.19

'Lord, with me abide' the hymn, ABIDE WITH ME, popular in Protestant England. II.10

love and articulate speech. I.44

and destruction. I.8

and hate, often associated with physiological sex and consequently confused with each other. No distinction is made between problems of verbal communication and of the reality which it is wished to communicate. I.32, I.43

and sado-masochism. I.10

as made by beasts. I.8
brotherly. I.10
father's, as described in the NEW TESTAMENT. The earliest description, as part of a fundamental change in culture, is the story of Abraham and Isaac. II.11
friendship, and 'marriage' as an institution contrasted. I.14
indefinable but fundamental. The capacity to love persons or things is often misunderstood, misquoted or wrongly applied. Confusion is frequently produced by the prevailing cultural use of terms such as 'homosexual'. I.38
making, made impossible by *Rosemary so* as to avoid venereal disease. II.16
of God, contrasted with the meaning as applied to humans. II.19
passionate. I.38, I.43
Related words like 'friend' and 'comrade' are used so easily that the psychoanalyst has, incidentally to his work, to use them with circumspection to restore their value. II.9
The negative cannot be known without experience of the positive. Love of food is related to the kind of love that pre-supposes gain. The love which is an expression of a desire to 'give' usually depends on the co-existence of maturity – even in an infant. II.16
word ambiguously used. The laws of grammar are treated as if they were laws governing the *thing* signified, and not simply the rules of communication. I.43
word frequently frivolously used. In practice the analyst has to decide what value to place on a word which is used ambiguously. The problem depends on a capacity instantaneously to assess the frivolous or serious intent of the speaker. I.42
Love God's [*see* **Wrath**]. II.1
love-making a term which often obscures, rather than illuminates, the reality beyond 'love'. II.9
loyalty to truth, as the aim of and criterion for validation of the products. II.12
£.s.d. and L.S.D. The pun as a compact free association, dispersed as in these pages, is assumed to have a meaning when 'interpreted'. I.29
Ludendorff supposed to be the strategic mind governing *Hindenburg*. II.7
lunar illustration as an example of the problem of the differentiation of unthinking obedience from disciplined thought. I.30
Luria, Isaac sixteenth-century Jewish cabalist and mystic. II.2
lust-crazed lust as conducive to the destruction of clear thought. II.18
Lycidas [see ***Milton, John***].

M

M31 Andromeda nebula, used to exemplify. I.43; II.1, II.2

M'Naghten Rules The M'Naghten Rules (pronounced, and sometimes spelled, McNaughton), stemmed from legal responses to the acquittal of Daniel McNaughton, charged in 1843 for the attempted assassination of the British Prime Minister, Robert Peel. They relate to the question of liability for criminal acts in terms of sanity and the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong. Bion discussed this issue with a group in New York, April 1977, Talk 2. [*Ed.*] III.12.

macroscopic used to contrast 'the general' from 'the specific'. I.41
vertex [*see* **microscopic**]. I.29

mad loosely used to express a state of mind that is feared. II.18

mademoiselle part of a soldiers' song of World War I. II.4

Maginot a line of fortification on which France depended for its safety. I.14

Maid of the Mountain stage musical. I.17

♂ contained, and symbol for 'male'. In what way does this symbol differ from the word 'male'? This is typical of the problem confronting the analyst where he has to consider that what he hears said by the analysand should be interpreted in a psychoanalytically correct manner. Usually it is safe to assume that the patient is aware of the conscious meaning of what he says, his problem being to know what is the 'over-interpretation' that requires to be discussed. But in practice it matters whether it is 'over', 'under', 'ironic', 'punning' etc. [*See also* symbol for 'female', ♀]. I.41

Mammon and God. I.8

Man a character made prominent by *Rosemary* analogous to an inanimate object made prominent by the invitation to discuss. *passim*
his scorn of English hypocrisy. I.24
memoirs of. I.28

man and girl, on 'holiday'. I.36

manic-depressive psychiatric definition assumed to have a 'cause'. I.12

manicure as one method of expressing hetero-hate. I.32
example of non-verbal communication. I.22

marble [*see* ***Heredia***]. I.19

mare day, and night. I.16

marriage official certification of. I.Pro

marry a question posed by *Man* and debated by *Rosemary.* She is not contemplating a love match but is using *Man* as a step towards greater power. Contrast this with *Alice,* who has succumbed to a sexual assault by *Tom*. This is part of a progress in the direction of lesser power. II.16

Mars (god of war) and desire, as devouring. I.8
planet, and its 'canals'. I.41
Martha (biblical) Story of Martha, in LUKE 10, v 38–42. III.7
masochistic impulse 'Masochism' and 'sadism' suffer from the recent vogue for long words. The psychoanalyst, whether he likes it or not, will have to become a master of the precise use of the language which he speaks if he intends to use it to help people to achieve clear thought. II.7
mathematical terms simplifying communication. I.Pro
and thinking, can be applied to make explicit what is otherwise hidden, as *P.A.* is doing. II.9
mathematics as a possible language for the achievement of friendly co-operation. II.2
negative numbers. I.14
pure; the inability to exclude basic sensuous quality even from mathematics. I.41
rational and irrational. I.11, I.30
word used for evocation of thought and for evocations intended to initiate a train of thought. II.23
maths as easily disregarded as religion. II.1
matrix a punning reference to an imaginative conjecture of the idea striving, fetus-like, to emerge from the womb of thought. II.4
maturity The word is useful to indicate the status which any word and its underlying meaning have acquired at the time of writing or speaking. It is useful to see this and other words as 'borrowed from' their accepted meaning in order to express what the analyst regards as an analogue in mental life. It may be as well here to remark that though I make a distinction between mental and somatic, I do not believe that that distinction will be sustained in the light of further growth of psychoanalytic thinking. II.7
Mayqueen *Rosemary* falling into confusion. II.10
mean the mean character alleged always to remain distinguishable from the generous character. II.19
meaning as an extension of observation. I.20
double. I.11
fate of, dependent on transmitter and receiver. III.9
mechanical aids, to human senses; radio etc. I.16
the attempt to transfer problems demanding thought into material which can be handled either by a machine or by transforming the mind into a machine [*see* **instrument**]. I.42
meconium and amniotic fluid. II.4
medical examination. I.6

meetings psychoanalytic, juxtaposed to religious. I.27
Meister Eckhart mystic or quack? I.9
memories [*see* **desires**]. II.9
Memory stimulated into activity. I.15
memory ridding one's mind of, discussed. II.1
'memory' as a recognized part of a character. I.15
'Men who march away' quotation from the poem of that name by *Thomas Hardy.* II.6
men *Rosemary* is being sarcastic in referring to a generally accepted present-day convention of masculine superiority. II.7
menace Buried, the idea becomes 'toxic' and is therefore metaphorically described as an 'explosive bomb'. I.7, I.14
Mendelian Laws of Inheritance. III.12
mental use of the alimentary canal as a model. I.29
mentally alive involves the possibility of mental death either through choice made by the individual, or imposed from without. I.38
mescal a narcotic drug. II.4
Messiah [*see* **Christ**]. I.30
[*see* **saviour**]. III.13
metaphor as a method of communication. II.3
used as an antithesis to *Berkeley's* phrase about 'departed quantities' [*see* **'ghosts'**]. II.19
microscopic contrasted with macroscopic vertex; the distance from the object observed depends on micro- or tele-scope. I.13, I.21, I.38
midnight *Moriarty* is deliberately misquoting *Milton's* IL PENSEROSO. II.14
mighty *Moriarty* is parodying the NUNC DIMITTIS. II.14
milestones There are many signs used to indicate what is variously known as a caesura *(Freud),* birth, adolescence, mid-life crisis *(Jaques),* and others which the practising analyst can discover for himself. These caesuras can be investigated, to use a physical model, by considering the palm of one's hand, looking at it from the back of the hand. That crude pictorial model is the best way in which I can describe something for which there is no sensuous evidence at present. When Freud talks about 'resistance censor' (THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS, 1900a, pp. 308, 321, 322, 499, 542, 563), I think that the practising analyst has to consider both what is censored or hidden, *and* the censor or the cryptographer or the cipherer, or who or what is doing the concealing. To consider only the 'resistance' can be indistinguishable from siding with the censor. I.41
Milton, John [1608–1674] appears throughout.
'formless infinite', PARADISE LOST, BOOK III. I.38; II.5

his blindness described at the beginning of PARADISE LOST, BOOK III. I.13
'holy Light', PARADISE LOST, BOOK III. I.42
Pandemonium, PARADISE LOST, BOOK I. III.3
poetry as the most serious way of writing. II.1
the 'evil days'. II.11
Mind Disturbing. The mind itself may have been a development of the human animal which was painful and unwelcome. II.3
more than the Soma can carry. I.8
mind and anatomy. I.17
as a recent discovery. I.28
as a sense organ. I.21, I.26
assumed to be an entity. I.26
assumed to exist as if the assumption corresponds to something of great significance. I.24
brain and central nervous system as analogues of its function. I.30
comprehensive term used for assumptions, useful but unproven. I.30
concept for which the supporting evidence is difficult to demonstrate. II.15
diseased, *Shakespeare,* MACBETH. I.21
disturbed balance of *Newton's.* I.8, I.13
evidence for such a supposition debated between *Man* and *Bion.* I.36
potentially an instrument. I.22
taking the place of the senses as an instrument of discrimination. I.14
mind± and its patterns. I.28
miracle a transient episode. III.5
mirror psychoanalytic. An analytic interpretation should be correct; that is, what the analyst interprets should make the patient aware of something of which he is not ordinarily aware, namely, how he is and how he appears to be to others. The realization of these contrasts appears to stimulate progress towards maturity. II.7
unflattering image. A debate of which the transient idea is of a 'world' that reflects the characteristics of its creator. II.9
Mister Toad character in *Kenneth Grahame's* THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS. I.31
and contempt. I.43
mistress of the house. Words like 'master' and 'mistress' are frequently used without reference to the observed facts. II.8
Moby Dick *Quee Quegg* 'reading'. I.19
model related to the attempt to conceptualize that which is inadequately formulated. II.9

Money as an object of worship. II.3

money and 'honours', morals, position and power, used seductively. I.28

Money-Kyrle, Roger his description of man's picture of his world. See MAN'S PICTURE OF HIS WORLD (1961), and THE COLLECTED PAPERS OF ROGER MONEY-KYRLE (1978). I.43

monomolecular film term used in a discussion of the problem of what co-ordinates to use in describing, psychoanalytically, 'space' as applied to mental phenomena. I.40

'Mono'theism The monotheistic religions have been regarded as more conducive to the well-being of the individual than polytheistic religions. It has been observed that an ostensibly monotheistic religion expresses polytheism by disguising the gods as saints, angels, demons and other individuals partaking of divine qualities. II.9

monstrosities angelic. The belief in angels has a long history. It is pagan, pre-Islamic, Old Testament and New Testament. The term 'angelic' has been devalued, and its use in analysis, therefore, has to be scrutinized in order to assess its signification, bearing in mind that it may be concealing a feared monster. II.14

Montesquieu French political philosopher. *Robin* describes the way in which a man can be killed in an insignificant episode in war. II.14

Mont Pelée destructive volcano on N. Martinique; a reminder of man's ephemeral nature and therefore easily forgotten. II.1

moon landing on. I.24

moors a quotation from a folk-song of courtship; also a place of burial of the victims of notorious murders by a man and a woman who claimed a loving relationship with each other. I.27

morals contrasted with science. I.26

moral system requiring overhaul. III.8

moral views meaning of, dependent upon the context, e.g. *Plato*. I.16

Moriarty as a fictional version of evil forces [*see* ***Sherlock Holmes***]. I.42

expresses his ability to manipulate a thinking and feeling man. *Sherlock Holmes* reacts with anxiety and anger. This scrap of dialogue represents the fact that 'clear thinking' can be used for evil purposes as well as good. II.7

representing 'modern' crime. II.7

speaking for the rights of evil figures of fiction. II.19

'morituri te salutamus' gladiators' salute to the Emperor. I.17

mortar of the mind. *See Ezra Pound's* translation of STONE TABLES OF CONFUCIUS. II.15

most interesting . . . an instance of a woman expressing hate. It is

striking that in psychoanalytic literature homo- and hetero-hate appear not to excite attention although as real as homo- and hetero-love, and just as inevitably linked with the expression of real sex. I.32
'Mother' the appeal of a fatally wounded soldier. II.2
mouse in the posture of prayer. I.17
mouth [*see* **zero** and **O**]. I.8
Mozart alteration in musical sounds effected by the development of instruments used for their production. I.43
mules make a sound alarmingly like an approaching shell – at least to war-weary troops. II.4
multiplication particular instances. I.21
Munden a village in Hertfordshire, England. I.7; II.3, II.20
murdered associated with supposedly 'loved' authority. I.23
muse of fire, *Shakespeare,* HENRY V. II.3
'Music, when soft voices die . . .', *Shelley,* POSTHUMOUS POEMS. II.20
music listening to, including silence and 'music of the spheres', *Sir Thomas Browne,* RELIGIO MEDICI. II.1
musical expression of the spoken word. I.17
mustard seed NEW TESTAMENT, ST MATTHEW XIII.31. II.9
mutton vulgar expression of contempt for the dead. II.16
Mycroft Holmes *Conan Doyle's* character for superiority in logic, but indolence in practical use. I.19
expression of sarcastic contempt. I.19
on figments of the imagination. II.19
Myself the relationship of fiction and reality debated. I.20
mysteries and half truths; *Keats,* in a letter to his brother. I.21
mystification used to dominate the unsophisticated. I.20

N

name signifying interpretation or diagnosis. II.3
'names 'our names, our deeds', quotation from poem, 'Heroes', in a schoolboy songbook, GAUDEAMUS. I.17
naming the accurate naming of emotional forces not yet achieved. II.2
narcissistic and paranoid; debasement and devaluation of technical terms. III.9
nation a mighty and puissant, quotation from *Milton,* AREOPAGITICA. I.30; IL9
Native American Church the right to use peyote, derived from Aztec ritual, recognized. II.19

Neanderthal man behaviour of. I.17

Néant, le meaning 'nothing', 'nought'. 'Éternité, néant, passé . . .', *Lamartine;* Je suis comme un milieu entre l'être et le néant', *Descartes.* III.1

Negative Capability [*see* ***Keats***]. I.43

neiges, les d'antan: a reference to past beauties, *Villon,* LE GRAND TESTAMENT. I.13, I.28; III.4

Nelson is said to have put his blind eye to the telescope when not wanting to signal retreat; cited here as a model for uses of inhibition. Being blind and deaf to what is unwelcome is a therapeutic measure contrasting with awareness, i.e. psychoanalysis. I.13, I.28

neologism can serve a purpose, but the term is usually used for something which is closer to jargon than a contribution to the armoury of thought. II.1

Milton's use of the word 'Pandemonium', borrowed from the Arabic, is an example of a useful neologism because time has proved its usefulness. In the domain of mental disorder neologisms are usually private to the individual and therefore serve no useful part in communication. II.8

Newton, Isaac and others, deeply buried and forgotten. I.14

Bishop Berkeley's criticism of the Calculus. I.8; II.9

equated with outstanding artists and scientists. I.26

his vertex and disintegration of his mind. I.13

Master of the Mint [*see also* **Opticks**]. I.13

his theories founded on acceptance of the reality of time and space. I.37

Nietzsche on the function of the group. I.26

nightmare fiction of a fictitious nightmare. I.26

nit-wit beauty as a seductive cover for lack of mind. II.3

nod sleep. I.14

noise inaudible but intolerable [*see* **blushing** and **pain**]. I.11

non-sense The distinction between nonsense and non sense is intended to emphasize the need to discriminate different meanings contained in the same word. II.8

to be understood as something not available to the physical senses. II.2

non-specific pressure on the eye as evoking a response similar to, but differing from, the effect of happenings for which the evidence is 'proper' but not tactile. II.1

No-Questionnaire as evocative of psychoanalytic knowledge. I.19

norm *P.A.*'s idea that an anatomical 'norm' is applicable in defining a psychoanalytic 'norm'. II.12

notes as records of a session. I.19

nothing to see No British troops existed between the few in the front line and the sea. *Foch* is said to have claimed at this time that he held the Germans in the hollow of his hand. II.4
noumena and facts. I.Pro
[*see* **phenomenes**]. I.10
noumenon [*see* **ultimate reality**]. II.8
nous used colloquially for common sense. I.15
number generator the word 'sex' analogous to. I.43
numbers natural. I.14
negative, dependent on a framework. I.16
negative, to be invented [*see* **mathematics**]. I.14
negative, used to describe mental phenomena in linear terms. I.37
real. I.16, I.20
stimulus of. I.17
religious; no meta-mathemalogic yet formulated. I.30
nuzzling infantile caress of a lethal object. I.23
Nymphs and Shepherds 'weep no more, woeful Shepherds, weep no more.. .', *Milton*, LYCIDAS. III.9

O

O as an exclamation. I.8
as a visual image. I.8
its relationship to the sensuous aspect of 'ultimate reality'. I.39
related to 'ultimate reality'. I.38, I.43
[*see* **zero**]. I.8
obedience attributed in particular instances, often without reference to the real origin of power. II.7
obscure deliberately and precisely, in the use of words to activate a train of thought in the listener. I.39
obscurities darken. The debate is described so that it illuminates modern psychoanalytic dilemmas in a way that is impossible to the obscurities of jargon. II.8
observation an activity intrinsic to every form of scientific work. II.5
obvious term often used to indicate that further investigation is unnecessary; implicit ideas therefore remain dormant. I.37
obviously certitude, bigotry and dogmatism discussed. The problem was discussed by *Plato* reporting the conversation between *Socrates* and *Theaetetus* on knowledge; it implied fundamentally the problems which have now become explicit, thanks to the attempt to use what we 'know' as the starting point of a psychoanalytic

investigation of the human attempt to 'know' what is real and what is false. On the answer to this problem depends the future course of the human attempt to survive amidst the forces of his universe. Psychoanalysis is one aspect of that attempt. I.14

Odysseus 'many wiled Odysseus' in the ILIAD. I.8, I.13

Oedipus as shorthand for man's mind. I.14

OEDIPUS REX The state of mind when conscious thought may have to develop in order to allow for mental development of such dramatic expression. I.37

the meaning transcending and implicit in *Sophocles'* play. I.42

of course as a space filler. II.3

meaning 'as a matter of course'. II.1

old hat an out-of-date vulgarism. II.1

Old Woman contrasted with any other age. I.31

old as indistinguishable from physical dilapidation. I.32

only signifying exclusion. I.29

opaque This is related to the fact that the 'state of mind' when asleep is not the same as the state of mind when awake; this produces a difficulty because the events of the experience when asleep are related by someone who is conscious. Similarly, what experience the conscious person has when he is awake is not known by the person who is asleep. Therefore when a 'dream' is reported, the psychoanalyst must discriminate between a verbally formulated pictorial image and a dream with which it appears to be identical. It is not in fact always so; the analyst has to interpret a factual conscious experience which relates to the event in 'sleep'. This is a distinction of great importance when the analyst is told by a psychotic patient that he 'had a dream'. [*See also* **darkness**]. I.39

OPTICKS *Isaac Newton.* I.13, I.20, I.35, I.42

theories of, related to divine pronouncement. I.28

order 'The old order changeth . . .', *Tennyson,* THE IDYLLS OF THE KING: THE PASSING OF ARTHUR. I.29

orders as given by one human to another, the pleasure of. II.9

ordinary description and reminder that even the greatest names in the history of our civilization were 'ordinary' men and women. II.1

matters debated, when the word is used, involve ideas of extra-, common, super, divine and similar estimates of the *character* of ordinariness. II.9

original sin and original guilt. III.12

origins fallible. III.8

glandular. III.8

hatred of. III.8

orphanage a word which, like 'adopted', frequently evokes ideas that are irrelevant to the 'facts', but are important because they produce facts, emotional facts that are created. II.7
oscillation related to contrasting wave and quanta. I.8
osteo-arthritis psychical, and rigid 'articulations'. III.3
oughtism In psychoanalytic practice 'ought' is frequently used without reference to the source of a moral obligation. II.4
oughto-nomic a pun rationally conjectured as springing from primordial sources of the mind. II.4
Oval a cricket ground at Kennington, London. II.1
ownership and plagiarism. I.20
Oxbridge colloquialism for 'Oxford and Cambridge'. I.17
Oxford and Cambridge, universities [*see* **Eton** for their symbolic use]. I.22
oysters *Lewis Carroll,* THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS. I.17
Ozymandias archaic remains; a reference to *Shelley's* poem of that name. I.9

P

pacification by fear. I.7
pain as an instance of direction, felt or inflicted. I.20
impalpable yet intolerable [*see* **blushing** and **noise**]. I.11
location of, often misleading. II.14
mental, regarded as a fuss about nothing. III.9
term borrowed from somatic experience to describe in-sensable mental experience. I.20
pain-talk from the hills; a punning reference to PLAIN TALES FROM THE HILLS by *Rudyard Kipling.* III.1
Palinurus fleet marker, *Virgil*, AENEID, BOOK V. I.8
helmsman directing mental traffic. I.13
Palomar site of the 200-inch reflecting telescope. II.1
Pandemonium *Milton,* PARADISE LOST, BOOK I. III.3
pander contrasted with man. I.28
Pangloss character in *Voltaire's* CANDIDE says, 'All is for the best in the best of possible worlds'. This is Voltaire's way of making a sarcastic comment on the optimism of German philosophy. III.9
panic a solvent of discipline. II.5
[*see* **groups**]. I.42
pansies vulgar term; U.S. equivalent, 'fags'. I.22

Pantheon Homeric; cf. *Pandemonium.* I.17

Paradise *Moriarty* regrets that *Milton* did not hail 'devilish darkness'. II.14

paradox related to a meaning. I.16

paramnesia *Freud's* description, THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIFE, 1900b, pp., 6, 7, 148, 149. III.9

paramnesias the problem of distinguishing between 'theories' and 'space fillers'. II.7

paramoecium and visual impression. I.28
the primitive organism contrasted with God. I.28

paranoid the psychoanalyst needs to 'smell' danger. III.8

'paranoid' [*see* **inferiority complex**]. I.43; III.9

Paranoid–Schizoid 'persecution' by individual's mode of thought and feeling. I.11

paranoid–schizoid position both clear and chaotic. I.21

para-sympathetic and sympathetic, contrasted with voluntary. I.14
[*see* **logic**]. I.14

Paris the lover of *Helen* of Troy. II.19

Parliament a 'talking shop'. III.8

parson contrasted with science. I.20

partiality The psychoanalyst's aim is not to take sides with one or other of the conflicts in his mind which the analysand exposes. Every analyst has to decide for himself whether he agrees with such an aspiration, and if so, whether it would be helpful to the analysand. II.8

Pascal investigates religiously as *Descartes* does mathematically. Both have the same vertices as *Newton* and others. I.13

passionate love related to maturity. I.29

passions as a force which appears under many disguises. I.8

Past and Present and Future are often used in psychoanalytic discussion. At best they can only be suggestions of the need to discriminate qualities which are being interpreted. The only evidence is that which the analyst can observe for himself at the time, while he talks. This fact is obscured by words which tend to imply that the event or emotion to which he wants to draw attention occurred 'in the past' or 'in the future'. The important thing about the patient's state of mind is that it exists *at the time* he or she is seeing the analyst. II.16

past often considered to be the concern of the psychoanalyst. II.19
unknown. I.4

patient term often used about ill or disturbed people without the prelude of thought to such usage being endured. Medical,

psychoanalytic and religious disciplines are all frequently evaded in the wish to find a short-cut. The psychoanalyst must discriminate between the ambiguities of the word 'patient'. II.1

Paton, H. J. philosopher, quoted from personal experience. II.1

pattern of thought. III.8

visual, recorded on paper, a sign that has to be interpreted. I.19

Pearse, Tom traditional English song, WIDDICOMBE FAIR, the chorus of which is, 'Uncle Tom Cobley and all'. I.32

peculiar used to mean 'odd'. I.11

Péguy on quality. II.14

Penelope wife of *Odysseus.* I.8

penetrating shaft of darkness, analogous to penetrating silence. II.3

penis and vulva antagonized. I.8

envy of. I.10

function of, as analogy. I.16

homogeneous. I.9

Pennsylvania University of, and its alleged wealth. II.15

perception sensory and extra-sensory. I.14

perspective changed if the focus or vertex is changed: e.g. eating, active or passive; nice feelings ↔ rage and pain. I.20

Euclidean image as a means of conveying perspective. Projective geometry is implicit in *Euclid.* I.35

perspicuity psychoanalyst's problem of his dependence on the analysand's capacity for comprehension. III.8

petrol used concretely in contrast to mental concept. II.1

phenomenes phenomena contrasted with genotypes. III.12, III.13

Philosophers and Saints and Artists, *P.A.* speaking of, draws attention to the fact that the mature expression of a basic quality is impossible – or has been so far. II.16

photogram an analogical portrayal of recording unseeable mental phenomena as if seen. I.24

phrenes diaphragm, often used as a model for any permeable membrane. I.20

If the phrenes are not the source of thinking, in what way are other locations of the source regarded as preferable? I.36

related to a bodily structure to which many functions are attributed. This attribution is similar to that by *Alcmaeon of Croton* and psychiatrists today to the brain. (*Alcmaeon of Croton,* c. 500 BC, physician and scientist, held the view that the eye is connected to the brain by pores.) I.37

pied facetious use of French for the slang expression 'my foot'. I.39

Piontelli, Alessandra See *From Fetus to Child: An Observational and Psychoanalytic Study* (Piontelli, 1992). III.12.

Bion would have been fascinated by Piontelli's findings, which demonstrate connections between psychoanalytic evidence and observational data on behavioural and psychological continuities between pre-natal and post-natal life. [*Ed*.]

'Pipe me to pastures still . . .', *G. M. Hopkins,* THE HABIT OF PERFECTION. I.20

pitch perfect (musical). I.8

pits optic and auditory, are discernible in the first few weeks of the life of the embryo. Under psychoanalytic observation many stages display the dominance of characteristics which, like those of seeing and hearing, appear to mark the character of the individual; they are signs which can reveal the 'direction' the individual is likely to take. II.1

Plato dialogue between *Socrates* and *Phaedrus.* III.5

Forms of, did not save him from the poets. I.13

on Forms, of which sensuous objects are the unreal but sensible counterpart. I.17, I.34

on Forms; parable of the cave. I.10

SOCRATIC DIALOGUES. III.5

Platonist The ideas expressed by *Plato* and *Socrates* in Babylonia were suppressed in Edessa, revived in Syria and were re-woken in Greece by the Arabs. Psychoanalysis today is carrying on from origins which were philosophical, religious and even athletic. II.16

plausible theories and fictitious constructions. I.37

play the playing of games as a prelude to making the thing 'played at' explicit; 'real' as a description of the quality of a thought or idea which has been made explicit by transformation into action. I.36

playing The practice of psychoanalysis has given a new dimension to the understanding of the play of children. The ability to 'understand' has to be extended to cover the significance and meaning of adult 'games'. The ability to regard psychoanalysis as one of these adult 'games' can aid in the comprehension of what is going on when two people are engaged in what is nowadays known as psychoanalysis. II.7

pleasure, sensuous ignorance of. I.3

+ mathematical symbol borrowed for purposes of indicating 'the couple' which is the biological unit in the case of living objects which depend on mating for genesis. I.43

PNS/CNS peripheral nervous system/central nervous system [*see* **phrenes**]. I.36
poetry a disciplined method of communication in the shortest possible terms known to the serious thinkers. II.1
Poincaré and mathematical beauty. I.28
THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCIENCE. I.21
'poison gas' [*see* **flatus**]. I.26
Poisson distribution statistical concept. I.39, I.40
Poisson's Law remains of archaic survival of 'embryological mentality' likened to. I.8
poles of confusion, as represented by the printed page. I.19
police The patient who resorts to violence forces the analyst to seek auxiliary aid; the consequent disruption of the conditions of his work has to be allowed for. II.19
polymorphous-perverse psychiatric technical term. II.14
Pontius Pilate a famous handwasher, now enshrined in literature. I.27
Pooter, Mister a fictitious character in THE DIARY OF A NOBODY by *George Grossmith.* I.20
Popsy nickname for an officer training cadet. II.4
pornography as a seductive component. I.31
portrait interpretations as portraits of the mind at whatever 'level'. I.31
Port Royal the home of a religious movement. II.18
possession of literary characters, as owned by their creator. I.20
post-fissile imaginative conjecture about the state produced after an atomic war. II.19
pother punning reference to person and state of mind. I.21
Pound, Ezra punning reference to, and buried meanings displayed. I.11
translations by. I.17
Fenollosa and 'Ideogrammatic signs'. III.4
Poverty be the bride *G. M. Hopkins,* THE HABIT OF PERFECTION. II.15
Powicke, Sir Frederick discussing communication or interpretation of states of mind. II.2
practice The practice of psychoanalysis belongs to a particular form of investigation of particular individuals. It is frequently forgotten that there are limits, however ill-defined, to the area in which its theories should be regarded as relevant. II.19
practising psychoanalysis The experience of *discussion* of psychoanalysis is liable to arouse powerful emotions in the discussants. This must be sharply distinguished from the powerful emotions released in the course of the *practice* of psychoanalysis. The emotions in the practice of psychoanalysis are important because they are often 'denied' without a proper realization that in the

psychoses the denial has a physical counterpart. What I have called sub-thalamic fear, 'terrifying' fear, relates to a primordial and probably pre-natal terror. It usually takes, with our existing methods, years of psychoanalysis before the patient will admit to the depth of terror. Usually the terror is so intense that verbal formulations are inadequate to do it justice. It is, therefore, expressed so faintly that the psychoanalyst can fail to observe it or may exaggerate his observation of expressions of terror which are not in fact subthalamic fear. The result is both failure to observe the serious condition on the one hand, and to claim a cure which in fact relates to observations of a state of mind which is *not* psychotic. [*See* **thalamus** and **adrenals**]. I.42

Praxiteles Attic sculptor, fourth century BC, conjoined with artists of other ages. I.31

precise contrasted with 'conversational' speech. I.42

preconception a word that might be useful to describe something not yet conceived; also a mind of a creature before conception. II.14

pre-conception The word 'conception' is often ambiguous; the context has to be relied upon to resolve the ambiguity. II.18

premonitions related to omnipotence. I.11

pre-natal and post-natal personalities; their coming together is a danger in psychoanalysis. III.10, III.11

pre-natal ↔ post-natal two-way relationship. III.12

present unobserved. I.4

pretend the ability to stimulate belief in the pretender's experience. I.24

pretty prettiness as a weapon used to humiliate. I.24

prick as a gross word. I.16

prides companies of lions etc. I.27

Priestly Code detectable in the OLD TESTAMENT. In the 51ST PSALM there are signs which may indicate the struggle between two states of mind. In psychoanalysis these usually appear as conflicts between the profession pursued for the sake of gain and the more God-oriented motives. II.1, II.2

priests of Ur. I.28

primal scene cruel version. I.4

Prime's Field schoolboy reminiscence. III.2

Prince the name of a cart-horse; boyhood reminiscence. II.4

prize a sarcastic reference to the alleged freedom of life in England. II.19

probability all theories of, are inseparable from an awareness of improbability. II.7

Procrustean In Greek mythology *Procrustes* was a highwayman who forced passers-by to fit one of two beds by cruel methods. I.9
profits financial, of psychoanalysis. I.27
progress and direction. III.8
conditions propitious to. III.8
projection 'algebraic projective geometry' as a soothing term. I.20
shadows unprojected. I.8
projective identification presumed to imply domains of thought not at the time explicit. I.37
resentment at being the receiver. I.18
prostitution The word should not be used by an analyst unless he wishes to convey the use of any gift or capacity in ways which involve a departure from what I understand religious people to mean by 'The Way', the Chinese know as 'Tao' and post-Islamic Arabs as devotion to Allah's will. I cannot speak with any authority on these matters; each psychoanalyst has to investigate for himself the 'domain' I am wishing to indicate. II.7
Ps ⇌ D wave theory ↔ quantum. I.28
psyche though invisible, 'betrayed' by psychoanalysis. I.24
Psychiatrist representing violent, artificial, civilized behaviour. I.17
State, representing socialized concern for social units of the group. I.17
psychiatrist and his fear of close contact. III.12
psychic quality *Freud,* INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS. I.21
psychoanalysis an action which is a prelude to action. III.11
bringing into view feelings of which the individual is unaware. III.8
compared with military action. III.8
meaningless term invested with meaning; a science that infuses fresh meaning into many terms familiarly used, usually without content. I.29
not accurately used in a group; an analogy borrowed from theories of the individual if applied in a group. I.24
practice of, advantage over the abstract. I.Pro
practice of, and fear. III.8
practice of; *P.A.* states the general principle of aiming for specific evidence for the scientific facts interpreted. III.9
presence of analysand and analyst a minimum necessity. II.11
terms used in, were rapidly learnt and misused when it was 'the fashion', and have been ever since. Nevertheless such people are thrown into disorder and dread when confronted by the actual experience, despite their easy familiarity with the language. II.6

use of this term is often applied to activities of which the nature is not understood. I.38

verbal formulation misleading in. III.8

psychoanalyst not wanted by *Rosemary.* Neuroses, and even psychoses before diagnosis, are not taken seriously; nor is pain or the psychoanalytic approach to it. II.18

psychoanalysts and doctors and surgeons, exposed to comparable stresses. III.9

psychoanalytic investigation and teaching, compared with problems of the religious. II.18

psychoanalytic conversation and social conversation; important distinction. III.11

psychoanalytic experience untoward effect of. I.24

psychoanalytic theories possible use of, to support any activity. III.11

Psycho-flim-flam contemptuous reference to psychoanalysis. It is a typical hostile comment on an activity likely to disturb existing modes of thought. II.4

psychosomatic and soma-psychotic, partners in the same physical soma. III.7, III.12

Public School in England open to 'all' if wealthy enough. I.15

Puckeridge a Hertfordshire village near Standon on the Road from Bishops Stortford to the North. II.4

pulsations rhythmic marching beat. I.23

punning typical of a state of mind. II.4; III.6

Purgatory used as a time or place for discarding meaningless accretions. II.14

pussy and grin. I.14

Pyrrha a character in *Horace's* FIFTH ODE on very unsentimental views of men. I.31; II.19

Pythagoras theorem of. I.30

Q

Q.E.D. quod erat demonstrandum; used to signalize the conclusion of the discussion. I.28

quackery derived from an animal noise, now contrasted with truth. I.14

quack-quack German machine-guns were superior by virtue of their slow rate of fire. The sound was believed to be more like the quacking of a duck than the nervous chattering of the Lewis gun. II.4

quanta not suitable to replace wave mechanics. I.39

quantity increase transformed from quantity to quality. I.21, I.22
loudness often contrasted with 'the still small voice'. I.42
+, zero, –: too much, just right, too little. I.14
quantum a discrete particle. I.28
quarters servants'; parts of a house reserved for 'inferiors'. II.7
Queen Mary sometimes known for her 'unqueenly' characteristics. II.15
Quee-Quegg a character in MOBY DICK by *Herman Melville.* I.19
Quentin modern disguise for the name of a soldier who 'broke down' and never recovered. II.6
questionnaire as a method of revealing a pattern. I.22
'Quo Fas et Gloria Ducunt' 'Where duty and glory lead', regimental motto. II.4; III.8
Quoodle 'bright smell of a stone'; incorrect quotation of 'The brave smell of a stone, ' G. *K. Chesterton,* THE SONG OF QUOODLE. I.28
'even the smell of roses is not what man supposes, And goodness only knowses the Noselessness of Man'. *G. K. Chesterton,* THE SONG OF QUOODLE. This is an example of 'concretion' [*see* **concrescence**]. I.14
quoth parody of *Poe's* poem, THE RAVEN: 'Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore"'. II.6

R

rack reference to *Shakespeare's* description in THE TEMPEST of the ephemeral nature of man's imagination. II.3
radiant term borrowed from mathematics. I.42
radiographers inaccurate without computer aid. I.28
rage *Alice's loss* of self control. I.3
and pleasure. I.20
ragged colloquial for 'teased'. I.15
ram caught in a thicket; an archaeological find at Ur of the Chaldees. I.8
random the supposition that chance might have 'laws' of its own and that 'logic' as it is known is a symptom of the limitations of the human mind and not a quality of *absolute* law. II.3
rape as cruel love. I.8
rational conforming to rules of human thought. III.7
rational explanation more acceptable than ignorance. III.9
rationalization as logical 'cause'. I.8

real *P.A.* is described as no more real than any other fictitious character. II.19
[*see* **play**]. I.36
things, contrasted with figments of the imagination. It implies a distinction between something supposed to have an existence independent of the mind, and what a mind perceives. The mind needs to be able to 'think clearly', i.e. to produce constructs that are as close as possible to the 'reality' which is thought to be observed. II.14
reality concept of, as referable to something knowable by humans. II.19
has to be defended against imagination. I.20
its differentiation from jargon. I.24
underlying a perturbation. I.24
underlying, physically as well as verbally recognizable. III.8
reason as a logical disguise for the passions. I.8
related to thought and constantly conjoined verbal elements and the limitation of the area of discussion. I.37
RECESSIONAL *Rudyard Kipling.* I.9
Regret a character in *Damon Runyon's* stories of New York. II.19
Reichenbach Falls fictional version of moral fall and termination; *Conan Doyle,* SHERLOCK HOLMES. I.42; III.12, III.13
relativity Ideas are relative to each other; it is not only between human individuals that a 'transference' exists. I.14
relevance dependent on the relation of the observer and his vertex, to the matter observed. II.19
RELIGIO MEDICI *Sir Thomas Browne.* II.19
religion ability to believe in God. I.17
Although words like 'God' and 'Devil' are frequently used as expletives, if in no other way, it is somehow supposed that a psychoanalyst would ignore the evidence which indicates something transcended by the words. Hostility is unlikely to escape anybody's attention; other possible origins for the emotion expressed are ignored. II.8
and education, and psychoanalysis; all described as futile. II.19
and worship. *P.A.* and *Priest* discuss. III.10
brought into contempt by its 'addictive' abuse. II.5
Christian, with decreasing adherence amongst combatant British. II.7
evidence of the force of power, bigotry, ignorance, given by. III.7
In *P.A.*'s soliloquy an attempt is being made to discuss a matter that is more familiar to theologically trained people than to psychoanalysts. II.8
language of. II.1

of psychoanalysis. III.10
psychoanalysis as a modern version of the religious 'concrete', i.e. the name given to all phenomena which are concrescent. I.26
[*see* **cruelty**]. I.17
'religions' discarded and replaced. III.10
religious and irreligious; aspects of a state of mind detectable in all classes of thought whether scientific or artistic. II.1
remember an example of a 'fact' alleged to be 'remembered'. II.3
word in constant use, but its meaning has to be re-valued for psychoanalytic investigation. II.2
Remes, Mr *Robin.* I.7
reminiscence not to be used as a denial of the reality of things remembered. II.3
repetition school term for memorizing poetry. III.3
réponse, la *Maurice Blanchot* quoted. III.6
representation arti-factual. I.34
reprobate Psychoanalysts are in no way peculiar in being both under- and over-estimated. II.7
research astronomical. The dissemination of scientific news is easily prevented by authority. II.5
resilient psychoanalyst needs to be. I.24
respect All psychoanalysis is based on respect for the individual as contrasted with the belief that merges him with the group. II.19
for character, and ownership of a character or its attributes. I.20
responsibility burden of, regarded as too great a price to pay for the privileges of choice. I.37
responsible the restoration of efficiency, physical or mental, debated. II.11
resort to arms. *Man* argues that psychoanalysis is a reprehensibly delayed act analogous to delayed attention to the signs of impending war. II.19
rests as in a musical composition; also silences, pauses and blank spaces. I.39
result used as if it were the end-product of a human endeavour. II.11
Resurrection Blues an alleged dance corresponding to the dancing movements of a fetus before birth. II.19
revelation term often used in a religious context, e.g. REVELATIONS OF ST JOHN, and the APOCRYPHA. II.11
revenge of past degradation. I.4
reversed perspective and vectors to indicate the direction of the 'reverse'. I.35

In psychoanalysis the analyst's observation must be acute enough to discriminate between metaphors and reversals of perspective. I.33, I.43

R.F. and punning associations. I.8

rhapsodically cf. scientifically precise. III.6

rhythm distinguished from pulsation by its timing. I.23

Rib the small river; a reminiscence of happy days, with the miseries of the muddy trickle of a beck in the Battle of Ypres remaining. II.4

Richthofen celebrated German airman. When he was killed the British dropped a wreath over the German lines. This was a dangerous action, as when a German airman, dropping mail from British war prisoners and carrying a mark indicating that he was not on a combat mission which was not seen by the antiaircraft gunners, was shot down. I.33

ridiculous a description which can be used to undermine any claim to scientific truth. II.19

Riemann and *Lobachevsky.* I.14

rigour of thought, dependent on destructive criticism. I.20

Rimbaud a French poet whose creative verse was written in a period of mental distress; considered by some people to be insane. He emerged from this into a period of physical travel and did not return to his poetic creations. II.2

ritual and sacramental death, equated with health. I.29

rivalry related to victory, success, triumph and failure – all expressed linearly from plus to minus; dependent on quality of emotion and amount of emotion, but without a scale of measurement. I.37

river 'shall we gather at the . . .'; from a revivalist, nonconformist hymn. II.19

road the end of the . . . , on a supposed journey to reach certainty. II.19

roaring associated with swelling. If psychoanalysis makes it possible to 'see' intuitively what is invisible, does it also make it possible to hear 'roaring' which is inaudible? I.9

Robin his own safety dominant. I.7

Roland as a concrete symbol of that which becomes abstract thought. I.16

and reversal of emotional roles between *Alice* and *Rosemary.* I.3

'only'; limiting discussion. I.29

Rosemary supports his death because of the danger that her former employers will attempt to undo their subjugation. II.16

Roll *Priest's* reference to a revivalist hymn. II.19

Roman Catholic Church ritual; its use for revelation or obscurity. I.30

Roman Catholics their monotheistic dogma. I.30

Ronsard 'Ronsard me célébrait du temps que j'étais belle', SONNET VI. I.8
root in its grave; ref. *George Herbert,* VIRTUE. I.8
Roper, Trevor historian. I.29
Rosemary and *Alice,* potentially augmenting power. I.22
as arrogant mistress. I.10
as lady-in-waiting. I.33
as personification of cruelty. I.16
emotionally more powerful than *Alice.* I.3
her feet demand attention. I.31
The content of her dream is represented as being the reciprocal of *Alice's* experience of conscious waking reality. It is a state of reciprocity that I have detected occasionally in psychoanalysis. The relation between the states of mind when asleep and awake has not been adequately explored by *Freud's* brilliant work on dreams. Any development of the understanding of dream states must not be regarded as taking the place of work already done. II.8
rose '. . . by any other name would smell as sweet', *Shakespeare,* ROMEO AND JULIET. I.14
'rosy wreath' *Jonson,* TO CELIA. III.4
'roughness' in contrast with smoothness and typical of descriptions e.g. hard and soft – which are so frequently used that their significance is often not observed. This is also true of 'left' and 'right'. In script it becomes more noticeable if it is in a language written from right to left, or up and down, in contrast with script read from left to right. In psychoanalysis the emergence of that kind of thinking can pass unobserved. II.3
Royal Court impossibility of unearthing archaeologically an archaic state of mind. I.28
ruck and reel *G. M. Hopkins,* THE HABIT OF PERFECTION. I.9
rudimentary brain, possibly related to rudimentary personality. I.18
Ruin Among the Lovers; distorted reference to LOVE AMONG THE RUINS by *George Meredith.* II.14
rules of war; contemptuous reference to war as a game played according to the rules of chivalry. II.19
Ruskin deflected from his true vocation by *Rose la Touche.* II.1
his elucidation of *Milton's* metaphoric communications. II.1
his interpretation of LYCIDAS compared with *Kenner's* interpretation of *Shakespeare.* II.2
on 'reading' without thinking the thought through. II.3
stressed the artist's loyalty to truth. II.1

S

Sade *Alice* and *Rosemary* similar to *Sade v. Masoch.* I.8
Marquis de; his services to cruelty. III.9

Sade* versus *Masoch suggested as a wrestling match by an analysand. I.22

sadism and mocking. I.4

sado- *Rosemary* interrupts *P.A.* before he can articulate a psychoanalytic concept; she expresses indifference for the psychoanalytic approach and for 'thought' as contrasted with material action. II.7

safety dominance of. I.7

Sagittarius supposed direction of galactic centre. II.1

Sahagun, Bernardino sixteenth-century Franciscan missionary in Mexico; on the use of divine attributes for the purposes of ordinary human beings. I.30

'Sail on!' quotation from *Longfellow,* THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP; used in an interchange between *Franklin Roosevelt* and *Winston Churchill.* II.1

Saint John of the Cross opposed to the dogmatizing of his beliefs. II.3

Saint Paul an early originator of the need to 'philosophize' what had previously only been described in terms of feelings. II.19

San Francisco topless style affected by prostitutes exposing their breasts. II.19

sanity as a refuge from imaginative conjecture and its association with the breakdown of logical rules. II.19
health as a limitation. I.8

Santayana, George view of science and scientists. I.20
view of the English. II.4

sarcasm (literally, 'tearing flesh') as a method of destroying a discussion at its initiation. II.1

Satan and hell fire. I.8

saturated used metaphorically to describe words which are charged with meanings. II.14

satyr 'and the satyr shall cry to his fellow', ISAIAH XXXIV. I.1, I.15, I.17

sauce impudence (colloquial). I.25

Saurian 'lay a-thynkynge'; a parody of one of THE INGOLDSBY LEGENDS by *Thomas Ingoldsby.* II.14

saurians dominant creatures of the reptilian age preceding an amphibian and possibly fishy state still detectable in the mature adult human. II.1

saviour expectations of the existence of. III.13

scandal school for; reference to *Sheridan's* play and to the act of spreading scandal. II.19

scandals as symptoms of social pain. II.18

scavengers excrement-eating. I.29

'Sceptre and crown . . .' *James Shirley,* THE CONTENTION OF AJAX AND ULYSSES. III.9

Schacht finance minister in *Hitler's* government. I.37

Schiaparelli the 'discoverer' of canals on Mars. I.41

schizoid smile gentle but clear. I.9

Schreber his MEMOIRS; ref. also to *Freud's* PSYCHO-ANALYTIC NOTES ON AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF A CASE OF PARANOIA, 1911c. III.4

science fact and fiction related to. I.8

In so far as it involves awareness of truth it can have a destructive or obscuring effect on human feelings. II.15

relationship to smoke drums and real life. I.Pro

screens obscuring. III.7

resistant. III.7

sculpture its tangible qualities shown to be extended by what is seen; the difference elaborated between the pattern made by 'light' and the pattern made by the shadow. *Myself* discusses this and its similarity to 'rests' as distinguished from the musical notes. I.39

Search the Scriptures reminiscence of school task set for Sundays. III.13

'seasons return' *Milton,* PARADISE LOST, BOOK III. II.14

Second Army British. The general officer commanding in World War I was famous for his respect for his troops. II.6

SECOND THOUGHTS collected psychoanalytic papers. I.16

secrets *P.A.*'s reference to secrets is a summary of a theory that in psychoanalytic practice thoughts and ideas are made overt, the implicit is made explicit. Whether such a state of affairs is possible and how it could come about might be debated by considering that Euclidean geometry, though different from algebraic projective geometry, nevertheless 'implies' algebraic projective geometry which becomes explicit after *Descartes.* The reader might also consider the ideals of psychoanalysis; the aims of *President Wilson* with regard to international covenants being openly arrived at; and the present-day debate of the scientific exposure of secrets which some think should have been kept unavailable to potential enemies. II.8

seduction in love with. II.16

word used as one extreme of a linear progression from sexual love to sexual hate. I.43

See punning use. II.1

seeing an instance of the psychotic ability to transfer impressions of hearing to impressions of sight. I.26

seepage of the content of one idea into another idea. I.16

self-control lack of. I.3

self-destruction its counterpart in ideas and feelings. I.14

self-murder Psychoanalytic work has revealed – although it has long been a common-place observation – that the patient can, by a series of minute steps, achieve the destruction of all that makes life worth living without resorting to the destruction of life itself by murder or self-murder. II.8

'Self-yeast of spirit . . .' *Gerard Manley Hopkins,* POEM 67 (untitled, 4th edition, Oxford University Press). III.10

semantic term applicable to discussion of articulate speech, but often, as with 'logic', spoken of as if applicable to cosmic space. II.4

semen as accompanied with venereal disease. II.16

sense ambiguity of 'sense'. I.21

sensual scale of sensuous experience; the problem of stating in scalar terms 'where' the 'diaphragm' separating conscious from unconscious is to be located when there is no scale. I.13

sensuous impressions [*see* **desires**]. II.9

sentence reference to an old school-masterly joke about a student's description of *Agag's* punishment when he was hewn in pieces. II.19

sentential calculus psychologists' exploration. II.1

'sermons in stones' *Shakespeare,* AS YOU LIKE IT. III.8

Serpent OLD TESTAMENT, GENESIS III.15. III.1

set theory The mathematical theories have recently been worked on in a very suggestive and disciplined manner by *Ignacio Matte Blanco.* This sophisticated approach appears to illuminate many of the events and episodes with which I am familiar when using psychoanalysis to investigate the personality. This is particularly illuminating with regard to thoughts and ideas which have never been conscious, e.g. vestigial remains of what appear to be primordial 'thinking' even before birth. If this conjecture is correct it may open up a revision of the relationship between 'states of mind' when awake, conscious and rational, and 'states of mind' when asleep; in particular, reports made by a fully conscious and alert being about what he says is a dream and, conversely, the relationship between the 'sleeper' or unborn personality and facts (so-called by the scientists) which make themselves felt by the fetus, and possibly the embryo, in the womb. I.38, I.39

Seven pillars *T. E. Lawrence,* SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM. II.10

Seventh Division The gun barrels of their artillery were worn through constant firing without replacement. II.19

sex 'all sex'. At the present phase in which 'psychoanalysis' is part of a vogue, though possibly the 'fashion' is declining, the early furore centring on the revelation of sex drags on as a cliché drained of content. II.8
Love of man for man, and love of woman for woman, is differentiated verbally as homo- and hetero- sex. The differentiation is debased by moral contamination which makes even the verbal formulation of negative value. The result is that homo-sexual is now indistinguishable from morally wicked. *passim*
notoriously laxly used. II.19
simulation of. I.3
'superiority' of the sexes; discussed in the context of the reality of biological sex. II.18
term often used as if its value were constant. The adjective 'just' almost invariably means that the term is being used meaninglessly. II.2
term too ambiguous now to be useful without qualification in precise and particular happenings. I.43
term used in contrast with psychological extensions of the meaning. I.39
typical of a term that has lost its scientific meaning; compared with other debased qualities. I.29
vagueness and ambiguity of this term is such that it is virtually meaningless; point discussed. II.5
Sexton and appendicitis; reminiscence of schooldays. III.13
sexual term used to describe experiences which might be better known as pleasurable. I.37
S.F. and punning associations. I.8
shadow pattern and absence of [*see* **X-ray**]. I.20
shadows in dreams. I.8
Shakespeare as artist conferring durability on aesthetic communication. II.2
MACBETH. I.17
Sonnet 51; a punning and oblique reference. I.8
'There's a divinity doth shape our ends . . .', a quotation from HAMLET, used by medical students in jesting reference to circumcision clumsily carried out. I.20
the works of, facetious reference at University College, Oxford. II.9
shape of things to come; linked with a ghost of the past. II.4
'Shape nothing lips . . .' *G. M. Hopkins,* THE HABIT OF PERFECTION. III.1
Shaw, Bernard his sarcastic reference to the gradualness of change contrasted with catastrophic change. II.19
Shelol *The Duke* of, an honoured demon. II.19

shell-shock and emotion breaking through the caesura. III.12
respectable in contrast with contemptible [*see* **brain**]. I.21
[*see* **fashions** in nomenclature]. III.8
Sherlock and *Irene Adler,* as snide reference to *Mycroft's* entanglement with psychoanalysis. I.24
'shine inward' *Milton's* way of finding an outlet for his sight of which he was no longer capable because of blindness. II.1
shit use of word related to conflicts between truth and prevalent culture. II.1
shock Death instantaneously brings together many and conflicting feelings. I.22
shoes as receptacles for feet, similar to the 'imprint' of feet. II.18
shot A more sophisticated capacity to verbalize would call it an 'ejaculation'. II.19
'should be' contrasted with 'is'. I.31
Shub-ad the queen in the death pit at Ur. II.10, II.15
sigh and other words contextually related to form a pun. II.4
sign NEW TESTAMENT, ST MATTHEW XI. I.22
silence as part of psychoanalysis, contrasted with noisy quarrelling. I.20
'silence, le éternel . . .', *Pascal,* PENSÉES. III.8
simplicity term used to reveal or conceal mental quality. II.3
simplification problems of. I.19
Sir Galahad the 'saintly' hero in the MORTE D'ARTHUR. I.16
skeleton a structure on which flesh can be built, and after death on which archaeologists can build theories. I.14
skivvy and mistress. II.16
and whore, as contemptuously equated. I.28
contemptuous term for 'servant'. I.15, I.32
contrasted with goddess. The contrast here is between the contemptuous reference to a servant and the idealized reference to a mistress. II.10
'gives the orders'. *Rosemary's* 'explanation' is a simplification based on the idea that hypocrisy leads to misfortune and that loss of status is a misfortune. Both ideas could repay reconsideration. II.7
sleep and speed of dream. I.10
events of. I.8
fact or fantasy. I.8
reference to the RUBAIYAT *of Omar Khayyam.* I.74
Sleeping Beauties reference to the fable *of* a princess who was liberated. II.15
slumber *Isaac Watts,* THE SLUGGARD. I.18

smell bad, and mental counterpart. III.8
bad, and obscene language. III.8
sense of, short range in water. III.3
'smell' of danger. III.8
snipe game bird. In spring its feathers make a 'bleeting' noise in rapid downward flight. II.4
Socrates and God. III.5
SOCRATIC DIALOGUES [*see* ***Plato***]. III.5
soil *Dr Spooner* alleged, in Oxford University Church, to misquote 'horny-handed sons *of* toil'. I.11
sojourn *Milton* describes a period during which he was 'detained in that obscure sojourn'. He refers to a state *of* mind from which he emerged, but into which many analysands fear to enter – usually described as 'a breakdown'. II.2
sole sarcastic reference to the soul *of Rosemary* after the years of survival. II.19
Soma and Psyche not sharing the same body, sometimes described as 'homosexual', 'heterosexual', 'married', 'in partnership'. III.12
soma-psychotic [*see* **psychosomatic**]. III.7, III.12
Somnus [*see* ***Lethe, Palinurus***]. I.8, I.32
songs classically sung by the *Sirens;* used here to refer to songs that might have been sung by the women's paramilitary services. II.2
SORDELLO poem by *Browning* often regarded as obscure and of which *Browning* said, when asked later in life, that only God knew what it was about. I.26, I.40
sound has to be interpreted by the hearer when he wants to know what it 'means'. II.19
source in the sense of 'origin' from which a train of thought or impulse is initiated. II.12
space Euclidean. The space pictorially described by *Euclid* with his lines, circles and geometrical figures, although its fallacies, notably with regard to parallel lines, became increasingly clear, was nevertheless close enough as a description of Real Geometry to imply what subsequently became explicit with the help of algebraic projective geometry. II.1
infinite and religious. I.14
mental, likened to astronomical space. I.8
space, breathing *Freud* has described the part played by thinking in delaying the transition from impulse to action in FORMULATIONS ON THE TWO PRINCIPLES OF MENTAL FUNCTIONING, 1911b. II.9
SPACE, TIME AND DEITY *Samuel Alexander.* I.38; III.9

span of time, dependent on scale of measurement used. I.28

sparse 'thoughts'. I.8

spectrographic investigation. Thanks to the spectrograph, the composition of far-distant sources of light can now be determined. At present no method has been found for the elaboration of an instrument to detect the source or path of *thoughts.* At some future date this may become possible when a unit sufficiently small is detected and a 'grating' is able to measure and discriminate wave-lengths of different categories of thought. At present such an idea can be decisively stated by modern Le Comtes as 'never'. II.5

spectrum biological; the need for a structure which would include inanimate as well as animate. I.16

term borrowed from optics to describe shades of meaning and understanding. II.18

speculation I have found it useful to consider speculation as being imaginative or rational. I mean by this that the rational explanation is only a part of speculation; it is usually characterized by referring to speculation which could be related to probability. A murder is often related to a translation from impulse to action without the delaying effect of adequate thought. II.8; III.9

spinning a man violently rotated [*see* **guts**]. I.22

'spiritual consolation' moral or immoral; or holy, i.e. honest and helpful. I.34

spiritualism and science conflicting in *Conan Doyle.* I.20

spirochaete reference to a poem by *W. B. Yeats,* THE SAD SHEPHERD ('There was a man whom Sorrow named his friend') with the suggestion of the physical assault on the physical brain in tertiary syphilis. II.19

splitting and articulate speech. III.11

spoils of war. Primitively, sexual freedom was regarded as the reward for victory; quoted by *Rosemary* as one of the primitive rewards of power, financial or social. II.15

Sport 'a Good Sport', an expression used of athletes; also used to parody the facile optimism of some Christian attitudes to troops at war. It did much to bring all religion into contempt. II.5

spy The suspicion of psychoanalysis, attributed to *Roland,* is in fact easily evoked no matter how *'officially'* it may be recognized. Like any other human activity, it can be put to malevolent, as well as benevolent, use. In practice it would seem that there is no satisfactory aim other than demonstration of what is true. This can be obscured by an analyst wanting to be 'helpful'. II.14

spying usually used to express an evil branch of curiosity. In real life investigation is indistinguishable from the purpose for which it is carried out. II.8

'square one' term borrowed from games in which a checkered board is used to describe the starting point, e.g. snakes and ladders. I.44

stammer provoked by shock at reaction to death. I.22

standards impressions of the human being may be *difficult* or impossible to validate. II.9

starvation both literally and metaphorically conducive to seduction. II.16

Stations of the Cross The earliest use of the word 'stations' as applied to the accustomed halting-places in the Via Sacra at Jerusalem; occurs in the narrative of an English pilgrim, *William Wey*, in the mid-fifteenth century. II.19

stegosaurus heavily armoured dinosaur. I.18, I.32
the saurians as a stage in animal development. I.14

Sterne, Laurence his method of verbal communication; ref. SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY [*see* **concrescence**]. I.14

stickler one who is a pedant. In psychoanalysis the pedantic use of a word emphasizes its grammatical importance to the exclusion of its essence. II.16

stockings, black at one time almost a uniform of the 'inferiors'. II.7

Stokes a South African in the days when it was still possible for such a man to fight against oppression. II.6

stone and stick; inanimate objects used by the animate. I.29

stops and dashes space-fillers, substitutes for true thought or action. I.7

storm centre *P.A.* somewhat optimistically describes himself as being able to detect the emotional storm of which he is the centre. II.8

Strachey, James his translation of *Freud.* III.9

strait jacket an article used for restricting the activity of a violent person; used metaphorically for ideas intended to confine freedom of thought. II.3; III.3

struck on colloquial, like 'sweet on', referring to happy love. I.22

stupefied emotions often destroy clear thinking. II.18

stupendous upheavals, referring to cosmic explosions. II.19

sub-thalamic term used by *P.A.* to express a conjecture. II.1

success [*see* **rivalry**]. I.37

suicide [*see* **self-murder**]. II.8

Sullivan and *Gilbert,* H.M.S. PINAFORE. II.1, II.2

summer's day *Shakespeare,* SONNET 18. I.22

'super-man' related to god; quotation from *Nietzsche.* I.28

surrender *Man* maintains the value of stimulating an enemy's fear. *Field Marshal Slim* fed orders into a non-existent flank of the British 14th Army. II.11

Swaffham a town in Norfolk, England, where burial urns were found that stimulated *Sir Thomas Browne's* classic, URN BURIAL. II.2

'Swollen with wind' *Milton*, LYCIDAS. III.10

sword NEW TESTAMENT, ST MATTHEW XXVI. II.1

symbol ingenious manipulation of. I.20

synapse [*see* **link**]. I.41

system applied to deceptions. I.28

T

'talk about' It is clear that in psychoanalysis talking can be a method of communication of genuine thoughts. Unfortunately words can be used in such a way that they are a 'cosmetic' representation of thinking instead of being the outcome of the labour involved in thought. II.8

'talking shop' a contemptuous expression indicating 'talk' as a substitute for action. II.16

tangent measurements of, dependent on the pictorial image of a triangle. II.1

tarpaulin jump into; a reference to a 'funny' story. I.15

tds (of medication) to be taken three times daily; from Latin, *ter die sumendus.* I.19

tea and cooling off, in contrast to an emotionally powerful evocative reminiscence. II.1

tears of fear and rage. I.3

teeth somatic and metaphorical. I.14

telescope [*see* **microscope**]. I.13

telescope, radio as an auxiliary to the senses. I.30

television an apparatus for facilitating long-range scrutiny. I.24

Tenochtitlan ancient city of Mexico, now Mexico City. *Priest* makes a sarcastic reference to the triumphs of modern science. II.8

Teotihuacan the site of the Aztec pyramids. II.4

terror of combatant individual [*see* **groups, panic, thalamus**]. I.24

Thaïs Athenian courtesan, 4th century BC, said to have been the mistress of *Alexander the Great* and later the mistress of the king of Egypt. I.8, I.17

Thalamus used for any proto-types of thought. I.14

thalamus anatomically close to the optic chiasma and in this book supposed to have a psychoanalytic counterpart in 'feelings' [*see* **phrenes**]. I.37

There are some forms of terror which can be observed in psychoanalysis which have their origin in the developing thalamus and its 'non-myelinated nervous connections'. This, of course, is an 'imaginative conjecture' which may take years to confirm scientifically. It is likely to be denied by those who claim that the infant or embryo cannot display primordial mental symptoms on the grounds that myelinated nervous tissue does not exist in these early embryological states [*see* **adrenals, theorizing**]. I.42

theocratic society [*see* **democratic society**]. II.2

theorizing an attempt to evolve 'scientific' knowledge. In the practice of psychoanalysis the analyst has to pass through an experience of 'rational conjecture' and 'imaginative conjecture' before he can reach a point where he is able to formulate a 'theory' of what is taking place. All these stages are vulnerable to 'scientific' assessment. The whole discussion between *Myself, Bion* and *Sherlock Holmes* is an 'imaginative conjecture'. I.42

'There will be too much of me . . .' *W. S. Gilbert,* PATIENCE. III.1

thing-in-itself sometimes interchangeable with 'it' and 'reality' [*see* ***Kant***]. I.10, I.38; II.8

think At what stage does an activity exist to which it is correct to apply the term 'thinking'? What term is to be found and used by the psychoanalyst when in practice he has to refer to primordial thinking as precursive to thinking? This problem commonly arises and has to be solved precisely on each particular occasion. II.1

thinking as an activity which *Freud* attempted to describe, scientifically, in psychoanalysis. I.34

varieties of thought. I.35

thinker abstract related to concrete. I.16

and abstract thought. I.8

thinking 'not thinking' does not prevent a fact which is ignored. II.1

thirty related to counting, ordering and mathematical manipulation; compare the dream in which the lean cows devour the others. OLD TESTAMENT, GENESIS XLI. I.14

thorns the crackling of, OLD TESTAMENT, ECCLESIASTES VII. I.21

thought 'to be thought through'. II.3

transformed into physical reality. I.36

with concepts. I.39

without a thinker; the debate between *Man* and *Bion* concerning the usefulness of such a postulation [*see* **Mind**]. I.36

thought generators [*see* **idées mères**]. I.41
thoughts and thinker. I.8, I.11, I.13, I.16, I.18, I.20
as evidence of an underlying, though unperceived, activity. I.20
as preludes to actions. II.1
empty. I.8
empty, and noumena. I.10
shoved into [*see* **projective identification**]. I.18
without a thinker. I.37
thought-without-a-thinker can assume the appearance of reality or that of an hallucination. I.20
threatening as an important part of an old-fashioned belief in a masterful and intimidating deity. II.19
Thus far . . . the lesson that *King Canute* was trying to teach his courtiers by demonstrating the fatuity of their flatteries. II.1
Tiger 'Tyger! Tyger! burning bright . . .', *William Blake*, SONGS OF EXPERIENCE. III.2
Time, the [*see* **watch**]. II.19
Time! a call used in English public houses to indicate the closure of the premises. II.19
time concept of, as a means of 'measuring' the otherwise immeasurable 'space'. I.16
the passage of, as affecting all expressions of human thought. II.3
the passage of, necessary condition for the confirmation or refutation of a hypothesis. I.38
times, ordinary contrasted with 'novel experiences'. II.17
timidity and fear of discovery; courage is required for the initiation of a train of thought. II.3
Tom and impotent, violent and unloving sexuality. I.17
tomb robber and the death pit at Ur. I.8
tomb robbers and archaeologists. I.27, I.28
Tonks This conversation took place between the two artists, *Tonks* and *Sargent*. I.33
tool depending on the function of the user. I.14
invisible, embryo as. I.10
said of a traitor who can betray either enemy or friend, or both. II.14
tools and tool-making. I.9
topless towers *Christopher Marlowe*, FAUSTUS. I.8
tower of Babel, as a symbol of confusion, OLD TESTAMENT, GENESIS xi. I.8, I.26
trail 'There's a long, long trail awinding . . .'; a song popular with the British Army in World War I. II.6
training It is a commonplace that loving parents like to have their

children correctly trained. Since we cannot foretell the future we do not know for what we need to be trained, or for what to train the child. We, therefore, fall back on memories of the past and assumptions about the future. Memory and desire can be seductively useful and as misleading as seductions are. II.7

traitor one who does not conform or subscribe to the prevailing culture. II.7

transference *Freud's* term borrowed to stress transience. II.2

transformation as one process of development. I.20
direction of. I.28
verbal. I.20, I.35

translating by *Pound,* CANTOS. I.15

translucency a reference to states of mind expressed in a 'translucent' manner in dreams, poems and other ways where the context causes the relevant meaning to be unnoticed. I.24

trash *Rosemary* assumes that there is no need to be selective because she has decided that 'trash' is an adequate summary of the material. This is not the case if there is any possibility of a valuable amongst rubbish. II.11
visual, referring to the accumulation through the sense of sight of worthless 'knowledge'. II.19

trauma of birth. III.12

trees troops advancing in the mist at Ypres; restored sight returning, NEW TESTAMENT, ST JOHN VIII. I.15
walking: 'I see men as trees, walking', NEW TESTAMENT, ST MARK VIII. I.8

trick as a method of manipulating an experience for which no scientific definition exists. I.39

tricks learning to deceive as a defence against scrutiny. I.24

Trinity term used by the religious, just as the story of *Oedipus* is used to describe a web of relationships. Difficulties arise because these concepts can be used to illuminate and come nearer to the object illuminated, or to closure the discussion, or even to hinder the approach to what is being sought. II.4, II.9

triumph last; cf. 'last infirmity of Noble mind', *Milton,* LYCIDAS. I.8

trivial related to the vast and the minute, and paradox. I.16

trompe d'oeil discussed with regard to the differentiation of the fake from the real. II.8

Trotter, Wilfred surgeon, and author of INSTINCTS OF THE HERD IN PEACE AND WAR. I.24; II.1

trousers *Robin* is referring to *Daudet's* LE ROI DES MONTAGNES. II.14

trust *Rosemary* expresses her independence of feelings of love or trust and the irrelevance of such feelings to anyone seeking power. II.16
term frequently used in psychoanalysis as if a person or senses could be trusted. In view of the psychoanalytic experience and theories, it is difficult to see why or how 'trust' can be supposed to be trustworthy. Neurologists may indeed believe that the health or efficiency of the central nervous system can be detected; the psychoanalyst on the other hand has to be aware of the intervention of forces the source of which we often do not know. II.16

Truth as a menace when associated with the insignificance of the human race. II.4
indistinguishable from Lies. I.11
robust in spite of neglect and poisoning. III.7
search for, as an obstacle. II.3
supposed to be the aim of and test for 'scientific' observation. II.19

truth and falsehood; polarization of. I.16
as a force exerting pressure to achieve overt existence. II.3
cowardly shrinking from. III.7
devotion to the idea of, the misleading consequences of taking such a concept as referring to something real. II.19
[*see* **fiend**]. I.11; II.1, II.15
obliteration of respect for. III.7
often unwelcome though sought after. II.15
'What is truth?' The question has provoked much thought and many theories. Undoubtedly there is a reality beyond the word 'truth'. Even an infant seems to be aware of the importance of being able to distinguish what we call reality from fiction or conjecture; but the problem of validating a theory is bound to be particularly clear, sooner or later, to a psychoanalyst. II.7; III.7

'Tu Marcellus eris. Manibus date lilia plenis.' [You are to be Marcellus. Give me lilies in armfuls.] *Virgil*, AENEID, BOOK VI. III.7

turbulence drawings by *Leonardo da Vinci.* I.11
insensible yet violent. I.11

turmoil [*see* **black hole**]. II.1

Tutankhamun ideas of, enclosed within the preservative shells of Thebes. III.5

twinkle reference to a childhood rhyme about the stars, and a metaphorical reference to pretty feet. II.19

tyrannosaurus [*see* **stegosaurus**]. I.14

U

Ubique everywhere, anywhere. III.8
Ultimate Reality related to religious concepts. II.9
ultimate reality the 'thing-in-itself, the noumenon which can never be known. II.8
Ultimate Truth It is difficult for a psychoanalyst to see what event in the practice of psychoanalysis could be said to deserve such a description. II.1
Uncle Tom Cobley a character in a popular ballad, WIDDICOMBE FAIR. II.19
uncertainty principle formulated by *Heisenberg;* compared with *Keats's* Negative Capability. I.43
unconscious, the a dream as effusions of. II.18
as an obtrusion in the dialogue. I.15
equated with God. II.18
often used as the name of a location from which ideas come. II.14
'unconscious, the', the danger of glorification of, by psychoanalysis. I.24
unconsciousness night and reality. I.8
'underground' term used to convey 'position' where there is no system of co-ordinates. II.2
uniform mental uniformity institutionalized. II.2
unkind cruelty and mocking. I.4
'unknowns' clarification replaced at once by. I.42
unsaturated component of statements which are not complete. I.20
unveil the evocative initiation of uncovering beauty. I.17
upheaval cosmic; its effect on humans. III.9
'Upon the King!' *Shakespeare,* HENRY V. III.10
upset the state of mind as the defence against sexual intercourse. II.16
Urania and pagan wisdom; one of the Muses of Greek mythology, the goddess of astronomy. I.8
Ur and scientific forebears. I.35
and the 'little cup'. I.31
archaic view of death. I.28
ceremonial. II.9
of the Chaldees, royal cemetery at. I.14, I.28, I.29; II.8
pun on *Sir Leonard Woolley's* excavations at. I.11
use function of. I.13
uttermost 'outer most' in contrast with 'inner'. There are no coordinates for these spatial concepts frequently used about the mind. II.1

V

vacuum nature abhors a, *Spinoza*, ETHICS. II.2
vagina as an analogy. I.16
confused with hole. I.8
vagina dentata fear component of sexual feeling. I.37
variable, eclipsing usually applied to a binary system in which one star is of less luminosity and is therefore able to eclipse the other in varying periods. II.2
verbalization words used in constructing a pictorial image. II.7
verbal methods and mental maintenance and repair. III.8
verisimilitude as a reinforcement of an intention to convince. I.19
Gilbert and *Sullivan*. THE MIKADO. I.19
vertex change of, through the alimentary model. I.Pro
contrast with scalar [see **sensual**]. I.13
further discussion of the term. I.36
microscope or macroscopic. I.43
need for the term. I.Pro
related to definitory hypotheses. II.19
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volcano *Lewis Carroll,* THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS. I.21
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W

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Wembley the sports ground on which the Final of the Association Football Cup is played in England. I.22, I.23, I.27

West Front a reference to the idle use of heavy artillery. II.6

'What hours, O what black hours . . .' *Gerard Manley Hopkins,* POEM 67 (4th edition, Oxford University Press). III.7

'what's Dunton' punning reference to *Theodore Watts-Dunton,* poet and critic, benefactor to *Swinburne.* I.29

wheels of God distorted version of 'Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small', from the SINNGEDICHTE of *Friedrich von Logau,* translated by *Longfellow* under the title, RETRIBUTION. I.17

whirlwind God answering *Job.* I.28

White Queen *Lewis Carroll,* ALICE IN WONDERLAND. I.21

whoore dialectical pronunciation of 'whore'. II.19

whore commercial love. I.5
quotation of a remark heard at Plymouth. I.17

why a fundamental question; perhaps one of the earliest, after 'what?', of which the personality is aware. II.16

Why-bro a reminiscence of schooldays and a punning reference to curiosity and its inhibition. I.11

wicked fairy borrowed from *Grimm,* THE SLEEPING BEAUTY. II.1

wide extended opening of eyes, mouth, etc. I.21

wife [*see* **concubine**]. II.15

win World War I was alleged to have been won by the Western Allies. *Auser* is supposed to want to know whether his death was in vain. II.19

wings of the morning; the original version is: 'If I take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea', from PSALM 139. II.1

Wipers [*see* **Ypres**]. III.Q.A.

wisdom and knowledge differentiated. III.7
no substitute for the growth of. III.13

'Wise men never tell' a reference to Lord *Shaftesbury* [1621–1683] who remarked that all wise men are but of one religion. 'And which is that?', he was asked one day. 'Wise men', he replied, 'never tell.' II.2
wits consciousness, wakefulness, equated with efficiency. II.3
'Woke up if they', *Tweedledum,* THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS by *Lewis Carroll.* I.15
'woke up so fast' patients dream of being carried over a weir; no distinction of dream from reality. I.15
woman and dishonour in war. I.17
and intelligence. II.2
idealized as a product of the imagination. I.31
Rosemary contemptuously refers to male ignorance of any difference that is not somatic. II.16
The real woman cannot receive affection is she is hedged around by impenetrable adoration. I.31
womanhood truth about, discussed. II.14
woman's world an expression to convey the dominance of one or other sex. II.7
womb associated with ignorance as a protection against unpalatable reality. II.4
women augmenting powers of observation. I.22
Wotton, Sir Henry (1568–1639) Provost of Eton College, friend of *Isaac Newton*. II.2
words as part of thinking, a method of diminishing the violence of a change from impulse to action. II.3
contrasted with other means for establishing communication. II.3
Wordsworth the inner eye: '. . . They flash upon that inward eye . . .', DAFFODILS. II.1
worship as a word loosely used to describe passionate devotion to many activities other than religious. II.12
the adoration of woman for woman. II.11
the object that is worshipped. II.2
Wrath God's; Truth and Love, like Wrath, are attributed to God in much religious thinking; the undisciplined use of this concept deplored. II.1

X

Xanthippe *Socrates'* wife, said to have been a shrew. III.5
Xaritas [*see* **Charity**]. II.1

ξ (xi) Greek letter. I.14
as an unknown variable. I.19
as a sign for 'end'. I.24
as a symbol of self-destructive progress. I.14
X-ray as a method of making an unseen pattern visible. I.20
film, interpretation of; cf. the interpretation of a mathematical formula. I.21

Y

yawning as a signal. I.16, I.19
Yeats SOLOMON AND THE WITCH. II.2; III.5
yeux de pierre *Heredia,* VITRAIL: 'Ils gisent la sans voix, sans geste et sans ouie, / Et de leurs yeux de pierre ils regardent sans voir / La rose du vitrail toujours épanouie.' I.34; II.10
Ypres third battle of; known as 'Wipers' by the English in historical times as in the two World Wars. I.32; III.1

Z

zero as dream thought not conceptualized. I.8
as a mathematical symbol. I.8
as negation. I.8
as a pictorial image. I.8
zoo term used contemptuously to express with hostility collections of people. II.1, II.2

. . . ATQUE VALE

W Are you there?

F Don't interrupt me I'm trying to finish this index.

W I wondered what you had been doing these last few months.

F Well, since you went off on an extended trip I thought I'd better have a go at completing the job we started so long ago.

W We were aiming high, weren't we? An index, glossary, notes, a book in itself, the definitive volume that would illuminate the obscurities

F I only hope it can stand up to scrutiny in its final form. By the way, I'm going to call it 'A Key'.

W What is it supposed to open?

F A few small chinks perhaps. Anyway, it's refreshingly short. Have you any suggestions?

W How about 'The Long Week-end'?

F Have you forgotten? That's supposed to be the title of your auto-biography.

W More words, words, words – how do you stand it? Excuse me, I must get back to my cubby-hole.

F Sweet dreams.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

W. R. BION

VOLUME XV

WRB at the Tavistock Centre, 1976

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Edited by Chris Mawson

Editorial consultant Francesca Bion

KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume XV): 978–1–78220–243–1

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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UNPUBLISHED WORKS

1961–1977

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The previously unpublished works by Bion included in this volume comprise four papers and 'Further Cogitations' from 1968 to 1969.

The first of the papers has the title, 'The Conception of Man'. It was written originally as a chapter for a planned book of the same title, to be edited by Arthur Burton, who also edited *Psychotherapy of the Psychoses* (1961). Bion had been recommended as a possible contributor to the book by John Harvard-Watts – who had, around that time, suggested to Francesca Bion that she might persuade her husband to publish as a book the papers of *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers* (1961). Burton's book was to have clarified how different thinkers conceived of Man, "in his basic nature and humanity.

In the end, *The Conception of Man* project did not result in a book, and it seems likely that Bion filed the manuscript of his paper and forgot about it. Interestingly, among the other contributors were to have been Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Buber, Karl Jaspers, Thomas Szasz, and Alan W. Watts; the latter was the author of *The Rise and Development of Zen*, a book Bion had found of interest in relation to his ideas on memory, understanding, and desire.

At the heart of Bion's conception of man is the problem of living with emotion. Bion began with the question, commonly asked in a different and more peremptory manner than the use to which he put it in the paper: who do you (or we, or they) think you *are*? He reminds us that phantasies about who we are have a structuring effect on our personalities and on our behaviour towards other people. It seems so characteristic of Bion that instead of answering the question set him by the book's editor – to describe how he conceives of the human being, or human condition – he begins with the fact that we are beings who

form conceptions of ourselves, conceptions that are instrumental in directing the nature of the relationships in which we take part. This emphasis resurfaced in his final paper, in 1979, 'Making the Best of a Bad Job' (see Volume X), in terms of the need to consider the nature of the communication of the Self with Self – particularly in relation to self-idealization.

Bion proceeds from the opening question – who do we think we are? – into the conception of man as an emotional being faced with the 'choice' of evading feelings or facing the reality of them and, possibly, modifying at source the pain produced, a distinction resting on Freud's 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911b). The concepts that form the basis for *Learning from Experience* are described clearly in 'The Conception of Man', following a description of how, according to Freud, the phantasy of being able to rid the psyche of unwanted contents is effected by the mental process of projection – predicated on the physical reality of muscular action. The paper is notable for a concise description of how Bion uses, and expands, Melanie Klein's theory of projective identification, in order to build his model of container–contained (♀♂). He writes that this expansion of the ideas explains, "more than what their propounder intended". In other words, projective identification together with container–contained (and, in later formulations, the operation of an oscillation between Klein's two mental positions, which Bion contracted to Ps ⇌ D) offers an account of the role of normal splitting and normal projective identification into the mother, the first container, as the means of the alleviation of terror and the inception of communication and mental functioning. Some of Bion's passion for his subject comes through in this paper, as it gathers momentum. He conveys his belief that the ideas that he is communicating are of more than academic importance, but are of urgent and practical significance for the human race.

The second paper, 'Penetrating Silence', was prepared as a talk, to be followed by discussion, given to members of The Study Centre for Organizational Leadership and Authority (SCOLA) in Los Angeles on 14 December 1976. It was transcribed by Francesca Bion from a tape recording made by Bion before the talk, together with interpolations of material from a recording of the talk when it was delivered. The subject of the paper, silence, tends not to be addressed very much in psychoanalytic training. When questioned after the talk about the importance

of silence in the analytic setting, Bion speaks about the internal 'noise' produced by our multitude of theoretical voices, as well as the difficulty experienced by most analysts during some kinds of silence. It is clear that he is not thinking of silence as the absence of something, but as containing a real and present quality which is part of the total situation facing analyst and patient in the room:

> I think it is useful to listen to a silence and not to be in too much of a hurry to break it up. I am familiar with this because I know that whenever I am tired I have a spate of interpretations to the mind – all the Freudian, Kleinian, Abrahamian, every blessed interpretation you ever thought of – they all come flocking to my mind. Indeed one could almost say that psycho-analytic training becomes a kind of psychoanalysts' neurosis, a sign that one is tired when rushing to employ these interpretations. . . . Much the same thing applies to the person who can't listen to silences. I would be surprised if anybody here is unfamiliar with the experience of not being able to tolerate the silence. 'For goodness sake! Why can't you say something?' But in fact there is a lot to be said for being able to listen to the silence.

The paper is really about attention. Although approached here by considering the aural modality, Bion's ideas on memory, understanding and desire are never too far away. Directing attention to the heartbeat – something normally unconscious (in the topographical sense) – he speaks of *achieving* a particular quality of silence, a term that resonates with something Bion felt important to the specificity of psychoanalytic attention – that is, the Language of Achievement, or Negative Capability. Bion felt the following quotation by Keats, written to his brothers in 1817, captured perfectly his sense of the mental attitude requisite for the analyst:

> . . . several things dovetailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in Literature and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously – I mean *Negative Capability*, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainty, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason . . . capable of remaining content with half knowledge.

The notion of Negative Capability became central in Bion's thinking, especially in his later writings.

Bion seems suddenly to have felt in this meeting that he had spoken for long enough, with the audience passive, and he stops just after presenting an allusive idea – suggesting, Quaker-like, that anybody who feels inclined to participate should do so.

The third paper, which was given as a talk at the Los Angeles Psycho-Analytic Society on 20 September 1977, is the ironically titled 'New and Improved' – a title he borrowed from the advertising line on a box of Kellogg's Corn Flakes. It is a complacency-shaking paper which, while not containing any new ideas, manages to deliver in a fresh way a clear, potent message concerning the inevitability of the uncomfortable, disturbing nature of real analysis – and the subtly seductive pull exerted by promises of something better, quicker and pain-free. Essentially, Bion is sounding a strong cautionary note against the silent operation of manic delusions in our field.

Bion speaks to what practising analysts know from experience, and practising patients too, when he writes,

> . . . when you go into your office tomorrow you have a chance of experiencing this 'transference'. The trouble about a word like that is you can't see it, smell it, touch it or taste it; so it is regarded as typical of intellectuals who invent more and more terms. But we are actually with those few people who come to us for analysis and very often find they don't like it. It may sound rather like a consolation – perhaps it is – but I think that the more experience you have of analysis the more familiar you get with the fact that it only takes a few seconds, if that, for the prospective analysand to pack it in. The knowledge that patients are hard to come by, and when they do come they disappear easily and quickly, is the first thing you are familiar with – the failure of psychoanalysis. . . .

Bion writes of the actual, real life of the analytic consulting room, reminding us that if we engage in an analysis,

> we cannot expect a trouble-free existence; we have to realize that in the office the analyst and the analysand are in for a rough time. In fact, liking either to be analysed, or to be an analyst, is a peculiar state of affairs. It is much more natural and in conformity with the nature of this subject, that both parties should hate it. There is considerable pressure all the while not to give what is the real interpretation, but some more tolerable version of it. So both the patient and the analyst are very glad to find some interpretation which is less than the truth – I think this is constant, inescapable. We are engaged on a somewhat unpleasant and dangerous occupation in spite of appearances to the contrary and the fact that we are always offered the chance of believing that it is something safe and pleasant, 'new and improved', more curative.

Bion underlines that this pressure away from direct, specific interpretations is inevitable and inescapable – not something to be hidden, or to

be ashamed of. It is part of the difficulty of the work. This was also the main thrust of an early paper by James Strachey, in 1934, 'The Nature of the Therapeutic Action of Psycho-Analysis':

> . . . there must be some quite special internal difficulty to be overcome by the analyst in giving interpretations. And this, I am sure, applies particularly to the giving of mutative interpretations. This is shown in their avoidance by psycho-therapists of non-analytic schools; but many psycho-analysts will be aware of traces of the same tendency in themselves. It may be rationalized into the difficulty of deciding whether or not the particular moment has come for making an interpretation. But behind this there is sometimes a lurking difficulty in the actual *giving* of the interpretation, for *there seems to be a constant temptation for the analyst to do something else instead. He may ask questions, or he may give reassurances or advice or discourses upon theory, or he may give interpretations—but interpretations that are not mutative, extra-transference interpretations, interpretations that are non-immediate, or ambiguous, or inexact—or he may give two or more alternative interpretations simultaneously, or he may give interpretations and at the same time show his own scepticism about them*. All of this strongly suggests that the giving of a mutative interpretation is a crucial act for the analyst as well as for the patient, and that he is exposing himself to some great danger in doing so. [p. 159; emphasis added]

Failure of one kind or another, suggests Bion, is associated with the idea that there is something much better just around the corner – usually with the connotation of 'cure': a 'better' method, which will make the patient 'better'. An important part of the problem, writes Bion, is that patience is necessary for real work, and patience is a scarce commodity. He reminds us of the precarious nature of the capacity to think and to wait. Following Freud, he refers to the role of *patience* in Charcot's formulation about waiting for an underlying pattern to emerge. There is the patience required too, we recall, in the attitude required to allow the crystallization of a Selected Fact – something Bion saw as an important contribution of the mathematician Poincaré.

Here Bion also makes a plea for analysts to value the part played by imagination in the work and to admit it into the faculty for observation. He urges that we should be careful not to be too mistrustful of the power of our imagination to damage the rigour of what we do. In this respect, as in many, Bion agreed with his close colleague Hanna Segal – who supported the inclusion in psychoanalytic work of the qualities of imagination and passion, together with reason.

Finally, Bion reminds us too that analysis is lonely work, in which we have to suffer a painful degree of isolation and dependency. The point is made not simply to 'point it out', but to encourage the analyst to recognize his or her need to find the resources, the necessary, limited 'supply of capacity' necessary for meeting this painful state – including the capacities of the patient.

Bion's *Cogitations* (Volume XI) comprised notes made between February 1958 and the beginning of August 1968, when Bion had been in Los Angeles for seven months. In the early 2000s, as preparations were being made to prepare and edit a *Complete Works*, some additional cogitations, which had been set aside, were discovered in a filing cabinet. These are published here as 'Further Cogitations', which begin in April 1968 and end in August 1969. As well as illuminating many of Bion's ideas, they reveal the kinds of difficulties faced by Bion in the first few months of setting up an analytic practice in Los Angeles.

The reader will notice how sometimes these previously unpublished writings clarify matters further, even when they are to do with ideas expressed by Bion many times in other places; the small differences reveal the underlying structure of his thoughts by something similar to the musical 'variations on a theme' to be found in jazz. In Bion's terms, this would be the depth-perception (binocular vision) enabled by holding, simultaneously, 'multiple-vertices' on the same psychoanalytic 'object'. This is true generally of his work, with its many instances of repetition, near-repetition and apparent repetition.

The Conception of Man

1961

The conception of man is unlikely to be thought of as a practical matter. It may not seem to be of interest to any but philosophers and others who lead academic lives. But the question, 'Who do you think you are?' is a spontaneous tribute to the fact that a man's idea of himself may be important in fashioning his behaviour.

The question, 'Who do you think you are?' is often associated with hostility aroused by what the questioner thinks is aggression. Hitherto, until the wars of 1914 and 1939, the aggression that an individual might suffer at the hands of another seemed to be of proportionately greater consequence than the injury one nation might do to another. A man might kill another, but a group would be unlikely to kill, or even seriously damage, another group. The atom bomb has altered that, and with it any hopes we might harbour that the greater the group, the more unlikely it would be to suffer or to inflict much harm. It therefore matters for a group to ask of another group and of itself, 'Who do they think they are?' Much may depend on the answer.

I began by framing our inquiry narrowly, as it might be necessary in a particular episode in the life of a man. It is no longer advisable to leave the wider application on one side as of no consequence in the affairs of nations. I shall consider it as a concept with significance in the context of man's place amongst living things in their historical development. Who, or what, does the human race think it is?

The question, and its possible answers, has become urgent since our capacity for destruction has increased. Our capacity for asking the question and pursuing an inquiry has also been increased by the work of Freud. Freud invented psychoanalysis during his observation of the class of sick persons who appeared to be ill and yet showed no

sign of physical or mental disorder as that was ordinarily understood. The investigation commenced with his interest in neurotic disorders, but I wish to focus attention on his work less as inquiry into the sick mind and more as an exploration of the minds of people who are not regarded as sick at all. For it is in this that he comes nearer to the inquiry, 'What is man?', and further from the relatively limited question, 'Why is this man ill?'

Freud believed that a great part of the opposition to his work was due to his sexual discoveries, and his hardihood in making these facts public. Hostility to his sexual theories has tended to obscure the hostility to the inquiry. Freud ignored the part played in the Oedipus myth by the Sphinx.

But it may be wondered why we should bother with a myth at all. Of what consequence is a fairy tale, told in antiquity, embroidered by various writers since then, but unlikely to have any factual counterpart? Even as a myth it hardly seems to merit consideration above that accorded to other myths: the names of the constellations include no Oedipus.

The usual view (that Freud observed certain forms of human suffering, invented psychoanalysis as a method of investigation, and discovered through its aid the Oedipus complex and other similar phenomena), is not as revealing as a view that his genius discovered the importance of the Oedipus myth as a tool and used it, perhaps unconscious that he was doing so, to discover not the Oedipus complex, but psychoanalysis and man.

The basic elements in the Oedipus myth are these:

1. The Sphinx, a monster compounded of different animals, parts of which are reassembled to form the creature that poses the riddle.
2. The riddle, to which the answer was supposed by later tradition to be "Man". Failure to answer correctly carried the penalty of death; the correct reply precipitated the death of the Sphinx.
3. Thebes, a city whose inhabitants suffered death by the agency of a mysterious plague.
4. Tiresias, a prophet, the opponent of curiosity relentlessly pursued and the upholder of the principle that such ruthless curiosity constitutes a crime, Hubris, inviting the attention of Nemesis, commonly identified with retribution or righteous indignation.

5. Oedipus, identified with infanticide by being the victim and with parricide by being the criminal, the ruthless investigator of a crime that he has unwittingly committed, he suffers the penalty of blindness.
6. Laos, the King and murdered father, who is himself an accomplice in infanticide; a believer in oracular pronouncements.

I have stressed the elements in this story, treating the narrative as a matter of secondary importance. Of these elements, the riddle-posing Sphinx and its fate have attracted least attention in psychoanalytic literature. I have mentioned[1] the obtrusive appearance of curiosity and its guise in the group; elucidation of transference in psychoanalysis involves investigation of the analyst's curiosity, but the detail in which this is carried out obscures the macroscopic view obtainable in the group. Group procedure does not therefore involve any conflict with the procedure and theories of psychoanalysis, but involves a change in emphasis. This change is relevant to an investigation of the conception of man, because the conception itself is the product of the play of curiosity around facts that obtrude as soon as the individual is aware of himself or his group, or the group is aware of itself or another as a group.

It is usual to be aware of the attributes of objects and of the sense organs that are responsible for the sensations we associate with physical objects. But awareness of personality depends only partly on sense organs. We can see that a man makes certain muscular movements, that his eyes are directed at a particular point, and that in some conditions the sum of these various sensations is interpretable as meaning that the man is expressing, say, love or hate. Freud postulated that consciousness was the sense organ of psychic quality (1900a, p. 574) and thus showed that there is a need for a conception of a 'sense organ' that would bring us information not only about physical phenomena but about aspects of personality, anxiety, fear, hate, depression, love and so on. The existence of these words shows indeed that we think we know of the existence in ourselves and others of realizations that correspond to these words, and therefore presumably that we possess equipment that makes it possible to see not only

[1]In *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers* [Volume IV].

the movement of facial or other muscles but to cognize the emotions of which these muscular movements are secondary manifestations.

Two developments have led to our dissatisfaction with our knowledge of emotional life. Philosophers of science have always become active in the precise elucidation of problems of learning when the individual or the group has, through failure of a project, been thrown back on doubts of the nature of its knowledge or the methods it has employed in acquiring it.

The history of preoccupation with methods of acquiring knowledge is as old as Plato and his simile of the men in the cave studying the shadows projected on the wall they face by the light behind them. The pessimistic conclusion expressed by Prichard (1950) is that such an inquiry is liable to end with our wondering how we can ever know anything. Yet, in fact, it is obvious that we do learn, even in infancy, and the pessimism is appropriate not so much to our capacity to learn but to our capacity to learn how we learn. This last inquiry is related to the second of the two developments to which I have referred, namely psychoanalysis.

The inquiry with which psychoanalysis is concerned is not new, but its methods and the success achieved by the founder of the movement have brought into sharp focus the problems presented by phenomena such as love, hate, anxiety, sex, depression, and the means by which we are aware of their existence, either in ourselves or others, and how we are to learn from the experience of these emotional forces.

The individual has to live with his feelings. He must therefore achieve an accurate awareness of what he feels, for only then is he able to learn from that experience what it means to live with other people's feelings.

The question of living with one's own and other people's feelings obtrudes first in infancy: the infant is aware of feelings, its own or its mother's, and has to do something about them. In his theories of pleasure and pain, Freud postulated the theory that a growing dominance of the reality principle involved a change of attitude to the environment. The part of the environment with which we are concerned is the personality, and the feelings that betray its existence, of which the individual thus becomes aware at an early stage. The reaction to painful feelings typical of the phase of dominance of the pleasure principle is epitomized in *Alice's Adventures*

in Wonderland by the scene in which the executioner is told that either the Cheshire Cat or its head must be cut off, and that "in less than no time". If the feelings are painful, then so much the worse for the feelings – they must be annihilated. Dominance of the reality principle implies developments of reactions intended to modify the environment that stimulates them. Assuming that evasion and modification are mutually exclusive reactions, and that resort to one rather than the other depends on the extent to which the psyche can tolerate frustration, an inability to tolerate it prejudices the development of the capacity for contact with reality since frustration is intrinsic to any real situation.

If the personality cannot tolerate the reality of emotional experiences, it becomes unable to learn from emotional experience *per se*. This state of mind is dominated by evasion of frustration, and I shall use the term 'evasion' as an abstraction to represent a number of different situations alike only in implying a destructive response to any apparatus that might lead to awareness of painful, and therefore all, emotions. 'Evasion' is contrasted with 'modification'. I use the term 'modification' as an abstraction to represent situations favourable to the development of capacity for sharpened awareness of emotional experiences, and the complementary development of capacity for using the emotional experiences thus made available to the personality.

Freud described muscular activity that is typical of the phase of the dominance of the pleasure principle, as intended to rid the psyche of accretions of stimuli. Dominance by the reality principle involves realistic attempts to change the environment. I shall use the sign E to represent the state of mind governed by the principle of evasion, and M to represent the state of mind governed by the principle of modification.

Muscular action, thought itself, and indeed any form of activity, may express E or M; there is no activity that is intrinsically bound to the exclusive expression of one or other. This applies even to attempts to rid the psyche of accretions of stimuli, an activity which, in certain circumstances, might be regarded as being more accurately described if placed in the M category than if placed in the E category. (This difficulty is one that constantly confronts the investigator of psychological problems; I shall hope to deal with it by employing the same symbol to express the same value in the

same argument.) When it is necessary to describe a situation in which the only realistic course open to individual or group is to rid itself of accretions of stimuli by destructive attacks on the feelings rather than by modification of the sources stimulating those feelings, I shall make it clear that the dominant principle has changed from E to M, though the activity was indistinguishable from one that usually characteristic of E.

In studying the 'conception of man' we have to investigate thinking, its origins and various transformations, and its relationship to awareness of psychic qualities of individual and group. I therefore need to introduce another theory, propounded by Melanie Klein under the name of 'projective identification'. I shall use only one aspect of this complex and widely applicable theory. This states that the infant, feeling overwhelmed by emotions, resorts to a mental activity that Klein describes as splitting off the feelings and putting them into the mother. The mother apparently is thus made into a container for the feelings that the infant feels unable to contain. After a sojourn in the mother, during which the feelings undergo modification, the infant takes the feelings back into its personality, which can now tolerate and therefore contain them by virtue of the modification that has been effected by the mother.

As I propose to use this theory in different contexts, for container and contained I shall apply two abstractions represented by the signs ♀ and ♂.

The theory of projective identification and those derived from it explain more than what their propounder intended: they satisfy the criterion that requires the theory to show itself capable of coherent and uncontradictory development when used in scientific investigation. I shall use the theory of projective identification as a model for early development of the processes that have later come to be known as thinking.

The model supposes the existence of a couple; I use it to represent an internal apparatus in the individual. What originally represented a relationship between mother and infant, or breast and mouth, now represents these objects internalized. The representation of these internalized objects is used as a model for the mental mechanisms involved in thinking. The signs ♀ and ♂ can be used to represent the internal apparatus by the sign ♀♂.

I have said that thinking may be dominated by E or M. It is necessary to examine further the model of the couple, ♀♂, to understand the issues involved in the use to which thinking is put.

Suppose that some feature exists to inhibit smooth development between infant and mother. Envy is one such factor, and I shall take it to illustrate my example. The infant can feel unable to use the mechanism for modifying feelings that I have described if the predominant emotions in the infant-and-mother link are envy and greed. If the infant is possessed by fears that it is dying and attempts to split them off and to project them into the mother for her to moderate their intolerable quality, instead of the process following the course described, ♀ is felt greedily and enviously to remove any goodness contained in the projected fears. This 'goodness' is whatever there is of *meaning* in the fears that it is dying. Consequently, when the infant comes to reintroject the fears that it is dying, it does not receive back those fears moderated so as to be tolerable to the infant psyche but, instead, takes back into itself a nameless dread.

Returning now to the installation of ♀♂ in the infant personality: instead of having a benign object, ♀♂, the infant appears to feel dominated by an object that has attributes of a conscience that is inflexibly opposed to knowledge, or the spirit of inquiry, or curiosity essential to acquiring knowledge. Furthermore, ♀ and ♂ are related to each other in a way that leads to the denudation of one element by the other. In so far as the situation can be verbalized, the benign unit ♀♂ is replaced by a malignant couple exerting an influence on the personality compatible with (a) a conscience devoid of regard for truth or personality, or indeed animate life itself, and (b) a 'scientific' (i.e. truth-regarding) object concerned only to employ facts as elements fitted for the destruction of conscience or morality.

Such an object, for which I shall use the sign –♀–♂, is calculated to starve the personality of truth and goodness of any kind. Indeed, the use of the term 'starvation', appropriate to the model that an alimentary system provides, is peculiarly apt as a description of the process of deterioration that such a personality displays. Although one doubts the suitability of such a model to represent thinking processes, yet its illuminating quality makes it impossible to discard it at the present stage of the inquiry. The object –♀–♂ suffers the same degenerative change. Not only is it starved of development-stimulating matter, but

it appears to be actively destroyed by its products as if they had a toxicity for mental life comparable to toxins in the body.

So far I have dwelt on the nature of the apparatus on which we depend for learning by experience. I have concentrated on a description of the fundamental quality of this apparatus as it appears if we approach the investigation by considering how both learning and destruction of learning develop. I have suggested that no learning by experience is possible without learning by experience what we, as individuals and groups of individuals are; we must experience ourselves and our emotions if we are to experience anything else, and we must learn from that experience. This involves acceptance of the idea that a scientific view is essential to the mental health of the individual as well as to the success of the attempt to win fresh knowledge. It is incompatible with the contrary view embodied in and typified by the forebodings of Tiresias. The successes of scientific method in modern physics tend to obscure hostility to the methods and operation of curiosity, especially from scientists who take scientific method for granted. The gloomy prognostications of Tiresias may seem to apply only to the investigation of the Oedipal situation, but for Tiresias the crime lies not in incest and parricide but in the ruthless persistence in investigation, hubris, in Oedipus himself. Instances of similar forebodings are the warning to Adam against eating of the Tree of Knowledge, the infliction of confusion on the builders of Babel, and the injunction against the numbering of the people. Anxiety so clearly expressed in racial myths may be biologically good, perhaps even complementary to the fear of mental starvation in the individual; is it possible that methods could be evolved that might win more knowledge for the individual or the race that either could tolerate?

There are conditions in the physical world that are unfavourable to the survival of man; similarly there are emotional situations that cannot be tolerated by the individual and lead to mental breakdown. If there is a danger of mental starvation, there is also a danger of mental surfeit. Pierre de Chardin (1955) postulates a *noösphere* on the analogy of the atmosphere. I shall borrow the term to facilitate this discussion but shall not use it as he did. I shall restrict it to denote that emotional environment essential for the survival of mental life in the individual from birth to death. An example of such a noösphere is a state in which the infant's emotional need for

a breast into which he feels able to project a part of himself appears to be satisfied.

The statement that the infant feels a need to project a part of his personality into the breast is Melanie Klein's description of a model that she uses to represent her abstraction from the behaviour, verbal and otherwise, of another adult. By use of this model I intend to convey my idea that those elements of the adult's behaviour to which I wish to draw attention may be recognized by the fact that they would be appropriate if they were part of a story that the infant believes, namely that he is splitting off a part of his personality, etc. In short, it is a *narrative* employed to define a psychoanalytic object. I use the term 'psychoanalytic object' in the same way and for the same purpose as the term 'mathematical object' was used by Aristotle. However, I intend also to convey my belief that the patient, when he was an infant, felt he was engaged on an activity which he would describe, if he could speak, in the terms I have attributed to him. In other words, he would describe his experience by using this model. But it could be argued that the patient was not using a model at all. In this case I am giving a verbal description of the model I have constructed, but am claiming in addition that my model is a verbalization such as the patient, were he an infant, might use if he could speak, to describe what he believed he was in fact doing.

This digression indicates some of the unsolved methodological problems that I have to ignore if I am to make public, before adequate equipment is available, my view of the issues raised by the conception of man. To believe my attempt may succeed, I have to suppose the existence of a noösphere into which I can project my views and on which I can rely to give my words a meaning for you who read them. I expect to evoke a response from individuals who read my words and also from the noösphere.

The latter will include a change of meaning so that what I now think is my communication will have a meaning of which I am not aware while I am writing it. An example of noospheric reaction would be an envious and hostile reception stripping my words of all meaning and returning them to me not merely denuded but envenomed in a manner calculated to erode my impulse to communicate creatively. The example I have just imagined can be represented abstractly by ♀♂–, in which ♀ is the idea and ♂– the noösphere dominated by greedy and destructive impulses.

If the reader will consider the whole of what I have said about the noösphere and will then attempt to reformulate my communication so as to preserve its value while conferring on it lucidity, he will easily be convinced of the grave difficulties involved in the attempts to think accurately about thinking. The problems are more complex than those involved in experiencing, abstracting a model from the experience, and making a further abstraction by theorizing by aid of the model, for the problems incidental to abstraction pervade more than one dimension of growth. Is the 'noösphere' to be regarded as an abstraction for 'breast', albeit a sign of the underlying impossibility of changing anything but the names we give to functions of human inability to devise an adequate equipment for thought?

The advances of the physical sciences seem to support hopeful estimates of our capacity to develop accurate methods of thought about the inanimate. Assuming that methods for thinking self-consciously are unlikely to remain uncreated, there may be a further danger of a kind supposed by some zoologists to have beset the progress of man's predecessors. One of the striking facts of animate development has been the decline of the dominant species. It has been supposed that the stegosaurus developed a defensive armour so complete that eventually it sank under the load it had to carry. If the distinguishing feature of man's triumph is his capacity for tool-making, then it may be that the tool he must forge for thinking self-consciously contains not only the hope of his survival, but the germ of his downfall. He may sink under the weight of his capacity for thinking as part of his wider faculty for making and using tools.

Suppose that increased power for thought does not simply destroy the meanings that we have hitherto been used to associate with life but strips all meaning, as we understand it, from thought: such a development engendered by the forces and in the manner described earlier falls within the category of disaster. But mobilization and sophistication of primitive mechanisms of the ♀♂ type may lead to loss of meaning similar to the normal loss of fear in the infant. This could effect a change in the realization represented by the term 'noösphere' that would not be any more disastrous for the group mentality than it would be for the mother to lose her fear that the infant was dying.

The feeling that phenomena have a meaning relates to the fundamental narcissistic, ego-centric judgement that a phenomenon is

an indication of a development that is conducive either to the death or the life of the individual. If the individual is unable to abstract a statement that the event falls into one of these categories, then that phenomenon has, as far as he is concerned, no meaning.

It follows that an empirical criterion of thinking is provided by its function. If the function is to abstract from phenomena those elements that the individual needs to know if he is to survive, then the activity is thinking. Thinking is the activity by which the individual abstracts the meaning of the phenomena: if the abstraction does not lend itself to determination of action appropriate to death or the survival of the individual, the abstraction (whatever it may represent) does not represent the meaning of the phenomenon. Conversely, failure to produce meaning, in this sense, increases fear of thinking. Yet it is clear that in certain circumstances individuals may feel that a phenomenon has a meaning without being able to see its relevance by ego-centric standards. Such meaning may be regarded as useless and ignored forthwith, or pursued with a view to further, supposedly disinterested, investigation. Analytic experience shows that phenomena displayed in the consulting room all have a meaning for the patient and that that meaning has the limited quality I have postulated here. That is to say, the individual has learned, or thinks he has learned, from experience, that all facts have a meaning that is relevant to the action he must take to evade or modify frustration: any other 'meaning' is meaningless.

As Freud showed, man is resistant to the acceptance of any meaning that does not support his narcissism: unwillingness to endanger narcissistic beliefs makes it difficult to abstract from phenomena those elements that would enable him to entertain views that ministered to his self-preservation. The attempt to evade feeling unwanted is inimical to the moderation of dangers inherent in being unwanted. Meaning, then, does not inhere in phenomena but is something that man seeks to abstract from phenomena.

The 'conception of man' may be regarded as the name for a meaning we believe to inhere in phenomena which have been collected to form a set: Man. At the start of this discussion I suggested an empirical meaning for the term, 'conception of man' limited by relating meaning to aggression and survival between men, between groups of men, and between man and other species. There is a case for systematic exploration in which the 'conception of man' is the name

for a meaning that is divorced from that the penumbra of associations inseparable from its origin and development; it might then be employed as an abstraction in a system that was not homocentric. The attempts to do this, notably in theology, are initiated by the anthropomorphic investment of the concept of a supreme being.

To summarize the problem: failure to solve problems has always led to scrutiny both of the unsolved problem and of the methods that have been employed in the unsuccessful investigation.

Hitherto the successes of scientific investigation, especially in the realm of inanimate objects or of those characteristics of animate objects that lend themselves to the investigations appropriate to the inanimate, support the validity of what has become known as scientific method. But these very successes have thrown into relief the failures.

Investigation of the causes of failure has led to a fresh approach to the problems, and also to the methods employed. The investigation of method has brought to light two main sources of error: the first, inadequate techniques of learning based on lack of human ability or knowledge at the time of the failure. The second, inadequate equipment inherent in the defects of the human personality itself. This has compelled attention to our own personalities; it has forced the human being to be self-conscious.

Following from this, there has emerged a fresh problem calling for investigation – ourselves; the object of our study – the conception of man. If we narrow the field in which the problem, lies our attention is focused on one very important characteristic of man, namely his capacity to think, and the fact that the tool he must employ is this same capacity to think. Thinking is the attribute that characterizes man and the central problem calling for scientific investigation. It has also to be the tool by which the investigation must be effected.

The problem is thrust upon us because scientists in their attempt to overhaul their scientific apparatus are forced to recognize that they are themselves part of that apparatus. But an additional reason for the development of this crisis of learning from experience has been Freud's investigation of what he believed originally to be sick people. That investigation has turned out to be no less than an investigation of the human mind itself.

As a result, the weaknesses of the human mind, although not a new discovery, have been demonstrated with a precision and

comprehensiveness not achieved before. The discoveries made so far show that the findings of psychoanalysis, though made in the course of an attempt to relieve human suffering, relate to the problems of scientific fallibility and therefore to the domain in which the scientist has to seek for, and correct, the failings of his apparatus.

The conception of man can accordingly be regarded as something more than a subject for academic debate. I do not mean that the academic debate is unimportant: on the contrary, it is more urgent and important than it has ever been, but in addition to the slow and patient study we have now to achieve a capacity for sure yet rapid judgement of the kind that would be appropriate to the situation in which the question, 'What do they think they are?' might be asked. Such a situation is an emotional one, and it is as well to be clear that the problem whose solution has to be found by an immediate judgement demands a capacity for clear thinking at a time when this may be endangered by a tendency to lose one's head. I propose to devote the remainder of this paper to the elements of this problem as it has to be approached in these particular circumstances.

Freud quoted Le Bon in support of the view that the group was inimical to creative thinking by the individual. It is this hostile environment to which we must direct our attention, as well as to the problem which has to be solved in that situation.

Lord Wavell said that it was not enough for a general to be intelligent: to be effective he must be able to think clearly even under bombardment and other stresses of battle. It is something of this capacity that is required in the ordinary citizen today. It is a capacity that I believe can be observed, fostered and strengthened in certain types of small groups organized the purpose.

The first requisite in the individual who aspires to cultivate his judgement of fellow men and neighbouring groups is perception of what Freud called psychic reality, or, as I put it earlier, psychoanalytic objects. There is a great difference between knowing that there is such a structure as an appendix and being able to detect which of the many structures laid bare by the surgeon's knife is it. Similarly, there is no difficulty in accepting statements, and even making them, about such concepts as transference, Oedipus complex, ambivalence and others, but it is another matter to be able to recognize the counterparts in reality of these representative terms. What does the thing they represent look like?

The denial that these and other theoretical concepts have a corresponding realization shows that observation of these psychoanalytic objects must be a matter of some difficulty.

I have suggested elsewhere that the apparatus concerned with the perception of psychoanalytic objects is the conscious and unconscious working together in a manner analogous to a harmonious working of the two eyes in binocular vision. This harmonious working that is the prototype of correlation makes it possible to observe the realizations, or at least our observation of them, with a three-dimensional quality that puts their existence beyond all sense of doubt in the observer. So far I have not been able to find any training better than psychoanalysis itself for decreasing obstructions to our capacity for vivid observation.

But the observer's troubles are not ended by an analysis. He soon finds his attempts to observe subjected to attack by the group. I drew attention to the Sphinx in the Oedipus myth and the fate it meted out to those who failed to answer its riddle and to himself when Oedipus answered it. The builders of Babel were punished similarly by the loss of ability to communicate and therefore to co-operate to achieve their aspirations. The penalty of banishment was likewise imposed on the pair who ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. In the group it soon becomes clear that membership is dangerous in proportion as the group is dominated by the scientist's curiosity.

This belief of obtrudes too consistently to be dismissed as fortuitous; the scientist's curiosity must be, and is, attacked. Each member of the group is scrutinized to see if he may be made the vehicle for a particular type of leadership. The member who leads in curiosity is permitted to do so, so that the rest of the group is excused the necessity to follow his lead.

An important element in preserving hostility to the operation of curiosity lies in the group's dislike of exposure of projective identification. This mechanism is almost a favourite method of 'thinking' in the group. There is of course ordinary rational communication, but at times it seems as if the group is conniving, and trying to make the analyst connive, in surreptitious employment of this mechanism to the exclusion of any other.

The employment of this method depends on the existence of thoughts that can be split off and used for evacuation. The reader may wonder what the justification is for using the term 'thought' in

this context, and what an object such as a thought that can be evacuated may be. The problem of exposition is serious, and objection to such terminology in a scientific investigation must be sustained in the existing framework of scientific method. As I am unable to find a more rigorous method of verbalization, and as changes in scientific method to meet the challenge of group relationships cannot be effected without long and patient endeavour, I must rely on the indulgence of the reader to extract the meaning I wish to convey in these imperfect descriptions.

There seem to be certain elements that are developmentally related to what ordinarily are recognized as thoughts. Some of these appear to be regarded by the individual as possessing qualities appropriate to what Kant calls 'things-in-themselves'. Accordingly it is felt that they are contained by the personality and lend themselves to procedures such as evacuation or, when they are outside the personality, ingestion. In extreme cases they seem to be treated as if indistinguishable from things-in-themselves; in less extreme cases, such as those ordinarily occurring in groups, they seem to be recognized as ideas, or ideational objects, but with a force appropriate to a high degree of particularization and therefore concretization.

When the group or the individuals composing it wish to manipulate the group without observation, resort is made to these highly concretized objects, which are then dealt with by the evacuatory and ingestatory processes typical of the mechanisms of projective identification.

These objects may be observed as being roughly divisible into two main classes. One consists of elements that are strong in emotion but weak in ideas, the other of elements weak in abstraction – or the qualities associated with abstraction and abstract thought – but strong in concretization.

The method of projective identification may also be seen to operate in two different states: Melanie Klein described it as a mechanism that was in fact the product of omnipotent phantasy. However, in my opinion it is capable of change in the way that so many ideas that start as omnipotent phantasies can, ultimately, be translated into realistic activity. If the group or the individual is resorting to omnipotent phantasy, then it does nothing, and the observer may be aware only of a somewhat passive but otherwise well-behaved group or individual. Consequently, although projective identification in its most extreme

form is highly active, paradoxically it makes little or no impression on the observer. But if individual or group becomes less omnipotent and better based on reality, then the observer becomes aware of an emotional situation in which he appears to be participating unwittingly and suffering disagreeable emotions as a result.

Resistance to the group's attentions and feelings of persecution are associated with this phase; the two are felt as if causally linked (resistance to projective identification ↔ feelings of persecution) but there is no realization approximating to the impression of cause.

Resort to projective identification, expressed by the sign ♀ ↔ ♂, is always facilitated by membership of a group; it is in the group that its activity is most pronounced and its acceptance most wholehearted. In the analytic or pair relationship it is ordinarily felt as disagreeable in itself, or as leading to disagreeable consequences. The nature of the activity and its consequences appear in very different forms according to the other elements in the network of relationship. So much is this so that it may take considerable effort to appreciate that apparently widely different circumstances are, dynamically, so closely related. For simplicity and brevity I shall consider only two elements: the degree of omnipotence, and the emotional medium in which projective identification is operating.

As we have already seen, extreme omnipotence can give a totally misleading impression of well-behaved passivity. It is not uncommon in analysis to hear a parent say about a patient who is disturbed to the point of psychosis: "But Doctor, he was always such a *good* baby (child, etc.)." Even allowing for the blindness of parental love, this statement is explained only by the fact that omnipotence requires no activity. Similarly an improvement leading to a decrease in omnipotence has the paradoxical and often embarrassing consequence of revealing depths of unpleasantness in emotional participation with such a patient or group as were previously passed over unnoticed.

The emotional element may be illustrated by the extreme and dangerous operation of envy. It is a commonplace that this, one of the seven deadly sins, can destroy a relationship between a pair or between individuals and the group they compose. It is nevertheless possible to witness at any time and place a denial of the seriousness of this element. Even the clear description given by Melanie Klein in 'Envy and Gratitude' (1957) is more often received with apparent apathy or positive denial than a just appreciation of its import.

I have said already that envy leads to a realization that I have represented by –♀♂ or –♀–♂. In group observation it is easier to see the stripping of thought, idea or person of value than to observe the objects that have been thus stripped: for example, a morality denuded of almost every quality that we ordinarily associate with it, and a scientific outlook stripped of almost every aspect of regard for the truth. It is even more difficult to see that these stripped objects have a product that is attractive to other and differently composed groups or persons.

I can only indicate the nature of this phenomenon because it is one that is incompletely observed and requires much more study and investigation. It is as if the –♀♂ state leads by its denudations not to dependents that are beneficently supported, not as it were to the so-called welfare state, but to parasites and a host group that is eroded from within. But this host group exerts a powerful attraction on other groups that are anxious to absorb or emulate it according to the nature of the other group. The consequences and nature of this phenomenon I leave to the scientific curiosity of my readers.

In his paper 'Instincts and Their Vicissitudes' [1915c], Freud describes vividly the conflict that can exist between sexual impulses in their operation as part of the group's need to perpetuate itself, and the individual's need for fulfilment. This bipolarity of the instincts he appears to restrict to sexual instincts and a conflict with ego instincts. It seems to me that the conflict must exist equally in the aggressive impulses, where it is even more clear that aggression in the service of the group may be of limited value to the individual, who may forfeit his life that the group may live. Freud makes the suggestion that the narcissistic neuroses might illuminate the problem. In fact, as other writers have shown (Burton, for example[1]), it is impossible now to investigate the characteristics of man without feeling that his nature cannot be understood without reference to behaviour that has hitherto been regarded as the peculiarity of an incomprehensible disease, and dismissed accordingly. Burton likewise indicates that there must be an expansion of individual consciousness in the interests of his mental health. The problem that arises through the primitive fear of curiosity, on which all learning depends, is one that concerns the

[1]['On Modern Man and Consciousness' (a chapter envisaged for the *Conception of Man* project). *Ed.*]

health of the individual himself. Hubris and Nemesis emerge as the penalty for extremism. Yet the scientist must be an extremist who admits no obstacle to the search for truth. It is a striking fact that the group will often protest that its opposition to the statement of certain truths to which it objects will split the group.

Inevitably the scientist, that is to say the individual who considers devotion to truth as paramount in himself or the group, is signalling that he is that kind of leader and wishes to enlist followers. His work, in its group orientation, is a signal to that effect. The league he thus offers, like the lead that is offered by all other individuals, appears to meet with a particular response from the group. Examination of this response shows that the group is behaving as if it were choosing a leader. Rejection of a given individual may seem to be dictated by the individual's failure to satisfy the group of his ability to satisfy the hopes that he arouses. I have said elsewhere[1] that the group is activated by certain basic assumptions that express themselves in preconceptions of leadership that observation of the group can reveal. It might be thought that that individual would be invested with leadership who showed himself to have qualities that approximated to the preconceptions – in short, that it chose the strongest man for the job. But this is not always so: it often chooses an individual because of his or her weaknesses.

This peculiarity becomes more understandable in the light of the theory of projective identification. The individual's desire to rid himself of certain elements of his personality by this evacuatory process leads, when the reality principle is well established, to a search for a character who will give substance to the idea that he can be used as a container for unwanted aspects of personality. Some individuals show a weakness in rejecting what on more ordinary levels of mind we regard as imputations of character, whether the imputations be good or bad. This weakness is exploited and a battery of signals is employed by the group to convey to this weak member that he is that character which, for the time being, the group wishes him to be. It may be that he must in some respects be undesirable, or, equally, it may be that he must carry an imputation of genius or leadership of a particularly flattering kind. If the object were flattery, no great harm would follow. But since these manipulations are secondary to giving

[1] *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers* [Volume IV].

substance to the phantasy of projective identification, the group is itself deceived and behaves as if the given leader had become the repository of the projected characteristics. In this way a leader is chosen for a particular purpose precisely through his unsuitability to be a leader at all. The wider extension to which the organism aspires will have to include the area of the conception of man as it obtrudes in the critical situations of group dynamics. I have attempted briefly to indicate why and in what way this study is important and why this skill should be mastered. Although it is a limited and highly specialized field, the same could have been said fifty years ago about nuclear physics.

Penetrating Silence

1976

The title is one I thought of because it seemed that it might give an idea of the area about which I want to talk, and it might be sufficiently stimulating or irritating to induce somebody to come and hear. Unfortunately what is an advantage from that point of view is almost immediately a disadvantage because it tends to obtrude to a point where it becomes difficult to pay attention to further extension of this subject. To try to extend the subject, in a sense it would be easier if I said it would be a good thing for all of us to remain silent, and if you could simply note what you then hear. Some of it would seem to be immediately obtrusive, other parts of it not so clear, but gradually perhaps you would be able to hear even things like your heartbeat. This is what I mean partly by the penetrating silence. If you can achieve that silence then it becomes more possible to hear things you cannot otherwise hear. In that way one begins to be able to collect evidence: certain facts, impressions begin to obtrude. It is rather like the situation which Freud describes a when he talks about Charcot, whom he obviously admired very much – the statement of Charcot's in which he says, "Go on looking until you think you see a pattern emerge." People who have had a medical training would be familiar with this in looking at an X-ray photograph. If you are familiar with the X-ray, you begin to notice some shadow with which you are not familiar. If you can stand the strain, you go on looking at what you don't understand and with what you are not familiar. Unfortunately most of us rapidly learn at school and elsewhere to fill that gap because it is so unpleasant. As a result it becomes very difficult indeed to achieve a silence because of the clamour of all the information picked up in the course of one's life. There is so much noise going on in one's own mind that it is hard to notice any fresh

element. We tend to try to simplify the situation by thinking of it in terms of a body and mind, these artificial divisions; we produce these boxes into which we put various ideas and compartmentalize them – physicians and surgeons, and finally psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. If we find ourselves in this last box, which is concerned with what we suppose is the human mind, what do we listen to? What is the counterpart? Is there anything we can take guidance from in the already existing discipline? For example, in medicine you are supposed to be able to have enough respect for the body to be open to the information which it is giving you. I remember a veterinary surgeon who was commiserated with on the grounds that his patients couldn't talk, to which he replied, "Yes, but it also means that they can't tell me any lies."

Can we understand the language of the body? Physicians are accustomed to various auxiliary aids, like stethoscopes and, finally, laboratories, which bring in a certain degree of extra information. But this doesn't seem to be available so far as the analyst is concerned. If he believes that there is such a thing as the mind which he is supposed to investigate, he has very little indeed to fall back on. If you are concerned with the behaviour of a group of people, what are you listening to? One doesn't really consider oneself to be a qualified physician, and therefore one excludes, so to speak, one's obligations as far as the body is concerned. But we don't in fact deal with bodies or minds: we deal with the totality of a person or of a group. And there the amount of information we get is infinite: it has no boundaries whatever. So out of this mass of material we have to do some selecting. As always, this not only involves choosing what to listen to, but also includes what not to hear. So you are pretty sure to regret the outcome: you can deplore the fact that you didn't see the point earlier, once it has a become clear to you. It applies even to the future, about which we know nothing; we choose a particular profession or sphere of interest, and this again means not choosing masses and masses of other jobs. Taking a group as a whole, you get a situation which is spread out because every individual has chosen a particular route, a particular journey as it were, and in a way they can pool it if they are so disposed, and you can get a kind of mass impression. But once again from the point of view of the individual, he has to make up his mind what to listen to and what to ignore of the totality of the available wisdom or knowledge.

Supposing it were possible for this group to fall silent: it would then be interesting to collect what different people heard, or thought they heard, during that silence. In psychoanalysis you can become familiar with that sort of silence and the temptation to break it by making noises oneself – and even producing interpretations. Luckily, or unluckily, interpretations are so available that it is almost impossible to move a yard without tripping up over them. I remember a time when psychoanalysis seemed to be extremely fashionable; you could hardly move into a community of people without tripping up over a 'father-figure' or some such creature – the place was simply littered with them.

Freud described 'rationalization' as a pathological mechanism, but I would like to consider this whole business of reason, reasonable reason, as simply being forms of rationalization. At what point do you draw the line between something you would call 'rational', a reason which would be of some value or use, and one of these rationalizations? The whole of psychoanalysis provides us with reasons, supposedly scientific reasons, but it doesn't matter what qualification we give these things – scientific, artistic, or religious – they are all reasons; and another way of looking at that is simply by saying that they fall into the category of things comprehensible to the human mind. It is very awkward indeed if the universe in which we live does not oblige us by falling into the box of our comprehensibility. There may be a great deal that is not comprehensible in the sense of the understandable or reasonably explained in a way which satisfies us what we regard as adequate.

However, first and foremost is this problem of collecting information. When I was at school, we used to have what was known as Divine Service, and amongst other things there was one hymn which used to be sung frequently. The words were something like this: 'Onward Christian Soldiers, Onward as to war, with the cross of Jesus, going on before.' That doggerel, highly religious doggerel, was matched by appropriately martial music – the same sort of status musically as the aesthetically valuable words. The music master, a person of not noticeably religious character, was in fact a very capable musician, so it presented him with no difficulty to play a tune such as that of Onward Christian Soldiers; but in order to add a certain verisimilitude to the music, he decided to include a bit of martial music, and what could be more natural than that he should

introduce a well-known British Army bugle call – one of which was always used to summon troops to the mess for meals, together with the words, "Come to the cook-house door boys". Some of the school were familiar with that bugle call from camp days; others with a more seriously religious disposition were quite familiar with the sacred meaning of this music. So as the audience listened one could only say they developed a kind of schizoid reaction: one half was rather shocked, the other had broad grins on their faces. I don't know what happened to the divine part of this occupation, but there it was: the audience was divided evenly. That seems to me to be one of these situations in which being able to listen, making yourself available to what is going on, has a somewhat disturbing effect on the listeners.

Another example of much the same thing: Kreisler wrote a composition which he called 'Träumerei, Reverie'. That tune goes very well with 'Way down upon the Swanee River', so the two can be combined without any difficulty. To make it more particular still, the effect of this tune on me when I hear it is quite different, because the combination of sounds which are associated with it in my mind are these: in France in 1917 a party of us had been much battered in the trenches, and we were at last withdrawn – we were to be relieved. We were enjoying our first meal and were in what was known as 'back areas'. A fellow officer picked up a fiddle he had found somewhere and began to play the Kreisler theme. While he was playing, the noise of the bombardment became extremely clear. We had all fallen silent listening to the music, and then to its considerable accompaniment of gunfire on the west front. As he ended his playing, it was announced that orders to stand to arms had just come through: we had to go back to the same trenches by the same route we had come by. That is an individual experience, the precise and practical thing. That is why it is a matter of some consequence when there are a number of us – as here, for example; the same stimulus produces very different reactions in each individual. If you can look at it individually, microscopically so to speak, you find a tremendous diversity of experiences – the same tune, same stimulus, but a multitude of different reactions.

Bring them together again and try to tell yourself what is the state of mind of that group. Are you in a position – we'll call it 'leadership' – in which it is of some consequence to you to know what the state of mind of that group is? What do you listen to? I am not suggesting an answer, because I don't know one; one of the disadvantages

of being a leader is that you have to make decisions when you don't know the answer; there is no other reason for making a decision. Otherwise the decision is made for you; nobody bothers with a problem to which the answer is already known. The leader always has to be able to stand the strain of making decisions when there is no answer. One quality he would have to have is a certain degree of robustness. A further difficulty is this: the actual universe in which this decision has to be made is unknown. So you have to translate such experience as is available to you – usually not very much – into action. Thanks to Freud and his predecessors and successors, even talking has become a kind of action. That is to say, it can be the sort of talk that is space-filling, simply intended to be a substitute for action, an indefinite postponement of the unhappy day when something will have to be done; or it can be a prelude to action – that brings it very close indeed. It is a matter of having leaders who have a certain amount of experience or training, but not to the point of excluding this ability to look at that part of the field which you don't know, do not understand, and for which your equipment is usually pretty thin. Even if you mobilize all the experience you have, every scrap of it, it doesn't amount to much when you are up against real life, as it were, having to decide what to say or think almost instantaneously. When you are in a position of taking the lead, you don't have the luxury of being able to fall back on having a long analytic discussion first – you have to act straight away. Usually people like to be able to discuss matters in advance of anything that is likely to happen, but that of course is related to something which hasn't happened yet – the future. The preparation for action is all really done in the dark: we don't know what we are preparing for. When the moment of action comes, the moment at which the leader has to say or do something, there is not time for any of that – he has to act instantaneously.

If you collect together people who might be interested in leadership and administration – SCOLA[1] – what training do you have? What are the minimum conditions which you demand of the person who is asking to be accepted into that particular group? Having accepted such a person, what do you subject them to? What further training or experience would you choose for them? Some of it is a matter of choosing a bibliography, choosing what books a person has

[1][The Study Centre for Organizational Leadership and Authority. *Ed.*]

to read, but in this brief sketch of the sort of problem with which we are confronted, what else would that person have to read? The poets seem to have a flair for expressing this kind of problem verbally; so one could turn to them and what they say. Shakespeare, for example, says, "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". Victor Hugo says something rather like it, although he also describes a situation in which he classifies words as if they had a kind of caste system: high-class words, words used by another poet, Racine, which are all aristocratic words you could regard as suitable for the expression of experiences which might be had by Phaedra and others. Then there are, as it were, middle-class words, which can be used for ordinary conversation and ordinary exchanges of view. Finally there are the indecent words, *les gros* mots. It is in this latter category that you very nearly get a universal language. You can try an experiment on yourself and see what your reaction is when your alarm clock goes off. What is the language which naturally springs to your mind? It is hardly the sort of language you can advocate, say, for the United Nations Assembly, but it is probably the language that would be understood by all of them, however diverse their cultures, training and so on.

To return to something much more individual, like the patient who one day comes and lays down his 450 revolver by his side. You can see he still has the safety catch on, but you, if you are the analyst, find yourself paying a very great deal of attention to that safety catch and what happens to it. The same patient can then turn up with one of those vast musical instruments – a tuba – which looks like some enormous heavy piece of artillery. If he can't put a stop to your interpretations by shooting you with his hand gun, then at least he can put a stop to them by blowing this infernal machine. Within the 'United Nations', if a common language isn't available or isn't considered proper, and if more proper forms of language are also not adequate, then they likewise can be reduced to resorting to fire-arms. But it ceases then to be murder; it becomes war.

Well, then, what about your candidate for admission to SCOLA? What are you going to choose leaders for? And what training are you going to give them? I think you will agree that it opens up a vast problem. I don't know what the solution is or whether it will ever be achieved – or whether it will be achieved in time. The more

urgent the situation – and I don't think there is any doubt about the urgency – the more reason there is for saying, like Marshall Lyautey when he was told it would take a hundred years to produce the wood necessary for building ships, "Well, there isn't a moment to lose". That is the situation: there is no time to lose; our reserves of time are, like all the rest of our reserves, very small in face of the job that has to be done. That being so, I think I would like to stop talking and give somebody else a chance. I suggest that the rest of the discussion should be one in which anybody who feels inclined should participate.

Q: The usual reason someone is accepted into an organization is intangible, something we can't define. Standards then lose their meaning, they become artificial; and yet one does like to think that in an organization certain definable parameters and standards are logical.

Bion: Yes, it is curious that a lot of people seem to be chary about choosing what they like with no better reason than that they like it, whether it is a person or a thing, or even an idea. It is hard to say why there should be any difficulty about that, but there certainly is. Sometimes it seems to present an almost impenetrable screen; the fact that the person would have to say what they like makes it very difficult for them. You can say to a collection of people that they are free to talk about whatever they like. It seems absurdly simple. It is therefore quite surprising to find that you are met with a silence.

Q: Doesn't this bear on the issue of justice in some sense, and isn't liking somebody not enough – in an organization or running a business or dealing with human beings in some matter of respect – doesn't one look to oneself for some sort of criteria above and beyond the immediate liking?

Bion: That's right – we always crave for that. This is the difficulty about making a decision: you always have to make a decision based on insufficient knowledge or experience, and the more that you know about yourself, the more you know how extremely slender your resources are. Even after a considerable experience of life, there is one thing which is pretty sure to be borne in on you – your ignorance, your lack of equipment. Even if you fall back on what you like

or don't like as the method of deciding what to say or do, the one certain thing is that it is not adequate. It is a frightening situation for the human being always to have to be responsible in a situation where the answer is not known, where the information is not enough. You can have the most elaborate intelligence systems, but it still isn't enough.

I doubt you can afford to do without any part of the vocabulary – any theory, diagnosis, or interpretation. Ultimately it falls back on the individual: Who are you? What are your resources? What is your information? What is the evidence on which you decide what to say or do? If you had good-enough intelligence, or if you supposed that you were sufficiently intelligent, I would be very surprised indeed if you felt you had enough intelligence available to solve these daily problems. But of course one could say that you might try to limit your vocabulary. Observe that I have used the word 'intelligence' three times in the last few lines, but that doesn't prove that it is therefore a good word to use, or that it is widely used, or that it is a word of your essential basic vocabulary. If you are one of these people who uses human speech as a chosen method of doing something, then you have to forge a personal vocabulary which you think you can keep in working order (in place of the available debased old clichés, worn theories and devalued coinage). Unfortunately it is only part of the problem; it is no good using that particular kind of weapon or tool of language unless there is somebody who will listen to you and understand what you say.

I was very impressed by an experience told me by John Rickman after we had succeeded in running the Northfield Experiment for about six weeks. He met a private soldier at York station, who said he had been at Northfield during the time Rickman and I were running the experiment, and he wanted to say how grateful he was because for the first time he had understood what a university was like – and I think it was very likely to be the last too, because he was not one of the privileged classes. He was a poor man who had been swept into the army. There is something extremely moving about an experience of that kind. When I say it impressed me very much, I wonder what was the impression that man got. It does indicate that talking may impress: there may be somebody who hears what you say and is impressed by it. So it is quite a good thing if you have a vocabulary

that can at least make an impression, but you have to choose your own vocabulary and keep it is good working condition.

Q: It seems from the title of your talk that one aspect of vocabulary has been your own particular concern – for example, your title, 'Penetrating Silence'.

Bion: I think musicians appreciate this point because they have signs they make on paper for various forms of what they call 'rests'. There are others who also recognize the importance of that – 'Wisdom cometh to the learned man through opportunity for leisure.' The thing that impresses me about that statement is 'wisdom' and 'cometh to the learned man'. In other words, the person must be capable of being learned, but that doesn't mean to say he becomes wise.

Q: I wonder if that is one of the reasons for resistance to one's own vocabulary, and for a certain difficulty in distinguishing between learning and wisdom. Is it because there is a terror that goes along with wisdom?

Bion: As far as I am concerned, I am persuaded that there is a great deal to be said for respecting the use of a term like 'terror'; I feel 'terribly' anxious. Very often a word like that is used in a context which seems to rub it all out – "Oh, I feel terribly anxious." The music is brought in to contradict the term; the accompanying music disguises it. It is another reason why the person who finds himself in a leadership role has to be able to be sensitive to the evidence – what is evidence, and what it is evidence of, amongst a whole mass of which is irrelevant. In the Burma war elaborate 'secret' messages were sent, but sent in a way which the enemy would be able to intercept. So not only were the movements of the troops, tanks etc. hidden, largely by virtue of air cover by the American air force, it was also possible to keep the enemy in ignorance of the real intentions and to build up in his mind a conviction of the position – I think it was of the 4th Corps – on entirely the wrong section of the front. With regard to oneself, if you are in a position of leadership, you have to take into account getting all sorts of information – some of which is voluntarily provided, some deliberate; but you have to decide, with your very limited resources, what you propose to listen to in what you are told, in what your senses tell you, in what your spies tell

you, your 'intelligence service'. So I could say in this way – or so it seems to me building up and improvising my own vocabulary as I go along – I make a distinction between 'intelligence' and 'wisdom'. I think the Nazis must have been extraordinarily intelligent to be able to organize things like the Nuremberg Rallies – a wonderful piece of organization – but even if I had a choice in the matter, I wouldn't fall for this highly intelligent organization and for its highly intelligent organizational capacity. If you ask me why I wouldn't, I don't think I could really answer. . . .

When it comes to the individual, you can apply such resources as you have to a very narrow field. How does what you can see for yourself apply to the immediate everyday decisions which have to be made?

Q: What about the knowledge we don't know we have – what we sometimes call 'intuition'?

Bion: If you want to talk about it, you have to invent a word like 'intuition', hoping that it is about something and that in fact you have intuition. Even the mathematicians have supposed that the classical method of conducting mathematical operations isn't adequate – there has to be something else. It is rather like the poet who is able to express something in a way that draws the attention of the reader to what he might otherwise not be aware of. The person who uses a word like 'intuition' may not have enough knowledge to be convinced that there is such a thing, but he may feel there is, and he may express a term, but he has to take the risk of somebody saying, 'What do you mean by intuition?' All he can say is, 'If you hear me use it often enough, I hope you may get a rough idea of what I am talking about.' The pattern will emerge in which it would seem to be appropriate to say, 'Ah, that's what he means by intuition', or 'Ah, now I know what you mean by university; I've never been to one and am never likely to go to one, but that's what you mean.' This seems to me to be part of the fascination of this kind of occupation.

Q: Could you comment on the personal need for silence in our profession?

Bion: I think it is useful to listen to a silence and not to be in too much of a hurry to break it up. I am familiar with this because I

know that whenever I am tired I have a spate of interpretations to the mind – all the Freudian, Kleinian, Abrahamian, every blessed interpretation you ever thought of – they all come flocking to my mind. Indeed, one could almost say that psychoanalytic training becomes a kind of psychoanalysts' neurosis, a sign that one is tired when rushing to employ these interpretations. Indeed, I think the only situation in which we are really omnipotent and omniscient is when we haven't the faintest idea what is going on – it's the only thing to be. Much the same thing applies to the person who can't listen to silences. I would be surprised if anybody here is unfamiliar with the experience of not being able to tolerate the silence. 'For goodness sake! Why can't you say something?' But in fact there is a lot to be said for being able to listen to the silence.

Q: You seem to be rather pessimistic about human resources. That makes me feel very pessimistic – and I wanted to counteract it by thinking how we can deal with that. . . .

Bion: I deal with it in this way: whether I am pessimistic or optimistic doesn't matter very much because I have to deal with human beings. Even as an infant one is dependent; and as the independent person one is also familiar with loneliness, isolation; even when you are in a crowd, you are all alone – it is the price you pay for being an individual. The fact that you are mostly dependent on things which are not worthy of being depended upon can become clear to you. But if you are a leader you are not supposed to make that clear to the people with whom you are dealing because there is always the danger that what is an individual fear might, when it is sufficiently supported, become panic fear. At least it has the merit of obliterating the loneliness if the whole bunch runs headlong away. That's one reason why the leader is in a dangerous situation if he stands against the stampede. His resource is not any greater, but he is not supposed to translate his thoughts and his awareness of the dangers of the situation into the kind of language which makes it available as a model to the rest. He is not supposed to lead the regiment from behind – like the famous Duke of Plaza-Toro.[1]'But when away his regiment ran, his place was at the fore, O – That celebrated, cultivated, underrated

[1][From *The Gondoliers* by Gilbert and Sullivan. *Ed.*]

nobleman, The Duke of Plaza-Toro!' This is a situation in which the loneliness is brought home to you in an unmistakable manner.

Q: Are the troops any less alone?

Bion: It depends who put them into that particular box, calling them 'the troops'. I don't think they are in any way in a different situation; they are in the same situation, except possibly that those people who are leaders are not in that particular slot: they simply serve as troops and may in fact be what we might call 'poor troops' because there is no outlet for their leadership. It is conceivable that some of them would be much better employed if they were in a position in which they had scope for their leadership qualities. I think it is the kind of thing Churchill had in mind when he said that democracy is a damn bad system of government, but it happens to be the best because it affords an opportunity for people to show what they can do – at least, it is supposed to.

New and Improved

1977

I sometimes think that Freud never really understood what a cloak he wore. In several places[1] he quotes this phrase by Hebbel,[2] in describing himself as "one of those who have disturbed the sleep of the world", and more than once he suggested that he was aware that he caused an uproar. But he seemed to be surprised to find what kind of uproar. In his paper on the history of psychoanalysis he mentions the motto (device) on the coat-of-arms of the City of Paris – 'It is tossed by the waves, but does not sink'.

If we are right about the scale of things, we could say that our recent achievement as human beings is the capacity to talk – a matter of a mere few thousand years. It is an achievement which floats. What does it float on? It is a matter of some importance because here in detail we are still floating on the surface of whatever the sea is that we float on. It seems to me that the nearest I can get to the emotional life of the human being is this capacity to talk and discuss. But I think that the capacity to talk – and nowadays even to think, to co-operate as here in solving these various problems – seems to be extremely precarious because people are impatient. Great crowds of people, even nations, decide to solve the problem by violence: if you don't like a problem, shoot it down.

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[1][E.g. Letter from Sigmund Freud to Ludwig Binswanger, 10 September 1911 (in Fichtner, 1972, pp. 73–75); Letter from Freud to Fliess, 26 April 1896 (in Masson, 1985); and 'The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement' (Freud, 1914d). *Ed.*]

[2][Christian Friedrich Hebbel (1813–1863), dramatist, poet, and short-story writer. The quotation is a reference to Kandaules' words to Gyges in Hebbel's *Gyges und sein Ring*, Act V, Scene 1. *Ed.*]

André Green introduced me to the statement, '*La réponse est le malheur de la question*',[1] which one could translate, 'The misfortune (or the illness, or the disease) of curiosity is the answer.' That is what kills curiosity. If you can rush to the solution quickly enough, then you can put a stop to the curiosity. So when it comes to the question of people who want to understand, or want to know something about themselves, the investigation of who we are, of what we are and what we do, the temptation is to put a stop to that by rushing precociously to the answer.

In recent times, as we know, this has actually been done on a large scale by killing, murdering, or – put in more respectable terms – waging war against people. One wonders whether the whole of psychoanalysis is floating very precariously indeed on these turbulent seas, and could easily be submerged by the violent approach. For example, it is not easy to tell what sort of person an individual is, so it is convenient if you can look at the colour of the skin which is visible straight away, and say, 'That is white', or as Ustinov says, 'pink' – and go no further. You can stuff that answer into your curiosity and hope it will shut up.

The curious thing is that it seems to cause an awful bunch of trouble if a person really wants to know what all this turmoil is about. On the surface psychoanalysis seems to be a very safe job, physically comfortable, rather inviting; so lots of people can be drawn to this peculiar occupation.

Psychoanalytic investigation can arouse powerful feelings – for example, feelings of hate. Freud called it 'transference' – a sort of phenomenon which presents itself. So, when you go into your office tomorrow you have a chance of experiencing this 'transference'. The trouble about a word like that is you can't see it, smell it, touch it or taste it; so it is regarded as typical of intellectuals who invent more and more terms. But we are actually with those few people who come to us for analysis and very often find they don't like it. It may sound rather like a consolation – perhaps it is – but I think that the more experience you have of analysis, the more familiar you get with the fact that it only takes a few seconds, if that, for the prospective analysand to pack it in. The knowledge that patients are hard to come by, and when they do come they disappear easily and quickly, is the

[1]Maurice Blanchot.

first thing you are familiar with – the failure of psychoanalysis, and what a fake it is to give interpretations. Most people dislike personal remarks – and that is exactly what interpretations are. One result is that while it is brought home to you that you are a failure (or something is a failure and you are bad at it), there is always something better – new and improved. I borrow that title from Kellogg's Cornflakes. I don't know what happens to the 'new and improved' things; they are often successful – or at any rate successful as far as the technicians are concerned. It is a very seductive idea – one could almost sum it up in one word – cure. It carries with it a connotation of good times coming, an improvement, *better*. We have to be aware of that because there may not be much more we can hope for than that we shall continue to float when the thing that is really flourishing is the turbulence, the turmoil, the upheaval. As analysts we should beware of being seduced by any such ambition from the actual task of analysis.

Freud was impressed by Charcot's statement that if you watch long enough, you ought to see a pattern emerge. The difficulty is how to find a chance of lasting long enough: most people don't like being looked at or observed and – worse still – having personal remarks made about them. I would like to consider that we should think not about our own analysis, but the problem which presents itself as part and parcel of the job.

In other words, when your patient walks into the room tomorrow, what do you see? Of course a lot of analysts have a medical training – I doubt whether that training is anything like good enough, or even as good as those concerned think it is. But as analysts we may get into further trouble because our idea of what is wrong with the patient can be so much more intense and exacting than that of the ordinary physician. I once had an experience of this when I agreed to see a patient referred to me by a doctor; I wrote to him saying that I considered the patient was suffering from myasthenia gravis (about which nothing much was known at the time – I happened to know by accident). He wrote to me about six months later, giving a very fine description of the terminal stages of myasthenia gravis and saying, "So you see, you were wrong. What the patient died of was . . .". It was perfectly true – but it had not been one of the initial symptoms.

I think there is a good chance that even in states about which it is reasonable to suppose that the only correct approach is a physical one, psychoanalysts may be able to detect symptoms of a physical

disease presenting themselves not only on the skin or in X-ray, but also mentally, yet can be seen to originate not in the mind or personality, but in the body. Some of the early analysts had a good clinical flair for physical ailments, but unfortunately they tended to decide that everything was physical; so Freud was attacked on the grounds that the real origin of mental disturbance was physical, and a physical approach was necessary for physical ailments. But our problem is observing tomorrow's patient. We are supposed to be able not only to detect that the origins of grosser symptoms of a particular disorder originate in the body, but also to detect a disorder that originates in the mind itself. "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" as Shakespeare put it. I suppose the answer to that would have been, "Yes, if you wait four hundred years, we'll try. By that time somebody will have invented psychoanalysis and we'll know something about the mind."

How are we going to observe a character or personality? My feeling about this – in so far as I have been able to observe myself – is that I go from nothing to a point where I begin to make guesses, conjectures, rational conjectures. Freud says dreams are central – and so they are. But a difficulty crops up when he describes certain dreams as rationalizations. How do you tell the difference between one rationalization and any other? One could say that about analysis itself: in what way does the whole of analysis differ from a kind of elaborate paramnesia, something that is invented to take the place of what you don't know or have forgotten?

I would find it difficult if I couldn't start by imagining what is the matter with the patient, or imagining why the patient has come. But that is a very vulnerable state: anybody could say, "You're just inventing any old story instead of really examining the patient." So it is just as well to keep your imaginings, your imaginative or rational conjectures, to yourself, because they can be put a stop to if you formulate them. Of course the most obvious person who can stop them is the analysand, who can walk out there and then. But this also applies to people who are not analysts, who don't know anything about it, but who might be related to the analysand. They can easily say, "What a lot of rubbish; what a lot of feeble imagination." From that point of view, if you can possibly enjoy the luxury of waiting to see if your imaginative reconstruction appears a bit more solid, that is why I think it is a good thing to give your imagination an airing – never

mind how ridiculous, stupid or intolerable it is. I am not talking about an undisciplined, rhapsodical display of just saying anything that comes into your mind. At the same time I do not want to be limited by having to be scientific, precise and exact.

Euclidean geometry appears to be well established, partly because we can draw pictures, triangles, circles, and the evidence of the eye carries an enormous amount of weight. It is one of the first infant capacities seeming to give release, a sort of approach to omnipotence: while you may not be able to crawl, you can reach something by looking at it. So geometrically it seems to solve a lot of problems – although there are certain problems like parallel lines, which don't really fit in; they break down logically if you look at them long enough.

We can still say that Euclidean geometry is useful, and Euclid cannot have been altogether mistaken – what he produced has lasted for two or three thousand years. But I would go further: geometry was at last released from the tyranny of the eyes by algebraic geometry, by the discovery of the Cartesian co-ordinates, and from that you could transform visual geometry into a mass of algebraic formulae.

To return to Euclid: one could say that 'real' geometry must have been partially discovered by Euclid, and what he discovered was the true geometry implicit in it, even if he didn't know what projective or algebraic geometry was. Nevertheless, when it comes to Cartesian or algebraic geometry, what was implicit has become explicit. I don't think it has caused much trouble, but when somebody – Freud for example, *the* example – makes explicit something that is implicit – then there is trouble. As he pointed out, people can complain about doctors who are always inventing – and are therefore responsible for – new diseases; but that is because they see the disease exists. But to do this with regard to the mind really seems to be going a bit far and causes very considerable uproar. Even with people like ourselves we don't have to go far to find that we have stirred up trouble simply by making explicit what is in fact implicit, and always has been; there is something about displaying it, or making it overtly obvious, that is most unpopular. Anyone who is practising analysis cannot expect a trouble-free existence; we have to realize that in the office the analyst and the analysand are in for a rough time. In fact, liking either to be analysed, or to be an analyst, is a peculiar state of affairs. It is much more natural and in conformity with the nature

of this subject that both parties should hate it. There is considerable pressure all the while not to give what is the real interpretation, but some more tolerable version of it. So both the patient and the analyst are very glad to find some interpretation which is less than the truth – I think this is constant, inescapable. We are engaged on a somewhat unpleasant and dangerous occupation in spite of appearances to the contrary and the fact that we are always offered the chance of believing that it is something safe and pleasant, 'new and improved', more curative. "Have what I call psychoanalysis, and you will feel better." The danger is much more that the individuals concerned will be able to observe more, and what they observe will not necessarily be at all agreeable. Even painters like the Impressionists have got into trouble – their pictures used to create a furore. This latest discovered activity – looking at ourselves – is probably the most obviously unpleasant. We don't mind very much about astronomers building vast radio-telescopes and observatories, but we hate this activity of looking at ourselves, our minds which are usually conveniently hidden away – so much so that it is difficult to tell if a person has a mind at all – and that state of affairs is regarded as much more comfortable than considering the personalities of people. I suggest that we should free ourselves to exercise our imagination and hope that it will be replaced by something that comes nearer to fact. I am doubtful about whether it comes to fact, because belief in fact is the privilege of physical scientists, and even they have got into trouble now because of the introduction of ideas like the Uncertainty Principle. The law courts are also in trouble and not happy with the fact that there are only two diagnoses – guilty or not guilty – and only two treatments (or possibly three, if you include execution in the sense of killing the person, which is a drastic operation). There again there is the tendency to want to drag in psychiatrists and psychoanalysts to help them out of this predicament thanks to having these somewhat limited but effective diagnoses and cures. Whether we should be wise to get involved with that is another matter. Knowing what we now know, it is difficult to decide whether to co-operate or to collude with these systems.

This brings us to another point: we are dependent on people who are not us, even dependent on society's groups, but at the same time we are alone. So we have the doubly unpleasant experience, namely,

of being dependent and isolated. Even in your office, where you have the analysand who can be your most valuable ally, the person who can co-operate in this task – even then, when you are alone with your analysand – you are alone. I don't think it is simply a verbal paradox; it is one of these things you can test for yourself in your own office, using all your reason, logic, imagination and capacity for conjecture; you cannot afford to do without any of this limited supply of capacity. What this means in practice is this: whether you make notes purporting to record what happened in the session, or whether it is worth considering that it might be more profitable not to make notes but to give your imagination an outing and imagine what happens next.

I am reminded of a story that was told me by Polunin when he was engaged in the Russian Ballet in England. He said he was with Diaghilev, Stravinsky and Fokine, and they had just run through the ballet, more or less the final version of *Petrouchka*. Stravinsky and Fokine were delighted and satisfied. Diaghilev said, "No, it won't do." The ballet ended with the death of Petrouchka; Diaghilev said, "The ghost of Petrouchka must appear." They protested about this, but ultimately Stravinsky wrote some more music, and Fokine added the choreography, and that was the final version. That depended on Diaghilev's capacity to believe something absolutely ridiculous – that the ghost of a puppet, which has no life in it anyway, should appear, seems to me to be an extraordinary feat of imagination. So in these sessions with an analysand we have to make some approach to the ghost which hasn't appeared. You have a perfectly good narrative story; the patient tells you everything – his life history. But what about the part that hasn't appeared? Just now I called it 'the ghost', but it is really the ghost of analysis that one needs to be aware of, the thing that would complete this story if only we knew it or could invent it. All this sounds like saying, "All you have to do is let your imagination rip – just think anything you please". But that isn't good enough; there has to be some sort of disciplinary framework; a skeleton, some sort of bony structure. There is no escape from the discipline of psychoanalysis. It is very difficult to understand why we should have to go through such a frightful discipline, and equally difficult to guess in what way it will pay off at some future date. But it is somehow necessary so that even your imagination cannot be allowed to develop into an imaginative orgy.

I have not really said anything about what we are looking at, partly because everyone has to make up their own minds about what it is that we, falling back on these words we borrow from physical events, see or hear. Nothing whatever can possibly take the place of the actual meeting between the analyst and the analysand; those two people are required to produce a binocular vision, a binocular observation. Perhaps you would like to continue the debate.

Q: Could you enlarge on this 'skeleton' that you just mentioned – the bony structure?

Bion: The thought that occurs to me immediately is a passage from *War and Peace* where Prince André says, in response to something that has been said to him, "That is sooth, accept it." In other words, there is something which makes one feel that it is true; in spite of all these imaginative reconstructions, what we are basically after is the truth. There are all kinds of approaches: a composer can compose a piece of music, and somehow you feel, 'yes, that's right'. The same thing with a painter: there is a difference between a painter who produces a sincere work of art and one which is bogus. The bogus one can look exactly like, or even better than, the genuine one, but there is something about the genuine thing which is convincing; even though we are not capable of knowing the truth, we are fundamentally right to be prejudiced in favour of it. And that is about as near as I can get to answering that question as to what this is that is so unbending, so rigid that it is very difficult to fool oneself about it.

Q: You touched upon medical education not being nearly as good as the people who are concerned with it think it is, and would like it to be. What would you recommend in the way of psychoanalytic education if you were to have a totally free hand?

Bion: I have asked myself that question and continue to do so. When I had something to do with the Training Committee of the British Psychoanalytical Society, I can't say I got much further with it. It is still a question that puzzles me. Recently I have begun to wonder whether we should attempt to develop our imagination, or even our capacity for rationalization. But there again, the risk is that it becomes completely undisciplined. I wondered whether I could describe it by saying 'rhapsody' – you engage in a kind of rhapsodic activity, just let your imagination go. That is obviously a danger; it

is not good enough simply to proliferate more and more imaginative constructions.[1]

One could say, "What is the interpretation of that? What does it mean?" It is a fairly simple and straightforward thing. It has the peculiarity that once you have seen it, it is impossible to stop seeing – there is no problem whatever. This is one of the peculiarities of solving a problem – we wonder what all the fuss has been about because the answer is so obvious.

Q: Like M. C. Escher – it keeps you from seeing the other answers.

Bion: Yes. In fact, would it be a good thing to have a course on Escher? Of course, it is not simply a question of the discipline of drawing or painting; it is also the discipline of looking. You could say it is no good supposing you have seen the Impressionists unless you go and look at them; you have to go through the physical discipline of getting your body there and having a look at them – and probably looking at them for some time too.

Q: As you were talking, I had the feeling that you were really gently encouraging us to accept our own helplessness in the analytic situation, that our only feeling of power might be in imagining, and seeing if our imagination was developing.

Bion: In so far as we are helpless, I think it is a good thing to know it. But it is a mistake to suppose that omnipotence is a peculiar state of mind which patients have. In fact we slip over into omnipotence over and over again whenever we are up against a problem we cannot solve. The whole pressure is to feel that we are omnipotent. Indeed it is almost an occupational disease of analysts to be cured; we crave to be able to produce some evidence to show that we have been cured. It is difficult to believe that a collection of really intuitive people would not be able to see someone's defective qualities. It is an astonishing thing that the collective, combined wisdom of the nation has achieved as much as it has done.

Stories like the Garden of Eden, the Expulsion from Paradise, the Tower of Babel, would seem to indicate a clear awareness that there

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[1][At this point Bion handed out copies of an A4-sized page with an illustrated version of his title for the talk, one which has the qualities of a drawing employing reversible perspective. See next page. *Ed.*]

Copy of Bion's original 'reversible figure' title

is a power who objects strongly to the development of intelligence in the human being. But you don't have to resort to these stories – you only have to see what happens in your own office. Freud thought, when he got a lot of psychoanalysts together at a congress, that there would be a certain amount of agreement. He seemed to be extremely disappointed to find that the effect was a kind of dispersal: they all quarrelled, they all disagreed. In this way there has to be a kind of 'splitting'. When they come together – as here, for example – they can separate physically and mentally and go off in different directions. I think it is a phase that has to be gone through.

According to Melanie Klein's theory of projective identification, the individual believes, as a phantasy, that he is able to split off parts of his personality, evacuate them, and get rid of them. As we all know, that is a matter of opinion – some people think they can see it; some people don't. But I would like to give another version – the same story on a different level, as it were. Breuer believed, and so did Freud, in a cathartic method. Is that the same story again? Cure people by evacuating some state of mind of theirs? Freud broke away from that; he didn't feel that this cathartic method was good enough. He had an extraordinary capacity for being able to exist in isolation, and yet he was companionable, very capable of making contacts, a most compassionate person.

An originator of human speech might be very disturbed at having his invention used for telling the truth; the obvious advantage of being able to talk is that you can mislead people. To distort a perfectly magnificent facility for lying into a method of speaking truth could seem to be a bit much – I hope I don't speak as an advocate of the liar, but even Blake said that Milton was very much on the side of the opposition – not on the side of the authorities in Paradise.

Q: [*Question missing from typescript.*]

Bion: I think Freud still carries the prejudice in favour of cure, that the truth would make you feel better. There is a good deal of controversy about this – I don't say it is open controversy, but there are a good many people who believe that a good lie is worth the truth any day. In fact, there has been a recent paper suggesting that when somebody has a terminal cancer, we should tell them nice things, things they would like. But there is always the risk that a person who has a

terminal cancer knows it and doesn't value lies about it; our primitive, primordial impulses don't appreciate being invaded by stuff from up here (the brain). It is like being the original possessor of the personality or character; things like primitive guilt – or original sin as religious people call it. The original possessor of the human being is nowadays being invaded by these impulses to speak the truth, to know the truth, or to investigate the truth.

Further Cogitations

1968–1969

16 April 1968

Volume 1, page 362[1]

A very striking passage. Money and wealth are very important because money can be exchanged for other things. This makes the value of money contingent: I am able to buy a comfortable bed, Californian sun and air, books, and interesting food and wine. I can buy interesting opportunities for Julian, Nicola, Parthenope. And when I am reminded, as I drink wine, by F., that I do not have to have food, I am angry – having had breakfast and lunch. Why? Gluttony – which I know cannot yield what I seek. Is gluttony concerned with quantity? Amount of pleasure, prestige; quality even?

"I have told you", says X. Told me what? I would not be asking if I thought I'd been told. I ask because I think I have *not* been told, and have something I have not told X. Schizophrenics tell me what I don't want to know: the ambiguous smile, the love of money, the greed for time, salesmanship.

8 May 1968

Friendly feeling = love is a constant, but when love is replaced by hate? A new formulation required to bring order out of chaos. Is this 'growth', or is it growth by catastrophic change? Replacement of one formula rather than another – change by catastrophe?

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[1][This is a reference to John Milton, *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine, Compiled from the Holy Scriptures Alone* (1825). *Ed.*]

10 May 1968

Technique:

Why am I such a bad psychoanalyst? Cannot just be age because have always been aware of this, though sometimes it is a suspicion that it is the inadequacy of psychoanalysis itself and not just me. But this is based on a mistaken idea of psychoanalysis as a body of knowledge or a therapeutic procedure rather than as a research into the domain of the mind itself, an expedition.

15 May 1968

Finance: The protean nature of it. No psychoanalytic interpretation satisfies. Greed for more money as a substitute for *x*: *x* a substitute for *y*: *y* a substitute for O. But substitutes only remind one of the dis-satisfaction, but satisfaction itself felt to be impregnated with dis-satisfaction for which it is felt to be a substitute.

Greed – can never be satisfied.

May and June, 1968

[*Fourteen pages of notes dealing with his anxieties connected with the (analytic) practice and fears of finding himself in an intolerable situation – the outstanding impression is one of anger, hostility and self-dissatisfaction. F.B.*]

4 July 1968

It is a waste of time and an expense of spirit to allow one's self to wonder how one appears to people. Yet that seems to be what psychoanalytic interpretations involve. Maybe one does that in work hours – but not outside.

Today I did interpret X's complaint of being attacked by me as a need to be able to be frank, and the feeling that it was not possible because it would be interpreted against him. But I did NOT interpret his feeling of being seduced and therefore being denied the criticism he needs. This I think is one instance of failing; but it is also something (criticism) which I feel I can get better from myself than from others. This is, however, indistinguishable from claiming a very favourable reception – one's own. Wish to claim unfavourable or hostile environment so one can ignore hostile criticism. How, then, can one be [judged]as an analyst? Not by one's self, not by friends and not by enemies. Being a recluse will not do, either. Very difficult to tolerate bad analysis, and very difficult to demand good analysis.

20 July 1968

Dejection and rejection. Fear the latter will emerge as sarcasm. Resentment at not being a success, and feeling I am not a success because not good enough to be one. If only I were a good analyst! Envy others who have the guts to charge fees on that supposition. I prefer paying the cost of being morally superior, thinking thereby I avoid the cost of being scientifically superior – which of course I don't. Resent that too. This comes near to resenting being a mere ordinary person who has to earn a living.

The language of achievement needs to be differentiated from the language of substitution for action. Both have precursors – there are day-dreams which are a substitute for action and day-dreams which are a prelude to action. I have available α and β elements: could these be used? The β elements, I have said, scarcely qualify for thoughts at

all; α elements I regard as precursors of C Category elements such as are used in dreams etc. . . . Could α be regarded as analogous to alpha-particles and β elements as inert, *not* penetrative and *not* reaction producing? The elements of 'thoughts of achievement' would be α elements. The language of inertia substitution would be the language composed of β elements (the β screen) capable of deflecting α elements. (Related to resistance, stability, inertia – no dream, no thoughts). Even when concerned with achievement in other fields, LA must conform to aesthetic laws of aesthetic achievement – "beautiful forms, beautifully executed".

[*Next page blank except for 'Vol. 1, Book II. Ch. 6'*[1] *'IV, page 425'*[2].]

21 July 1968

The point is that one can verbalize many qualities such as 'beautiful forms, beautifully executed', but it depends on motive with which it is expressed how outcome will be decided. And this brings one to O, which will never be known – not the 'form', the evolution, but that from which it evolves – the ultimate reality.

Growth as the criterion (not cure). But what of the cancerous growth? And once one admits a standard of values, one is back in the circle: 'who or what or how' is the growth assessed – Life? Death? The problem grows with its solution. There is no solution, or – as St John of the Cross put it – "The soul is now, as it were, undergoing a cure in order that it may regain its health – its health being God himself."

A capacity for growth might be better. But how is such a capacity to be assessed? Has it to be assessed? These continuing questions themselves may betray a fallacy, in that they are at once evidence of growth and afford evidence of an existence of pseudo-growth – premature formulation of next question long before that stage has been reached.

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[1][Milton (1825). Relevant to Bion's thinking here is that serving from 'the newness of spirit' releases one from the 'oldness of the letter', gaining a degree of freedom from 'the yoke of human judgement'. *Ed.*].

[2][Ephesians, IV: 15, to be guided by the spirit of 'truth in love'. *Ed.*]

24 July 1968

Washington send a favourable reply and sound very welcoming despite (because of?) fee and conditions. It seems hard to believe that one is worth it. (It is significant that one even entertains the idea of being worth it).

29 July 1968

What is the relationship between dreams as ordinarily understood and what I am calling *transitive dreaming* – the turning of actual experience into a form suitable for storage? I say (the) patient can no more make use of experiences without dreaming than he can make use of food without digesting it: food must be digested; equally the experience must *at the time* it is experienced be 'dreamed'. Then what is the dream ordinarily so-called? It is a failure of the patient to dream the experience of sleep. He fails to 'digest' the experience of sleep. If he 'remembers' a dream, he means he has to wake up before he can leave the dream, just as my psychotic patient has to come to analysis before he can 'dream', In both instances it is because he cannot tolerate the synthesizing, digesting process of the dream because he cannot tolerate what is synthesized (namely the super-ego?).

11 August 1968

Another way of stating the patient's difficulty is that he can dream, but that even any 'good' dream (i.e. one that lends itself to interpretation) is evidence of a breakdown in dream-work alpha. The point with any patient is not whether he suffers or does not suffer from insomnia – does or does not sleep – but whether he can or cannot do α, is or is not capable of α, for whatever reason. It may be because he

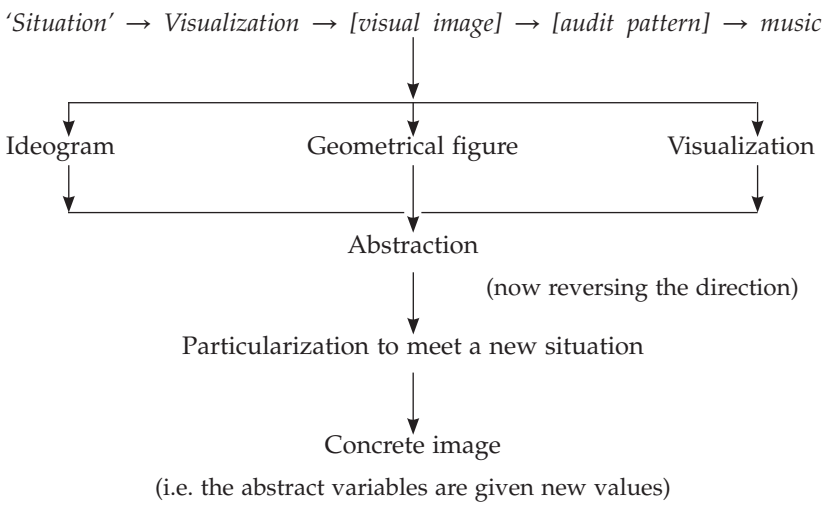
lacks whatever the necessary apparatus is that is required, or that he fears the synthesizing activity of *α* if all dream work is not inhibited. But the result is he may not be able to sleep because of fear of *α*, and then find he cannot keep awake for the same reason, for as I have pointed out, *α* operates in sleeping and in waking. Since the patient, if he is to live, must sleep and must wake, he can oscillate rapidly from one to the other to destroy *α*.

11 August (*continued*)

α

It has just come to me that mathematician is one who is capable of *α* and that it has its consequence:

He can see the essential characters in, say, the paranoid–s[1] and depressive positions; or the oedipal situation; or the primal scene; or any other. These situations, or complexes, are seen concretely and, at some point, in visual images. For example Euclid's geometrical patterns: They can easily be visual lines which are made abstract. (Similarly the word '*dog*' can be an abstraction.) Hence:



[1][Abbreviation for paranoid–schizoid. *Ed.*]

But the mathematician is able to produce abstractions and signs for these abstractions and can then replace the abstraction or its sign, now reversing the direction of α (as it was in the production of the abstraction) with a *particular* concretization.

If my idea is right, then Euclid could say good-bye to 'elements' (1.5 *Elefuga*). That is to say, the 'elements' could be worked, transformed in his case, into an abstract visual image, the theorems, and then radically still further abstracted by Descartes, or rather by use of the system of coordinates he worked out so as to form the whole system of projective geometry, and then abstracted them still further to form the system of algebraic projection geometry. Now the calculus thus elaborated lies ready to use.

Leaving aside the question, for the time being, of how this process of abstraction is to take place and how α effects it, we can see that the calculus that has been produced is available for the solution of all kinds of problems which on the face of it are far removed from the basic facts ('elements' in this case) from which the original abstraction was effected. But it is probable it will only serve effectively for the solution of problems in which the concrete facts that are to be substituted for the variables of the calculus have a value relative to each other which is similar to the values the basic original facts had relative to each of the other basic original facts. Put in other terms, Newton explores astronomical space, elaborating his laws of motion in doing so, by virtue of an already existing calculus, or calculi, which derived originally by a process of abstraction from the facts of the first space of all – the infant's space of breast, the Positions, Oedipal situation, Primal Scene. There are these: (1) a base pattern, (2) an abstraction, (3) calculi, (4) reapplication of calculi.

A Newton, then, owes his freedom to investigate to a series of derivatives from a basic pattern, which same basic pattern imposes also a limitation on his freedom in that only such data tend to be regarded by him as will lend themselves to a scheme fitting in with the original basic pattern. In an extreme form this can lead to such a limitation of selectivity of observed facts that the 'discovery' (e.g. of the origin of the solar system) is really not much more than a projection on to astronomical facts of a crude and very easily detected emotional problem centring on, say, the stature of Newton. The facts now drawn together by aid of the calculi already in existence can be

seem not to be adequately represented by the laws of motion and their representative calculi.

Thus there is produced anew the situation described by H.P.[1] of disparate elements lacking any coherence. Confronted by this repetition of the Positions, again all depends on the individual's capacity for *α*. The new Positions can again be negotiated depending on *α* capacity, new visual images, new abstraction and further calculi. And so on. . . .

In this lies the possibility of belief in this value for scientific enquiry of the original basic patterns, and at the same time as indication of the nature of the limitations from which human intellectual exploration and enquiry is bound to suffer.

He can ultimately only see in the universal that which lies within the compass of the mental equipment, and that in turn it means that he can only see that which lies within the compass of his ability to solve through *α*-capacity certain basic elemental positions and patterns such as paranoid–s and depressive positions, primal scene and oedipal situations. All that lies outside those few elementary patterns can, in fact, only be grasped by virtue of *α* capacity which can be brought to bear on a derivation from a derivation from a derivation . . . to the nth.

26 August 1968

The 'Cure'. The term has a considerable history germane to the topic on which I wish to embark . . .

Considering the matter in greater width, it would seem that this term has affiliations with certain people and certain disciplines. Most of us are familiar with it in the context of medicine. In England it is often employed, as in the phrase 'cure of souls', as delineating a particular domain of religious activity: priests have been – sometimes still are – actively concerned in aspects of the cure of souls in a 'therapeutic' sense. I remember one such person causing some debate in the psychoanalytic establishment in the days when I was part of it.

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[1][Henri Poincaré. *Ed.*].

30 August 1968

Still there is the wish to write about the war but seem unable to overcome my inertia. I suppose there is fear of areas of discontent and resentment. Arthur used to say I was sulking in my tent like Achilles. Achilles or nothing perhaps, but do not like being nothing. Only the thinker venoms all his days. Who said that, or something like it?[1]

7 September 1968

'Cure' The problem that I want to discuss may be introduced by a somewhat compressed and distorted – in the instincts of discretion – account of some episodes in the treatment of a borderline psychotic. I call him that because although he had been certified and kept in a mental hospital as a schizophrenic for about a year, the psychoanalytic experience made me dissatisfied with such a diagnosis without making it possible for me to propose any other.

The psychoanalysis went on interminably, week after week, year after year. The patient claimed he was better. If asked to substantiate the statement, he would report that his writing had improved, or he no longer blinked in a bright light. There were various items of this kind, none of which could be regarded by a sane man as offering evidence in support of the idea of improvement and all which could be seen as requiring further psychoanalytic interpretation.

Ultimately the analysis terminated. The patient, as if feeling it would be hopeless to resort to his usual procedures for prolonging it, seemed to be stupefied and helpless. There were no communications from the relatives or medical practitioners: my last memory is of his face, agonized, with beads of perspiration showing, though it was not a hot day.

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[1][Bion has half-recalled that in Keats's 'Hyperion' the Goddess Moneta admonishes the poet: 'Only the dream venoms all his days. / Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve'. *Ed.*]

I could give you, without any difficulty, a perfectly true factual account of his progress from the day he came to the day he left: of exams passed, work done, marriage successfully maintained, and children born and brought up. As I say, it would be factually correct, but in almost complete contrast to the evidence of my experience in the analysis: almost but not quite.

Any version purporting to repeat facts would be almost intolerably boring and as misleading as a photograph which was not correctly interpreted, or, subject to interpretation, in which case it is open to objection on the grounds of its *being* an interpretation and coloured by its vertex – medical, psychoanalytic, Kleinian etc. . . . – *ad nauseam*, *ad infinitum*. Yet is difficult to tolerate the idea of dispensing with 'cure' without substituting some other.

Analysands have a reason, or many reasons, for justifying their expenditure of time and money on the activity, the psychoanalyst likewise is suggesting that his company is what the patient really wants and for which he should pay in hours, weeks, months and pounds; if need be, for years. The statement, even if not made overtly, has to be made (in the privacy of his own mind at least) by the psychoanalyst in a few brief moments of the preliminary interview.

The rest of the history of the emotional relationship between psychoanalyst and analysand (whether terminated or continued) resolves into doubts about the wisdom of the course decided upon: The more significant and searching the association, the more powerful the doubts. The less significant, the nearer to 'no doubts' and nothing to be doubtful about.

The capacity for doubt, the condition in which doubt can be entertained, has become central. The 'analytic situation' must be one in which two people can have a relationship in which neither is compelled to search 'irritably'[1] for certainty as a method of stifling doubts, uncertainties, mysteries, half-truths and neither is compelled to assert anything as a means by which doubt and uncertainties are evaded.

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[1][A reference to Keats's 'Negative Capability': "I had not a dispute but a disquisition with Dilke on various subjects; several things dove-tailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously – I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (Keats, 1817). *Ed*.]

7 September 1968 (*continued*)

Thinking

The main premise of this book is that thoughts exist and that thinking is a function which has been and is being developed in order to deal with the thoughts. Stated thus, the view is contrary to the usual presumption that thoughts are a result or by-product of thinking. I am not educing evidence in support of his hypothesis which appears here as one of the premises in a deductive system and must therefore be treated as part of the apparatus of investigation, to be justified or condemned according to its usefulness as such.

A thought is an emotional experience which may be independent of any recognizable physical sensory stimulation. Should a man be threatened by another with physical violence, it is supposed that he would have an emotional experience and would be able to feel that he could see why he was afraid or angry or whatever he did in fact feel. (But) there is a class of patient who has an emotional experience and cannot see why he has it because the emotional experience cannot be related to an episode such as I have just imagined, and cannot be related to any other because he is incapable of recognizing that quality in thoughts which makes them capable of arousing feelings, or indeed of recognizing the existence of thoughts themselves.

It is exactly this phenomenon that such a patient cannot recognize that I describe as an emotional experience independent of any recognizable physical sensory stimulation. I do not wish to deny the existence of thoughts (which are) dependent on, or at least associated with, a recognizable physical sensory stimulation, but to emphasize that they need not so depend.

September (undated)

A theory of functions

Introduction – Concerned with the application of psycho-pathological theories in the consulting room. One very important part is incidental to main theme of paper.

The common everyday locution, 'How like so and so' or 'Churchillian' – meaning a *function* of the personality. Various *factors* combined to produce the characteristic.

From this I propose to abstract 'Functions' and 'Factors'. As an example of a function I propose to take the relationship the patient established with the analyst. This I shall abstract by using the term 'Link' as a name for it. I shall consider that three links only exist: Love, Hate and Knowing – meaning by the last term something akin to 'getting to know'. These terms I shall at once replace by further abstractions: *L, H,* and *K.*

Plan

When it comes to use of abstraction, models, etc. . . . in the session itself, I must point out that students think they know too little. Though this is true, it obscures far more important points, namely:

1. That the student's analysis is not primarily to give information but to remove obstacles to his capacity for observation.
2. That he knows far too many psychoanalytic theories to be good for him.
3. That he should pick out the smallest possible number of fundamental theories which together will enable him to construct the maximum number of models, and from them the maximum number of interpretations. This is the fundamental importance of learning to make model-flexibility.

5 October 1968

Conscience used as lumps of β, which can be employed as missiles. The greedy devouring of a moral outlook (SE[1]) and turning it into lumps of β.

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[1][Abbreviation for superego. *Ed.*]

6 October 1968

The bad super-ego produced by disparagement of good parental discipline – "you *always* stop me doing what I want!" as an indignant comment made on an ordinary parental prohibition. This means that the good super-ego is chewed up into lumps of faeces – a kind of disparaged faecal super-ego is thus produced and chunks of it used as ammunition. Differs from the ordinary *neurotic* disparagement in that the latter is related to influencing parents and the former is omnipotent projective identification.

27 October 1968

The predominant feeling is one of fear, resentment, anger, obstinacy, laziness, 'can't be bothered', jealousy, envy, resentment, sulks, ungraciousness – Achilles sulking in his tent. But not being able to get out is peculiar to all ages: and unwelcome at all. All states have their unwelcome features. In all, then, one is a prey to envy.

3 November 1968

The positive and negative therapeutic reactions are in essence the same. They are therapeutic reactions intended to take attention away from psychoanalysis. Like the insistence on 'cure' as an objective for taking up analysis, they are objectives for continuing or stopping. They are 'covers', rationalizations – 'reason' operating in its role 'as a slave to' . . . what? The passions, or some unknown such as hatred or doubt?

When a small attendance at a meeting is deplored, it is explained that had the complainant been in charge how much better the result would have been; when he is one of the absentees, how good his reason for absence was. These are 'therapeutic' explanations; they heal

the traumata of decision, and decision is an essential of 'achievement' or the transformation of thought into action (thought as a substitute for, or a prelude to, action)

16 November 1968[1]

A. Introduction.

How the gap between theory and interpretation is to be bridged.

1.
B. Psychoanalytic theoretical equipment:
As few as possible, say 6 at most:
e.g. Oedipus
Transference
Infantile sexuality
Pleasure and Reality Principles
Paranoid schizoid and Depressive Positions
Projective Identification
C. Relationship between analyst and patient restricted to these categories –L, H, and K
D. Theory of practices
And Factors

2.
E. This paper is on K
F. Twofold approach – use this to investigate breakdown in K [α-F][2] and so throw light on normal K

3. Now I use these theories to investigate a breakdown in K. NB. I am NOT going into a detailed clinical description: I wish to use the material later in a full discussion of it from a psychoanalytic

[1][This outline appears to be for a revision of *Learning from Experience*, or for a talk based on that work. *Ed.*]

[2][Abbreviation for alpha-function in these notes. *Ed.*]

point of view: for the present I use it as a breakdown in K to illustrate normal K.

4. First I need to describe a number of mental activities such as attention, symbol formation and so on – I do not know what. They have already been copiously described, notably in 1. 'Two Principles of Mental Functioning' [1911b]. 2. Freud's view of consciousness as a sense organ for the perception of psychic qualities. 3. Klein on splitting and Projective Identification, and Paranoid Schizoid and Depressive Positions. 4. Symbol Formation by Segal and Rycroft and Klein. As I wish to investigate the function of the various mechanisms operating in consort, and as I do not know what other mechanisms may be involved, I propose, rather than allow myself to be held up, to make use of my theory of functions and call them all, known and unknown, factors in *α*-F.

5. (a) *α*-F works on

(i) sense impressive

(ii) feelings and emotions

to produce *α* elements

(b) *α* elements are

(i) storable

(ii) used in dream thoughts

(c) If *α*-F is disturbed, sense impressions and sense impressions of feelings and emotions remain unchanged

(d) *β*-elements

(i) Not useable in dreams

(ii) Only for projective identification

(iii) Ridding psyche of accretions of stimuli

N.B. Distinguish clinically between memories and undigested thoughts – *β*-elements.

6. A breakdown in K.

(a) If *α*-F does not operate, no dream thoughts, and patient cannot dream, *so* he cannot wake up and cannot sleep. This can be seen in the consulting room.

(b) To bring out my point I shall rewrite the folklore statement[1] that a man has a nightmare because he has indigestion and consequently wakes in a panic.

My version would be: the man has a panic, and because of breakdown in *α*-function he cannot have a nightmare. Consequently he has had mental indigestion ever since.

(c) Wider context of inability to sleep or wake.

Inability to make unconsciousness waking thinking possible. Therefore cannot learn from experience e.g. learning to walk.

(d) Cannot learn from experience of his own emotions – seriousness of this for psychoanalysis.

(e) Cannot keep bad things out, therefore no capacity for discrimination, and thinking (i.e. what you do with thoughts) is correspondingly impaired. Cannot contact with reality and cannot be unaware of a single sensory stimulus.

(f) Instead of being awake, patient can only achieve mania. Instead of being asleep, stupor. In-between these two: agitated melancholia, persecutory mania, melancholia and depressive stupor.

7. The use of *α*-screen, = contact barrier: to preserve reality-contact from being overwhelmed by phantasies *AND* phantasies from being overwhelmed by reality sense.
8. The *α*-screen to protect 'conscious' views from being overwhelmed by 'unconscious' and vice versa. *α*-F is converting the *emotional* experiences.
9. Thoughts. Freud on thinking ('Two Principles')

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[1][It is close to the 'folklore statement' that Bion wrote in *Learning from Experience* (1962, Chapters 3 and 4): "As alpha-function makes the sense impressions of the emotional experience available for conscious and dream-thought, the patient who cannot dream cannot go to sleep and cannot wake up. Hence the peculiar condition seen clinically when the psychotic patient behaves as if he were in precisely this state" (Volume IV, p. 275). "The emotional experience must now be considered generally and not only as it occurs in sleep. I shall emphasize what I have said so far by re-writing a popular theory of the nightmare. It used once to be said that a man had a nightmare because he had indigestion and that is why he woke up in a panic. My version is: The sleeping patient is panicked; because he cannot have a nightmare he cannot wake up or go to sleep; he has had mental indigestion ever since." Volume IV, p. 276). *Ed*.]

'Thoughts are a nuisance'

Thoughts logically and epistemologically, prior to thinking.

10. Importance of Reverie.

    Importance for analyst because he thus manufactures 'Thoughts'.

11. What is to be done with the 'thoughts' once they have been manufactured?

    (a) L, H, W, K Choose function

    Elucidate 'factors'

    It sets the 'key' – the 'value'.

    (b) The Selected Fact and Poincaré's *Science and Method,* p. 30.

    (c) The formula.

12. Danger of Abstraction.

    Becomes an 'ingenious manipulation of meaning of symbols'.

    This modified by reference to the background.

13. Freud's reflex apparatus.

14. The Model.

    Restores concreteness.

15. Danger of Models and need for constant vigilance, e.g. latent model or metaphor in 'Link'.

16. Need, therefore, to be abstract (see 12 above) and Scientific Deductive Systems.

17. Anthology of Theories [see after 19. Conclusion].

18. Model compared with theory (T, Tn where $n < 6$) to produce the Interpretation.

19. Conclusion.

    (a) Advantages of theory of functions

    (b) Advantages of Models – avoids over-abstraction

    – avoids over-production of theories

    (c) Advantages of Anthology – shows analyst's armoury

    (d) Advantages of Abstract Notation – shows diagnosis

    – shows deterioration in analyst's technique.

[Undated – probably 17 November 1968]

Anthology of theories

(a) Why limit the number? Because a psychoanalyst, engaged in observation (which he should be) limits his field for other activities. Similarly and conversely, if he concentrates on Theory, he limits his field for observation. He can hope to lay hands on the right one, or one near enough to make no difference if the number and quality of theories available are adequate, without having his attention distracted from what is going on.

(b) The number: if they are too few, say only one, the Oedipus – too much time is taken, or would be taken in the session in reaching that point in the deductive hierarchy where the hypothesis could be seen to represent the model or realization – that is to say the point at which the theory becomes sufficiently particularized for its relevance to the realization to be clear.

(c) If on the other hand they are too many, then too much attention is diverted to hunting through a mass of hypotheses which are so particularized that they have to be generalized before their applicability and relevance can be seen. And in the meantime precious opportunities for observation are being missed. T, to . . . Tn, where n = any number >0 and <6, depending on person.

(d) Quality: means that which makes the theory capable of change and development and logical expansion. It must then be capable of (i) standing up to logical analysis and, more importantly, (ii) susceptible to revision and therefore supercession, and (iii) expansion by deductive logic. They must be sufficiently high in the hierarchy of theories to cover a wide area; that is to say, to provide a premise for a large number of hypotheses – when taken in conjunction with others of the basic theories selected.

(e) The selection and formation of the personal handbook of theories is in itself a valuable exercise and enables the analyst to stand back from himself and see where he stands at any point in the space identified by two coordinate axes, one the man's body of

psychoanalytic thought, and second the line of his own changing outlook. He can do this by using his personal handbook for notes.

(f) In note-taking, the handbook makes it possible to use a private notation so that a session can be rapidly recorded; e.g. (T_1 + α-F. + L) or (T_1 + T_3). Scrutiny of this record could yield three alternative illuminations (f, g, h).

(g) Information indicating what psychoanalytic theories were returning their value for him and which ones were being discarded. This clearly is a record of the axis provided by the main body of analytic thought.

(h) Information indicating some change in the analyst's armoury and therefore in himself, either + or – .

(i) Diagnostic. The pattern of such formal notation could in time offer help for analyst to elaborate, after scrutiny of recurrent items in his notation, a system of diagnostic classification. It would in any case be evidence of the kind of practice the analyst was accumulating.

(j) Such a handbook, if the analyst liked to bequeath it to the society, might be an invaluable aid to understanding the history of the development of psychoanalytic thought and practice.

29 November 1968

How impossible it is to be satisfied of reasonable efficiency of psychoanalytic work. Is this not an example of 'validation' as an expression of psychoanalytic desire? Why not just get on with one's job and put up with the consequences?

The consequences, with X, may be very serious.

The importance of sense came clear to me again. 'I am going home' is not the same as 'I am $\overrightarrow{\text{going}}$ home' or 'I am $\overleftarrow{\text{going}}$ home'; or 'I $\overleftarrow{\text{am}}$ going' as 'I $\overrightarrow{\text{am}}$ going'.

7 December 1968

The divorce is centrifugal: Divergence

Marriage is

Centripetal: Convergence

This suggests a dynamic pulsation – expansion: contraction.

The paranoid–schizoid and depressive positions are related to a part of the domain of thought, that part of it in which there exist thinkers corresponding to the thoughts awaiting someone or something to think them. The thinkers might be likened to objects sensitive to contain wave lengths of thought, as the eye or radio-telescope is sensitive to a particular range of electromagnetic waves. Such thinkers can be impinged upon by thoughts which are too powerful in relation to the sensitivity of the receiving apparatus. Or they may be unmatched by a reciprocating thinker.

The human being may not, despite similarities to other human beings, have an apparatus adequate to thinking the thoughts, through over- or under-sensitivity. The human becomes aware of these thoughts usually through the medium of what is ordinarily known to him as religious awe and is variously expressed as incarnation, evolution of godhead, platonic forms, Krishna, mystic experience, inspiration and the like. Thus the source of emission of the received or evolved thoughts is felt as external, God-given, derived from a particular person, or occasion, phrase, book, painting, awareness of a constant conjunction. The fate of the thought and the thinker is to follow one of the paths I have already indicated as peculiar to ♂, or some variation. In some circumstances the impact is incandescent, growth-producing, and then the individual thinker becomes an emitter or intermittent. And a chain reaction is set up, as I have already discussed it, in terms of the messianic thought, mystic etc. . . . The problem is whether one is to regard this model ♀♂ as a model for a configuration which underlines certain groups of particular instances, or is it simply a way of regarding meaningless, incoherent, unrelated phenomena and making them appear to have coherence and

a meaningful pattern.[1] Does it in fact matter which it is? Do facts arrange themselves in this pattern, or is it a peculiarity in the individual that he finds it necessary to discern this or similar patterns in the facts he observes?

The craving for validation may then be a wish to localize the emitter in God, universe, person, conscious and unconscious by instruments which are micro- or macro-scopic and which appear to confer authoritatively the Guardian of truth.

2 January 1969

Reason starts primitively as the slave to the passions, and is then sophisticated so that it can be used for some very different purpose. Do maths likewise start primitively as slaves to the passions – possessiveness for example – and then become sophisticated for use in a quite different realm? Same with the idea of the father: a primitive god – rationalized, sophisticated and then used in the realm of reason? [see Paton, *Categorical Imperative* , pp. 188–196]. Mathematical statements seem to me (5 + 2 = 7) to be related to a belief that the mind cannot think otherwise until it is proved that it can. The moral judgements may be based on sensuous experience. Good = pleasurable. Evil = painful. Conversely, painful = morally evil. pleasurable = morally good. Then undergo sophistication. Why? To make them more generally applicable – to find the underlying group of which the several instances are only particular examples.

4 January 1969

Knowing Mrs Klein, I am unwilling to suppose she had not sufficient supporting evidence for the robin interpretation.[2] On the other hand,

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[1][Later elaborated by Britton and Steiner (1994) in their distinction between Selected Facts and Overvalued Ideas. *Ed.*]

[2][Klein (1961), *Narrative of a Child Analysis. Ed.*]

it is impossible to be satisfied with the formulation of evidence as she formulates it. She says, 'when the robin has stood for his genital'. This is now an established fact, and in her mind I am sure it is so. As Kant says (*Critique*, B7, p. 46), we should assure ourselves of the foundations on which any structure is built. How?

As futile as finding the cause? The criminal? The mystic? The messianic idea? The 'curse'? How do ideas spread? Parasitism? Symbiosis? Communalism? Violence-murder and robbery? Cross infection – the violent container is destroyed by the contained object?

The central point about psychoanalysis, in this context, is its demonstration of the difficulty of tracing the history of any idea, especially if ownership is thought to be important. The judgement of Solomon is based on the idea that the owner is the one who is prepared to pay, or does pay, the cost of suffering of being responsible for the idea. There does not appear to be anything sacrosanct about the idea or about 'responsibility' for it. 'Idea' seems to be a term representing a realization in itself.

8 January 1969

Cannot quite recapture the analogy between line and plane, contained and container. It is clear that ♀♂ can be used for concealment; similarly then, a plane can cover something, or that the line could penetrate something.

13 January 1969

Just read Huxley's introduction[1] to Haydon's Autobiography. Felt the criticism might be made of myself and with it the immediate

[1][Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786–1846). Huxley insisted that Haydon's true talent lay as a romantic novelist but had wasted his creative energy on painting: "a born writer who wasted his life making absurd pictures when he might have been making excellent books" (Huxley, 1926). *Ed.*]

denial – indeed a refutation that could be said to forestall the criticism it is so immediate – of the criticism. How impossible self-criticism is, no matter what anyone may say to the contrary. The only reassurance I can get is – for what it is worth – the feeling that I like devoting myself to psychoanalysis. Haydon apparently had capacity. It is not over-criticism from which one suffers but lack of criticism, lack of quality in criticism.

23 January 1969

Notes almost as unsatisfactory as ever, and yet they have an occasional use. The visual image, as befits a locution with a sensuous origin, is most effective . . .

28 January 1969

I feel a deep lethargy, that I cannot see my way – and when I cannot see my way I feel no disposition to act as if I could, nor in a way that would give substance to a reassuring phantasy that I could. I *do not know*, nor does anybody else. It is absurdly simple really – unless one wants to complicate it. When there is nothing to do – don't do it!

4 April 1969

Every so often I am impelled to abandon a train of thought, or the impulse to think, and wander off on some trivial diversion, distraction, if one could say that it was some external stimulus. One is not *drawn* off – it is not '–traction'. *Pushed* off, *driven* off, would be nearer to it; it is almost topological. It is not from an

intellectual area; the Greek Phrenus, or mid-riff, would come closer. Does 'diaphragm' pictorialize a division between conscious and unconscious?: below and above the line. The division could also be made between male and female. Female = sub-diaphragmatic, intuitive, emotional, visceral; Male = Thoracic, intellectual. The fundamental difficulty seems to be in the gap between O and public representation. 'Cat' does not look like a cat as a hieroglyphic can. Or even a Chinese character, however fanciful the supposed resemblance.

5 April 1969

This seems to be a schizoid, already established, view of an already established alphabet which is then transformed into a depressive (whole object) view. Words can be seen and read as a whole, but it is difficult to believe that they are formed like that. The subject is itself a formless void:[1] maybe it will evolve in visual images, in noises, perhaps musical patterns; muscular patterns – dance movements; Balinesque eye-dance patterns, tongue-stammer movements; mental detritus from which dreams are made, when awake. Perhaps 'being awake' is made out of the mental detritus, is simply the state out of which it is possible to rationalize and say, 'I had a dream'.

Certain pairs which appear to represent conflicting elements can be formulated: Love and Hate, conscious and unconscious, emotion and intellectual ability. Whether this pairing is significant of more than an underlying sense of conflict, I doubt; it is convenient to ignore all significance other than its signification of conflict. Emotions appear to have the power to suppress thought and vice versa. The experience appears to be painful, unsuccessful, 'remembered' and

[1][Milton, 'Light', Line 12: ". . . Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal stream, / Whose Fountain who shall tell? before the Sun, / Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice / Of God, as with a Mantle didst invest / The rising world of waters dark and deep, / Won from the void and formless infinite". *Ed.*]

'forgotten' – what Freud described as a repressed memory. It is only one example of the painfulness of mental life. It seems to be painful itself owing to its function of linking pain with awareness of pain, and to be painful by virtue of its defective, inadequate operation in almost every (except the rarest) of its instances.

It can be a substitute for action, a prelude to action, and instrument for obliterating awareness of past action.

Instantaneous avoidance of sensuous pain provides a model for an ideal. Freud pointed out the advantages flowing from the development of thinking as an aspect of the onset of the reality principle, but the cost of prevision . . .

6 April 1969

If avoidance of pain was an adequate response, there would be nothing further. As always, there is 'something further' even when the solution is adequate. Greed must contribute to the course of 'something further'. Probably it is a part of mental pain. Mental pain presents a problem because, unlike sensuous pain, it cannot be satisfactorily located. The intensity is not always in proportion to its significance in accordance with a known vertex.

10 April 1969

Preoccupation with raising fees (patients), failure to dose and failure to do so and failure to charge for missed visits by going on holiday out of my term. Fear of open admission of craving for money, anxiety to have it without accepting responsibility, or laying one's self open to the accusation of being mean and greedy; and in short, wanting money but not the price one has to pay for it. I do not want to pay the price. I would like to make plenty, have a

reputation for being 'unworldly', generous, altruistic, unlike 'other men', and ascetic.

Francesca says she gets pleasure, a sense of well-being, from abstention. I think she is quite right, mentally and physically: I strive and perpetually fail to do what she succeeds in doing. I resent the failure; the exposure of the greed. I rely on her indulgence and indeed claim it as a kind of right – as if I were entitled to nurse a grievance because her sense of reality and my own could not possibly exclude awareness of the truth. Hence the cheat: all the advantages of an intimate life without the cost.

11 April 1969

For what can the Grid be used beside communications? The use to which it is being put sounds useful as a start. It is necessary to have 'definition' for one: perhaps 'binding' would be a better term to apply; it needs definition itself.

'Definitory hypothesis' is another tem (col. 1).

Related to the above is the act of exclusion. One narrow restriction of the elements conjoined, or deemed to be conjoined, can be to restrict the field to 'manageable' proportions in keeping with needs of subject and objective: equally it may be related to the need to preserve the observer from emotional upheaval. The latter 'use' relates to ψ turbulence. In fact col. 1. definitory hypothesis, binding etc. . . . involves ex- and inclusion. Apparently, but actually?

Related to the above is the problem of 'evolution'. If the constant conjunction is part of 'evolution', the question of inclusion and exclusion does not arise. It happens. Inclusion and Exclusion are part of the investigatory activity (col. 3? col. 4? What?) . Hitherto it has been a col. 2, restricted to restriction. And to a relatively sophisticated activity – classification itself being sophisticated.

17 May 1969

The problem was the psychotic transference from line to plane, and both to container.

Penetration, depth, confusion = *line*. Breadth, shallowness, sensitivity, indiscrimination = plane.

24 May 1969

In Euclidean geometry a model can be found in space which matches the Euclidean statement, or postulate, that two contradictory logical statements cannot be simultaneously true. This postulate – that logically incompatible statements cannot be simultaneously true [e.g. a thing cannot both *be* (exist) and *not be* (exist)] – cannot be matched by any model in the domain of the mind.

The statement: 'two logically incompatible statements are simultaneously true' *can* be matched in the domain of psychosis (or non-logic).

28 June 1969

I think X cannot afford analysis because of the appalling cost of the truth. It is certainly a price from which I shrink. Or, I shrink from the appalling cost of speaking the truth, the effort required and the courage. The last point, the courage, never ceases to surprise me. On the surface, nothing would seem to be simpler. In fact even when one thinks one knows the truth, I do not speak it. Colman[1] said Davis was the only Welshman he knew who spoke the truth spontaneously as

[1][A schoolmaster at Bishop's Stortford College. *Ed.*]

if he did not have to consider carefully whether it would not be wise to lie. How can one form an opinion about other people?

24 August 1969

Amherst (Group conference)

Started the day feeling sick and tired of being regarded as the trouble-maker, and particularly disgusted at being attacked on these grounds by S. The sting, as usual, being related to feeling that it was impossible by action or in any other way to refute such an action, or defend oneself against such an accusation – Northfield, Tavistock, Presidency. Guilt both at craving privileges and knowing one does want to pay the price of being dominant either by being the liability *or* being the asset.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Days of Our Years

Francesca Bion

'The Days of Our Years' was an address given by Francesca Bion in April 1994 in Toronto and Montreal, Canada. It was first published in The Journal of Melanie Klein and Object Relations, 13*, No.1, 1995*.

Before studying the work of original thinkers in the field of human behaviour and the human mind, it is surely valuable to know what influences and experiences contributed to their personalities, especially as seen through their own eyes. We are fortunate to have a record of Bion's own impressions of his first fifty years in *The Long Week-End* and *All My Sins Remembered*. Less fortunately, we are left with an impression of unrelieved gloom and of his dislike of himself. I tried, therefore, to present a more balanced view by publishing a selection of his letters to the family written during the following thirty years, giving it the title, *The Other Side of Genius* For those who have not read those books, a brief biographical outline may be the best way of setting the scene.

Wilfred Bion was born in 1897 in Muttra in the United Provinces of Northwest India where his father was an irrigation engineer. He had one sister, three years his junior. At the age of eight he was sent to school in England, never to return to the India he loved. His years in the prep school were unhappy ones. To a child of eight it must have seemed as though some incomprehensible and disastrous turn of events had deprived him of parents, home and sunshine, and had dumped him in an alien land inhabited by nasty little boys and cursed with an even nastier climate. It was more than three years before he saw his mother again – and then, momentarily, did

not recognize her. By the time he entered the senior school, he had adapted well, joined the "enemy" and enjoyed the next five years. He always said that what saved him was his large size, physical strength and athletic ability.

He left school in 1915, just before his eighteenth birthday, and joined the Royal Tank Regiment in 1916. He was posted to France where he was on active service until the end of the war. He was awarded the DSO (Distinguished Service Order), the *Légion d'Honneur* (Chevalier) and was mentioned in dispatches. The chapter on the Battle of Cambrai in November 1917 in *The History of the Royal Tank Regiment*, includes the following:

> Some of the tankmen fought on when 'dismounted'. A striking example was that of Lt. W. R. Bion who, when his tank was knocked out, established an advanced post in a German trench with his crew and some stray infantry, and then climbed back on the roof of his tank with a Lewis gun to get better aim at an opposing machine-gun. When the Germans counter-attacked in strength he kept them at bay until his ammunition ran out and then continued to fight with the use of an abandoned German machine-gun, until a company of Seaforths came up. Its commander was soon shot through the head, whereupon Bion temporarily took over the company. He was put in for the VC (Victoria Cross) and received the DSO. [Liddell Hart, 1959, p. 143, fn. 2]

After demobilization at the end of 1918, he went up to Oxford to read History at The Queen's College. Compared with undergraduates entering university from school, he and others were "old" war veterans and must have been in disturbed states of mind.

Nevertheless, his years there remained a cherished memory all his life, not least because he was a first-class athlete (playing rugger with the Oxford Harlequins and captaining the water polo team). He also remembered with gratitude conversations with Paton, the philosopher, and regretted not having studied philosophy.

On leaving Oxford, having disappointed his tutors by not achieving a First Class Honours degree – due, they said, to the strain of recent fighting – he tried school-mastering at his old school for two years, and then embarked on medical studies at University College Hospital in London, already knowing that he was primarily interested in a strange, new subject called "psychoanalysis". He said he

wisely avoided disclosing this at his initial interview; he mentioned, instead, his athletic successes at Oxford and, lo and behold! he was offered a place.

As with his time at Oxford, the memories of these years from 1924 to 1930 were vivid and enduring. He was especially impressed by, and admired, Wilfred Trotter, who was not only an outstanding brain surgeon, but also wrote *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*. This was to prove an important influence on Bion's interest in, and nascent theories about, group behaviour. It was first published in 1916 when the horrors of the First World War had already exposed the crass stupidity of leaders of nations and armies alike.

Bion had no copy of the book; it may have been among those he lost during air raids over London in the early 1930s, and by the 1950s it was out of print. So I had not been able to read it until a few years ago, when by, by chance, I came across a copy for 20p in an antiquarian bookshop in Oxford – a happy example of serendipity.

Trotter makes observations which remind one strongly of Bion's later views. He speaks of man's "resistiveness to new ideas, his submission to tradition and precedent"; of "governing power tending to pass into the hands of a class of members insensitive to experience, closed to the entry of new ideas and obsessed with the satisfactoriness of things as they are"; of "our willingness to take any risk other than endure the horrid pains of thought". Of the war, then in its second year, he wrote, "Western civilization has recently lost ten millions of its best lives as a result of the exclusion of the intellect from the general direction of society . . . so terrific an object lesson has made it plain how easy it is for man . . . to sink to the irresponsible destructiveness of the monkey". And twenty years later, "man" was at it again.

After obtaining his medical qualification, Bion spent seven years in psychotherapeutic training at the Tavistock Clinic, an experience he regarded, in retrospect, as having been of very doubtful benefit. In 1938 he began a training analysis with John Rickman, but this was brought to an end by the Second World War.

He joined the RAMC in 1940 and worked in a number of military hospitals, trying to introduce new methods for the treatment of psychiatric casualties. (This period is covered in detail in Eric Trist's valuable contribution, "Working with Bion in the 1940s: The Group

Decade", included in Malcolm Pines's book, *Bion and Group Psychotherapy*.)

The Northfield Experiment, ill-fated and short-lived, was one of the earliest group therapy projects. He was also Senior Psychiatrist to the WOSBs (War Office Selection Boards) set up to select officers capable of leadership, using the way candidates dealt with the tension arising in working groups to judge their suitability. What he learnt from these wartime experiences formed the foundation of his group work at the Tavistock in the years immediately after the war, culminating in his papers published between 1948 and 1951 in the Journal, *Human Relations*.

Early in the war he married the actress, Betty Jardine, who tragically died when their daughter was born in 1945. So at the end of the war he was left grieving, with a baby to care for, very little money and no immediate regular income to depend on. He returned to the Tavistock Clinic, having written very little up to that time (a paper entitled, 'The War of Nerves', in a collection called, *The Neuroses in War*, published in 1940, and 'Intra-group Tensions in Therapy', based on the Northfield Experiment, published in 1943), but in the next five years he had the opportunity to exercise his exceptional abilities: he worked with many different kinds of groups, took a major part in the whole re-organization of the Clinic, chaired the Planning Committee and the Executive Committee, entered into analysis with Melanie Klein, and set up in private analytic practice in Harley Street. He was also Chairman of the Medical Section of the British Psychological Society to whom he delivered a paper, "Psychiatry at a Time of Crisis", in 1948. In 1950 he gave his membership paper to the British Psychoanalytical Society, "The Imaginary Twin".

So, when we met at the Tavistock in 1951, he had already written his last group paper and had a full-time analytic practice. It was mid-March, and we were married in early June. This sounds rather like rushing from impulse to action without any intervening thought: be that as it may, the partnership endured.

It was not long before I was asked to persuade Bion to agree to the publication of the group papers in book form. But, as he explained in the Introduction, he was "reluctant to do this without changes embodying later experience". The inclusion of the 1952 paper, "Group Dynamics: A Re-view" [see Volume IV, p. 207], went some way towards achieving this.

Due to his absorption in psychoanalysis, the writing of seven papers between 1952 and 1957, and his habitual lack of interest in past work as he always preferred to concentrate on the present – *Experiences in Groups* was not published until 1961. It proved to be his most successful book in terms of copies sold. Its success surprised him, especially as he was used to being told by reluctant publishers in the 1960s that his books sold, "very, very slowly". The demand for it continues thirty years after its publication and forty years since the original papers were written. I have lost count of how many foreign editions there now are; I do know that from an aesthetic point of view the Japanese is the most beautiful one to look at.

Melanie Klein was not sympathetic towards his group work: in her opinion it was at odds with analytic work. She was suspicious of some of his psychoanalytic theories, although she did ultimately acknowledge their validity. Bion, on the other hand, did not regard group work as totally divorced from that of analysis. He wrote, in the Introduction to *Experiences in Groups*:

> I am impressed, as a practising psychoanalyst, by the fact that the psychoanalytic approach, through the individual, and the approach these papers describe, through the group, are dealing with different facets of the same phenomena. The two methods provide the practitioner with a rudimentary binocular vision. [Volume IV, p. 101]

He was convinced:

> . . . of the central importance of the Kleinian theories of projective identification and the interplay between the paranoid–schizoid and depressive positions. Without the aid of these two sets of theories I doubt the possibility of any advance in the study of group phenomena.[Volume IV, p. 102]

Some of what he says in that Introduction was prompted by the frequent question, "Why did you give up group work?" He was already engrossed in the practice of analysis while taking groups but ultimately realized that, for him at any rate, to practice both methods in parallel, so to speak, would not be beneficial to the group, the individual or the analyst.

In the light of his increasing experience and changing views in his practice of analysis, the papers of the 1950s were published in 1967 as *Second Thoughts,* with his commentary, a critique, to

accompany them. His continuing work with psychotics formed the foundation of the four books of the 1960s – *Learning from Experience*, *Elements of Psychoanalysis*, *Transformations*, *and Attention and Interpretation*. The formidable difficulties involved in the analysis of such patients is clearly revealed in his occasional writings both before, during and after the production of those books: they show in detail the evolution of his ideas and theories. They were published in 1991 under the title, *Cogitations*, the name Bion gave them. They clarify many of the obscurities in the books; in my opinion he pruned away too much of the enormous amount of preparatory work that went into the final product, leaving extremely concentrated *faits accomplis,* and earning for himself the reputation of being, at best, difficult to understand, and at worst, incomprehensible and crazy. André Green wrote in a detailed and valuable review of *Cogitations*: "Compared with Bion's published works, the Cogitations are thrilling to read and often less difficult to assimilate, because the author's formulations are less condensed and because he makes us witnesses to the process of the unfolding of his thought. We literally *follow* him" [see Volume XI, p. 353].

He often talked to me about his feelings of being totally in the dark, unable to make any headway towards fathoming a patient's behaviour. There were infrequent occasions when he felt he had a glimpse of understanding, only to fall back almost immediately into doubts about the possibility of any effective treatment. He would say, "I'm in the wrong job", or, "It's beyond me", or, "I can't make head or tail of it." He would sometimes emerge from his study, where he had been deep in thought, struggling with these seemingly intractable problems, looking pale and what I can only describe as "absented". It was alarming until I realized that he had been digging so deep into the nature of the psychotic mind that he had become "at-one" with the patient's experience. Very rarely, he was elated by a sudden flash of understanding; I remember him exclaiming, "I must be a bloody genius." But he would soon after decide that it had been a "blinding flash of the obvious".

As an administrator he was an outstanding influence: he could pinpoint the crux of a problem and keep discussion "on track" in committee. With his acute mental vision and unerring instinct he never allowed the trees to obscure his sight of the wood. Time wasting was anathema to him: his heart would sink if, having completed

a meeting's agenda, someone said, "I would just like to raise the question of . . ."

Arriving back late, he would exclaim to me, "Have they no homes to go to!"

He never sought positions of responsibility – they were thrust upon him: Director of the London Clinic of Psychoanalysis from 1956 to 1962; President of the British Psychoanalytical Society from 1962 to 1965; Chairman of the Publications Committee and the Melanie Klein Trust; and member of the Training Committee from 1966 to 1968. In spite of his deep dislike of evening meetings – two or three a week at the end of an already very long day's work – he accepted these positions as his contribution as a senior member of the Society.

Looking back, it surprises me that in the midst of so much work and so many commitments, we had any time for a private life. However, week-ends were sacrosanct times for relaxing with the family, conversation, listening to music (our tastes were catholic but favourites were Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Britten and Stravinsky), reading, contemplating and writing. He once said, "I want to be a psychoanalyst. But I do not want that experience to make it impossible for me to have a life worth living where I could never go to the theatre or a picture gallery or paint or swim."

The children looked forward to his reading to them at bedtime; he was their friend, talked to them as equals, was gentle and even-tempered. I do not recall ever hearing him raise his voice in anger, but angry he certainly could be – the look in his eyes and a cutting remark were signs of stormy weather. He derived intense pleasure from the children's successes, but never made them feel diminished by their failures, which he regarded philosophically as a normal part of life. He restrained his natural anxieties to allow them to go their own ways, although he was always ready to offer advice, based on his own experience, which was usually given in a light-hearted, amusing way. Parthenope recalls the following episode:[1]

> I was about to leave, at the ripe age of eighteen, for a long period of study in Italy. The day before I left, my father called me into his study, saying that he wanted to speak to me. I entered the room;

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[1]From a series of interviews with Dr Silvio Merciai, held during the preparations for the International Centennial Conference on the work of W. R. Bion, held in Turin in July 1997.

> silence – he was writing and perhaps had not noticed my presence. After a while, and without feeling at all enthusiastic about the matter, since I expected some sort of rather oppressive "good advice", I said, "I'm here."
>
> "Oh yes, I just want to say two things to you before you leave. First of all, remember to go and see the contemporary paintings in Palazzo Pitti too" (as much as to say, don't think that Italy and Italian culture are things of the past; they are alive and developing), "and then this is for you when you get lost." "This" was a map of Europe and Asia Minor.

Remembering his own medical school interview, he advised Julian, "Be sure not to mention any interest in psychoanalysis." Julian has said of him (during an interview for a 1990 article about the Northfield Experiment and the subsequent treatment of mental distress during the Second World War): "It was evident to me from an early age that my father was a man of tremendous courage and immense compassion. Because of his degree of self-control this was not always immediately apparent."

When Nicola told him that she had gained a place at Cambridge University, he said, "Well done." He paused, and then, with a mischievous smile, added. "Pity – wrong university."

I knew him as a man of strong emotions who evoked equally strong feelings in others. He was deeply moved by beauty in all its forms. He had a wry sense of humour and an appreciation of the ridiculous; there are many stories told of his droll remarks (some of them apocryphal) that were impossible to anticipate and always took one by surprise. When all is said and done, his published letters illustrate his unique qualities more strikingly than any number of anecdotes ever could.

During the 1960s we spent holidays in Norfolk, where we had a cottage on the North coast. Bion infected the children with a love of that area known to him since boyhood and which he had visited often during the 1920s and 1930s. The bracing climate and austere landscape were very much in tune with his temperament. We all remember vividly the fascinating country walks, the endless supply of beautiful churches to explore, ice-cold swims, lark song, primrose picking – and he made it all precious with his deep fund of knowledge and reminiscences. He particularly enjoyed painting there; its

clear air and wide skies make it a painter's paradise – provided you can prevent the easel from being blown away by the constant wind.

Books and book collecting played a prominent part in our lives; conversation at mealtimes usually led to a gradually increasing number of reference books between the plates. He always declared that he felt guilty about spending a great deal of money on books, which, he complained, only turn into millstones whenever they have to be moved. Most of ours are much travelled: six thousand miles to Los Angeles, and another six thousand back – there were, inevitably, many more on the return journey.

Our peripatetic years began in 1967, when Bion was invited to work for two weeks in Los Angeles where a few analysts were interested in the theories of Melanie Klein and hoped to persuade a Kleinian-trained analyst to move to California to work with them.

Our decision to uproot ourselves in January 1968 was not an easy one; we had doubts and fears about the wisdom of such a major upheaval and worried about leaving the family. But on the plus side it offered Bion the possibility of freedom to work in his own unorthodox way, a freedom he felt he did not have within the Klein group. He had for a long time experienced a sense of being, as he expressed it, "hedged in".

Many of the British psychoanalytic community were shocked and baffled; as well as genuine regret at losing him, the reactions ranged from surprise to the assumption that it was his way of going into retirement, to incomprehension, to disapproval and to dire warnings of culture shock and imminent racial bloodbaths in a land of drug addiction and weird cults. The dangers to be faced turned out to be of a somewhat different kind from those visualized by the prophets in London: the likelihood of being sued by paranoid patients; of being prevented from practising by the authorities on the grounds of lack of American medical qualifications; of not having a leg to stand on in a court of law as a "resident alien"; of actively hostile neighbours; even the possibility of making an adequate income was in doubt for a time. These were the serpents in that Garden of Eden where the sun shone, the flowers bloomed all year and the swimming pool beckoned.

Change the vertex again – as Bion might say – and I see many valuable, long-lasting friendships, generous hospitality, wonderful

art exhibitions, thrilling orchestral concerts and recitals at the Music Centre and UCLA. Our experiences were as diverse as the country itself and its inhabitants. I must pay tribute here to our many Californian friends for their help, support and invariably stimulating company. I miss them still.

The anxieties associated with the fundamental change in professional status and the loss of a sense of security (probably illusory even in one's own country but usually assumed to exist) added stresses to the already difficult job of psychoanalysis. But from what Bion told me and what I sensed, his work did not suffer; his courage and characteristic reaction to a challenge were beneficial stimulants.

A society fed on distortions of the truth, facts spiced with phantasy, lying by omission, the encouragement of false expectations, presents a rocky foundation for a structure based on truth, but psychoanalysis has to be practised in the real world, however adverse the circumstances.

In late 1971, when we had been in California for almost four years, Bion wrote in his *Cogitations*,

> The relationship between myself and my colleagues in Los Angeles could be accurately described as almost entirely unsuccessful. They are puzzled by, and cannot understand me – but have some respect even for what they cannot understand. There is, if I am not mistaken, more fear than understanding or sympathy for my thoughts, personality or ideas. There is no question of the situation the emotional situation – being any better anywhere else. [Volume XI, p. 321]

Nevertheless I am sure that California provided the environment, both emotional and physical, in which he could break free, develop further his individuality, think what he called "wild thoughts", give free rein to "imaginative conjectures" – there is always the chance that they may turn into realizations.

In the mid-1970s, the growing interest in so-called "Kleinian" analysis caused consternation in the 'traditional' American Psychoanalytic Society. Bion said, in a 1976 interview,

> . . . American psychoanalysts think that psychoanalysis will be undermined by sanctioning psychoanalysts who support the theories of Melanie Klein." He was reluctant to be drawn into this kind of controversy, regarding it as an irrelevant waste of time.

> He succeeded in preserving his independence by remaining an 'outsider'; he was not a member of any American psychoanalytic society, institute or group. [Volume X, p. 153]

His South American travels began in August 1968, when he was invited to work in Buenos Aires for two weeks. Unfortunately, I could not go with him, so my comments are based on what he told me in letters at the time and in conversations later. He enjoyed the experience immensely, and repeatedly said, "How I wish you had been there!" He formed a sympathetic relationship with the analytic society there, some of whom he had met previously in London. One particularly valuable result of the visit was the stimulus it provided for the writing, and publication in 1971, of *Introduction to the Work of Bion* by León Grinberg, Danío Sor and Elizabeth Tabak de Bianchedi. A new edition has recently been published with additional material on later works.[1]

His next working trip was in August 1969 to Amherst College in Massachusetts, for a Group Relations conference. This was the second and only other time he went without me: it was school vacation time, and I took the children on a tour of Oregon. His letters made clear that the usual group tensions and hostilities made themselves felt, no doubt exacerbated by the presence of the Great Guru Bion. As he wrote to me, "The continual 'Bion – Bion Bion' did ultimately make me a bit angry and impatient."

The next two years were a time of adjustment, of building up a practice, and of setting to work on 'The Dream', which became the first book of the trilogy, *A Memoir of the Future*. It was published in 1975, followed by *The Past Presented*, in 1977, and *The Dawn of Oblivion*, in 1979. The three were finally published in one volume in 1991, fulfilling a wish I had had for ten years. This exciting and disturbing "magnum opus" (it is certainly a hefty tome of almost seven hundred pages) is a fictionalized, dramatized presentation of a lifetime's experiences, filled with a crowd of characters; voicing the many facets of his own personality and thought, at the same time we recognize ourselves among the *dramatis personae*. Had he remained in England, he would certainly not have felt able to express himself in this frank and revelatory way. I saw the

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[1][Grinberg, Sor, & de Bianchedi (1993). *Ed.*]

change in him and the relief he felt in throwing off some life-long restraints. He wrote in the Epilogue:

> All my life I have been imprisoned, frustrated, dogged by common-sense, reason, memories, desires and – greatest bug-bear of all – understanding and being understood. This is an attempt to express my rebellion, to say 'Good-bye' to all that. It is my wish, I now realize doomed to failure, to write a book unspoiled by any tincture of common sense, reason, etc. (see above). So although I would write, 'Abandon Hope all ye who expect to find any facts, scientific, aesthetic or religious in this book', I cannot claim to have succeeded. All of these will, I fear, be seen to have left their traces, vestiges, ghosts hidden within these words; even sanity, like 'cheerfulness', will creep in. [Volume XIV, p. 138]

In 1972 Bion gave three talks to the psychoanalytical society in Rome. I hesitate to use the word, 'lecture', because he always spoke *ex tempore*, with no notes of any kind, declaring that he didn't know in advance what he was going to say. In this way he achieved an immediate contact, made all the more effective by his commanding presence and piercing eyes.

The invitation to visit São Paulo for two weeks in 1973 was prompted by Frank Philips, who had also left London in 1968 and is [in 1994] still working in São Paulo. Brazil, with its repressive military government at that time, widespread corruption and economic chaos, seemed unlikely soil in which psychoanalysis might flourish, but adverse circumstances can provide growth both in individuals and societies. It was an intriguing prospect. Bion had already met some of the Brazilian analysts in London during the 1950s and 1960s and had found them receptive to his ideas and to those of Melanie Klein. They are charming, affectionate, cultured people – a pleasure to know and to work with.

His visit aroused great interest, and the lectures attracted large audiences. Curiosity and unrealistic expectations were fuelled by absurd press coverage about "the most famous psychoanalyst in the world" (although this was no worse than a New Yorker's reference to him as 'the hottest thing in town'). It dismayed and amused him, but exposure to such journalistic exaggeration is one of the occupational hazards faced by those who, whether they like it or not, are elevated to a kind of messianic status. As he often remarked, it is akin to being "loaded with honours and sunk without a trace." Fortunately for

psychoanalysis, he succeeded in keeping both feet firmly planted in reality.

He took pleasure in the work and was stimulated by it. At the lectures I sensed a marked willingness and desire to grasp his ideas, and there was plenty of lively participation. For those unfamiliar with his style, expectations would probably have needed adjustment; those looking for cut-and-dried answers to their questions were disappointed. He agreed with Maurice Blanchot's statement that "*la réponse est le malheur de la question*". He said, "'answers' are really space-stoppers, a way of putting an end to curiosity, especially if you believe the answer is THE answer." On another occasion he explained,

> When I feel a pressure – I'd better get prepared in case you ask me some questions – I say, 'To hell with it. I'm not going to look up this stuff in Freud . . . or even in my past statement – I'll put up with it', but of course I am asking you to put up with it too. [Volume VIII, p. 230]

And again,

> If you are looking for answers to questions, you will not find them except through your own intuition and understanding.

Accordingly, his replies were aimed at clarifying the problem by approaching it by an indirect route; in due course it became clear that the apparently irrelevant answer had in fact illuminated the area of the question and beyond – like a circular tour, bringing the traveller back to the point of departure, but now seen with increased knowledge and experience gathered on the journey. As Bion might have put it, "back to a higher point on the helix".

The following year, 1974, he was asked to go to Rio de Janeiro for two weeks, followed by one week in São Paulo. He welcomed the opportunity, although he had some misgivings about the wisdom of going again so soon after the 1973 visit. His schedule was, as usual, a heavy one: five evening lectures each week, and seven or eight hours of seminars and supervisions daily. He was skilful in pacing himself – he regarded this as highly important in any job – he could carry a heavy load of work without any apparent falling-off in quality. He was also able, like Winston Churchill, to fall asleep for a few minutes and wake refreshed. In this age of rapid communication, the precedence accorded to speed – speed

tests, speed reading, snap decisions, 'quiz' contests aiming for answers in seconds or even instantaneously – leaves less and less opportunity for leisure, that is allowance to think or act without hurry. Bion used to quote from Ecclesiasticus (xxxviii, 24), "wisdom cometh to the learned man by opportunity for leisure". He asked, "Is the growth of our wisdom likely to keep pace with our intelligence? It is a matter of the greatest possible urgency that the human animal should discover what sort of animal he is before he has blown himself off the earth."

In 1975, Dr Virginia Bicudo asked us to spend a month in Brasilia. That year was the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the city; to mark the occasion, four meetings were held at the Bunti Palace to provide a panel of discussants (including Bion) with the chance to express their opinions, hopes and fears about this unique capital. Apart from these meetings and three evening talks at the University, clinical seminars and analytic sessions filled the four weeks, five days a week. In addition to analysts from Brazil, there were some from other parts of South America, who attended the seminars to take advantage of a month of concentrated work.

The fourth, and last, visit to Brazil was for two weeks in 1978. Here again, he worked in the same concentrated way: he held fifty clinical seminars, daily consultations, and ten evening meetings. Such a volume of work demonstrated his remarkable vigour and stamina at the age of eighty. There were many other working visits between 1976 and 1979: they included Topeka, London (four times), Rome (twice), Lyon, Paris, New York, and Washington.

During the 1970s I undertook the task of editing his work for publication – in addition to typing, proof-reading and corresponding with publishers, which I had already done for many years. It was obvious that he would never have the inclination to do the job, nor the time available if he was to continue with the all-absorbing occupation of creative thinking and writing. By that time I felt that I knew him and his way of working and expressing himself as well as anyone was likely to, and being present at all his talks made it easier to recall not only what he said (if recordings were of poor quality) but also how he said it. A tape recording tells you only a limited amount about a speaker: it presents an editor with the problem of how best to transfer the spoken word to the printed page, preserving

the individual style and spontaneity while at the same time producing smooth-flowing prose. The most difficult part of the whole job was persuading him to read the finished product; it would have been easier to get a child to take a dose of foul-tasting medicine. He expressed his feeling somewhat crudely but graphically: "I don't like examining my own vomit."

The books which grew out of the talks and seminars of the 1970s – *Brazilian Lectures*, *Bion in New York and São Paulo*, *Four Discussions* (held in Los Angeles) and *Clinical Seminars* (in Brasilia) reveal more about his convictions, his personality and his methods than any of the earlier writings; they are an invaluable extension of the theoretical books. They contain much that is applicable to whatever discipline you follow: there is no trace of jargon, and he manages to discuss complex matters in simple language that is nevertheless penetrating and filled with wisdom.

By 1978 we were seeing less and less of our family, owing to their work commitments: after lengthy discussions during that year, in early 1979 we decided to return to England but were unwilling to sever ties with California entirely. We sold our house and bought an apartment, hoping to divide our time between the Western world and Europe. Arriving in London on 1 September, Bion set to work (as usual), while I once more went house-hunting in the Oxford area. There were a few analysts in Oxford at that time, including Oliver Lyth, Isabel Menzies, Donald Meltzer and Matti Harris. Bion's arrival added a stimulus to the hope that the nucleus of a psychoanalytic group could be formed where none existed. Having found a suitable house, we moved in at the beginning of October, the container arrived from the docks, and unpacking began. I recall the hours we spent emptying cartons of books, a tedious job but one mixed with the pleasure of meeting 'old friends' again.

It has been suspected and believed that Bion wanted to return to England because he knew that he faced imminent death, but although it would have been natural for him to accept that at the age of eighty-two his days were numbered, taking steps to keep a foothold in California and agreeing to work with a group in Bombay in January 1980 were not the actions of a dying man – unless he is given to gross denial. Bion was, above all else, scrupulously honest with himself and others.

He became ill in the third week of October: myeloid leukaemia, diagnosed on 1 November, developed with extraordinary rapidity and, mercifully, quickly led to his death on 8 November.

* * *

I turn now to those aspects of his work that were of major concern to him and to which he returned time and time again in conversations with me. I do not want to appear to be preaching what I do not practise, so let me once make it clear that I base what I say on what I learnt during twenty-eight years as receptor and confidante, and also through subsequent reflection and experience during the fifteen years since his death. I have discovered that, as with a successful analysis, the close collaboration of a marriage makes it possible for learning and development to continue with increasing strength after its ending. An analyst's job is a lonely one: even communication with colleagues cannot take the place of contact with a close companion in whom to confide doubts, struggles, fears and even, occasionally, the feeling that a piece of work has been well done.

First and foremost he placed respect for the truth, without which effective analysis becomes impossible. It is the central aim and as essential for mental growth as food is for the body: "without it the mind dies of starvation".

Bion viewed the concept of truth in different ways: the usual, everyday meaning; the search for truth by those engaged in music, painting, sculpture, and so on; and the fear of knowing the truth "which can be so powerful that doses are lethal". And then there is the kind of Truth that is both elusive and unattainable. In his own personal search he constantly forged ahead through mental complexities with an intensity which was almost tangible, and as soon as he had overcome a "monster" he moved on as if driven by an irresistible force to the battle. Experience taught him the value of respect for the patient and for the unique knowledge that the patient has of him – or herself. No other information about the patient, from whatever source, is of such benefit. To quote him: "If the analyst is prepared to listen, have his eyes open, his ears open, his senses open, his intuition open, it has an effect upon the patient who seems to grow."

He advocated the use of speculative imagination or imaginative conjecture, without which the analyst will not be able to produce the conditions in which the germ of a scientific idea can nourish. At the

same time he should keep it disciplined and avoid being a prey to a state of rhapsody – that is, metaphorically drugged with optimism, pessimism or despair. In other words, be rid of memories and desires. These interfere with the analyst's ability to focus all attention on the "here and now"; they are illuminations that destroy the value of the analyst's capacity for observation, "as a leakage of light into a camera destroys the value of the film being exposed". Psychoanalytic observation is concerned neither with what has happened nor with what is going to happen, but with what happening. Every session must have no history and no future – the only point of importance in any session is the unknown.

It is hard to know why this recommendation – to all appearances one of obvious common sense – should have been adversely criticized and, one suspects, wilfully misunderstood. Bion knew that it is extremely difficult to achieve and can at first arouse fear and anxiety in the analyst, but he also knew from experience and perseverance that it make possible what he called "at-one-ment" with the patient. By divesting the mind of these temptations, "the noise made by learning, training and past experience is at a minimum". Those who have succeeded in putting this technique into practice have found it profoundly beneficial. I know that it was central to Bion's own analytic method.

He stressed the need for awareness of the *dangerous nature of the psychoanalytic experience*: it is a stormy, emotional situation for both people. The analyst, like an officer in battle, is supposed to be sane enough to be scared while at the same time remaining articulate and capable of translating what he is aware of into a comprehensible communication.

The development of his ideas associated with the impressive *caesura* of physical birth occupied him for a considerable time, leading to some intriguing suggestions about the effects of pre-natal on post-natal life – particularly, but not exclusively, that of the psychotic individual. Since he wrote his paper, 'Caesura', in 1975, there has been much research into the pre-natal behaviour and responses of the human foetus. Only two weeks ago I saw a film about experiments in foetal education leading, so the researcher claimed, to increased intelligence and maturation post-natally. In *The Dawn of Oblivion* there is a particularly apposite conversation between Somites, Soma, Psyche, Infancy, Childhood and Maturity.

Of the birth of an idea he said, "Each time somebody has a new idea, it at once becomes a barrier, something difficult to penetrate; instead of being liberating, it becomes imprisoning."

He well knew from personal experience that original thinkers face, first, the struggle to express new concepts, and then the opposition and hostility of those who are unwilling to suffer the turbulence involved in making a similar effort. In New York, in 1977, he said:

> Whether it is a group of people or an individual which is giving birth to an idea the pains which are associated with that experience are extremely upsetting and disturbing, and somebody will certainly try to put a stop to it; nobody likes pain. . . . I should be surprised . . . if the phagocytes do not collect and try to gobble up this new idea before it gets more troublesome, before it turns into a contagion or an infection. [Volume VIII, p. 299]

He regretted the difficulties and restraints imposed by the exclusive use of verbal communication in analysis. He was aware that, in order to compensate, the analyst should be acutely aware of the necessity of using all the senses to pick up messages, however faint and of whatever kind, from the patient. He envied the poets, painters, sculptors, composers of music, mathematicians, who can communicate in a way that is penetrating and endures. Nevertheless he was able to have a lasting effect on people through the way he expressed himself verbally, and also through some indefinable non-sensuous quality. Siegfried Sassoon wrote of his delight of knowing and talking with Walter de la Mare,

> I have never been in his company without a sense of heightened and deepened perception. After talking to him, one goes away seeing the world with rechristened eyes.

I have heard the same thing said of Bion; sometimes a single meeting has been remembered with gratitude for many years afterwards.

He emphasized the importance of interpreting a silence – or what seems to be a silence. He said, of the patient who is silent all the time:

> . . . restricting ourselves to verbal intercourse won't get us far with this kind of patient. What kind of psychoanalysis is needed to interpret the silence? The analyst may think there is a pattern to the silence. If he cannot respect the silence, there is no chance of making any further progress. The analyst can be silent and

> listen – stop talking so that he can have a chance to hear what is going on

To quote him from another occasion:

> Some silences are nothing, they are 0, zero. But sometimes that silence becomes a pregnant one; it turns into 101 – the preceding and succeeding sounds turn it into a valuable communication, as with rests and pauses in music, holes and gaps in sculpture.

He drew attention to the state of mind that the analyst has to be in during the analytic session; the margin between being consciously awake, able to verbalize impressions, and being asleep is extremely small. He found that "being on the right wave-length is comparatively rare and has to be experienced to be recognized". He told me that he also sensed this when alone in deep thought; he would "wake up" to find light had been shed on a previously "dark spot" (Freud's words in a letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé).[1]

Bion found it useful to consider the existence of a thought without a thinker. On a tape, recorded before a visit to Rome in 1977, he said:

> If a thought without a thinker comes along, it may be a stray thought, or it could be a thought with the owner's name and address on it, or it could be a wild thought. The problem is, what to do with it. Of course, if it is wild, one might try to domesticate it. [Volume X, p. 175]

If its owner's name and address are attached, it could be restored to its owner, or the owner could be told that you had it and he could collect it any time he felt inclined. Or, of course, you could purloin it and hope either the owner would forget it, or that he would not notice the theft, and you could keep the idea all to yourself.

A word about the Grid: when he was working on its construction in the early 1960s, I remember that he became very enthusiastic about its possible use as a tool for the analyst – but not, as he pointed out, for use during the analytic session. An unpublished paper he wrote in 1963 has recently been brought to my attention.[2] It is a more detailed

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[1][Letter dated 25 May 1916; in Pfeiffer, 1972. *Ed.*]

[2][The paper was subsequently published in 1997 as 'The Grid' (see Volume V). It was brought to Francesca Bion's attention by Rosa Beatriz Pontes Miranda de Ferreira (see Volume V, p. 97). *Ed.*]

explanation and discussion of the Grid paper given in Los Angeles in 1971 (and published in 1977).

He says:

> The procedures I . . . advocate do help to keep the analyst's intuition in training, so to speak, and do help in impressing the work of the sessions on the memory. [Volume V, p. 101]

There are those who have found it of value, and continue to do so, but he gradually became dissatisfied with it as he realized its shortcomings. In Rio de Janeiro in 1974 he said,

> The Grid is a feeble attempt to produce an instrument – not a theory. I think it is good enough to know how bad it is, how unsuitable for the task for which I have made it . . . for me it is a waste of time because it doesn't really correspond with the facts I am likely to meet. [Volume VII, pp. 125–126]

As regards the writing of patient notes, he ultimately found them useless and irrelevant. This was, of course, his personal opinion and not necessarily a recommendation to others. He recognized the risk in not being able to produce detailed information about a patient as evidence in a court of law, but was willing to take it. There was a time when he made lengthy, detailed notes; finding them unsatisfactory, he tried other methods, but gradually discarded them all. He found that what might have helped to clarify his thoughts immediately after sessions clarified nothing at all later. The way in which he 'recorded' clinical experience was by incorporating it into his writing – a much more valuable method of "thinking through" the associated problems. As he says in the introduction to *Second Thoughts:*

> Memory is born of, and only suited to, sensuous experience. As psychoanalysis is concerned with experience that is not sensuous – who supposes that anxiety has shape, colour or smell? – records based on perception of that which is sensible are records only of the psychoanalytically irrelevant. Therefore in any account of a session, no matter how soon it may be made after the event or by what means, memory should not be treated as more than pictorialized communication of an emotional experience. [Volume VI, pp. 53–54]

During the late 1970s he used another method of re-experiencing sessions by drawing captioned caricatures of patients. I suspect that

this may have been as good a way as any. It is a pity that, for obvious reasons, they cannot be published.

While on holiday in France, six months before he died, he recorded some thoughts on tape. Part of what he said makes a fitting conclusion to these reminiscences of him and of our years together.

> Comparing my own personal experience with the history of psychoanalysis, and even the history of human thought, it does seem to be rather ridiculous that one finds oneself in a position of being supposed to be in that line of succession, instead of just one of the units in it. It is still more ridiculous that one is expected to participate in a sort of competition for precedence as to who is top. Top of what? Where does it come in this history? Where does psychoanalysis itself come? What is the dispute about? What is this dispute in which one is supposed to be interested? I am always hearing – as I always have done – that I am a Kleinian, that I am crazy; or that I am not a Kleinian, or not a psychoanalyst. Is it possible to be interested in that sort of dispute? I find it very difficult to see how this could possibly be relevant against the background of the struggle of the human being to emerge from barbarism and a purely animal existence, to something one could call a civilized society. [Volume XI, pp. 347–348]

APPENDIX B

Offices and Appointments Held by Wilfred R. Bion

Education

Bishop's Stortford College
The Queen's College, Oxford
University College Hospital, London

Degrees and Awards

BA History (Oxon)

Gold Medal: Surgery (University College Hospital, London)

Membership, Royal College of Surgeons (MRCS)

Licentiate, Royal College of Physicians (LRCP)

War Service

1916–18	Royal Tank Regiment
1940–45	Psychiatrist, Davy Hulme Military Hospital
	Chester Military Hospital
	Officer-in-Charge, Northfield Military Hospital Training Wing
	Senior Psychiatrist, War Office Selection Board

Decorations

Distinguished Service Order (DSO)

Légion d'Honneur

Mentioned in Dispatches

Appointments

1933–39	Secretary, Medical Section, British Psychological Society
1945	Chairman, Medical Section, British Psychological Society
1946	Chairman, Executive Committee, Tavistock Clinic, London
1956–62	Director, London Clinic of Psychoanalysis
1962–65	President, British Psychoanalytical Society
1966–68	Member, Training Committee, British Psychoanalytical Society
	Chairman, Publications Committee
	Chairman, Melanie Klein Trust
1978	Hon. Member, Los Angeles Psychoanalytical Society
1979	Hon. Fellow, A.K. Rice Institute

APPENDIX C

'Catastrophic Change' and 'Container and Contained Transformed': A comparison

by Chris Mawson

'Catastrophic Change' was presented by Bion on 4 May 1966 to a Scientific Meeting of the British Psychoanalytical Society. Until the publication of *The Complete Works of W. R. Bion*, this important paper had not been widely available.

In 1970, an adaptation of the paper was reproduced, with one or two expanded segments, as Chapter 12, 'Container and Contained Transformed', of *Attention and Interpretation: A Scientific Approach to Insight in Psycho-Analysis and Groups* (see Volume VI). Because the two texts are so similar – identical for many passages – the places at which Bion has thought to elaborate in the 1970 version are likely to be of interest to those studying his work in detail, in a manner similar to the way in which historians and cartographers superimpose maps of similar scale but from different historical periods in order to study small but significant variations.

Accordingly I have arranged in this appendix the text of 'Catastrophic Change' alongside that of 'Container and Contained Transformed' in a manner suited to close comparison of the two.

As I wrote in the 'Introduction' in Volume I, there is considerable repetition across Bion's writings and in his talks and seminars concerning his core clinical and theoretical ideas, but in many instances additional meaning may be gleaned from the variations on a theme, modulations in the 'angle of approach', and the 'binocular vision' of comparing apparently small differences, something very much in keeping with Bion's beliefs concerning what he was attempting to do with his communications, both spoken and written.

'Catastrophic Change' (1966)

In this paper I describe a configuration which constantly recurs in psychoanalysis. Although I may resort to formulations which appear to be descriptions of events in psychoanalysis or history, I do not claim for them the status of historical narrative. They are what I call C category elements, descriptions made up of sensuous images derived from a background of experience or reported experience reassembled for my purposes.

I shall give no psychoanalytic interpretations; these should be given only by the psychoanalyst in the course of a psychoanalysis when the facts which are to be interpreted are available and when he only is available to give them.

Description 1. This consists of two signs ♂ and ♀ which I call the contained and the container. The use of male and female symbols is deliberate but must not be taken to mean that other than sexual implications are excluded. These signs designate a relationship between ♀

'Container and Contained Transformed' (1970)

In this chapter I repeat the configuration in formulations that appear to be descriptions of events in psychoanalysis or history but have not the status of historical narrative. They are C category elements, images derived from a background of experience or reported experience, reassembled for my purpose.

Description 1: The signs ♂ and ♀ I call the contained and the container. The use of the male and female symbols is deliberate but must not be taken to mean that other than sexual implications are excluded. These signs designate a relationship between ♀ and ♂ The

and ♂: The link may be commensal, symbiotic, or parasitic.

Description 2. A word contains a meaning; conversely, a meaning can contain a word – which may or may not be discovered. This could be represented as the word (♀) containing the meaning (♂). Or vice versa, the meaning (♀) containing the word (♂). The relationship is established by the nature of the link.

A constant conjunction of elements in a psychoanalysis can be bound by the attribution to it of a word, or a theory or other formulation. The word by which it is bound can have such a powerful pre-existing penumbra of associations that it squeezes the meaning out of the constant conjunction it is supposed to mark. Conversely the constant conjunction can destroy the word, theory, or other formulation which the formulation is intended to 'contain'.

Thus ♀♂ can be so powerful that they destroy the meaning I want them to contain. Conversely the conjunction they are to represent may be so powerful that the sign cannot contain it. Equally the link may be symbiotic or commensal. Describing it in yet other C category terms:

> a man is attempting to express such powerful feelings that his capacity for verbal expression

link may be commensal, symbiotic, or parasitic.

Description 2: A word contains a meaning; conversely, a meaning can contain a word – which may or may not be discovered. The relationship is established by the nature of the link.

A constant conjunction of elements in a psychoanalysis can be 'bound' by the attribution to it of a word, a theory, or other formulation. The word by which it is bound can have such a powerful pre-existing penumbra of associations that it squeezes the meaning out of the constant conjunction it is supposed to mark. Conversely, the constant conjunction can destroy the word, theory, or other formulation that the formulation is intended to 'contain'.

For example, a man is attempting to express such powerful feelings that his capacity for verbal expression disintegrates into a stammer or a meaningless, incoherent babble of words.

disintegrates into a stammer or becomes a meaningless and incoherent babble of words.

Description 3. The container (♀) extracts so much from the contained (♂) that the contained is left without substance. A psychoanalysis is so long continued that the patient can get no further meaning from it. A converse example would be the continuation until the patient had no more patience, tolerance, fortitude or money left. The container can squeeze everything 'out of' the contained. Conversely the 'pressure' may be exerted by the contained so that the container disintegrates. An illustration would be the word used as a metaphor until finally the genetic background is lost and the word loses its meaning. (See Fowler's Modern English Usage [2nd edition] for illustrations.)

Description 4. The marriage *in* which the sexual relationship ♀♂ plays such a part that there is *no room* for any of the other activities in which the married couple might engage. Conversely, the other (i.e. 'other than sexual') activities play such a part that there is *no room* for sexual fulfilment. (The metaphors used in this description exemplify the inside – the outside, container – contained, ♀♂ pattern).

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Description 4: The marriage *in* which the sexual relationship ♀♂ plays such a part that there is *no room* for any of the other activities in which the married couple might engage. Conversely, the other (i.e. 'other than sexual') activities play such a part that there is *no room* for sexual fulfilment. (The metaphors used in this description exemplify the outside-inside, container–contained, ♀♂ pattern.)

[1]See H. W. Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, 2nd edition, 'Metaphor' 2D.

Expansions of 1–4

Memory may be represented by ♀ or ♂. Thus regarding it as the container ♀ it is filled with 'memories' derived from sensuous experience. The sensuous background is dominant and 'memories' with such a background are tenacious. The memory ♀ is therefore saturated. The analyst who comes to a session with an active memory is therefore in no position to make 'observations' of mental phenomena because these are unknown and cannot be sensuously apprehended. Anxiety is known to us all but it has no shape or smell, colour or sound. An obtrusion of memory therefore obstructs intuition of the unknown phenomena. But, it may be said, do not analysts remember, and ought they not to remember, what has been said?

♀ or ♂ may represent memory. The container ♀ is filled with 'memories' derived from sensuous experience. The sensuous background is dominant and 'memories' with such a background are tenacious. The ♂ memory is saturated accordingly. The analyst who comes to a session with an active memory is therefore in no position to make 'observations' of unknown mental phenomena because these are not sensuously apprehended.

There is certainly something which has often been called 'remembering' and which is essential to psychoanalytic work. But this must be sharply distinguished from what I have been calling memory.

There is something that has often been called 'remembering' and that is essential to psychoanalytic work; this must be sharply distinguished from what I have been calling memory.

I want to make a distinction between (1) remembering a dream or having a memory of a dream and (2) the experience of the dream in which it seems to float into the mind as if it were a whole which was at one moment absent and at the next present.

I want to make a distinction between (1) remembering a dream or having a memory of a dream and (2) the experience of the dream which seems to cohere as if it were a whole, at one moment absent, at the next present.

This experience, which I consider to be part of an evolution of the

This experience, which I consider to be essential to evolution of the

emotional reality of the session, is often called a memory, or remembering a dream, but is to be sharply distinguished from the dream remembered or the experience of remembering it.

Indeed what I am describing is a good example of the meaning ♀ in which is embedded the unknown word or formulation ♂, for what I would like would be to find a word that most people would regard as appropriate to represent the meaning I want to convey.

The term 'memory' I shall use with its ordinary conversational meaning and it represents something I consider to be out of place in the psychoanalyst's conduct of a psychoanalysis. A patient's close relatives are burdened with memories which make them quite unreliable judges of the patient's personality and unfit to be the patient's analyst.

So far I have examined the configuration as it appears in the limits of words themselves. I shall not spend time in detailed examination of its appearance in more complex formulation except to indicate the degree of its persistence.

The psychoanalytic situation would be expected to evoke examples of the configuration and it does so. But it is also a situation in which it is likely that difficulties will arise for both analysand and analyst in finding methods of communication.

emotional reality of the session, is often called a memory, but it is to be distinguished from the experience of remembering. In memory, time is of the essence. Time has often been regarded as being of the essence of psychoanalysis; in the growth process it has no part. Mental evolution or growth is catastrophic and timeless.

I shall use 'memory' with its ordinary conversational meaning; it represents something that is out of place in the psychoanalyst's conduct of a psychoanalysis. A patient's close relatives are burdened with memories which make them unreliable judges of the patient's personality and unfit to be the patient's analyst.

So far, I have examined the configuration as it appears in the limits of words themselves; its appearance in more complex formulation indicates the degree of its persistence.

The psychoanalytic situation provides and evokes examples of the configuration; it pervades difficulties which analysand and analyst find in communication.

Conversely there will be emotional experiences to be conveyed or represented, some of great intensity. It is likely therefore that we shall find in the subject matter instances of the configuration I mention and the same configuration in the psychoanalytic procedure designed to deal with it.

Thus we arrive at another description.

Description 5. The patient will be at a loss to convey his meaning or, the meaning he wishes to convey will be too intense to express properly, or the formulation will be so rigid that he feels that the meaning conveyed is devoid of any interest or vitality.

Similarly the interpretations given by the analyst, in this instance ♂, will meet with a reception from the patient which, by an apparently co-operative response of repeating the interpretation for confirmation, he deprives of meaning by compression or denudation.

Which it is will depend on whether the link between ♀ and ♂ is commensal, symbiotic or parasitic.

Failure to observe or demonstrate the point may produce an apparently inexplicable lack of progress in what is outwardly a progressive analysis. The clue lies in the observation of the fluctuations which make the analyst at one moment ♀

There are emotional experiences to be conveyed or represented, some of great intensity. Therefore, we find instances of the configuration in the subject-matter and in the psychoanalytic procedure designed to deal with it.

Description 5: The patient will be at a loss to convey his meaning, or the meaning he wishes to convey will be too intense for him to express properly, or the formulation will be so rigid that he feels that the meaning conveyed is devoid of any interest or vitality.

Similarly, the interpretations given by the analyst (♂) will meet with the apparently co-operative response of being repeated for confirmation, which deprives ♂ of meaning either by compression or by denudation.

Failure to observe or demonstrate the point may produce an outwardly progressive but factually sterile analysis. The clue lies in the observation of the fluctuations which make the analyst at one moment ♀ and the analysand ♂,

and the analysand ♂ and at the next reverse the roles.

At the same time as this pattern is observed – worked out in words or persons – there must also be noted which link is operating, commensal, symbiotic or parasitic.

Expansions of 1–5

The more familiar the analyst becomes with the configuration of events, which I represent by the relationship between ♀ and ♂, the more often and the more readily will observe them.

There is a difference between ♀ and ♂ which is I hope sufficiently clear to make it possible to distinguish between events in the session which approximate to these two representations.

The essential experience for the analyst is not the reading of this paper but the matching of the real event in the psychoanalysis which approximates to these formulations. Aided by the frequent references made by patients and himself to events which occur 'in analysis' or 'in the past' or 'inside' or 'outside', it should be easy to recognize with increasing frequency the realizations to which these signs relate.

The recognition of the category of link which is operating may be more difficult unless a lead-in can be obtained by considering the kind of event which takes the place of ♀ or ♂. Thus an extremely greedy patient may want to obtain

and at the next reverse the roles.

When this pattern is observed the links (commensal, symbiotic, or parasitic) within the pattern must also be observed.

The more familiar the analyst becomes with the configuration ♀, and ♂, and with events in the session that approximate to these two representations, the better. The essential experience is not the reading of this volume but the matching of the real event in the psychoanalysis that approximates to these formulations. The frequent references made to events that occur 'in analysis', or 'in the past', or 'inside' or 'outside', should aid recognition of the realizations to which these signs relate.

The recognition of the category of link that is operating may be more difficult unless a lead-in can be obtained by considering the kind of event that takes the place of ♀ or ♂. Thus an extremely greedy patient may want to obtain as much as he

as much as he can from his analysis while giving as little as possible: we should expect this to show itself by frequent events in which the container was denuding the contained object and vice versa.

The patient might show that he made enormous demands on his family but resented doing anything for it. Many patients might show behaviour of this kind on relatively rare occasions but some might show it in many activities and in striking degree as, for example, by habitual incoherence while demanding great precision of interpretation from the analyst. This kind of patient cannot well be described in terms of narrative recording actual events, first, because any such formulation is suspect for reasons I have given in discussing memory, and, second, because it is impossible to predict what form his greed will take.

Therefore the psychoanalyst, who may have such a patient, or a patient showing such patterns of behaviour relatively rarely, or anything between these extremes, needs formulations of theory that enable him to have as wide as possible a spectrum of observation so that these configurations do not pass unnoticed. If these formulations are too abstract they lack body.

Therefore I give them body by using C category description but these are liable to produce so great

can from his analysis while giving as little as possible; we should expect this to show itself by frequent events in which the container was denuding the contained object, and vice versa.

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Accordingly I give them body by using C category descriptions, but these are liable to produce so great

a penumbra of association that the formulations become saturated and narrow the analyst's perspicacity.

a penumbra of associations that the formulations become saturated and narrow the psychoanalyst's perspicacity.

Before leaving the expansion of descriptions 1–5 it will be as well to look at claustrophobia, agoraphobia and acting-out as illustrations of the appearance of the configuration.

Descriptions 1-5 could include claustrophobia, agoraphobia, and acting-out as illustrations of the configuration.

Acting-out, as it is ordinarily understood, takes place 'in' the analysis and the analysis is then itself a part of acting-out. In claustrophobia the patient identifies himself with an object which is inside a container. An ability to see the ♀♂ configuration in both these states reveals the relationships between one element and another of the patient's personality which otherwise would remain unknown.

Acting-out, as it is ordinarily understood, takes place 'in' the analysis and the analysis is then itself a part of acting-out. The claustrophobic-agoraphobic patient identifies himself with an object which is inside or outside a container. An ability to see the configuration reveals relationships within the patient's personality that otherwise would remain unknown.

When a patient can be said to be acting-out the analysis is 'in' a situation of which the boundaries are unknown. If the behaviour characterized as 'acting-out' is brought to the analysis it can be accompanied by claustrophobic symptoms in the patient.

When a patient can be said to be acting out, the analysis is 'in' a situation of which the boundaries are unknown. If the behaviour characterized as 'acting-out' is brought to the analysis it can be accompanied by claustrophobic symptoms in the patient.

The coherence of these symptoms may not be detected if the underlying configuration is not realized. As this last point touches on group behaviour I shall make my next description a formulation in terms of history. As I intend to broaden the scope of the configuration

The coherence of these symptoms may not be detected if the underlying configuration is not realized. As this last point touches on group behaviour I shall make my next description a formulation in terms of history. The description will appear to be complex because

the description will appear to be complex but its complexity will be less if it is borne in mind that the description has the same fundamental configuration even if at first sight it appears that this is not so. It may help if I explain that new ideas may appear to be presented in this description; their novelty or otherwise is a function of the reader's personality and must not be supposed to inhere in the communication.

I intend to broaden the scope of the configuration, but its complexity will be less if it is borne in mind that the description has the same fundamental configuration even if at first sight it appears that this is not so. It may help if I explain that new ideas may appear to be presented in this description; their novelty or otherwise is a function of the reader's personality and must not be supposed to inhere in the communication.

Description 6. From time to time men appear in history who are variously described as mystics or men of genius. Some attract notice as outstanding personalities but some must be supposed to attract virtually no attention because the conditions for their existence are not propitious. A similar fate attends upon ideas.

A study of these conditions may at some time be carried out but I am only concerned here to formulate their existence.

Description 6: This section is mostly recapitulation and expansion of the model of mystic and group. Some mystics attract notice but others do not because the conditions are not propitious.

The same is true of ideas; the idea which I consider to be the counterpart of the mystic or genius, I call the 'messianic idea'.

The idea which I consider to be a counterpart of the mystic or genius I shall call the 'messianic idea'. The idea that is messianic may be confused with the idea that he, she or it is the Messiah. The person I shall call 'the mystic'; the idea I shall call 'the messianic idea'. I shall use the terms 'mystic' and 'genius' as interchangeable.

The idea that is messianic may be confused with the person; he may believe he is the messiah. The person, I call 'the mystic'; the idea, I call the 'messianic idea'. The terms 'mystic' and 'genius' are interchangeable.

Mystics have appeared in all religions, at all times, in all places and

Mystics appear in any religion, science, time, or place. Such persons

in all centres of scientific discussion. Such persons 'contain' the 'messianic idea', or the 'messianic idea' may 'contain' the person who is sought to incarnate, represent or manifest the Messiah in a manner analogous to the meaning which is felt to 'contain' the word which is to represent its. (See Expansion 1–4 and Description 2.)

'contain' the 'messianic idea', or the 'messianic idea' may 'contain' the person who is sought to incarnate, represent, or manifest the messiah in a manner analogous to the meaning that is felt to 'contain' the word that is to represent it.

The society in which the mystic appears has been described by Nietzsche as a body whose function it is to produce a genius. I shall adopt this view as part of my formulation. But I consider it also to be the function of the society to make the mystic or the messianic idea available to the members of the group. This is done by laws (in society), dogma (in religion), rules or laws (in mathematics or science). The governing body of the society I shall call the Establishment. The counterpart of this in the domain of thought would be the pre-existing disposition or pre-conception.

The society in which the mystic appears has been described by Nietzsche as a body whose function it is to produce a genius. It is also the function of the society to make the mystic or messianic idea available to the members of the group. This is effected by laws (in society), dogma (in religion), rules or laws (in mathematics or science). The governing body of the society I call the Establishment; the counterpart in the domain of thought would be the pre-existing disposition or pre-conception.

The mystic makes direct contact with, or – as with certain Christian mystics (one of whom, Meister Eckhart, I shall mention again) – is at one with, God. This is not possible for the ordinary member of the group. Hence the need for the Establishment to pronounce dogmatically, make laws or rules, by which the advantages of the mystic's communion with God or ultimate truth or reality may, as it

The mystic makes direct contact with, or is 'at one' with, God. This capacity is not attributed to the ordinary member of the group. The Establishment must pronounce dogmatically, make laws or rules, so that the advantages of the mystic's communion with God or ultimate truth or reality may be shared at one remove by the ordinary members.

were, be shared at one remove by the ordinary members.

This the Establishment may fail to do either by lack of discrimination which loads to the furtherance of false views or by rigid adherence to an existing framework which sets up a parasitic link between mystic and group, ♂ and ♀. The life is then squeezed out of the mystic or messianic idea, or the society is disrupted. This brings me to catastrophic change and my next description.

Description 7. The conflict between the mystic and his group is exhibited in its most exaggerated, and therefore most easily studied, form in the account of Jesus and his relationship with the group. He himself claimed, in a manner typical of many mystics, that his teachings were in conformity with the existing Establishment: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil". (Matthew 5. 17. A.V.)

This claim is often associated with an awareness of the disruptive force which is being brought to bear upon the group from within.

It was a charge which St. Augustine felt obliged to refute four centuries later in *The City of God* when the sack of Rome by Alaric was attributed to the pernicious influence of Christians and their doctrines.

This the Establishment may fail to do through lack of discrimination, leading to the furtherance of false views, or through rigid adherence to an existing framework, so that a parasitic link is set up between mystic and group, ♂ and ♀. The life is then squeezed out of the mystic or messianic idea, or the society is disrupted.

Description 7: The conflict between the mystic and his group is exhibited in its most exaggerated, and therefore most easily studied, form in the account of Jesus and his relationship with the group. He himself claimed, in a manner typical of many mystics, that his teachings were in conformity with the existing Establishment: 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil' (Matthew 5:17. A.V.).

This claim is often associated with an awareness of the disruptive force that is being brought to bear upon the group from within.

The mystic does not necessarily claim to conform to the group. He may appear in the guise of a destroyer from within or without. He does not claim peaceable intentions or methods.

It would be possible to make a distinction between the nihilistic mystic who disrupts the community which is his own creation and the creative mystic who appears to eschew violent methods particularly against his own group. We need not trouble about these claims because I wish to stress the disruptive quality of the mystic, whether he claims to be disruptive or not, for it is this disruptive quality which is associated with the group's hostility to the mystic and vice versa. It is, furthermore, the quality which I wish to emphasize in this description.

The reaction of the Establishment is to prevent the disruption and this it does as follows: It can load the mystic with such honours that he sinks without a trace. This is expressed in the biblical illustration by the temptation in the wilderness where the rewards of conformity are clearly stated. Conformity can be renunciation of the messianic ideas, or acceptance of the role of the messianic idea. Alternatively, the mystic can be destroyed and an attempt made to ensure the same fate for his ideas.

The failure of the rabbinical

The mystic does not always claim to conform to the group. He may appear in the guise of a destroyer from within or without. He does not claim peaceable intentions or methods.

A distinction is sometimes made between the nihilistic mystic, who disrupts the community, and the creative mystic, who denies violent methods particularly against his own group. I wish to stress the disruptive quality of the mystic, whether he claims to be disruptive or not, for it is this disruptive quality that is associated with the group's hostility to the mystic, and vice versa. It is, furthermore, the quality that I wish to emphasize in this description.

The reaction of the Establishment is to prevent the disruption, and this it does by incorporating the mystic within itself. This is expressed in the biblical illustration by the temptation in the wilderness where the rewards of conformity are clearly stated. Conformity can be renunciation of the messianic idea or acceptance of the role of the messiah. Alternatively, the mystic can be destroyed and an attempt made to ensure the same fate for his ideas.

directorate had disastrous consequences for this group.

The functions of containment – I use the word with its military implication of one force containing another – had to be assumed by the split factions of the group, one ostensibly against, and the other for, Jesus. Gradually a fresh group was formed and a fresh Establishment to contain the mystic, or rather the messianic idea. The Jewish group learned to handle the mystic with consequences which were less disastrous for itself. The Christian group, though finding a different solution of the problem, achieved a similarly satisfactory result. Neither system was free from recurrences of the problem. One Christian Establishment restored the disruptive structure and ensured its continuity by taking over the festivals of paganism and thus mollifying the hostility which might otherwise have followed the loss of holidays and feasts which were beloved and valued.

The theme could be stated as bigger and brighter paganism with gods refurbished and rejuvenated as saints and devils. (Milton expresses this very clearly in his representation of Pandemonium in Books I and III of *Paradise Lost*).

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delineation of the borders of the group, selection and training, and stabilization of the hierarchy.

To take the last point first: In the account in Mark's Gospel, Chapter 10, v. 35-45, the problem was clearly posed by James and John with their request for status. In his reply Jesus seems to suggest a kind of initiation or test, but the alacrity with which the two accept the conditions makes it hard to know what the initiation was, though it is clear that Jesus regarded its performance as beyond them. He also adumbrates a change in the function of the Establishment as it existed amongst the Gentiles of that time. The proposal put forward by James and John seems to be for status, and status appears to be a substitute for qualification. The point is that their desires were to be satisfied, as it were, 'ex officio'.

The reply given by Jesus seems to indicate that the 'position' achieved *ex officio* was an alternative the pair produced to undergoing the experience of the mystic himself. In this respect the rejected solution meets one of the requirements of society, namely, to make the fruits of the mystic's work available to ordinary members who do not have the mystic's qualifications for atonement with the deity.

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The problem of membership of the group and how to decide whether

man was to call himself a Christian or not also arose early. Characteristically it hinged on the question of the therapeutic efficiency of the Christian and his brand of Christianity. The problem was brought to a head through the apparently successful therapeutic effects obtained by persons who were not qualified members of the group (Mark 9. 38).

In the instance quoted the criterion proposed by Jesus seems to be the successful cure and its attribution by the therapist to Jesus. The issues involved are: membership of the group as itself being a symbol of status; status – expressed by the locution, "In Thy name" as a therapeutic agent; therapeutic result as a criterion of membership of the group. The solution was empirical but it accepted the criterion of therapeutic efficiency. For the time being the test of membership seems to be two-fold, namely, medical or therapeutic and capacity for achieving results. This last requirement always seems to have been something of a nightmare throughout history. It might be described as a demand that the group leader should (1) be able to foretell the future, (2) render adequate someone alleged to have been adequate in the past, and (3) guarantee continued adequacy to all future contingencies.

or not a man was to call himself a Christian[1] also arose early. Characteristically, it hinged on the question of the therapeutic efficiency of the Christian and his brand of Christianity. The problem was brought to a head through the apparently successful therapeutic effects obtained by persons not qualified members of the group (Mark 9:38).

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[1]The modern Israeli state has met the same problem of deciding who is, or is not, a Jew.

The Christian hierarchy soon found itself faced by the same problems that had defeated the rabbinical directorate. The same forces were involved: on the one side the need to control the messianic idea and make it available to ordinary people through dogmatic formulation, and on the other side the messianic idea or its incarnation perpetually breaking through the barriers intended to control it and threatening to disrupt the society in which it became manifest. The Reformation was a spectacular example of this but only one of many such. (See Knox on *Enthusiasm*.)

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Expansion of 6–7

I have used for my 6 and 7 descriptions material familiar to all, for a configuration which is repeated in many forms and at many times.
It is not limited to religious societies, or therapeutic societies, or artistic societies, or scientific societies, but – as far as my limited experience can tell – is discernible in all societies.

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elaboration of abstractions. Naturally I suppose that people other than psychoanalysts would profit from a recognition of the configuration and the underlying group to which one suspects that it belongs. But here I am concerned only as an analyst with the configuration as it might be discerned by other analysts. Descriptions 6 and 7 must therefore not be supposed to have a sociological or political application but to be by way of fables or mythological constructs (C category) which, if formulated with greater precision and sophistication, represent a pattern to which the human personality would be found to approximate. The fable, constructed in terms of the group, must be regarded as a pictorialization of man's inner world.

For those familiar with Kleinian theory my description can be seen as a dramatized, personified, socialized and pictorialized representation of the human personality. It may clarify my procedure to contrast this pictorial view with accepted morphology of classical analysis.

The theory formulated in terms of ego, super-ego, and id differs in two respects: first, it is an F category formulation whereas the pictorialized formulation I am representing verbally is a C category formulation – primitive and based on sensuously derived terminol-

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The Messianic Idea

The nature of the messianic idea can be only very approximately represented by the C category formulations I have been using. In addition to Jesus I shall speak of Meister Eckhart and Isaac Luria. They represent in different ways the problem of reconciling the messianic idea and the Establishment.

The rabbinical directorate appears to have learned caution so that when it had to adjust to the Lurianic doctrine and to the injuries which Lurianic doctrine was alleged by its opponents to have inflicted on Judaism, it did not contribute to an explosion. Luria for his part insisted on his conservatism and related all he said to older authorities.

Significantly he left no writings and when questioned by a disciple about his reasons for not setting out his teaching in book form he replied, ˝It is impossible, because all things are inter-related: I can hardly open my mouth to speak without

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Significantly, he left no writings and, when questioned by a disciple about his reasons for not setting out his teaching in book form, he replied: ‘It is impossible because all things are interrelated. I can hardly open my mouth to speak without

feeling as though the sea burst its dams and overflowed. How then shall I express what my soul has received, and how can I put it down in a book?"[1] Meister Eckhart wrote extensively but the obscurity of his writing and perhaps the matter led to the condemnation as heretical of some 28 propositions from his later writings.

The main question seems to centre on his forthright statements of identity with the deity – "We are transformed and changed into God."[2]

The fate of Jesus himself has been crucifixion as a criminal on the one hand and deification on the other. Both Isaac Luria and Jesus were alike in being followed by a proliferation of hagiographical biography, much of it, in the instance of Jesus, not being included in the canon.

It is not necessary to pursue this topic for my prevent purpose but it can be followed in detail in *Enthusiasm* by R.A. Knox. O.U.P.

The common features are the containment of the messianic idea in the individual, the containment of the messianic individual in the group and the problem for the Establishment that is concerned

[1]G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Thames and Hudson). p. 254.

[2]See J. Copleston, *History of Philosophy*, Vol. VI, p. 193.

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Description 2 (cycle 2). If it were necessary to express descriptions 6 and 7 by one word a choice could be made from terms such as 'religion' or 'Christianity' or 'God'. If none of these term is considered suitable an attempt could be made to find the suitable terms by introspection. This attempt is a search in the mind for the term supposed to exist or it is a search in the meaning for the term; the latter is an instance of the meaning containing the word.

The difficulties attendant on finding the word are described in the terms used by Poincaré searching for a mathematical formula, or by Luria in the passage quoted above.

A better idea of the problem is obtained by substituting the term 'statement' for 'word' and including in its definition any act of expression whatsoever. In C category terms the problem is analogous to that of the sculptor finding his form in the block of his material, the musician finding the formula of musical notation within the sounds he hears, the man of action finding the actions which represent his thoughts.

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cussion lies in its being an example of the problem being discussed. It is an attempt to find a verbal formulation to which psychoanalytic realizations approximate. I restate the problem thus: psychoanalysis, the thing-in-itself, existed. It remained for Freud to reveal the formulation embedded in it. Conversely, once formulated by Freud it remains for others (including Freud himself) to discover the meaning of the conjunction bound by his formulation.

It is necessary to postulate 'thinking' without supposing a thinker to be essential. I shall not at this point try to explain why. All thinking and all thoughts are true when there is no thinker. In contrast to this, for lies and falsities a thinker is absolutely necessary. In any situation where a thinker is present the thoughts when formulated are expressions of falsities and lies. The only true thought is one which has never found an individual to 'contain' it.

The messianic ideas may be supposed to have a counterpart, the absolute truth, to which a thinker is not necessary: this I shall mark by a sign O.

Falsity is the characteristic of thought within an individual, or thought within a container. It follows that all thought as it is ordinarily known, that is as an attribute of the human being, is false, the problem associated with it being

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the degree and nature of the falsity. The lie is a falsity associated with 'morals'.

The messianic idea is a term representing O at the point at which its evolution and the evolution of a thinker intersect. The mystic, as seen in descriptions 6 and 7 is a thinker who claims the capacity for direct contact with O. The degree of falsity depends on whether the relationship with O is commensal, symbiotic or parasitic.

Commensal. The thought O and the thinker exist quite independently of each other. There is no reaction, or, as we should say ordinarily – identifying ourselves with the thinker – the truth has not been discovered though it 'exists'.

Symbiotic. The thought and the thinker correspond and modify each other through the correspondence. The thought proliferates and the thinker develops.

Parasitic. Thought and thinker correspond but the correspondence is category 2, meaning that the formulation is known to be false but is retained as a barrier against a truth

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It is not often enough recognized that a patient in whom resistance is active can be reacting against what he feels to be a thought in search of a thinker. It is supposedly his own thought (classical resistance theory), but it does not have to be so.

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In symbiosis the thought and the thinker correspond, and modify each other through the correspondence. The thought proliferates and the thinker develops.

In a parasitic relationship between thought and thinker there is a correspondence but the correspondence is category 2, meaning that the formulation is known to be false,

which is feared as annihilating to the container or *vice versa*. The falsity proliferates until it becomes the lie. The barrier of the lie increases the need for the truth and *vice versa*.

The commensal position changes when thought and thinker approximate. In more usual terms, a critical situation arises when a 'discovery' threatens. It is commonly said that messianic hopes were more than usually active at the birth of Jesus, and it is a matter for remark that often more than one investigator seems to be approaching a discovery at the time when a discovery is made. The resistance of the thinker to the unthought thought is characteristic of category 2 thinking. The crucial problem appears to be the relative strength of the messianic idea and the personality who is to 'contain' it. We must therefore reconsider the personality. To do this I shall use the descriptions 6 and 7 as pictorial representations (C category) of the parts composing the totality of the individual, not the group. I am assuming that the reader keeps in mind existing theories of personality structure. It is not to be supposed that they are to be abandoned or even modified by what follows. Existing theories are F category formulations; what takes place in the consulting room is an emotional situation which is itself the intersection of an evolving O with another evolving O.

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The description I am giving is, as it has been through this paper, a C category formulation intended to bridge the gap between a unique event on the one hand and a generalized F category formulation on the other.

Description 3 (cycle 2). The messianic idea clothes itself, or is clothed, in a great variety of forms.

There is no reason why it should not take any form, and yet there appears to be great difficulty for form and idea to achieve a symbiotic or commensal relationship.

Therefore I shall not succeed in this description in finding a formulation by which I can convey my meaning to the reader. At most I can find a sign pointing him to the consulting room or other domain where he may intuit it for himself.

Similarly I can direct him to seek out and carefully observe the word 'cure' when he hears it pronounced; for 'within' this word he may be able to intuit the messianic idea.

He should allow his attention to dwell on formulations in which he himself is described in positive terms; for 'within' these statements he may be able to intuit the 'contained' messianic idea. Whether the statement appears outwardly to be representing a summer holiday or a car or a person or a state – in time he should be able by degrees to

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Description 3 (cycle 2): The messianic idea clothes itself in a variety of forms.

Though it may take any form there appears to be difficulty for form and idea to achieve a symbiotic or commensal relationship.

Therefore it is difficult to find a formulation by which I can convey my meaning to the reader, but I can point to the consulting-room or group where he may intuit it for himself.

Similarly, I can direct him to observe the word 'cure' when he hears it; for 'within' this word he may be able to intuit the messianic idea.

His attention should dwell on formulations in which he is described in positive terms; for 'within' these statements he may be able to intuit the 'contained' messianic idea. Whether the statement appears outwardly to be representing a summer holiday, a car, a person, or a state in time, he should be able by degrees to intuit the frequent occur-

intuit the messianic idea with sufficient frequency to be persuaded of its reality and his ability to feel its presence.

rence of the messianic idea and be persuaded of its reality and his ability to feel its presence.

When I said I might find a sign pointing the reader 'to the consulting room or other domain' I was deliberately restricting the field of search to provide a 'container' wherein the search might be pursued without too much difficulty. In this way the reader might experience the ineffable relatively quickly.

When I say the reader might search the consulting-room or group, I am restricting the field of search to provide a 'container' wherein the search may be pursued without difficulty and relatively quickly.

Yet it is doubtful whether intuition of a constant conjunction occurring in the domain of psychic reality can ever be said to be attainable quickly or easily unless it is by virtue of exceptional capacity.

Yet it is doubtful whether intuition of a constant conjunction in the domain of psychic reality can be attainable quickly or easily.

It must be accepted therefore that there can be no short-cut for the psychoanalyst. He can hope that years of experience may enable him to intuit the messianic idea when he sees it or recognize that this hope is a formulation containing the messianic idea.

Therefore there can be no short cut for the psychoanalyst; he can hope that experience may enable him to intuit the messianic idea or recognize that this hope is itself a formulation containing it.

The idea that the messianic idea is contained within the analysis, or that descriptions 6 and 7 can be used as C category statements or formulations of the individual personality, implies that the personality can be represented by a ♀♂ relationship and that the personality has a ♀♂ relationship with a psychoanalysis. Such a formulation is useful if it assists the psychoana-

The notion that the messianic idea is contained within the analysis, or that descriptions 6 and 7 can be used as C category statements or formulations of the individual personality, implies that the personality can be represented by a ♀♂ relationship and that the personality has a ♀♂ relationship with a psychoanalysis. Such a formulation assists the psychoanalyst to intuit

lyst to intuit, in the course of a psychoanalysis, a personality external to the psychoanalysis which is present in the analysis only by 'hearsay'. The patient becomes little more than a voice reporting that the messianic idea is abroad.

I mention it as a typical complexity of the ♀♂ relation which is significant for its bearing on phenomena named collectively as 'acting-out'. I wish to relate these phenomena to beta-elements lying outside the domain of thought proper and only appearing to belong to it because they are represented 'in' the analysis by C3 statements made by the analysand.

The psychoanalyst and his analysand therefore appear to be excluded from domain of action and confined within the domain of thought in such a way that they are not in a position to pursue their psychoanalytic aims by psychoanalytic means. What then *are* their psychoanalytic aims?

Psychoanalytic practice shows that the motives for any human activity are numerous and complex. They are derived from a background of sensuous desires; as fast as one is demonstrated it is apparent that further desires lie unknown. The aims of the psychoanalytic couple are arrived at by conjecture and formulated, at least as far as the analysand is concerned, in terms representative of sensuous experience.

a personality, external to the psychoanalysis, which is present in the psychoanalysis only by 'hearsay'; the patient becomes a voice reporting that the messianic idea is abroad.

A typical complexity of the ♀♂ relation, significant for its bearing on 'acting-out', relates to beta-elements lying outside the domain of thought proper, but appearing to belong to it because they are represented 'in' the psychoanalysis by C3 statements made by the analysand. The psychoanalyst and his analysand appear, therefore, to be excluded from the domain of action and 'confined within' the domain of thought in such a way that they are not in a position to 'psychoanalyse', but only to substitute 'psychoanalysis' for psychoanalytic thinking, which is a prelude to interpretations – the psychoanalytic counterpart of action.

Psychoanalytic practice shows that the motives for any human activity are numerous and complex. They are derived from a background of sensuous desires; as fast as one is demonstrated it is apparent that further desires lie unknown. The aims of the psychoanalytic couple are arrived at by conjecture and are formulated, at least as far as the analysand is concerned, in terms representative of sensuous experience.

Even the objects of curiosity are formulated in terms suitable to a sensuous background. Insofar as the desires can be stated they will be sensuous desires and sensuous aims – the over-riding aim being to keep alive.

Without exception these aims and desires are not relevant to psychoanalysis. Nor have they proved relevant either to Judaism or Christianity. It is true that their place has not been taken by any formulations which are more satisfactory. So long as thinking is regarded as subordinate to the senses there is no difficulty. If thinking is a primary activity the *aims* of contemplation or meditation are presumed to exist because thinking is associated with its genetic history as subordinate to muscular activity, and muscular activity is presumed to have an aim in accord with the dominance of the pleasure principle.

It is possible that the vacuity, produced by the subordination of sensuous aims to growth of a capacity for contemplation or meditation, was filled in the course of his teaching by Jesus. But as his teaching was subjected to the twin pressures I have described – namely, annihilation by physical destruction on the one hand, and divine honours on the other – we do not know what such a solution might have been. In practice the problem is shelved as thinking remains a function subordinate to the satisfaction of sensu-

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ous desires as a means to physical survival.

The consequence is that psychoanalysis is saddled with an aim which, according to their various desires, is attributed to it by both analyst and analysand. Both are debarred from fulfilling their aim when the aim is pursued in the domain of action and the analysis is confined to the domain of thought in which thought is the only means of fulfilment.

The 'conflict' is between action and thought, the counter-part – in descriptions 6 and 7 – being the conflict expressed in St. Augustine's refutation of the responsibility of Christianity for the Fall of Rome.

In the individual the demands for action and sensuous gratifications associated with physical survival conflict with the demand for mental 'activity'. The latter cannot justify itself in terms comprehensible to the former. The former cannot justify itself to the latter, for its apparatus of sensuous fulfilment is irrelevant to the domain of thought.

I have used the term 'conflict', in describing action and thought as a reminder of the accepted view. The object of using ♀♂ is to differentiate the states of containment which, as with thought and action, prevent conflict by containing thought and containing action in a mutually

In consequence, psychoanalysis is saddled with an aim that, according to their various desires, is attributed to it by both analyst and analysand. Both are debarred from fulfilling their aim when the aim is pursued in the domain of action and the psychoanalysis is confined to the domain of thought in which thought is the only means of fulfilment.

The 'conflict' is between action and thought, the counterpart (in descriptions 6 and 7) being the conflict expressed in Saint Augustine's refutation of the responsibility of Christianity for the fall of Rome.

In the individual, demands for action and sensuous gratifications associated with physical survival conflict with the demand for mental 'activity'. The latter cannot justify itself in terms comprehensible to the former. The former cannot justify itself to the latter, for its apparatus of sensuous fulfilment is irrelevant to the domain of thought.

I have used the term 'conflict', in describing action and thought, as a reminder of the accepted view. The object of using ♀♂ is to differentiate the states of containment which, as with thought and action, prevent conflict by containing thought and action in a mutu-

exclusive commensal state. In this condition thought and action do not modify each other but persist commensally in the same personality. Actions which appear to be compulsive are in reality beta-elements confined to the domain of action and thus insulated against thoughts which are confined to the domain of thought – which includes psychoanalysis. Similarly thoughts are within the domain of thought and cannot be influenced by beta-elements confined within the domain of action.

An apparent exception, not real, is provided by C3 elements in thought which appear to bring A category into the realm of thought but are only C category *records* of action; there is no conflict.

The domains of thought and action are so close, when the musculature used in talking is involved with beta-elements, that the distinction between them becomes confused. The same confusion arises if intolerance of frustration leads to a substitution of thought for action.

The associated omnipotence of thought obstructs the proper use of the musculature, as a feeling of helplessness stimulated by ineffectual muscular action is often the genetic base of omnipotence: when one is active the other is present.

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given examples of ♀♂ associated with inside and outside: (1) the personality, (2) the analytic situation, (3) domain of action, (4) domain of thought. Although such instances have a psychological value in giving body to a formulation which might otherwise lack it, their use is bad if it encourages the reader to expect further instances instead of consulting his practice to provide them. According to his background a patient will name various objects as containers, such as 'his mind', the 'unconscious', the 'nation' and many others as 'contained', such as his projections, his money, his ideas. The objects are innumerable but the relationships are not.

The individual always displays some aspect of his personality which is stable and constant even though it may sometimes be very difficult to detect in the welter of evidence for instability; it may appear only in the regularity with which the patient attends his sessions. In this stability will be found the counterpart of what, in descriptions 6 and 7, I have called the Establishment. It will be maintained with great tenacity as the only force likely to contain the counterpart of the messianic idea. Reciprocally the messianic idea is the only force likely to withstand the pressures of the counterpart in the individual of the Establishment. Fears of megalomanic identification with the messianic idea are associated with an inability to be at one with

given examples of ♀♂ associated with outside and inside. They have a psychological value in giving body to a formulation that might otherwise lack it, but the reader should seek further instances from his practice. According to his background a patient will describe various objects as containers, such as his mind, the unconscious, the nation; others as contained, such as his money, his ideas. The objects are many but the relationships are not.

The individual always displays some aspect of his personality that is stable and constant even though it may sometimes be very difficult to detect in the welter of evidence for instability; it may appear only in the regularity with which the patient attends his sessions. In this stability will be found the counterpart of what, in descriptions 6 and 7, I have called the Establishment. It will be maintained with great tenacity as the only force likely to contain the counterpart of the messianic idea. Reciprocally, the messianic idea is the only force likely to withstand the pressures of the counterpart of the Establishment in the individual. Fears of megalomanic identification with the messianic idea are associated with an inability to be at one with the

the omnipotent Father. The counterpart of the Establishment in the individual is not related to father or mother but can be related to fragments of both.

In the ♀♂ configuration, decision is synonymous with selection for inclusion or exclusion. Thus the psychoanalyst has to decide whether to include or exclude himself from various groups, to include or exclude a patient from his practice, to include or exclude a given interpretation, to include or exclude given associations, ideas, experiences and so forth. The Establishment of the group has to decide to include or exclude certain individuals.

The personality decides to include or exclude certain characteristics or, failing that, to include or exclude awareness of their existence. Dislike of the onus of decision, or of awareness of responsibility for the decision, contributes to the formulation of selection-procedures by which selection, like dogma, laws of science, are made to act as substitutes for judgement or scapegoats for the guilt attendant on overtly acknowledged exercise of responsibility.

The configuration to which I have drawn attention can be seen to have a penumbra of associations which retain an illuminating function in the circumstances on which they are brought to bear. At other

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The configuration to which I have drawn attention can be seen to have a penumbra of associations which retain an illuminating function in the circumstances on which they are brought to bear. At times the

times the light they shed distorts by over-emphasis of the past – and therefore irrelevant – elements, and occlusion of the unknown – and therefore relevant – elements. Once the constancy of the configuration is recognized its nature can be assessed and related to psychoanalytic theory. Reciprocally, theory can be reformulated when it requires readjustment.

The primitive formulation of ♀♂ in C category terms of breast and mouth, penis and vagina, has the simplicity of all C category formulations.

Although descriptions 6 and 7 appear more complex, they too share the stamp of all C category formulations. Both appear to differ from the configuration represented by the Kleinian theory of paranoid–schizoid and depressive position interplay. I am unwilling to accept this apparent cleavage though I cannot suggest any satisfactory formulation which would display the underlying harmony.

The approach to its discovery may lie through investigation of the disruptive effect of creative synthesis. Or, to put it in C category terms, the relationship between the mystic and his group.

light they shed distorts by over-emphasis of the irrelevant past and occlusion of the unknown (and therefore relevant) present and future. Once the constancy of the configuration is recognized its nature can be assessed and related to psychoanalytic theory. Reciprocally, theory can be reformulated when it requires readjustment.

The primitive formulation of ♀♂ in C category terms of breast and mouth, penis and vagina, has the simplicity of all C category formulations.

Although descriptions 6 and 7 appear more complex, they too share the stamp of all C category formulations. Both appear to differ from the configurations represented by the Kleinian theory of paranoid–schizoid and depressive position interplay. I am unwilling to accept this apparent cleavage.
The most satisfactory formulation that displays the underlying harmony relates to the practice of psychoanalysis.

The discussion of the configuration of container and contained has occupied a considerable space in this book. It may, therefore, seem surprising if, at this stage and in relatively few sentences, I describe what is perhaps the most important mechanism employed by the practising psychoanalyst. It requires less description and is relatively

more easily grasped. It is for these reasons only that it occupies what may appear to be an insignificant place in this book. It is derived from Melanie Klein's descriptions of the paranoid–schizoid and depressive positions, and to these the reader should refer.

Here, briefly, is my formulation of this matter as it concerns the practising analyst:

In every session the psychoanalyst should be able, if he has followed what I have said in this book, particularly with regard to memory and desire, to be aware of the aspects of the material that, however familiar they may seem to be, relate to what is unknown both to him and to the analysand. Any attempt to cling to what he knows must be resisted for the sake of achieving a state of mind analogous to the paranoid–schizoid position. For this state I have coined the term 'patience' to distinguish it from 'paranoid–schizoid position', which should be left to describe the pathological state for which Melanie Klein used it. I mean the term to retain its association with suffering and tolerance of frustration.

'Patience' should be retained without 'irritable reaching after fact and reason' until a pattern 'evolves'. This state is the analogue to what Melanie Klein has called the depressive position. For this state I use the term 'security'.

This I mean to leave with its association of safety and diminished anxiety. I consider that no analyst

is entitled to believe that he has done the work required to give an interpretation unless he has passed through both phases – 'patience' and 'security'. The passage from the one to the other may be very short, as in the terminal stages of analysis, or it may be long. Few, if any, psychoanalysts should believe that they are likely to escape the feelings of persecution and depression commonly associated with the pathological states known as the paranoid–schizoid and depressive positions. In short, a sense of achievement of a correct interpretation will be commonly found to be followed almost immediately by a sense of depression. I consider the experience of oscillation between 'patience' and 'security' to be an indication that valuable work is being achieved.

APPENDIX D

Standardized Bibliography of the Works of W. R. Bion

Compiled by Harry Karnac

The 24 published books of W. R. Bion (prior to the Complete Works), referred to as WRB 1–WRB 24

WRB 1 *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers*
London: Tavistock Publications and New York: Routledge, 1961. Reprinted Hove: Brunner-Routledge, 2001

WRB2 *Learning from Experience*
London: William Heinemann Medical Books, 1962. (Reprinted in *Seven Servants* with WRB 3, WRB 4, & WRB 6. New York: Aronson, 1977.) Reprinted London: Karnac, 1984

WRB 3 *Elements of Psycho-Analysis*
London: William Heinemann Medical Books, 1963. (Reprinted in *Seven Servants* with WRB 2, WRB 4, & WRB 6. New York: Aronson, 1977.) Reprinted London: Karnac, 1984

WRB 4 *Transformations: Change from Learning to Growth*
London: William Heinemann Medical Books, 1965. (Reprinted in *Seven Servants* with WRB 2, WRB 3, & WRB 6. New York: Aronson, 1977.) Reprinted London: Karnac, 1984

WRB 5 *Second Thoughts: Selected Papers on Psycho-Analysis*
London: William Heinemann Medical Books, 1967. Reprinted London: Karnac, 1984

WRB 6 *Attention and Interpretation: A Scientific Approach to Insight in Psycho-Analysis and Groups*
London: Tavistock Publications, 1970. (Reprinted in *Seven Servants* with WRB 2, WRB 3, & WRB 4. New York: Aronson, 1977.) Reprinted London: Karnac, 1984

WRB 7 *Bion's Brazilian Lectures 1 – São Paulo*
Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora, 1973. Reprinted in *Brazilian Lectures* (revised & corrected edition) with WRB 8 in one volume, London: Karnac, 1990

WRB 8 *Bion's Brazilian Lectures 2 – Rio de Janeiro/São Paulo*
Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora, 1974. Reprinted in *Brazilian Lectures* (revised & corrected edition) with WRB 7 in one volume, London: Karnac, 1990

WRB 9 *A Memoir of the Future, Book 1: The Dream*
Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora, 1975. Reprinted in *A Memoir of the Future* (revised & corrected edition) with WRB 10, WRB 13, & WRB 15 in one volume, London: Karnac, 1991

WRB 10 *A Memoir of the Future Book, 2: The Past Presented*
Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora, 1977. Reprinted in *A Memoir of the Future* (revised & corrected edition) with WRB 9, WRB 13, & WRB 15 in one volume, London: Karnac, 1991

WRB 11 *Two Papers: The Grid and Cæsura*
Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora, 1977. Reprinted (revised and corrected edition) London: Karnac, 1989

WRB 12 *Four Discussions with W. R. Bion*
Strath Tay: Clunie Press, 1978. Reprinted in *Clinical Seminars and other works* with WRB 18 in one volume (edited by Francesca Bion), London: Karnac, 2000

WRB 13 *A Memoir of the Future, Book 3: The Dawn of Oblivion*
Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora, 1977. Reprinted in *A Memoir of the Future* (revised & corrected edition) with WRB 9, WRB 10, & WRB 15 in one volume, London: Karnac, 1991

WRB 14 *Bion in New York and São Paulo*
Strath Tay: Clunie Press, 1980

WRB 15 *A Key to A Memoir of the Future*
Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora, 1977. Reprinted in *A Memoir of the Future* (revised & corrected edition) with WRB 9, WRB 10, & WRB 13 in one volume, London: Karnac, 1991

WRB 16 *The Long Weekend: 1897–1919 (Part of a Life)* (edited by Francesca Bion)
Abingdon: Fleetwood Press, 1982. Reprinted London: Free Association Books, 1986; reprinted London: Karnac, 1991

WRB 17 *All My Sins Remembered: Another Part of a Life* and *The Other Side of Genius: Family Letters* (edited by Francesca Bion)
Abingdon: Fleetwood Press, 1985. Reprinted London: Karnac, 1991

WRB 18 *Clinical Seminars and Four Papers*
Abingdon: Fleetwood Press, 1987. Reprinted in *Clinical Seminars and other works* with WRB 12 in one volume (edited by Francesca Bion), London: Karnac, 2000

WRB 19 *Cogitations* (edited by Francesca Bion)
London: Karnac, 1992. New extended edition London: Karnac, 1994

WRB 20 *Taming Wild Thoughts* (edited by Francesca Bion)
London: Karnac, 1997

WRB 21 *War Memoirs 1917–1919* (edited by Francesca Bion)
London: Karnac, 1997

WRB 22 *Clinical Seminars and Other Works* (edited by Francesca Bion)
[Single volume edition containing *Four Discussions with W.R.Bion* (WRB 12) and *Clinical Seminars and Four Papers* (WRB 18)] London: Karnac, 2000

WRB 23 *The Italian Seminars* (edited by Francesca Bion and transl. from the Italian by Philip Slotkin)
London: Karnac, 2005 [earlier edition *Seminari Italiani: Testo Completo dei Seminari tenuti da W.R.Bion a Roma*. Rome: Edizioni Borla, 1985]

WRB 24 *The Tavistock Seminars* (edited by Francesca Bion)
London: Karnac, 2005

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1940	The War of Nerves: Civilian Reaction, Morale and Prophylaxis In: *The Neuroses in War* (pp. 180–200), ed. E. Miller & H. Crichton-Miller, London: Macmillan, 1940	
1943	Intra-Group Tensions in Therapy: Their Study as the Task of the Group (with J. Rickman) *Lancet 2*: 678–681 (27 Nov)	WRB 1: 11–26
1946	The Northfield Experiment (with H. Bridger and T. Main) *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic 10*: 71–76	
1946b	The Leaderless Group Project *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic 10*: 77–81	
1948a	Psychiatry at a Time of Crisis *British Journal of Medical Psychology 21*: 81–89	
1948b	Experiences in Groups I *Human Relations I*: 314–320	WRB 1: 29–40
1948c	Experiences in Groups II *Human Relations I*: 487–496	WRB 1: 41–58
1948d	Group Methods of Treatment In: *Proceedings of the International Conference on Medical Psychotherapy, Vol. III* (pp. 106–109), ed. H. K. Lewis, London & New York: Columbia University Press, 1948	
1949a	Experiences in Groups III *Human Relations 2*: 13–22	WRB 1: 59–75
1949b	Experiences in Groups IV *Human Relations 2*: 295–303	WRB 1: 77–91
1950a	Experiences in Groups V *Human Relations 3*: 3–14	WRB 1: 93–114
1950b	Experiences in Groups VI *Human Relations 3*: 395–402	WRB 1: 115–126
1950c	The Imaginary Twin Membership Paper presented to the British Psychoanalytical Society, 1 Nov 1950	WRB 5: 3–22
1951	Experiences in Groups VII *Human Relations 4*: 221–227	WRB 1: 127–137

1952 Group Dynamics: A Review WRB 1: 141–191
International Journal of Psychoanalysis 33: 235–247. Also in *New Directions in Psychoanalysis* (pp. 440–477), ed. M. Klein, P. Heimann, & R. E. Money-Kyrle, London: Tavistock Publications, 1955. (Republished in WRB 1 as: Re-View: Group Dynamics)

1954 Notes on the Theory of Schizophrenia WRB 5: 23–35
International Journal of Psychoanalysis 35: 113–118

1955 Language and the Schizophrenic
In: *New Directions in Psychoanalysis (*pp. 220–239), ed. M. Klein, P. Heimann, & R. E. Money-Kyrle, London: Tavistock Publications, 1955

1956 The Development of Schizophrenic Thought WRB 5: 36–42
International Journal of Psychoanalysis 37: 344–346

1957a The Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-Psychotic Personalities WRB 5: 43–64
International Journal of Psychoanalysis 38: 266–275

1957b On Arrogance WRB 5: 86–92
International Journal of Psychoanalysis 39: 144–146

1958 On Hallucination WRB 5: 65–85
International Journal of Psychoanalysis 39: 341–349

1959 Attacks on Linking WRB 5: 93–109
International Journal of Psychoanalysis 40: 308–315

1961 Melanie Klein – Obituary (with H. Rosenfeld and H. Segal)
International Journal of Psychoanalysis 42: 4–8

1962 The Psychoanalytic Study of Thinking WRB 5: 110–119
International Journal of Psychoanalysis 43: 306–310. (Republished in WRB 5 as: A Theory of Thinking)

1963 The Grid WRB 20: 6–21

1966a Catastrophic Change
Bulletin of the British Psychoanalytical Society, 1966, No. 5

1966b *Medical Orthodoxy and the Future of Psycho-Analysis*, by K. Eissler. New York: International Universities Press, 1965 [Review]
International Journal of Psychoanalysis 47: 575–579

1966c *Sexual Behavior and the Law,* ed. R. Slovenko. Springfield: Thomas, 1964 [Review] *International Journal of Psychoanalysis 47*: 579–581

1967a Commentary WRB 5: 120–166
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1967b Notes on Memory and Desire WRB19: 380–385
Psychoanalytic Forum 2 (3): 271–280. Reprinted in *Melanie Klein Today Vol. 2: Mainly Practice* (pp. 17–21), ed. E. Bott Spillius, London: Routledge, 1988

1976a Evidence WRB 18: 313–320
Bulletin of the British Psychoanalytical Society, 1976

1976b Interview by A. G. Banet Jr. Los Angeles, 1976 WRB 24: 97–114
Group and Organisation Studies 1 (3): 268–285

1977a On a Quotation from Freud WRB 18: 306–311
In: *Borderline Personality Disorders,* ed. P. Hartocollis, New York: International Universities Press, 1977

1977b Emotional Turbulence WRB 18: 295–305
In: *Borderline Personality Disorders,* ed. P. Hartocollis, New York: International Universities Press, 1977

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1978 A Paris Seminar (10 July 1978): Une topique groupale. W. R. Bion et le groupe (published originally in French)
Revue Psychotherapie Psychanalytique de Groupe, 1986
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1979 Making the Best of a Bad Job WRB 18: 321–331
Bulletin of the British Psychoanalytical Society, 1979

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WRB, 1979

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Edited by Chris Mawson

Editorial consultant Francesca Bion

KARNAC

First published in 2014 by
Karnac Books
118 Finchley Road
London NW3 5HT

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record for this collection is available from the British Library

The Complete Works of W. R. Bion
ISBN (Complete set): 978–1–85575–603–8
ISBN (Volume XVI): 978–1–78220–244–8

This volume not to be sold separately

Edited, designed, and produced by Communication Crafts

Printed in Great Britain

www.karnacbooks.com

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General Index

"This index, like the rest of the book, is the outcome of an attempt at precision. The failure of the attempt will be clear; what may not be clear is the following dilemma: 'precision' is too often a distortion of the reality. 'imprecision' too often indistinguishable from confusion." – W. R. Bion, 1970

[From the opening page of the index for *Attention and Interpretation*]

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